

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 236

(Chair, Economic Matters Committee)(By Request -
Departmental - Labor)

Economic Matters

State Athletic Commission - Blood Testing of Contestants - Timing

This departmental bill extends the period of time, from 30 to 90 days, before which an applicant for a license to participate as a contestant in a boxing, kickboxing, wrestling, or mixed martial arts (MMA) contest must be tested for specified diseases. A contestant must present documentary evidence to the State Athletic Commission (SAC) of negative test results for the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), the antigen of virus hepatitis B, and antibodies to virus hepatitis C conducted within the 90-day period (instead of 30 days) prior to a license application or, when requested by SAC, participation in a contest.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill does not materially affect governmental operations or finances.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: The Department of Labor has determined that this bill has a meaningful impact on small business (attached). The Department of Legislative Services concurs with this assessment.

Analysis

Current Law: SAC has regulatory and licensing authority over all boxing, kick boxing, MMA, or wrestling contests held in the State, with the exception of some intercollegiate or amateur events. The commission licenses participants, managers, referees, judges, seconds, matchmakers, and promoters of these contests.

Each applicant for a license to participate as a contestant in a contest must present documentary evidence, satisfactory to the commission within the prior 30-day period the applicant has been test for the presence of:

- antibodies to HIV;
- the antigen of virus hepatitis B; and
- antibodies to virus hepatitis C.

The results of all tests must be negative. Additionally, an individual who is licensed to participate as a contestant must present documentary evidence, upon request by SAC, that they have tested negative for these pathogens within 30 days prior to participating in a contest.

Background:

SAC advises that this bill is needed to bring the Commission’s bloodwork regulations in line with industry standards observed by other athletic commissions across the United States. Under current law, bloodwork required to be eligible to participate in SAC events is only valid for 30 days, which is far shorter than the neighboring states; for comparison, Pennsylvania and Virginia currently allow 180 days.

Fighters not used to such a timeframe have several times been forced to pull out of fights due to a lack of valid bloodwork. Extending the timeframe to 90 days reduces the financial burden on promoters and creates a larger pool of eligible replacement fighters without having to incur additional fees for expedited testing. Lower production costs create opportunities for more events to be held throughout the year, which in turn, helps increase revenue generated by the Commission.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: SB 32 (Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee)(By Request - Departmental - Labor) - Education, Energy, and the Environment.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Labor; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 27, 2026
sj/mcr

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ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC IMPACT ON SMALL BUSINESSES

TITLE OF BILL: State Athletic Commission - Blood Testing of Contestants - Timing

BILL NUMBER: HB 236

PREPARED BY: Johnston Brown

PART A. ECONOMIC IMPACT RATING

This agency estimates that the proposed bill:

WILL HAVE MINIMAL OR NO ECONOMIC IMPACT ON MARYLAND SMALL BUSINESS

OR

WILL HAVE MEANINGFUL ECONOMIC IMPACT ON MARYLAND SMALL BUSINESSES

PART B. ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS

Extending the blood work validity period from 30 to 90 days would ease the burden on promoters by reducing the frequency and cost of testing for replacement fighters.