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To whom it may concern,

I am writing in support of the ***Muhammad Ali American Boxing Revival Act (H.R. 4624)***. This bipartisan legislation, endorsed by the Association of Boxing Commissions (ABC) and Lonnie Ali, wife of the late boxing legend and co-founder of The Muhammad Ali Center, provides professional boxers with greater safety protections.

I was appointed and have served the California State Athletic Commission (CSAC) as a Ringside Physician for 36 years. In addition to my considerable years of service, I am the most experienced combat medicine physician in the United States, overseeing boxing, mixed martial arts, muay thai, kickboxing, and bare-knuckle fighting. As a member of the Association of Ringside Physicians Board, I was a contributor to the Professional Boxing Safety Act of 1996 and the Muhammad Ali Boxing Reform Act ("Ali Act") in 2000.

It is my firm opinion that professional combat sports regulations must strictly prohibit athletes from competing while pregnant. Indeed, the United States is the only major country that does not require pregnancy testing. During one year as Chair of the ABC Medical Committee, medical directors from various commissions reported 17 cases of combatants (who had said before being tested that they were not pregnant) who had a POSITIVE blood or urine pregnancy test. In my State, California, where pregnancy testing is not allowed, we have had several combatants who knowingly and unknowingly fought while pregnant. We were only made aware of the pregnancy through the media.

The physical toll of training and fighting on female boxers frequently causes abnormal menstrual cycles or amenorrhea. Those who are sexually active may have NO idea if or when they became pregnant. The physical challenges increase during pregnancy, especially hormonal changes, which can affect ligaments and balance, increasing the risk of injury. There is also an increased risk of miscarriage, and the intense physical strain of competition and extreme weight-cutting procedures poses a high risk to the combatants and the pregnancy.

Direct blows to the abdomen may cause serious injury or death to the fetus. The hazardous nature of combat sports, which emphasizes causing physical harm, amplifies these ethical dilemmas far beyond those in non-contact sports.

Moreover, engaging in combat sports like boxing during pregnancy carries significant risks to both the mother and the fetus due to potential trauma, falls, and high-impact movements. I am not aware

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Moreover, engaging in combat sports like boxing during pregnancy carries significant risks to both the mother and the fetus due to potential trauma, falls, and high-impact movements. I am not aware of any legitimate health care organization that would encourage participating in a contact sport during pregnancy, where competitors are purposely hit in the abdomen to cause temporary damage.

A core medical and ethical challenge is how to balance the athlete's independence and the right to make their own choices with the Commission's duty to protect their safety and that of the fetus. Even when testing is available, privacy concerns often outweigh medical judgment for pregnant athletes in combat sports. Despite the federal privacy protections of HIPAA, there is no less privacy for pregnancy than there is for HIV.

While an athlete may consent to compete, factors such as financial pressure may influence their decision. Many women, especially at lower-tier levels, have reported being reluctant to disclose pregnancy for fear of losing a payday, which can expose these athletes to catastrophic risk.

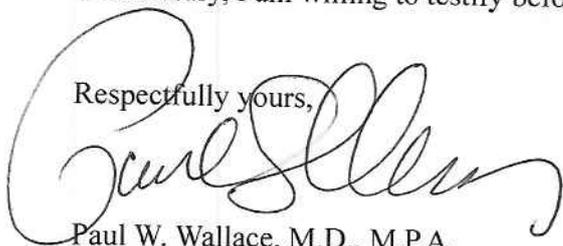
The risks extend beyond a single fight. Training for that fight requires repeated trauma, particularly to the abdomen, increasing the risk of danger. Commissions must consider the immediate and long-term health of pregnant athletes and their unborn child.

Combat sports organizations have an ethical duty to create clear, common-sense pregnancy policies for female athletes. These policies should clearly state the zero-tolerance of competing while pregnant, and provide the necessary steps for a confidential disclosure of pregnancy (e.g., any medical issue, HIV).

Unfortunately, to date, there is NO enforced universal medical minimum standard in the United States. I have testified six times before the California State Assembly and Senate committees on pregnancy testing. Each time, an issue other than the boxer's safety has led to a 'No' vote. Federal law is necessary to hold Commissions accountable for ensuring that medical protocols protecting pregnant athletes (and their fetuses) are respected across all levels of competition, not just the contractual obligations of some championship contests.

If necessary, I am willing to testify before the House Committee.

Respectfully yours,



Paul W. Wallace, M.D., M.P.A.

Chairman, CSAC Medical Advisory Committee and Chief, Ringside Physician

2-term Medical Chair, Association of Boxing Commissions

Chair, World Boxing Council Medical Advisory Committee

Founding and Emeritus Board member of the Association of Ringside Physicians (ARP)

Past Chair, California State Ringside Physicians Association

Lecturer and advisor to the International Boxing Federation, World Boxing Association, and World Boxing Organization