

Bryan co-sponsoring bill to reform professional boxing

Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON — Sen. Richard Bryan announced last week during a Senate Commerce Committee hearing that he and Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., have teamed to sponsor the Muhammad Ali Boxing Reform Act.

The bill would protect the health and safety of professional boxers and prevent certain anti-competitive, arbitrary, oppressive and unethical business practices.

"The sport of boxing will continue to suffer from credibility problems until steps are taken to protect the boxer's interest with his manager and promoter," Bryan, a Democrat said last Thursday. "In addition, the myriad sanctioning bodies will continue to erode public



MIKE TYSON

confidence in the sport of boxing. The lack of an unbiased, private governing body to rank boxers and to impose necessary ethical guidelines on the industry is one of the root causes of the problems that exist in professional boxing today."

Larry Hazzard, who represents the New Jersey Board of Athletic Control,

appeared at the conference. New Jersey is currently considering a license application by boxer Mike Tyson. The former heavyweight champion got his Nevada license revoked for biting Evander Holyfield's ears during their June 28 title rematch at the MGM Hotel.

Bryan urged Hazzard to respect the Nevada Athletic Commission's revocation. The new bill contains a provision requiring states to recognize license suspensions in other states.

The Bryan-McCain legislation was prompted by a hearing several months ago when several boxing representatives, including a promoter, manager, state regulator and official from one of the sanctioning bodies told lawmakers about the industry's



RICHARD BRYAN

troubled business dealings.

One witness testified that he knew certain promoters would only promote a boxer or provide him with lucrative bouts only if the boxer signed with a certain manager. The witness also said he's seen situations where managers were paid employees of promoters or relatives of promoters.

It is also common for the ratings organizations to remove champions from other organizations from their rankings, according to the testimony.

The Muhammad Ali reform bill would:

— Place a one-year limit on promotional rights which boxers are forced to provide a new promoter to participate in a particular boxing match;

— Prohibit promoters and sanctioning bodies from requiring a boxer or promoter to provide exclusive "options" to a promoter in a mandatory bout situation;

— Require certain financial arrangements between boxers, promoters and sanctioning organizations to be disclosed to state boxing commissions prior to a fight;

— Prohibit a promoter from

requiring a boxer to hire an associate, relative or any other individual as the boxer's manager, or in any other employment capacity;

— Prohibit a promoter from having a financial interest in the management of a boxer, and prohibits a manager from having a financial relationship with a promoter, either directly or indirectly.

"All too often these days, it is the 'business' of professional boxing that is stealing the headlines from the sport," Bryan said. "The relationships that exist between boxers, promoters, managers and sanctioning bodies is often so muddled that some boxers spend more time fighting in court than they do the ring. The result is that the fight fan is often left wondering who is the legitimate champion."

Surgeon general wants Blacks mobilized in AIDS fight

Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON — With blacks now accounting for more than half of new HIV infections, Surgeon General David Satcher urged black leaders to mobilize against the epidemic.

Recalling his childhood in the segregated South, Satcher compared the fight against AIDS to the struggle for civil rights.

"We need to educate as we've never educated before," Satcher, who is black, told the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in a speech

Tuesday. "I'm talking to you about you."

While blacks make up 13 percent of the U.S. population, they account for 57 percent of the new infections. Among some groups, the statistics are even more striking: Blacks and Hispanics make up 82 percent of HIV-positive women ages 13 to 24.

And life-prolonging AIDS drugs are helping whites more than blacks. In 1996, deaths among whites with AIDS were down 28 percent; for blacks, it was just 10 percent.

The Southern Christian



DAVID SATCHER

Leadership Conference's new president, Martin Luther King III, underscored the difficulty of AIDS education, saying he

is not comfortable promoting use of condoms.

"The only way is abstinence," he said in an interview after Satcher's speech. "Sex should not be something that we just casually engage in and take lightly."

The solution, King said, is restoring fundamental values to society. He said AIDS is an important issue, although it is not among his top priorities.

Satcher did not recommend any particular prevention strategy on Tuesday. But he and other public health experts agree that use of condoms is

essential to halt the spread of HIV among people who are not likely to abstain from sex.

The surgeon general will hammer the AIDS message in upcoming speeches to black journalists and doctors, and he plans to reach out to other groups such as black fraternities, sororities and newspapers.

But his speech to church leaders was particularly important. Churches play a central role in many black communities, and ministers are often among the most prominent community leaders. But church leaders have been reluctant to talk about AIDS because it relates so closely to sex and homosexuality, Satcher says.

The issue is also thorny because of its relationship to drug use, a major problem inside the black community with its own set of taboos.

"We need your help," Satcher told the organization formed by ministers in 1957. "We need the church to help us to deal with the prejudice and the bias that we face as we're trying to fight this epidemic."

Ministers are uneasy talking about AIDS, said the group's chairman, Dr. Claud Young, a family doctor in Detroit.

"They speak about sex in any form as if it's a form of cancer," he said, recalling preachers asking him not to use the word "condom" inside the church.

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Witness in Clark beating tracked to Vegas

Special to Sentinel-Voice

The missing eyewitness in the Lenard Clark racial beating case fled to Las Vegas to live with a friend shortly after disappearing from his Scottsdale, Ariz. home, federal court records show.

Prosecutors say 19-year-old Richard DeSantis witnessed the March 27, 1997, beating of 13-year-old Clark in Armour Square Park on Chicago's South Side as he rode his bike through the area.

Clark, now 15, spent days in a coma, suffered brain damage and cannot remember the beating.

A federal affidavit says DeSantis quit his job in a Scottsdale video store in January and in April moved to Las Vegas to stay with an unnamed acquaintance.

Last month, Criminal Court Judge Daniel M. Locallo granted the prosecution's request to delay the start of the trial until July 20 from July 6 to give prosecutors more time to find DeSantis.

In their motion, prosecutors wrote, "Since ... the day this case was last set for trial, a material witness has been murdered. This has hampered the people's efforts to bring the defendant's to trial. In addition, a material witness for the state is currently

unavailable and the state will be prejudiced by the absence of his testimony."

Prosecutors had two witnesses when they began preparing their case against three Bridgeport youths — 19-year-old Frank Caruso, 18-year-old Victor Jasas and 21-year-old Michael Kwidzinski. But in May, 19-year-old Michael Cutler was fatally

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