

House Republican Press Release

January 11, 2007
Press Office: 860-240-8700

Belden Introduces Wrestling Regulation Bill



Shelton Man's Tragic Death in Ring Prompts Legislation

HARTFORD- State Representative Dick Belden (R-Shelton) has introduced legislation this session of the Connecticut General Assembly that would give the state greater control over public wrestling exhibitions held in the state. The death of a semi-professional wrestler from Shelton moved Belden to introduce the bill.

On May 28, 2005, Daniel Quirk of Shelton received fatal injuries sustained in a wrestling exposition match hosted by Ultimate Championship Wrestling at the American Legion Post 103 in Taunton, Massachusetts. Belden was contacted by Quirk's family following the tragedy, asking that action be taken to protect wrestlers like Daniel. In both Connecticut and Massachusetts, independent wrestling remains unregulated as it is considered entertainment under the law. Regulations and standards for the sport could have prevented the injuries Quirk received according to Belden.

"This kind of independent wrestling isn't regulated in Connecticut the way boxing is," said Belden. "We have a Boxing Commission in this state under the Department of Consumer Protection which regulates the sport and provides legal standards for safety. Similar standards and regulations need to apply to independent wrestling events as well, to ensure among other things that needless tragedies such as the one involving Daniel Quirk never happen again."

Belden's bill would give the Department of Public Safety jurisdiction over all public wrestling exhibitions in the state and require the Department to adopt regulations concerning the safety equipment required at wrestling matches.

Last year similar legislation establishing a licensing system passed the state House of Representatives but was never taken up by the Senate during the final month of the session because it would have inadvertently affected interscholastic and collegiate wrestling. Belden hopes that this year a modified bill can be enacted.

"Wrestling in scholastic, collegiate, and national federations currently have rules and protections," said Belden. "This proposed bill would extend these same safety protections to a currently unregulated segment of wrestling."

The 2007 session of the General Assembly will last until June 6th.