



# DEBATES OF THE SENATE

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## CRIMINAL CODE

Bill to Amend—Second Reading  
of Bill S-209

Speech by:

The Honourable Larry W. Campbell

Thursday, April 26, 2012

## THE SENATE

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### CRIMINAL CODE

#### BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING

On the Order:

Resuming debate on the motion of the Honourable Senator Runciman, seconded by the Honourable Senator Eaton, for the second reading of Bill S-209, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (prize fights).

**Hon. Larry W. Campbell:** Honourable senators, I rise today to speak on Bill S-209, an act to amend the Criminal Code with respect to prizefights. If passed, this bill will provide an updated definition of prizefighting, which would be truly representative of what that means today.

The Criminal Code currently defines prizefighting as an “an encounter or fight with fists or hands between two persons.” We are somewhat familiar with that in this place from a few weeks ago.

Under the Criminal Code, the only combative activities legally allowed are boxing matches held under the jurisdiction of a provincial athletic board. If the bill is passed, the definition of prizefighting would include encounters with fists, hands or feet. Additionally, the bill would add the following exemptions under the Criminal Code: amateur combative sports which are included on the program of the International Olympic Committee; other

amateur sports designated by the province; and boxing matches and/or mixed martial arts contests held under the jurisdiction of a provincial athletic board or similar body.

Essentially, this would mean that sports such as judo, karate and mixed martial arts would be exempted from prosecution. These are all legitimate sports that are enjoyed by thousands of Canadians across the country.

Mixed martial arts especially have become extremely popular in recent years. The Ultimate Fighting Championship, the largest organization for professional mixed martial arts, has already hosted a number of events in Canada and has plans for more. Previous events drew over 200,000 fans. These events generate a lot of revenue and are good for our tourism industry. This bill will ensure that our provincial governments no longer have to turn a blind eye to organized sporting events for these kinds of martial arts.

The previous version of this bill, Bill C-31, which died on the Order Paper when the second session of the Fortieth Parliament was prorogued, received all-party support in the other place.

Honourable senators, this is a straightforward piece of legislation that would ensure this particular definition is relevant and up to date. I support its speedy passage.

**Some Hon. Senators:** Hear, hear!