



COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
THE JOHN A. WILSON BUILDING
1350 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, NW
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20004

BRIANNE K. NADEAU
Councilmember, Ward 1

Chairperson
Public Works and Operations

Committee Member
Recreation, Libraries, and Youth Affairs
Facilities and Family Services
Health

Statement of Introduction

Theatrical Wrestling Regulation Amendment Act of 2024
September 23, 2024

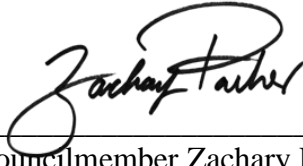
Today, I am introducing the “Theatrical Wrestling Regulation Amendment Act of 2024”. The independent “pro” wrestling scene has a storied history in the District – especially as a way of creating spaces of cultural and community importance, by and for Black, Latino, and LGBTQ wrestlers and spectators.

These wrestling exhibitions are much closer to theater performance than a sport like boxing – pro wrestling match outcomes are usually pre-determined or non-competitive and moves are choreographed in advance. However, a small independent wrestling event and a title fight in Capital One Area are both subject to the same set of laws and regulations administered by the Combat Sports Commission.


Unfortunately, D.C.’s tight regulatory environment and extremely high costs have driven nearly all of small pro wrestling events to Maryland and Virginia.

Wrestling regulation reform is a current focus of the Mayor’s Advisory Committee on LGBTQ Affairs. In the lead-up to World Pride, there is a strong interest in putting on events during the festival and bringing the scene back to the District permanently.

This legislation defines “theatrical wrestling” as its own class of event (limited to smaller venues) and reduce the burdens that have made it close to impossible to put these events on in the District. It is in line with legislation recently passed in Washington State and Louisiana, and longstanding policy in states like Missouri and Virginia.



Councilmember Zachary Parker



Councilmember Brianne K. Nadeau



Councilmember Robert C. White, Jr.

A BILL

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

1 To amend the Boxing and Wrestling Commission Act of 1975 to clarify exemptions,
2 including theatrical wrestling events.

3
4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this
5 act may be cited as the “Theatrical Wrestling Regulation Amendment Act of 2024”.

6 Sec. 2. The Boxing and Wrestling Commission Act of 1975, effective October 8, 1975
7 (D.C. Official Code § 3-601 *et seq.*, D.C. Law 1-20) is amended to read as follows:

8 (a) Section 3 is amended as follows:

9 (1) Existing paragraph (1) is designated (1B).

10 (2) A new paragraph (1A) is added to read as follows:

11 “(1A) “Amateur” means an individual who has never participated in a boxing, martial
12 arts, or professional wrestling event for money, compensation, or reward other than a suitably
13 inscribed memento.”.

14 (3) A new paragraph (8A) is added to read as follows:

15 “(8A) “Theatrical wrestling” means the performance of sports entertainment in which:

16 “(A) Two or more participants work together in a performance of mock combat
17 for the purpose of entertainment;

18 “(B)(i) The outcome is predetermined;

19 “(ii) performance is choreographed in advance;

20 “(iii) is noncompetitive; or,

21 “(iv) participants do not necessarily strive to win; and,

22 “(C) Takes place in a venue with a total audience capacity of fewer than 2,000
23 attendees, or as part of a festival or other special event.”.

24 (b) Section 6(b) is amended to read as follows:

25 “(b) The provisions of this act shall not apply to:

26 “(1) Amateur wrestling bouts;

27 “(2) Amateur exhibitions and the amateur participants therein;

28 “(3) Engagements involving amateur martial arts that are conducted by or held
29 under the sponsorship any elementary or secondary school or public or private institution of
30 higher education located in the District of Columbia;

31 “(4) Amateur boxing; and,

32 “(5) Theatrical wrestling events.”.

33 Sec. 3. Fiscal impact statement.

34 The Council adopts the fiscal impact statement in the committee report as the fiscal
35 impact statement required by section 4a of the General Legislative Procedures Act of 1975,
36 approved October 16, 2006 (120 Stat. 2038; D.C. Official Code § 1-301.47a).

37 Sec. 4. Effective date.

38 This act shall take effect after approval by the Mayor (or in the event of veto by the
39 Mayor, action by the Council to override the veto), a 30-day period of congressional review as

40 provided in section 602(c)(1) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act, approved December
41 24, 1973 (87 Stat. 813; D.C. Official Code § 1-206.02(c)(1)), and publication in the District of
42 Columbia Register.