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State Opposes Professional Boxing in 2016 Olympics

California State Athletic Commission Responds in Opposition to International Boxing Association's Decision

SACRAMENTO, CA – Ching-Kuo Wu, President of the International Boxing Association (AIBA), awakened the ire of many in the professional boxing world last week, when he confirmed his intention to change AIBA's qualifying criteria to allow professional fighters to compete in the Summer Olympics.

Yesterday, John Carvelli, chairman of the California State Athletic Commission (CSAC), said he reviewed AIBA's February 26 [Facebook](#) statement regarding opening the 2016 Summer Olympic Games to professional boxers. He has asked that AIBA reconsider its position.

Carvelli said, "The bottom line is that professionals will compete against amateur fighters. Amateur/professional participation would create a competitive environment detrimental to the sport and dangerous for the participants – particularly young amateurs learning their craft. It is our collective responsibility to protect the health and safety of amateur athletes, while we protect and promote the honorable tradition of Olympic boxing – an international symbol of fair and open competition."

Andy Foster, executive officer of CSAC, said he is also opposed to AIBA's decision allowing professional boxers to compete in the Olympics.

"As a former competitor and current regulator of professional and amateur combat sports in California, I am disturbed by this decision and am concerned for the safety of these albeit talented, amateur athletes; because there is potential for them to be pitted against seasoned professionals," said Foster.

Foster said while many sports in the Olympics allow professionals to compete, boxing is unique because it is a full contact sport and the varying levels of risk between amateur and professional boxing are quite significant.

"What AIBA is doing is wrong and I hope they reconsider this policy change," Foster said.

CSAC has not yet taken an official position, but may consider doing so at its next meeting.

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ABOUT CSAC: The California State Athletic Commission (CSAC) regulates professional and amateur boxing, kickboxing and mixed martial arts throughout California by licensing all participants and supervising the events. CSAC constantly seeks methods to make combat sports safer by focusing on techniques to lessen traumatic brain injuries, educating athletes about the adverse effects of the practice of dehydration and weight cutting, regular training of inspectors and officials, and careful and thoughtful approval of professional and amateur matches. Learn more at www.dca.ca.gov/csac/index.shtml.

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