

SENATE



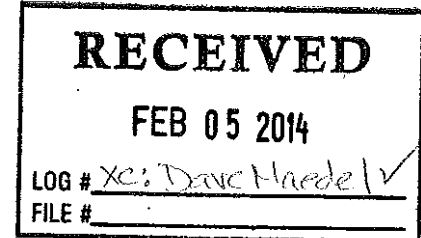
SÉNAT

The Honourable Robert (Bob) Runciman  
Senator—Ontario  
(Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes)

L'honorable Robert (Bob) Runciman  
Sénateur — Ontario  
(Mille-Îles et lacs Rideau)

January 29, 2014

David Galbraith, Assistant Deputy Minister  
Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development  
PO Box 9490 Stn Prov Government  
Victoria, B.C., V8W 9N7



Dear Mr. Galbraith:

I am writing in response to the recent letter from you and B.C. Athletic Commissioner Dave Maedel asking for the legislative intent of Bill S-209, which amended the Criminal Code in respect to prize fighting.

My intent when introducing this bill was to broaden the definition of combative sport to reflect modern realities. I neither intended nor expected that professional sports previously deemed legal by provincial regulators should now be regarded as illegal.

Although I firmly believe provincial regulators are in the best position to evaluate specific events, Bill S-209 was designed to broaden, not narrow, the scope of legal combative sports, and I was quite surprised to hear that some sports previously deemed legal are now being considered illegal.

Clearly, under the previous Criminal Code definition, boxing was the only legal combative sport. Under the current definition, professional mixed martial arts competitions are now exempt from criminal prosecution. It defies logic that some martial arts competitions were deemed legal under the previous boxing-only definition, but are now considered illegal under a definition that permits mixed martial arts.

I'd like to clarify one other point. In your letter, you ask me to clarify "the intent of the federal government." Bill S-209 was not a government bill. It was a Senate Public Bill, which is the Senate equivalent of a Private Members' Bill. The bill was supported by all parties in both the Senate and the House of Commons, with only nine MPs voting against.

I hope this clarifies the intent of Bill S-209.

Sincerely,

Senator Robert W. Runciman