



Illinois Department of Professional Regulation

NEWS

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Department of Professional Regulation Lauds 'Toughman' Decision by Rockford Judge

The Director of the Illinois Department of Professional Regulation (IDPR) commended Winnebago County (17th) Circuit Court Judge Ronald Perrillo today for rejecting efforts to overturn the IDPR's ban on two "Toughman" events scheduled for later this month in Rockford and Peoria.

"Judge Perrillo's decision is consistent with what people from Gov. Blagojevich to law enforcement officials to concerned citizens in communities across Illinois have been saying: Toughman has no place in Illinois," IDPR Director Fernando E. Grillo said.

Under Gov. Blagojevich's leadership, the IDPR on Jan. 14 instituted an emergency rule to the Illinois Boxing Act closing loopholes that allowed promoters to stage "Toughman"-type events throughout the state. The promoter of Toughman brawls scheduled for Feb. 20-21 in Peoria and Feb. 27-28 in Rockford, Adorable Productions, filed suit against the Department seeking a preliminary injunction to allow the Rockford event.

At least 12 people have died after participating in Toughman contests across the country, including Stacy Young, a 30-year-old mother of two from Florida who climbed into the ring at an event last year against an opponent with vastly more experience.

"These competitions amount to organized street fights. The participants lack training, the rules are loose – at best – and the outcomes are often deadly," Grillo said. "We cannot, and will not, allow Toughman fighting in Illinois."

Events like Toughman pose serious health risks to those involved because they:

- Do not always require boxers to undergo a pre-fight physical;
- Do not test competitors for HIV;
- Do not prevent inebriated fighters from entering the ring;
- Offer only a few weight classes so that competitors can be 100 pounds or more apart in size;
- Pair trained and untrained fighters;
- Offer inadequate medical care and physician oversight.

The new regulations will require promoters and participants to abide by the same rules professional boxing does, such as using stringent class and weight measurements in pairing fighters, and mandating that unlicensed one- and two-day elimination tournaments be sanctioned by reputable organizations like the Golden Gloves of America and the U.S. Amateur Boxing Federation.

Illinois joins 14 other states in banning or severely restricting these types of competitions. Another five states are considering similar action.

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