



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

NEWS RELEASE

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Attached is a copy of a letter today sent by Governor Jim Florio and former ABC sportscaster Howard Cosell citing the need for professional boxing reforms.

In 1982, Congressman Jim Florio first initiated reform legislation in the House, but the bill failed to pass. In subsequent sessions, Florio co-sponsored boxing reform bills and has chaired hearings on the issue, most recently in June, 1988. This same legislation, now sponsored by U.S. Rep. Bill Richardson (D-N.M.), is again pending before Congress. The attached letter, in its support, was sent to House Speaker Thomas Foley; U.S. Rep. Bill Richardson, U.S. Rep. Pat Williams (D-Montana); U.S. Senator Joseph Biden (D-Del.); U.S. Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA); U.S. Rep. John Dingell (D-Michigan), and U.S. Rep. Frank Guarini (D-NJ).

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STATE OF NEW JERSEY
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

CN-001
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JIM FLORIO
GOVERNOR

February 14, 1990

Honorable Thomas S. Foley
1201 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-4705

Dear Speaker Foley:

The recent spectacle over the Mike Tyson-James "Buster" Douglas fight highlights the problems which plague the sport of professional boxing. No governmental action could have kept Mike Tyson on his feet, but the aftermath of the fight sharply highlights the need for changes. The Tyson-Douglas incident should serve as a catalyst for reform of professional boxing.

It is a disgrace that the World Boxing Association and the World Boxing Council delayed recognizing Douglas as the winner of the Tyson-Douglas fight. This was a clear example of the undue influence that promoters have on the governing bodies in boxing. Currently, there is no control over boxing managers and promoters and they are a primary source of revenue for the governing bodies. The only way to insure evenhandedness, unbiased decisions and accurate rankings is to control more carefully promoters and managers.

We have both participated for years in Congressional efforts to reform professional boxing, as Chairman of the Subcommittee with jurisdiction over boxing and in testimony as a prominent journalist with considerable expertise in boxing. The Congressional hearings have demonstrated that there are serious problems in professional boxing, including conflicts between the organizations that govern the sport, differences in officiating standards, and lax health and safety regulations. There have been proposals advanced to address these issues; there is no reason to delay further in moving forward with these proposals.

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Unfortunately, some who have influenced professional boxing have prevented the sport from achieving a high degree of respectability. This is harmful to the boxers, who are some of the greatest athletes in the world, and to the spectators and fans. New Jersey is recognized by many as the boxing capital of the world. The State derives considerable benefit from the sport, both in increased tourism and from the increased attention the State gets when it hosts high profile fights. We would all benefit from making boxing a sport which provides its participants and the spectators with a safer, more respectable environment.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to working with you to bring the proper degree of safety and consistency to the sport of boxing.

Sincerely,

JIM FLORIO
GOVERNOR

HOWARD COSELL