

**MASS GATHERING EVENTS: ASSESSING SECURITY  
COORDINATION AND PREPAREDNESS**

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**HEARING**

BEFORE THE

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND  
TECHNOLOGY**

OF THE

**COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS**

FIRST SESSION

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MAY 21, 2025  
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## **MASS GATHERING EVENTS: ASSESSING SECURITY COORDINATION AND PREPAREDNESS**

**Wednesday, May 21, 2025**

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT  
AND TECHNOLOGY,  
*Washington, DC.*

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:03 p.m., in room 310, Cannon House Office Building, Hon. Dale W. Strong (Chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Representatives Strong, Evans of Colorado, Mackenzie, Kennedy of New York, and Johnson of Texas.

Also present: Representatives Correa, and Pou.

Mr. STRONG. The Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Emergency Management and Technology will come to order. Without objection, the Chair may declare the subcommittee in recess at any point.

The purpose of this hearing is to assess security best practices, highlight challenges, and understand how the Federal Government, State government, local law enforcement, and the private sector coordinate with one another for mass gathering events.

Without objection, the gentleman from California, Mr. Correa, and the gentlewoman from New Jersey, Ms. Pou, are permitted to sit on the dais and ask questions to the witnesses.

I now recognize myself for an opening statement.

Good afternoon, and thank you for joining us today. I also would like to take the time to thank the staff for their hard work on this hearing.

Today we will discuss the important and timely topic of security preparedness and coordination for mass gathering events. By their very nature, these events draw large crowds in concentrated areas, making them attractive targets for malicious actors.

Ensuring their safety requires complex coordination among Federal, State, and local authorities, including law enforcement and emergency services. It also requires close collaboration with partners in the sports and entertainment industries.

I witnessed the scale of these challenges first-hand when I led a Congressional delegation to New Orleans to serve a security preparation for the Super Bowl, following the New Year's Eve attack on Bourbon Street.

That incident and others like it serve as a stark reminder that terrorist threats persist and underscore our responsibility to safeguard such gatherings.

These events will only continue to grow in prominence and frequency. In the year ahead, the United States will host several major international sporting events, including the 2025 FIFA World Cup, the 2026 FIFA World Cup, and the 2028 Summer Olympics and Paralympics in Los Angeles.

These events present enormous opportunities, delivering economic benefits, while also showcasing our great Nation on the international stage.

But they also bring significant security challenges. Take the 2026 World Cup, for example. Seventy-six matches will be played in 11 U.S. cities, with an estimated 6.5 million fans traveling to the United States, not to mention it will also be played in the midst of the celebration of America's 250th anniversary.

To meet these unprecedented demands, DHS has convened an all-hands-on-deck approach to ensure they are safe and secure.

CISA is working to secure critical infrastructure. The Office of Intelligence and Analysis is sharing threat information, and CBP and CIS are carefully vetting and processing international travelers.

I am also proud of this committee's leadership in addressing this topic. Three weeks ago, the committee passed its budget reconciliation recommendation, including \$625 million in additional preparedness funding for the 2026 World Cup and \$1 billion for the 2028 Olympics.

I support these measures, and I hope funds can be distributed as quickly and effectively as possible.

Additionally, following President Trump's Executive Order, convening a White House task force on the FIFA World Cup, this committee established its own bipartisan Task Force on Enhancing Security For Special Events in the United States.

I applaud Vice Chairman McCaul, who will be chairing the task force, and Chairman Green for their leadership on this issue, and I'm honored to have been selected to join this task force.

I hope today's hearing will offer valuable insight and inform future task force discussions.

Many challenges must be addressed to improve security preparedness for these major events. As we discussed last month, unmanned aerial aircraft systems can act as a force multiplier for DHS's mission.

However, they can also be used for evil and unlawful purposes. You may remember in 2017, a drone dropped leaflets over 2 sporting stadiums, in violation of temporary flight restrictions.

It doesn't take very much to imagine, to see how the same technology could've been used for a much deadlier purpose.

As for—I previously mentioned, the New Orleans attack demonstrated the danger that vehicles pose to mass gatherings and the need to ensure effective countermeasures are in place.

Additionally, the fan behavior at these events can be erratic as seen during the 2024 Copa América match when thousands of fans breached physical security barriers and overwhelmed law enforcement.

These examples reflect the importance of robust security planning to ensure events are conducted peacefully, that all spectators remain safe, and everyone has a good time.

I'm thankful for the participation of our witnesses today. I look forward to their perspective, as well as what Congress and the Federal Government can do to support these events.

Again, thank you all for being here, and I hope we can have a productive and bipartisan discussion, as we seek to improve security ahead of these mass gathering events.

[The statement of Chairman Strong follows:]

STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN DALE STRONG

Good afternoon and thank you for joining us.

I would also like to thank the staff for their hard work on this hearing.

Today, this subcommittee will discuss the important and timely topic of our security preparedness and coordination for mass gathering events.

By their very nature, these events draw large crowds in concentrated areas, making them attractive targets for malicious actors.

Ensuring their safety requires complex coordination among Federal, State, and local authorities—including law enforcement and emergency services.

It also requires close collaboration with partners in the sports and entertainment industries.

I witnessed the scale of these challenges first-hand, when I led a Congressional delegation to New Orleans to survey security preparations for the Super Bowl following the New Year's attack on Bourbon Street.

That incident, and others like it, serve as stark reminders that terrorist threats persist, and underscore our shared responsibility to safeguard such gatherings.

And these events will only continue to grow in prominence and frequency.

In the years ahead, the United States will host several major international sporting events, including:

- The 2025 FIFA Club World Cup,
- The 2026 FIFA World Cup, and
- The 2028 Summer Olympics and Paralympics in Los Angeles.

These events present enormous opportunities—delivering economic benefits, while also showcasing our great Nation on the international stage.

But they also bring significant security challenges.

Take the 2026 World Cup for example: 78 matches will be played in 11 U.S. cities, with an estimated 6.5 million fans traveling to the United States.

Not to mention, it will also be played in the midst of celebrations for America's 250th anniversary.

To meet these unprecedented demands, DHS has convened an “all-hands on deck” approach to ensure they are safe and secure.

CISA is working to secure critical infrastructure; the Office of Intelligence and Analysis is sharing threat information; and CBP and CIS are carefully vetting and processing international travelers.

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I applaud Vice Chairman McCaul, who will be chairing the task force, and Chairman Green for their leadership on this issue.

I'm honored to have been selected to join the task force.

I hope today's hearing will offer valuable insights to inform future task force discussions.

There are many challenges that need to be addressed to improve our security preparedness for these major events.

As we discussed in our hearing last month, Unmanned Aircraft Systems—or UAS—can act as a force multiplier for the DHS mission.

However, they can also be used for evil or unlawful purposes.

You may remember in 2017 a drone dropped leaflets over 2 sports stadiums in violation of the Temporary Flight Restrictions.

It doesn't take very much imagination to see how the same technology could have been used for a much deadlier purpose.

As I previously mentioned, the New Orleans' attack demonstrated the danger that vehicles pose to mass gatherings—and the need to ensure effective countermeasures are in place.

Additionally, fan behavior at these events can be erratic, as seen during the 2024 Copa América match when thousands of fans breached physical security barriers and overwhelmed law enforcement.

These examples reflect the importance of robust security planning to ensure events are conducted peacefully, that all spectators remain safe, and everyone has a good time.

I'm thankful for the participation of our witnesses today.

I look forward to their perspectives, as well as what Congress and the Federal Government can do to support these events.

Again, thank you all for being here, and I hope we can have a productive and bipartisan discussion as we seek to improve security ahead of these mass gathering events.

Mr. STRONG. I now recognize the Ranking Member of the subcommittee, Mr. Kennedy, for his opening statements.

Mr. KENNEDY. Thank you very much, Chairman, and good afternoon everyone. It's great to see you all here today this afternoon.

I'd like to start on a somber note by remembering our colleague and good friend, Congressman Gerry Connolly, who passed away earlier this morning.

Gerry was a passionate public servant, a tireless champion for working families, and a defender of democracy. His loss will certainly be felt deeply in Congress and in Virginia's 11th District.

He was actually one of the first Members that I met when I came here to Washington, DC. I believe he was the first Member to stop by my office, before I was sworn in last year, to say hello. He welcomed me as a fellow Irishman and offered me a kindness that I'll never forget.

We all knew him as a consummate gentleman and certainly a leader and, again, a dear friend.

So our thoughts are certainly with his wife Cathy, their daughter Caitlin, and the entire Connolly family on this difficult day.

Now, turning to today's Emergency Management and Technology Subcommittee hearing on mass gatherings, I want to thank all of the witnesses for joining us here today.

I also want to extend my gratitude to the staff for their efforts in making today's hearing come together.

My thoughts, and I believe all of our thoughts and concerns, are with those in Kentucky, Missouri, Indiana, Virginia, and everyone who was impacted by the tornadoes and storms that hit just over this past weekend.

Nearly 30 lives were lost in the devastation, and we know far too often natural disasters are continually posing significant threats to our Nation, and we have to ensure that we are as prepared as possible to respond and meet the moment.

Shortly after the storm, it became clear that the local National Weather Service office in Kentucky is 1 of 4 offices nationwide without enough staff.

National Weather Service offices, in part, are the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration offices as well, and those are the offices that provide critical tornado forecasting that is then transmitted into emergency alerts so that communities can prepare.

The future of emergency management in this country is dependent on the kinds of investments we make in these missions and the staff that keep them running.

So I am certainly concerned that the President's budget request cuts NOAA by at least 27 percent, and I fear that this will only increase the level of devastation that we saw this past weekend when it comes to future emergencies.

Additionally, we are days away from the start of hurricane season, and the chaos at the Federal Emergency Management Agency continues to hinder our ability to support communities.

So this won't just affect responses to natural disasters. FEMA's preparedness and grants administration will have a direct impact on the security of mass gatherings, like the 2026 FIFA World Cup and the 2028 Olympics.

We know that mass gatherings don't happen in a vacuum, and having strong emergency management infrastructure that can respond is going to be essential to ensuring that the 2 premier, once-in-a-generation sporting events that we're discussing today, among other mass gathering events, are as seamless as possible.

In preparing for these mass gathering events, State and local first responders across the country are scaling up, and in some cases, like the 2 major events—the Olympics and the FIFA World Cup—these are historic visitations, record investments for the communities and States, and potential high-security risks.

The Department of Homeland Security's Office of Intelligence and Analysis conducts the annual Homeland Threat Assessment, and its publication for 2025 warned that the terrorism threat environment throughout our country remains high.

Given this, it's critical that the Federal Government make good on its promise to provide States and local communities with FEMA preparedness grant funding, so we're ready to respond and mitigate any threats during these high-profile events.

Again, I'm concerned that President Trump's budget proposes a \$646 million cut to FEMA's non-disaster grant programs.

Cuts like these severely undermine our ability to detect threats, support our local law enforcement partners, and prepare for major events and mass gatherings.

Now it's time to shore up the FEMA grant program, like the Homeland Security Grant Program, which includes the State Homeland Security Program, the Urban Area Security Initiative, and Operation Stonegarden.

I look forward to hearing about the importance of these programs from our witnesses as well as ways that we can continue to partner with each and every one of you, supporting law enforcement, supporting the private sector and Federal agencies in a collaborative, collective way so that we can secure these mass gathering events and make them as safe as possible for those in attendance and those in the vicinity.

Again, thank you all for your service to our country, to your respective communities, and I look forward to our conversation.

Thank you, Chairman.

[The statement of Ranking Member Kennedy follows:]

## STATEMENT OF RANKING MEMBER TIMOTHY KENNEDY

MAY 21, 2025

First, I want to say that my thoughts are with those in Kentucky, Missouri, Indiana, and Virginia, and everyone who was impacted by the tornadoes and storms that hit over the weekend.

Nearly 30 lives were lost in the devastation. Natural disasters continue to pose a significant threat to our Nation, and we must ensure that we are prepared as a Nation to respond. Shortly after the storm, it became clear that the local National Weather Service (NWS) office in Kentucky is 1 of 4 offices nationwide without enough staff.

NWS offices, a part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), provide critical tornado forecasting that is then transmitted into emergency alerts so that communities can prepare. The future of emergency management in this country is dependent on the kinds of investments we make in these missions and the staff that keep them running.

I am deeply concerned that the President's budget request cuts NOAA by at least 27 percent. I fear that this would only increase the level of devastation we saw this weekend in future emergencies. Additionally, we are days away from the start of hurricane season, and the chaos at the Federal Emergency Management Agency continues to hinder our ability to support communities. This won't just affect responses to natural disasters. FEMA's preparedness and grants administration will have a direct impact on the security of mass gatherings like the 2026 FIFA World Cup and the 2028 Olympics.

Mass gatherings do not happen in a vacuum, and having a strong emergency management infrastructure that can respond, for example, to a mass gathering dealing with extreme weather, will be essential to ensuring that the two premier, once-in-a-generation sporting events that we are discussing today are as seamless as possible. To prepare for the 2026 FIFA World Cup and the 2028 Summer Olympics, State and local first responders across the United States are scaling up for historic visitation, record infrastructure investments, and the potential for high security risks.

The Department of Homeland Security's Office of Intelligence and Analysis conducts an annual Homeland Threat Assessment, and its publication for 2025 warned that the terrorism threat environment throughout the country remains high. Given this, it's critical that the Federal Government make good on its promise to provide States and local communities with FEMA preparedness grant funding so that we are ready to respond to and mitigate any threats during these high-profile events.

I am concerned that President Trump's budget proposes a \$646 million cut to FEMA's non-disaster grant programs. Cuts like these severely undermine our ability to detect threats, support our local law enforcement partners, and prepare for major events like the World Cup and the Olympics.

Now is the time to shore up FEMA grant programs like the Homeland Security Grant Program, which includes the State Homeland Security Program, the Urban Area Security Initiative, and Operation Stonegarden.

I look forward to hearing about the importance of these programs from our witnesses, as well as the ways in which the Federal Government can support local law enforcement, the private sector, and Federal agencies in collectively securing mass events.

Mr. STRONG. Thank you, Ranking Member Kennedy.

Other Members of the subcommittee are reminded that opening statements may be submitted for the record.

[The statement of Ranking Member Thompson follows:]

## STATEMENT OF RANKING MEMBER BENNIE G. THOMPSON

MAY 21, 2025

While today's hearing is focused on mass gatherings, the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) role in supporting first responders cannot be overstated. Unfortunately, the Trump administration is creating a crisis at FEMA. Secretary Kristi Noem appeared before this committee last week and doubled down on her position that FEMA should be eliminated. She also admitted that she did not have any written plan for addressing catastrophic disasters.

Those statements alone should be cause for concern. But coming just days before hurricane season begins and amid reports that FEMA has lost thousands of employ-

ees, they are profoundly irresponsible and dangerous. Unfortunately, the explicit attack on FEMA is not an isolated incident. It's part of a larger pattern under this administration—dismantling preparedness, sidelining career experts, and treating public safety like a partisan game.

Even as this administration undermines FEMA and emergency preparedness, Trump's most loyal Republican allies are still lining up to beg for Federal assistance when their States are hit by disaster. While today's hearing focuses on upcoming large-scale events, local communities across the country already face the challenge of preparing with fewer resources.

That's because the Trump administration froze key Federal preparedness grants, including the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI), the State Homeland Security Program (SHSP), and the Securing the Cities (STC) program. These grants fund everything from emergency planning and training to equipment and exercises. Local officials rely on this funding to prepare for mass gatherings. Yet, the Trump administration delayed this money for months, only releasing portions after Federal courts forced them to. Even now, several programs remain in unlawful limbo, leaving cities and States stretched thin on funding and unsure how to plan effectively for events like the World Cup.

At the same time, the Trump administration has weakened our emergency preparedness on multiple fronts: slashing the Federal workforce, stripping DHS of essential staff responsible for threat assessments and emergency coordination, and shutting down training centers for first responders.

The administration's proposed fiscal year 2026 budget goes even further by eliminating key training programs for first responders through the closure of the National Domestic Preparedness Consortium, a group of 7 nationally-recognized organizations that provide specialized training to emergency response personnel nationwide. Even more dangerously, the Trump administration has scaled back Federal efforts to address domestic violent extremism—the most lethal terrorist threat facing the homeland.

The administration's proposed fiscal year 2026 budget continues this retreat by eliminating the Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention (TVTP) program—an initiative focused on early intervention and community-based prevention of radicalization and violence.

Defunding this life-saving work sends a dangerous signal: that the Federal Government under Donald Trump is willing to abandon its responsibility to confront the threats we know are growing. Together, these actions by the Trump administration represent not just a neglect of duty, but a systematic dismantling of the tools and partnerships that keep Americans safe. Our communities, our responders, and our most vulnerable are the ones paying the price.

I hope that today's hearing will be an honest conversation about the Trump administration's actions and how Congress can better support communities hosting mass gatherings.

Mr. STRONG. I'm very pleased to have such an important panel of witnesses before us today. I ask that the witnesses please rise and raise their right hand.

[Witnesses sworn.]

Mr. STRONG. Thank you. Please be seated.

Let the record reflect that all witnesses have answered in the affirmative.

I would like now to formally introduce our witnesses. Sheriff Donald Barnes is the sheriff-corer of the Orange County Sheriff's Department. He has served the Orange County for over 35 years, having started in 1989.

At the national level, he is the Major County Sheriffs of America's vice president for homeland security and also chair of their intelligence committee.

Mr. John Junell is the chief security officer at Live Nation Entertainment, where he leads their corporate security program that helps keep employees, guests, and artists safe.

Prior to his work at Live Nation, Mr. Junell served as a special agent with the United States Secret Service, where he served as the Agency's Presidential Protective Division.

Mr. Jeremy Hammond is the assistant commissioner of the Southeastern Conference where he plays a pivotal role in some of the Nation's most high professional collegiate sporting events, ensuring a seamless experience for fans, athletes, and stakeholders alike.

Before joining the Southeastern Conference, Mr. Hammond's held senior roles with organizations such as Ingress Events, WWE, and the Georgia Dome, developing deep expertise in event management, public safety, planning, and venue operation.

I thank the witnesses again for being here today. I now recognize Sheriff Barnes for 5 minutes to summarize his opening statement.

**STATEMENT OF DONALD BARNES, SHERIFF-CORONER, ORANGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT, ON BEHALF OF THE MAJOR COUNTY SHERIFFS OF AMERICA**

Mr. BARNES. Thank you, Chairman Strong and Ranking Member Kennedy, for holding today's hearing.

I'm here today representing the Major County Sheriffs of America, the professional law enforcement association of the largest sheriffs offices across the country. Our members serve more than one-third of the United States population.

As sheriff of Orange County, I lead an agency of more than 4,000 people who provide exceptional public safety services to the 3.1 million residents in Orange County.

As a major population center and popular tourist destination on the Southern California region, mass gathering events are a regular occurrence in our AOR. Nationwide, managing the security for mass gathering events and addressing associated public safety impacts largely fall on the shoulders of sheriffs and our partners in city municipal police departments.

Today's focus is on the once-in-a-generation events—the FIFA World Cup, the Olympics—and other events, as mentioned, that will be coming to our country.

It's been 3 decades since our Nation hosted these events so close to each other. The FIFA World Cup of 1994 and the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta were significant moments for our country.

Thirty years later, we will host these events in Southern California, and in a dozen other regions, under a much more complex, rapidly-evolving threat environment.

We have greater technology available to assist us you know with our security efforts, but risks associated with a cyber attack are ever-present.

Our border is more secure since the beginning of the year, but many of the nefarious actors who entered our country over the last 4 years remain, and their locations are unknown.

An event that hosts visitors from all corners of the world brings with it tensions from the multitude of conflicts occurring around the globe.

We must always remember that we have no national security or homeland security without local law enforcement efforts.

We can be successful in our goal of a safe World Cup and Olympics if we use proven strategies and we are properly resourced with the right mix of people and technology.

Strategies that are most worthy of this committee's focus and efforts include, No. 1, communication among law enforcement partners.

Sharing intelligence information across levels of government is critical. This type of communication can best occur through the network of fusion centers across our country.

In Orange County, the Orange County Intelligence Assessment Center responds to college protests, concern in conflicts with the Middle East. Fusion centers play a central role in communicating intelligence to personnel on the ground, resulting in safe conclusions of these events.

Continued and enhanced Federal funding is essential to preparedness, providing support for strategic planning, and maintaining operational and situational awareness.

The UASI and SHSGP grants mentioned in Operation Stonegarden provide funding that supports intelligence sharing through fusion centers, builds critical incident response capabilities, and creates Federal local partnerships that strengthen national security.

Second is the use of the Incident Command System. The Orange County Sheriff's Department has long used ICS, known as NIMS, SIMS, or whatever it might be at other levels, for emergent events and planning for special events.

It's a standardized protocol that creates command control, communication coordination at all levels of government.

It's been a proven, scaleable model that can be applied to a variety of public safety incidents and events, and my department has used it across our operational platform.

Law enforcement across multiple jurisdictions needs to be on the same page particularly with regard to events like the Olympics and World Cup.

Also, adaptation by Federal agencies would ensure better integration when they work with State and local agencies during these mass gathering events.

Briefly, unmanned aerial systems will also be part of any security strategy. Drones have proven to be a successful, beneficial tool for public safety and emergency response, and we anticipate that drone capabilities will be leveraged extensively to help the World Cup and Olympic sites.

Congressional support through legislation like H.R. 1058, the DRONE Act, cosponsored by Representatives Correa and Nehls, can help.

At the same time, the unauthorized misuse of drones represents a significant security concern for mass events and the public's safety.

Lawmakers must establish a legal framework that provides broad-based but carefully regulated authority for locals to deploy and operate counter-UAS systems. This framework must be supported by funding, training, oversight, and transparency.

Finally, I ask for your support in alleviating resource impacts on local law enforcement. The number of simultaneous events in multiple cities will put tremendous stress on resources across the country.

Federal grant funding to help offset these costs, which has been provided during previous Olympics, will help us maintain operations associated with these events while also fulfilling our day-to-day law enforcement responsibilities to our communities.

I thank you for the opportunity to be here today, and I'm looking forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Barnes follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DON BARNES

MAY 21, 2025

Thank you Chairman Strong and Ranking Member Kennedy for holding today's hearing.

I am here today representing the Major County Sheriffs of America (MCSA), a professional law enforcement association of the largest Sheriff's offices across the country. Our members serve more than one-third of the United States population. Our membership is comprised of Sheriff's Offices serving counties with a population of 400,000 or more and employing over 700 personnel.

As Sheriff of Orange County, I lead an agency of more than 4,000 men and women who provide exceptional public safety services to 3.13 million residents. As a major population center and popular tourist destination in the Southern California region, mass gathering events are a regular occurrence in our area of responsibility.

Nationwide, managing the security for mass gathering events and addressing associated public safety impacts largely fall on the shoulders of sheriffs and our partners in city police departments.

MASS GATHERING DYNAMICS

There are several types of mass gathering events that present a multitude of risks and security concerns. These mass gatherings can occur daily at destinations like Disneyland in Orange County, CA or the Disney World Resort in Orange County, Florida. There are annual mass gathering events like the Coachella and Stagecoach Music Festivals in Riverside County, California. This past year many of my colleagues were responsible for ensuring the safety of those who attended the various political events associated with the 2024 election. And there are quasi-spontaneous events like protests. The unpredictable nature of these events often makes them the most complex.

Finally, there are the once-in-a-generation events we are primarily focused on today—the FIFA World Cup and the Olympics. It has been 3 decades since our Nation hosted these events so close to each other. The FIFA World Cup 1994 and 1996 Olympics in Atlanta were significant moments for our country. Neither were without their challenges. World Cup games were hosted in Los Angeles just 6 months after the devastating North Ridge Earthquake. The Atlanta Games featured memorable scenes like Muhammad Ali lighting the Olympic Torch and Keri Strug securing Gold for Team USA, but the Games were also marked by a deadly terrorist bombing at Centennial Park.

Thirty years later we will host these events in Southern California and in a dozen other regions under a much more complex threat environment. We have greater technology available to assist with our security efforts, but risks associated with cyber attack are ever present. Our border is more secure since the beginning of this year, but many of the nefarious actors who entered our country over the last 4 years remain. An event that hosts visitors from all corners of the world brings with it tensions from the multitude of conflicts occurring around the globe.

Mitigating these risks falls to all those of us entrusted with national security, homeland security and local public safety. We must always remember that we have no national security or homeland security without local public safety. We can be successful in our goal of a safe World Cup and Olympics if we use proven strategies we know work and if we are properly resourced with the right mix of people and technology.

SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES

Today I will highlight strategies my colleagues and I believe are most worthy of this committee's focus and efforts.

*Communication Among Law Enforcement Partners.*—Sharing intelligence information across levels of Government is critical. This type of communication can best occur through the National Network of Fusion Centers. Fusion centers are where

local, State, Federal, and private-sector partners collaborate to analyze and share threat-related information. In Orange County, we use our fusion center regularly in our work to help maintain safety at mass gathering events.

A recent example occurred in the Spring of 2024 when multiple Orange County law enforcement agencies were called to respond to protests at the University of California, Irvine centered on the conflict in the Middle East. Activity associated with the protests was deemed unlawful and necessitated action by law enforcement. The fusion center played a central role in communicating intelligence to personnel on the ground, resulting in a safe conclusion to the event.

This work highlights the need for those who work at the 80 recognized State and regional fusion centers around the Nation to maintain access to local, regional, State, and Federal sources of information at the Classified and unclassified levels. This includes continued access to law enforcement records, criminal intelligence databases, the Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN), the Homeland Security Data Network (HSDN), the FBI's Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS), the FBI Network (FBI Net), DHS's Treasury Enforcement Communications System (TECS), and systems for collecting and sharing tips, leads and threat-to-life data.

This access enables fusion centers to add local and regional context to national intelligence, as well as provide information and value-added intelligence to support counterterrorism and other criminal investigations that would otherwise be difficult or unlikely for lead Federal, State, or local investigative agencies to obtain through traditional channels.

*Use of Incident Command System (ICS).*—The Orange County Sheriff's Department has long used ICS to manage our response to emergencies and plan for special events. ICS is a standardized approach to the command, control, and coordination of a public safety response. ICS was initially created by Southern California fire chiefs in 1968 to organize their response to wildfires. It has proven to be a scalable model that can be applied to a variety of public safety incidents and events. My department has utilized ICS in response to barricaded suspects, active shooters, and emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic. We have also used ICS in the planning of large-scale events, like the August 2008 Saddleback Civil Forum which featured the Presidential nominees of both parties.

When used properly, ICS is particularly effective when multiple agencies are involved in an event or response to an incident. The model is rooted in the concept of defined roles, a common hierarchy, and a commitment by all involved to the planning process. On July 13, 2024, we saw the tragic results that can occur when roles are not clearly defined. In reviews of the attempted assassination of then-former President Trump, it was clear that several tasks and responsibilities were not carried out due to lack of coordination. The ICS model is designed to ensure coordination takes place and that all involved are clear on their specific roles.

*Embedded Personnel.*—Federal personnel should be embedded with local staff during events where they have a role. For example, in Orange County we have had several events featuring the President, Vice President, Presidential candidates, and other Secret Service protectees. Having an embedded Secret Service agent with our personnel has enhanced communication and filled information gaps that could be exploited by bad actors.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONGRESS

Based on the success of these strategies I recommend this committee work to support and implement the following:

*Ensure Use of ICS Construct.*—Law enforcement across multiple jurisdictions need to be on the same page. If we all are utilizing ICS, people will know their roles, responsibilities and easily integrate with one another. In my view it is important that Federal agencies adopt the ICS model for their incidents and responses. ICS is a universal model used by public safety agencies throughout the Nation. Adaptation by Federal agencies would ensure better integration when they work with State and local agencies during mass gathering events.

*Sustained Federal Investment in Homeland Security Funding.*—Continued and enhanced Federal funding is essential to preparedness, providing support for strategic planning, and maintaining operational readiness. The Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI), State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP), and Operation Stonegarden provide funding that supports intelligence sharing through fusion centers, builds critical incident response capabilities, and creates Federal-local partnerships that strengthen national security. These programs have transformed our prevention, preparedness, and response capabilities for both terrorist threats and natural disasters, creating capacity that would not exist without Federal support. A

major part of our Nation's threat prevention and response capabilities are sustained by FEMA grant funding—primarily through UASI and SHSGP. The information access and analytical collaboration enabled by these grants cannot be easily replicated. Therefore, it is a core Federal responsibility to ensure these programs continue to support capabilities that would otherwise be unavailable to the Federal Government.

Direct grant funding to local agencies—bypassing State-level intermediaries—would eliminate bureaucratic hurdles, reduce administrative overhead, and deliver resources more effectively to front-line departments where they matter most.

*Counter-UAS Authority.*—Drones have proven to be significantly beneficial for public safety and emergency response, and we anticipate that drone capabilities will be leveraged extensively to help protect World Cup and Olympic sites. Congressional support through legislation like H.R. 1058, the DRONE Act, co-sponsored by Representatives Correa and Nehls can help.

At the same time, the unauthorized misuse of drones presents a significant security concern for mass events. Mass gathering events are vulnerable to unauthorized Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS), which puts both public safety and national security at risk. This was seen the past summer when concerts were paused due to drone activity.

Current Federal law limits the use of counter-UAS technologies, such as signal jamming, tracking, and drone interdiction, to just 4 Federal agencies. This legal gap is dangerous and must be addressed. Lawmakers must establish a legal framework that provides broad-based, but carefully regulated authority for locals to deploy and operate counter-UAS systems. This framework must be supported by funding, training, oversight, and transparency.

*Alleviate Resource Impacts on Local Law Enforcement.*—The number of simultaneous events in multiple cities across the Nation will put stress on our resources. We must remember that law enforcement presence will be needed not only at the games themselves but also at the locations that will house the millions of visitors traveling into and around our country.

Much of what we do will fall on the shoulders of our existing personnel. The overtime costs associated with filling shifts will put a burden on our local agency budgets. Local agencies alone cannot shoulder the burden for additional personnel, equipment, technology, and supplies required to protect thousands of athletes and foreign dignitaries, and secure Olympic housing and competition facilities across hundreds of square miles. Federal grant funding to help offset these costs—which has been provided during previous Olympic Games hosted in the United States—will help us maintain operations associated with these events while also fulfilling our day-to-day law enforcement responsibilities in our communities.

These recommendations are the 4 best things Congress and the administration can do to ensure the 2026 FIFA World Cup and 2028 Olympic Games are remembered as the safest and most secure on record. Sheriffs stand ready and willing to work with you and your colleagues. I look forward to answering your questions.

Mr. STRONG. Thank you, Sheriff Barnes.

I now recognize Mr. Junell for 5 minutes to summarize his opening statements. Mr. Junell.

**STATEMENT OF JOHN JUNELL, CHIEF SECURITY OFFICER,  
LIVE NATION ENTERTAINMENT**

Mr. JUNELL. Chairman Strong, Ranking Member Kennedy, and other Members of the subcommittee, I'm John Junell, chief security officer at Live Nation Entertainment. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss critical safety issues facing the live entertainment industry.

Twenty-twenty-four marked an historic milestone for live music. Live Nation hosted more than 54,000 events, including 137 festivals, welcoming more than 151 million fans. And 2025 is already on track to surpass those benchmarks with more stadium shows scheduled than ever before and record demand for both concerts and festivals.

As the scale and complexity of live events grow, we know security measures need to enhance as well. I oversee the development

and implementation of security protocols and lead the efforts to collaborate with local and Federal authorities to help keep fans, artists, and workers safe.

Our commitment to safety is unwavering. We've continuously advanced our protocols and technologies, the dedication that earned us the SAFETY Act Designation Award from DHS, but we recognize there are limits to what we can do, especially when it comes to the emerging threats posed by drones.

As a private entity, we lack the authority to counter drone activity, and law enforcement often lacks necessary capabilities and authority to respond.

This is why it's essential that more events are covered by FAA-issued temporary flight restrictions, or TFRs, and counter-UAS authority be expanded to local law enforcement.

Drone use continues to grow rapidly. The FAA recently reported that more than 1 million drones are now registered in the United States, 160 percent increase since 2019. Given the rise in usage in high-profile, drone-related incidents, expanding TFR authority is needed.

With the context in mind, I'd like to highlight several key areas where we believe Congress can take further action.

We commend Congress for passing section 935 of the FAA Reauthorization Act last year which expands FAA authority to issue drone-related TFRs for certain large-scale events.

The provision allows TFR coverage for stadium concerts with at least 30,000 attendees and festivals with at least 100,000.

Live Nation was supportive of this provision but knows more work must be done to mitigate the airborne threats at live events.

To maximize the impact of section 935, it's essential that the FAA, State, and local law enforcement agencies, and other stakeholders are fully aware of this new authority and equipped to utilize it.

Ultimately, success depends on the venue or local law enforcement reaching out to Federal law enforcement agencies, Federal law enforcement's willingness to request the TFR, and the FAA's readiness to approve it.

Without coordination and follow-through, this new provision falls short of its intention to create more secure live events.

Further recognition of this provision enhancement is needed, including a clear, prominent, on-line process for submitting a TFR request for all live events, including concerts and festivals, and the addition of a dedicated submission form to streamline the process for law enforcement officials.

Additionally, we ask Congress to consider lowering the current thresholds to ensure that more events can benefit from the protective coverage of TFRs.

Last year alone, we had more than 1,000 shows in venues with a capacity of 10,000. We ask Congress to lower the attendance threshold to 10,000 for events taking place outdoors.

These proposed adjustments would significantly expand safety coverage for high-density events that are currently excluded despite facing comparable security risks.

We also urge Congress to build on the progress made in last year's FAA bill by strengthening air space protections to include

not only unmanned aircraft systems, but also small manned aircrafts.

We appreciate the bicameral and bipartisan attention this issue has received and appreciate members for recognizing these evolving threats.

Finally, we urge Congress to grant mitigation authority to qualified local law enforcement agencies. When a drone enters restricted air space, rapid response is critical.

But Federal authorities may not always be positioned to act quickly. Allowing trained local agencies to respond to the Federal guidance would significantly enhance real-time capabilities and strengthen the effectiveness of TFRs.

Similarly, we appreciate the bicameral and bipartisan attention to this issue and commend Members for their efforts. On behalf of Live Nation Entertainment, thank you all for your leadership on these important issues, and I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Junell follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JOHN JUNELL

MAY 21, 2024

Chair Strong, Ranking Member Kennedy, other Members of the Emergency Management and Technology Subcommittee, I'm John Junell, chief security officer at Live Nation Entertainment. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the critical safety and security considerations in the live entertainment industry.

Twenty-twenty-four marked a historic milestone for live music—it was the industry's biggest year to date. Artists toured the globe, and fans showed up in record numbers. Live Nation hosted more than 54,000 events, including 137 festivals, welcoming more than 151 million fans. Twenty twenty-five is already shaping up to surpass last year's benchmarks—with more stadium shows scheduled than ever before, and the demand for both festivals and concerts growing at an unprecedented pace.

As the scale and complexity of live events grow, we are advocating for security measures to enhance as well. As the chief of security at Live Nation, I am responsible for leading the company's security program working in close contact with local and Federal authorities to help keep fans, artists, and workers safe. Our commitment to safety is unwavering—we've continuously advanced our protocols and technologies, a dedication that was recognized through our receipt of the Department of Homeland Security's SAFETY Act Designation Award. Yet, there are limits to what we can achieve on our own, particularly when it comes to the emerging and rapidly-escalating threat posed by unmanned aircraft systems (UAS). It's important to emphasize that Live Nation, as a private entity, does not have the legal authority to mitigate drone activity in air space, nor can we require our local law enforcement partners to acquire and use the necessary surveillance systems or counter-UAS technologies to prevent unauthorized activity. This limitation underscores why it is critical that more events fall within the scope of Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)-issued temporary flight restrictions (TFRs).

With the continued rise in domestic drone usage—highlighted by the FAA's recent report that the number of registered drones has surpassed 1 million,<sup>1</sup> a roughly 160 percent increase since 2019's 385,000 reported,<sup>2</sup>—and in light of recent high-profile incidents that have made national headlines, it is clear that an expansion of TFR authority is urgently needed. Strengthening these protections is essential to ensuring public safety and preserving the integrity of large-scale events. With that context in mind, I'd like to highlight several key areas where we believe Congress can take further action.

Congress took an important step in the right direction with the passage of Section 935 in the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024. Live Nation was proud to be among

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.faa.gov/node/54496>.

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.faa.gov/sites/faa.gov/files/data\\_research/aviation/aerospace\\_forecasts/FY2020-40\\_FAA\\_Aerospace\\_Forecast.pdf](https://www.faa.gov/sites/faa.gov/files/data_research/aviation/aerospace_forecasts/FY2020-40_FAA_Aerospace_Forecast.pdf).

the foremost industry advocates for Section 935, which expands the FAA's authority to issue TFRs for drones at large public gatherings, including stadium concerts with at least 30,000 attendees, and festivals with 100,000 people. Enactment of Section 935 marked progress in protecting our events from airborne threats. However, more work remains to ensure the provision is effectively implemented and to further enhance its scope to broaden protections for fans, performers, and event personnel at live events across the country.

To maximize the impact of Section 935, it's essential that the FAA, State/local law enforcement agencies, and other stakeholders across the country are fully aware of this new authority and equipped to utilize it. Clear communication, interagency coordination, and proactive outreach are critical to ensuring that TFR coverage for drones are authorized in a streamlined and timely fashion. We support a seamless TFR drone coverage application process by collaborating with our law enforcement and venue partners to reach out to Federal agencies and request a TFR on our behalf. Even as the producer of a show or festival, we rely on our partners to request and grant any TFR. Ultimately, success depends on the venue or local law enforcement reaching out to Federal law enforcement agencies, Federal law enforcement's willingness to request the TFR, and the FAA's readiness to approve it. Without consistent engagement and follow-through, this new provision falls short of its intention to create more secure live events. Further education and acknowledgement of this provision enhancement is needed—including mention of the change on the FAA's TFR application webpage and the addition of a dedicated submission form to streamline the process for law enforcement officials.

Additionally, we ask Congress to consider lowering the current attendance thresholds to ensure that more events can benefit from the protective coverage of drone-related TFRs. These current thresholds are too high to address the wide range of large-scale events that still face significant security risks but fall just below the current limits. Many of our events occur at outdoor venues, which regularly attract 10,000 to just under 30,000 attendees. Last year alone, we had more than 1,000 shows in venues with a capacity of 10,000. While these shows fall below the current threshold, they still present significant and similar security challenges due to their open-air design and dense crowds. Similarly, Live Nation produces festivals across the country that draw upwards of 85,000 festival goers, require more than 10,000 credentialed workers, as well as artists and their teams—yet are not considered to meet the 100,000-person threshold. Given their scale, visibility, and logistical complexity, they too warrant TFR protection. Expanding eligibility to include these types of events is a necessary reality to keep pace with the technologically-advanced risks at large-scale events associated with aircraft activity.

As such, we respectfully ask Congress to lower the attendance threshold to 10,000 for events taking place outdoors. These proposed adjustments would represent a meaningful step forward—significantly expanding safety coverage for high-density events that are currently excluded, despite facing comparable security risks.

We also urge Congress to build on the progress made in last year's FAA bill by further strengthening air space protections to include not only unmanned aircraft systems (UAS), but also small, manned and unmanned aircrafts. We appreciate the bicameral and bipartisan attention this issue has received and commend Rep. Raul Ruiz and Sen. Marsha Blackburn for recognizing these evolving threats by sponsoring H.R. 2887, the Protecting Outdoor Concerts Act,<sup>3</sup> which would expand Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) coverage to include small, manned aircraft. By doing this, there would be a critical gap closed in current policy which would provide a more comprehensive security framework for TFR eligible events.

We urge Congress to consider granting carefully-defined mitigation authority to trained local law enforcement agencies. In the event of an unauthorized or suspicious drone entering restricted air space, response time is critical. While Federal agencies play a central role in countering unidentified aircraft efforts, they are not always positioned to respond immediately at the local level and/or do not have the bandwidth to do so. Empowering designated local and regional law enforcement agencies to take timely and proportionate action, under clear guidelines and in coordination with Federal partners, would strengthen real-time response capabilities and improve the overall effectiveness of TFRs. We appreciate the bicameral and bipartisan attention this issue has also received, and we commend Reps. Greg Stuebe, Dina Titus, Rudy Yakym, Lou Correa, Cory Mills, Jill Tokuda, Sens. Tom Cotton, and Jacky Rosen recognizing that empowering local law enforcement is a necessary step to mitigate UAS risks by cosponsoring H.R. 3207/S. 663, the Disabling Enemy Flight Entry and Neutralizing Suspect Equipment (DEFENSE) Act.

<sup>3</sup>Senate companion bill expected to be introduced soon.

On behalf of Live Nation, we appreciate your continued leadership on these important issues and look forward to working with you to advance the safety and security of live events across the country. I look forward to answering your questions.

Mr. STRONG. Thank you, Mr. Junell.

I now recognize Mr. Hammond from the Southeastern Conference for 5 minutes to summarize his opening statement.

**STATEMENT OF JEREMY HAMMOND, ASSISTANT  
COMMISSIONER, SOUTHEASTERN CONFERENCE**

Mr. HAMMOND. Thank you, Chairman Strong and Ranking Member Kennedy, and the honorable Members of this subcommittee, for the opportunity to participate in today's hearing.

My name is Jeremy Hammond, and I have the honor of serving the 16 member institutions of the Southeastern Conference as assistant commissioner.

In my role, I lead our efforts to produce world-class championship events, including the SEC Football Championship, and I work with our member institutions to develop event management policies and procedures including public safety best practices.

I come to you today not only as somebody that is involved in the day-to-day management of public events, but as someone who's deeply invested in safeguarding the environments where friends and families come together to celebrate traditions, community, and competition—because that's really what we all seek together.

However, we cannot share those experiences without the assurance that we can enjoy them in safe, well-managed environments.

Just as the rapid advancement of technology and weaponry has evolved global conflicts, the same can be said for the threats that we must protect against at our favorite sporting event, concert, festival, or convention.

As cities across the United States prepare to host the World Cup and the Olympics over the coming years, there is no group of professionals better positioned or prepared, to plan for, manage, and mitigate challenges than those we call friends and colleagues here in this country.

The World Cup and the Olympics obviously are the 2 largest international events in existence. They present a provocative and highly-visible target for bad actors.

However, as my counterparts here today may agree, large public events with high threat profiles are produced 365 days a year in this country. Whether in metropolitan cities or small college towns, college athletics welcomes fans week after week from kickoff in late August to the last out in May.

Chairman Strong from Alabama can attest, in the SEC, we like to say, "It just means more." During Saturdays in the fall our campuses grow to the populations of a midsize city.

In 2024, 5 SEC schools averaged 100,000 fans in their venues at home football games. Accounting for schools in other leagues, that number grows to 8 nationwide.

It's also routine that campuses host 50- to 75,000 additional fans who take part in the fanfare around the stadium with tailgating and other activities.

Nowhere else in the world do you see that volume of fans in such consistency. If you follow college athletics, you know we love top 25

rankings, and the list of the largest sport venues by capacity, college football in America accounts for 8 of the top 10 globally.

Yet rarely to do of these events register on the SEAR rating system higher than a 4 or 5, meaning they have limited national importance to require Federal interagency support.

If I can just pause on that note for a second—the largest events that are hosted in this country on a consistent basis currently do not qualify for Federal interagency support.

I work with my colleagues at our member institutions to identify emerging challenges to their operations, and I'd like to share a few of those with you today. These topics fall in the category of “what keeps you up at night.”

Vehicle mitigation. Campus environments are full of soft targets with tailgates and team walks surrounding the stadium. A bad actor with a vehicle has become a hallmark of modern crowd attacks.

Unfortunately, we saw that play out on January 1 in New Orleans as fans prepared to enjoy the Sugar Bowl.

As has been mentioned multiple times today already, the UAS or drone threat. The proliferation of drones in modern warfare has exacerbated that concern and for that threat at full stadiums across the country.

As it stands, our schools can spend upwards of \$500,000 on drone-tracking technology, but they have no legal authority to intervene or mitigate a hostile drone.

We're encouraged by the efforts of both the Senate and the House to introduce legislation that would allow Federal agencies to deputize local officials with the authority to mitigate drone threats with the proper training and the access to the advanced technology.

Finally, access to intelligence, staffing, equipment, and funding resources that modernize public safety posture at our events.

In closing, to put it simply, the key to public safety is communication, transparency among agencies, and access to the appropriate resources.

As this committee evaluates the role of the Federal Government in supporting the host efforts for large public gatherings, please remember the schools, venues, promoters, and local officials hosting large gatherings on a nightly and weekly basis throughout the calendar year.

Please consider a review of the methodology of establishing a SEAR rating.

We're encouraged by the work of this committee and the collaboration and communication that will usher in some progress. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Hammond follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JEREMY HAMMOND

MAY 19, 2025

Thank you, Chairman Strong, Ranking Member Kennedy, and the honorable Members of the Emergency Management and Technology Subcommittee for the opportunity to participate in today's hearing.

My name is Jeremy Hammond, and I have the honor of serving the 16 member institutions of the Southeastern Conference as assistant commissioner. I am the Conference liaison to the event management, operations, and facilities departments on our member campuses. I lead our efforts to produce the SEC Football Champion-

ship, NCAA Championships hosted by the Southeastern Conference, and support our team at various other events.

Prior to the SEC, I held several roles spanning venue management (Georgia Dome), tour management & promotion (WWE), and most recently as vice president of live events at an event management and public safety consulting firm (Ingress Events).

I appreciate the opportunity to share my perspective on the pressing public safety challenges facing mass gathering events, and particularly those unique to college athletics. I come to you today not only as someone involved in the day-to-day logistics of managing public events, but as someone deeply invested in safeguarding the environments where friends and families come together to celebrate traditions, community, and competition. However, we cannot share those experiences without the assurance that we can enjoy them in safe, well-managed environments.

Just as the rapid advancement of technology and weaponry has evolved global conflicts, the same can be said for the threats we must protect against at our favorite sporting event, concert, festival or convention.

My message today is not one of doom and gloom. As cities across the United States prepare to host the World Cup and the Olympics over the coming years, there is no group of professionals better prepared to plan for, manage, and mitigate challenges than those we call friends and colleagues here in this country.

The World Cup and the Olympics are the 2 largest international events in existence. They present a provocative and highly-visible target for bad actors. However, as my counterparts here today will agree, large public events with high threat profiles are produced 365 days a year in this country. Whether in metropolitan cities or small college towns, college athletics welcomes fans week after week, from kickoff in late August to the last out in May.

Chairman Strong from Alabama can attest, in the SEC we like to say “It Just Means More”. During Saturdays in the fall, our campuses grow to the populations of a mid-size city. In 2024, 5 SEC schools averaged 100,000 fans in their venues at home football games. Accounting for schools in other leagues, that number grows to 8. It is also routine that campuses host 50,000–75,000 additional fans who take part in the fanfare around the stadium with tailgating and other activities. Nowhere else in the world do you see that volume of fans in such consistency.

If you follow college athletics, you know we love top 25 rankings. In a list of the largest sports venues (by capacity), college football in America accounts for 8 of the top 10 globally. Yet, rarely do any of these events register on the SEAR rating system higher than a 4 or 5—meaning they have limited national importance to require Federal interagency support.

I work with my colleagues at our member institutions to identify emerging challenges to their operations and I’d like to share a few of those with you today.

- *Cost Management.*—With a consistently-evolving threat picture, the tactics and tools of the trade are rapidly advancing. With that comes extreme growth in expenditure just to maintain the status quo.
- *Staffing.*—To activate a security deployment that is in line with national standards, public safety officials on campuses routinely draw from surrounding city labor pools to supplement staffing needs. Spending on law enforcement personnel averages several hundred thousand dollars per game for SEC schools.
- *UAS (Drone) Threat.*—We are encouraged by the efforts of both the Senate and the House to introduce legislation that would allow Federal agencies to deputize local officials with the authority to mitigate drone threats with proper training and advanced technology. The proliferation of drones in modern warfare has exacerbated concern for this threat at full stadiums across the country.
- *Vehicle Mitigation.*—As we experienced on January 1, 2025 in New Orleans as fans prepared to enjoy the Sugar Bowl as part of the College Football Playoff, a bad actor with a vehicle has become a hallmark of modern crowd attacks. Campus environments are full of soft targets at tailgates and team walks surrounding the stadium.
- *Intelligence Sharing.*—It is critically important that our public safety officials on campus continue to receive and share important intelligence information from and with State and Federal agencies.

In closing, as this committee evaluates the role of the Federal Government in supporting the host efforts for large public gatherings, I’d respectfully request that we remember the schools, venues, and promoters hosting large gatherings on a nightly and weekly basis throughout the calendar year. We are encouraged by the work of this committee and the collaboration and communication that will usher in progress.

Mr. STRONG. Mr. Hammond, thank you for your opening statement. We're honored to have you here and each of our people here before us.

It doesn't matter if you're a cat, a tiger, a dog, a volunteer, whether you scream "war eagle" or "roll tide"—every one of our conferences definitely have a task to provide safety for America.

Members will be recognized by order of seniority for their 5 minutes of questioning. An additional round of questioning may be called after all Members have been recognized. I now recognize myself for 5 minutes for questioning.

I'd like to begin by asking each of you, starting with Sheriff Barnes, what can Congress and the Federal Government do to better support security preparedness at mass gathering events going forward?

Mr. BARNES. Thank you, Congressman. First, the collaboration among Federal partners is key. The fusion centers, and the funding that drive them, I think, is necessary to maintain that, and I would even argue probably—argue for an increase.

Counter-UAS capabilities, I think, is going to be an imperative going forward, as mentioned before. Currently, we can probably speak for an hour about the risks that we have experienced by drones in our different areas of responsibility.

For example, in Orange County, we had an individual flying drones within hundreds of feet from departing aircraft at John Wayne Airport. Any one of those impacts would have undoubtedly placed that jet at risk and all its passengers.

Fortunately, that was adopted by the U.S. Attorney's Office. He was prosecuted, but we had no way to mitigate that drone or locate it.

We found him through social media as he's posting his footage on-line. If not for that, we probably would not know who that person was.

We've had narcotics trapping the drones into our jails. We had them intervene. We had the emergency response during wildland fires. Sadly, if you followed the recent news, the cartels, a foreign terrorist organization, are using drones and counter-drone technology against the United States.

The cartels have advanced forward of local law enforcement's capabilities, and we should anticipate that those technologies will make their way CONUS, inside the United States, and probably be a significant factor in any one of these events as bad actors use these technologies against us for legal law enforcement, overwatch efforts to any one of these venues.

Last I would say that funding is critical. UASI, SHSGP, Operation Stonegarden—which I do on behalf of the Federal Government's Western Border of the United States, which being impacted with maritime traffic again as a result of the lockdown of the border—all of those have a significant issue.

But interagency collaboration, I think, is most important. We all have to be at the table, and we have to be operating on the same common operating platform, whether it's NIMS, SIMS, or ICS, and make sure we have defined roles in a unified command, working with our private-sector partners, I would add, to make sure we put

all of this in a good place, and we are ahead of the planning stage now—and that needs to start today.

We can't do these things, you know, a year from now. We're already behind the curve when it comes to counter-UAS technologies and other planning.

Mr. STRONG. Thank you.

Mr. Junell.

Mr. JUNELL. Thank you, Chairman. I agree with the sheriff on intelligence sharing, fusion centers, collaboration. Any support to streamline the efforts would be greatly appreciated from the private sector as well as the Government sectors.

But streamlining particularly the response capabilities to UAS threats, if we could streamline the process, understand who is eligible, lower the thresholds to where we can cover more events, anything to do to streamline the process would be greatly appreciated amongst all the shareholders.

Mr. STRONG. Thank you.

Mr. Hammond.

Mr. HAMMOND. Yes, I think 2 priorities from our perspective—No. 1, a reevaluation of the SEAR rating system, developing some additional consistency there in those directives, and then as my counterparts here have stated, streamlining that process to allow local authorities to mitigate the drone threat.

I think those are the 2 most pressing issues on the minds of our public safety officials on campus.

Mr. STRONG. As we prepare to host these high-profile events in summer—every weekend each of you, you're involved in this—is it essential that the Federal Government double down on planning and collaboration with State local law enforcement?

Mr. BARNES. I would say triple down, Congressman. We are already behind the curve. These investments need to take place now, and keep in mind, while all these things are happening, FIFA World Cup, for example, you mentioned, at 11 locations, 7 events over a prolonged period of time.

The one other aspect we have is a drain on resources. We still have CONOPS. Continuity of operations still has to happen within all of our agencies to do the everyday job that we're expected to do. So, yes, it needs to happen now, and we need to get ahead of it today.

Mr. STRONG. Thank you.

Mr. Junell, we have seen too many concerts and sporting events become the target of terrorist attacks. Can you describe Live Nation's role in working with law enforcement and host venues to ensure adequate security for event attendees and artists and athletes?

Mr. JUNELL. Yes, Chairman Strong. We work very closely with our law enforcement partners on a nationwide basis—everything from the planning, communication, coordination, joint understanding of risk, shared situational awareness, highly encourage co-location during the events, sharing intelligence, fusion centers, as the sheriff mentioned earlier, the Incident Command System—to make sure that we're all on the same page and able to plan for the foreseeable risk and be resilient to those risks that may not be foreseen.

Mr. STRONG. Thank you. I now recognize Ranking Member Kennedy for 5 minutes for any questions he may have.

Mr. KENNEDY. Yes, thank you, Chairman. Sheriff Barnes, thank you again for being here today.

In your testimony you make the case for sustained Federal investment in Homeland Security funding. As you've mentioned already, you know, that funding is critical, including \$61 million through State Homeland Security Program, \$156 million through the Urban Areas Security Initiative, and \$2 million through Operation Stonegarden in fiscal year 2024, in order to prepare for FIFA World Cup and the Olympics around the corner.

Can you just discuss how the threat prevention and response capabilities enabled by these FEMA programs have helped your community proactively prepare for these mass events, and separately how that funding in such a robust manner helps these programs in California and New York prepare for these upcoming mass gatherings?

Mr. BARNES. Yes, thank you, Congressman. First, the funds that are being provided through those 3 initiatives specifically are essential in maintaining our posture of the 80 fusion centers nationally.

Our HIDTA programs are different funding, but that's been stagnant, has a significant risk. Operation Stonegarden, I already mentioned what would happen, but I'm going to turn the corner.

Without those funds, this is what will happen. We have to step back from our posture in our fusion centers which I think has been the most beneficial national security initiative that we maintained over the last 24 years—or 22 years, since 2003, when they were stood up.

Operation Stonegarden stops, we don't protect our borders and other initiatives that we have with those funds.

So without those funds—for example, I fund majority of my fusion center out of local taxpayer dollars. It subsidizes some of that program.

But the Northern California Regional Intelligence Center is 100 percent funded through FEMA grant opportunities, SHSGP and UASI. That means that program stops.

They have a major initiative happening throughout the—through the FIFA World Cup. That means no intelligence, no vetting, no collaboration that would happen in that area and other areas like it. So we've taken a huge step back of keeping our Nation safe.

I will tell you, these have worked well because nothing bad has happened. We've intervened, interdicted, acted left of bang in numerous circumstances that has kepted our country safe.

This is not the time to step away from those programs.

Mr. KENNEDY. Thank you very much.

Sheriff, again, a critical part of preparing for these mass events is ensuring that first responders have what they need in the event of an emergency. DHS programs train first responders so they can respond more efficiently and effectively.

Troublingly, the Trump administration has closed the National Fire Academy in Maryland, one of the Nation's premier training facilities for first responders.

His proposed budget would eliminate the National Domestic Preparedness Consortium, a group of 7 nationally-recognized organizations that provide training for FEMA and first responders.

So, Sheriff, this program is hosting several trainings in the greater Orange County area next month, dedicated to sport and special event evacuation and protective actions.

As you prepare for the 2028 Olympics, how might these expert trainings help the first responders and law enforcement community in Orange County?

Mr. BARNES. Thank you again. I will tell you that I would not speak how they went prospectively. Retrospectively, they have been beneficial in our response platforms and protocols.

The American public never sees what we do behind the scenes, and if we do it well, they never do see what we do behind the scenes, because we invested in these infrastructures and planning and logistics and resources and training, and all that happens in the shadows.

But you can't step up or stand up a team to be responsive on the fly. It has to happen in real time, multi-agency collaboration, which we do routinely with our partners in firefighting and other venues and platforms.

So it is an investment to be ready to respond, hopefully that we don't need to, but this is also a huge investment on resources and personnel that have to be on the ready, standing in reserve in response to these venues. It's been that way for decades.

Mr. KENNEDY. Thank you, Sheriff. As you likely know, we have a Department of Homeland Security Secretary who has stated that this administration's intent is to eliminate FEMA.

Are you concerned about the impact that that might have on Orange County that you represent and the State of California, as well as, you know, our responsiveness across the Nation?

Mr. BARNES. Yes. Once again, that is a great question. Obviously I'm going to hypothesize, but if we start to draw back on these investments, whether it be in Orange County, California, nationally, we're turning a corner, and we're actually, I would say, inviting something bad to happen without our ability to be responsive or to interdict prior to that act happening.

So I would say this is not the time that we should be backing away from these investments. We need to maintain our posture of readiness across the Nation.

Mr. KENNEDY. Thank you, Chairman.

I yield back.

Mr. STRONG. The Ranking Member yields back.

I now recognize the gentleman from Colorado, Mr. Evans.

Mr. EVANS. Thank you, Chairman and Ranking Member. Thank you, of course, to all of our witnesses for coming.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to enter into the record this statement from the Association of Uncrewed Vehicle Systems International that includes some security recommendations for mass gathering events that empower local law enforcement.

Mr. STRONG. Without objection.

[The information follows:]

STATEMENT OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR UNCREWED VEHICLE SYSTEMS INTERNATIONAL  
(AUVSI)

MAY 21, 2025

This limitation leaves stadiums, universities, concert venues, and police departments with a dangerous gap between awareness and action. Detection technologies may alert security personnel to a drone entering restricted air space, but without the legal authority to act, they are unable to interdict it, potentially until harm is already done.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONGRESSIONAL ACTION

AUVSI urges Congress to take the following steps to strengthen stadium security and empower local partners with the tools they need:

1. *Expand Counter-VAS (cUAS) Authority.*—Congress should authorize a narrowly-tailored expansion of cUAS authority to qualified State and local law enforcement agencies and critical infrastructure entities, including stadiums and event organizers, under appropriate oversight and training requirements.
2. *Support Pilot Programs.*—DHS and FAA should launch and fund pilot programs that enable stadium operators, police departments, and universities to test and evaluate cUAS technologies in real-world environments with rigorous Federally-administered training and oversight.
3. *Invest in Detection Infrastructure.*—Congress should appropriate dedicated funding to help local jurisdictions acquire UAS detection systems and integrate them with emergency response networks.
4. *Implement ARC Recommendations.*—The FAA’s UAS Detection and Mitigation Systems Aviation Rulemaking Committee (ARC), co-chaired by AUVSI’s president and CEO Michael Robbins, issued recommendations in 2024 for minimum performance standards and approval pathways for UAS detection technologies at airports and critical infrastructure. These frameworks should be expanded and adapted for stadiums and event venues.
5. *Clarify FAA and DBS Roles.*—Federal agencies should work in tandem to streamline approval processes for deploying cUAS tools around protected air space, including TFR zones, and develop real-time data-sharing platforms between Federal, State, and venue-level security stakeholders.
6. *Working Together to Protect the Public.*—Stadium operators, law enforcement agencies, and event organizers are on the front lines of ensuring public safety in an increasingly complex air space environment. While Federal regulations like FAA TFRs play a vital role, they must be coupled with on-the-ground capability to detect and mitigate drone threats effectively.

AUVSI appreciates the committee’s leadership in exploring how the Federal Government can better partner with public and private entities to secure mass gatherings. We stand ready to work with Congress, DHS, FAA, and other stakeholders to modernize our national approach to stadium security and UAS threat response.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent issue. We look forward to continuing to support the development of safe, secure, and innovative UAS policy that empowers and protects our communities.

Mr. EVANS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, thank you to the witnesses. My first question will be to Mr. Barnes.

I spent a combined total of a little over 2 decades in between both military and law enforcement. On the Army side I was a Black Hawk helicopter pilot, so operating in the same air space as a lot of the new and emerging UAS threats that we’re facing, both overseas and then also fighting fires and all of the things that we use in the domestic operation space here in the United States.

Then as a police officer, I got to lead our mobile field force, and so I’ve been that, user-level, boots-on-the-ground individual that’s operating and having to make real-time decisions whenever we have either mass gathering events that were anticipated or if you have contingencies that emerge in mass gathering events.

So my first question to you—I think we’ve talked a little bit about fusion centers and lot of the preplanning and intelligence

that comes out of facilities like that—can you talk a little bit more about the tactical level?

You've done your preplanning. The event is now in full swing. What are those critical shortcomings at the tactical level, specifically focusing on either equipment shortfalls, training shortfalls, communications shortfalls during an event that would potentially impact your ability to operate efficiently with other Federal, State, and local partners?

Mr. BARNES. Thank you, and first of all, thank you for your service. Your question is a good one. You look at preparedness, and from a tactical perspective—you mentioned mobile field force—mobile field force should be a national standard for crowd control and maintaining order within our communities.

We've heavily invested in mobile field force in the county of Orange and trained all the municipal agencies on mobile field force tactics and response protocols, and it's worked very well for us.

From tactics, it first starts with intelligence, getting good information. We know there's mis-, dis-, and malinformation campaigns we should expect over the next several years, so getting good information in and being able to be responsive to that.

There's a huge drain of resources when you have a tactical element in reserve for a prolonged period of time, I think that we agree.

This other resource is like bomb detection, canines, and others that work in tandem with them that have a limited utility that you have to replicate at a much larger platform.

So tactics, rapid response models, I think, are very key, ability to have them ready to go out, but we just don't have the depth. So I think investing in that now ahead of time and making sure as a national standard we have these protocols in place.

I stressed for a long time through FEMA to have resource tasking for law enforcement. It's not as deep as it should be, look at all the critical issues we have to face on a broad risk environment that we have to be prepared for.

Mr. EVANS. Thank you. Continuing down that train, I've done a lot of the Federal training in places like Anniston, Alabama, to make sure that we have that interoperability at the Federal, State, and local level.

What do you see as far as communication shortfalls with folks in your sheriff's office potentially having to work and collaborate in real time with folks from other agencies, particularly with regard to the communication equipment?

Mr. BARNES. Well, thank you for that question again, Congressman. I'll start with, Orange County's had an interoperable radio system for decades. 3.1 million people, all the law enforcement agents can communicate at the same time we're a dedicated channel.

That technology should be at least strive to advance it nationally, or minimally have our Federal partners in the same room on the same communications conduit so we're sharing information in real time for the benefit of everybody.

That has not always been the case. We saw that happen in Parkland High School, in Uvalde, recently in Butler. We have learned a lot about what we need to do. We just have to make sure we

solve that problem before we go to forward and make sure we're on the same communication platform.

Mr. EVANS. Thank you. I got 1 minute and 5 seconds left, so final question again will be to you, Sheriff, but drawing on some of the comments from others about UASs and TFRs.

So flying on wildfires, of course, you have a TFR that's going to be dropped over the wildfire area so that crews like myself can go out and do our jobs. You still have drones that come through. You got to shut down the fire TFR, ground all of the aircraft until we can chase the drone out.

On that, again, tactical, user level, what do you think are the most critical shortcomings to be able to actually kinetically intervene in real time in the event that you have malicious drone activity occurring?

Mr. BARNES. I'll start with the FAA Reauthorization Act or legislation that would give local law enforcement or public safety the authority to have that. If you look forward into FIFA, there's not a depth for counter-UAS that can manage this at a national scale.

I would say task force operators and locals that have dual designation and training technology and access to the platforms are most critical. You look at what happened with the Palisades fire.

They took one of the most beneficial firefighting apparatus out of the sky, because of an impact with a drone, for 3 days. It could've contributed to a lot of structures being saved.

So we have to invest now. We can't wait a year or 2 years or when FIFA's on our doorstep. That has to happen now, in my belief, and I think we have the ability to spread that out responsibly through good policy and protocols and have that shared.

We have to do it now because the cartel's already ahead of us, and we're going to be dealing with this domestically if we don't prepare for it, not to mention if there's a mass drone attack—a mass weaponized drone attack, we cannot be responsive to that.

Sorry I went long, but the threat arises much broader, and it's advancing beyond your capabilities if we don't get in this game today.

Mr. EVANS. Thank you. Yield back.

Mr. STRONG. Thank you. The gentleman from Colorado yields. The gentleman from Pennsylvania, Mr. Mackenzie, is recognized for 5 minutes of questioning.

Mr. MACKENZIE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate everybody being here today to discuss such a serious topic, about how we can protect our communities and individuals who are attending mass gatherings from terrorist attacks and other threats.

My first question, I'd like to go to Mr. Junell from Live Nation Entertainment. We are fortunate to have a venue that is being operated in coordination with Live Nation in our local community now. It's a midsize venue, I would characterize it.

So can you please talk to what, in particular, you are doing for events like that, maybe not the high-profile events, for the World Cup or anything like that, but communities like mine are hosting music events and gatherings on a regular basis. Tell me about what you're doing at midsize events like that.

Mr. JUNELL. Yes. It's—sir, regardless of the size of the event, the concern is the same. We want to make sure that we are as pre-

pared as can be, we are trained, facilitating all the intelligence sharing and everything else through our Federal, State, and local law enforcement partners and working highly in a collaborative process to make sure that we have the standards, we have a clear picture of the issues that we're dealing with, understanding what our roles and responsibilities are, and then what our partners will be bringing to the table as well, so that we have that robust resilience around the event regardless of the size.

Mr. MACKENZIE. Thank you.

For all of our testifiers then, obviously the attention of our country is going to shift next year to the America 250, the World Cup, other big events like that, that are taking place all across our country.

So for anybody on the panel, do you feel that we are prepared at this point, or is there more work that needs to be done, and if so, is it resources, training? What can we assist with from a Federal level and as Members of Congress?

Mr. BARNES. I think we're working toward being prepared. Those plannings are being put—committees are in place, and the collaboration has started, especially on FIFA and also the Olympics.

Club Cup is coming next year. That brings a different clientele to the country that's different than the FIFA World Cup, and they have a tendency to operate outside social norms that we might consider in America, taking to the streets, levels of intoxication, celebrations, fan fest that might be problematic.

So, yes, we are in the planning stages, but it takes resources. I look at that not as a cost. It's an investment into the planning. The preparedness, the logistics, the training, the tactics, the equipment, all of those things need to start happening now or else we'll be behind the curve when the time comes to be responsive and keeping our public safe.

Mr. MACKENZIE. Do you feel at this point in time that we are on track to be ready for those events?

Mr. BARNES. I think we are in the planning stage, which, for the Olympics, I think we're on track. I think there's already been some preplanning on Olympics with the Los Angeles city and county that has had advance teams look at what's happened in Paris and others.

The threat environment has changed, and it's ever-evolving, so we have to be dynamic. I know that we look at mitigating the threats as they change over time. They will change between now and 2028, and we have to stay ahead of the curve and make sure that we are well-planned and well-prepared to take whatever threat comes next, especially in the area of cyber.

We should anticipate the cyber threat advancing well beyond our capabilities. I'm not picking on the administration, but stepping away from cyber at this time and putting it on the shoulders of locals, we're going to have different response capabilities across the country who can interdict, intervene, and be responsive to cyber attacks, DDoS attacks, whatever it might be that's going to change, not to mention traditional attacks like bomb threats and swatting incidents, and then intentional attacks and the normal crime that comes with these events.

All of these things make this a very complex solution that needs to be implemented over a prolonged period of time. It's not doing any one thing. It's doing 100 things simultaneously that's going to put us in a position of preparedness. That has started, but I think we have a long way to go.

Mr. MACKENZIE. Well, again, I'd like to thank all of you. All law enforcement across the country put themselves in harm's way every single day. We appreciate that work that you do, and the preparedness that we are looking for as a country, I think, we are in many ways on track.

I know there are some things that we want to continue to work on. As you mentioned, threats evolve and the nature of those threats change with time, and so we got to continue to stay on top of those as we prepare for an incredible year next year, again, celebrating America's 250 and also welcoming people from around the world for the World Cup.

So thank you again, and with that, I yield back.

Mr. STRONG. The gentleman from Pennsylvania yields back. I now recognize the gentleman from California, Mr. Correa, for 5 minutes of questions.

Mr. CORREA. Chairman Strong, thank you very much, and for our Ranking Member, Mr. Kennedy, thank you for this hearing. I want to welcome our witnesses today, Sheriff Barnes from our good Orange County, Mr. Junell, Mr. Hammond.

Sheriff Barnes, let me turn to you first. Orange County vibe—Disneyland, Knott's Berry Farm, the Olympics, the World Cup, the Angels—you got a lot to defend, sir. So far, I think you've been—the other guys have scored zero on you, so good job.

How serious is the threat of international terrorism to you?

Mr. BARNES. Congressman Correa, thank you very much, and I appreciate your partnership over the years.

Not just international terrorism, foreign terrorist organizations, CT, domestic terrorism, home-grown violent extremists, extremist groups are ever present.

Again, going back to the fusion center, I have a fusion center committed to Orange County, the Orange County Intelligence Assessment Center, one of the 80 nationally routinely recognized for our product and intervention strategies.

All those things are happening in real time, and not to say that bad things have been mitigated, but the last 4 years, unfortunately, through the border, have undoubtedly let bad actors into our country.

Without getting into any Classified information, we know that we are looking for people CONUS, who may be accelerating their plans because of actions in immigration trying to locate them.

It is a completely different threat horizon that we've ever faced, and so, yes, there are a lot of—

Mr. CORREA. Sheriff Barnes, if I may interrupt you, you talk about this fusion center, and I've had the opportunity to go tour it. That's a center where you take information from all sources—international, domestic, State, local, and you put that together, and it gives you a picture of the threat environment. Is that correct?

Mr. BARNES. Yes, and I would say, when fusion centers were set up post-9/11, they were focused on foreign terrorism abroad. They

are all crimes, all hazards now. Our fusion centers focus on domestic terrorism, bad actors, extreme groups, narcotics trafficking, sex trafficking, human trafficking. It's looking at everything and so—

Mr. CORREA. Now you've got, on top of that, unmanned aerial small aircraft?

You said propaganda, misinformation, artificial intelligence, those are on top of the other things you're doing? That's what the fusion centers have to challenge?

Mr. BARNES. Yes, Congressman, it is an all-inclusive, risk-mitigation center and for the benefit of not just the region, the State, but the Nation. We're putting product out for everybody and sharing that information among fusion centers, with our partners to make sure everybody's well-informed of what the threats are and how they're evolving.

Mr. CORREA. So if we want to play linebacker for you, make sure that nobody scores, what is it that you would see from us—more funding, legislative action to give you more authority, for example, maybe to control, take down aerial drones?

Mr. BARNES. Exactly that, Congressman. Maintaining the funding for the fusion centers through the SHSGP, UASI, Stonegarden, and other avenues for funding.

The HIDTAs, which is a different funding source, I think, is not sufficient. Dealing with the worst time in our Nation's history—narcotics trafficking, which does have a direct threat to these venues through users consuming products that are clandestine-produced and probably fentanyl, and also the technology.

The technology needs to keep up with the times, and we, I think, are—we're playing defense, and I don't like playing defense. I want to be in the offense. So giving us the technology that we can intervene appropriately. If any of these things do happen through counter-UAS or other venues, we need to be prepared for that.

Mr. CORREA. You mentioned earlier that you would want us to triple down on Federal funding for your fusion centers. Is that correct?

Mr. BARNES. I think we need to not step away, but I think there's opportunities to invest larger. If I lose those funding, my fusion center is going to take a significant hit on some of the all crimes, all hazards.

This is not just for Orange County. This is across the Nation there's benefit.

Mr. CORREA. So you're speaking for the Nation as a whole when you talk about funding fusion centers, coordination with the Federal Government, all it takes, resources that you need, and other sheriffs across the country need, to keep Americans safe?

Mr. BARNES. Not just sheriffs. If you look at the fusion center network as it operates, there isn't any major city chief that operates outside of a major county based on definition.

All the venues that are being proposed are happening in major counties or major cities that are represented and supported by the fusion center network. Especially for the FIFA World Cup and Club Cup, the connectivity and sharing of real-time information among that venue, which we did through the elections recently, has to happen in real time as these threats present themselves because

they're likely to be replicated in other areas as bad actors share their tactics to try to bring this country down and do harm.

Mr. CORREA. Sheriff, I want to thank you for your time, for your efforts in being here, informing us here in Congress, about the needs that you have on Main Street. It makes us better policy makers. Thank you very much. Hope to talk to you soon again. Thank you very much.

Mr. BARNES. Thank you, Congressman Correa.

Mr. STRONG. The gentleman from California yields back.

I now recognize the gentlelady from New Jersey, Ms. Pou, for 5 minutes of questioning.

Ms. POU. Thank you so very much, Mr. Chairman. It's wonderful to be back on this committee. Thank you. Thank you to our Ranking Member Kennedy for also holding this meeting.

I'd like to begin by certainly indicating that, you know, mass gatherings are unique opportunities to connect with others and feel like we are a part of something bigger than ourselves.

Especially after the pandemic, there has been a renewed appreciation for the value of a sold-out ball game or concert.

The FIFA World Cup will bring together hundreds of thousands of fans. It is a time for friendship and celebration, and I am so proud that the final match will be played in my district in New Jersey.

I was recently named the co-chair of a new bipartisan task force focused on enhancing security for special events like the World Cup, and I look forward to the Chairman calling our first official meeting and beginning our work.

With that being said, I'd like to begin my questioning and indicate that, you know, as my district, as I've just mentioned, ratchets up for security preparation for the World Cup, our first responders and municipalities need resources today to plan for next year.

I am deeply concerned by the Trump administration's illegal withholding, or otherwise delaying, critical FEMA and anti-terror grants.

These delays seriously undermine the ability of State and local government to protect our communities and ensure that large sporting events like the World Cup are safe and secure.

Last week I pressed Secretary Noem on when our communities will receive guidance on the Homeland Security Grant Program. Unfortunately, she did not give me an answer.

So, Sheriff Barnes, how do delays in critical grant funding, like the State Homeland Security Grant Program or the Urban Areas Security Initiative, impact your Department's ability to keep communities safe, especially as they prepare for high-profile events like the World Cup that I've just mentioned?

Mr. BARNES. Yes. Thank you for the question. First, as an adage in anything we do, you fail to plan, you plan to fail, so planning is everything and preparedness goes into many facets of equipment, tactics, training, tools, tabletop exercises, red-teaming these events so we make sure that we're thinking like our adversaries. It's all very critical and that planning needs to start today.

Regarding the FIFA World Cup, there's one aspect, and I love the partnerships we have with our private-sector representatives here, but a lot of the response protocols are beyond the venue itself.

There's practice sites, hotels, other things and areas that grow beyond that that are contemporaneous to the actual event that spill over into local neighborhoods, communities. Maybe even though it's beyond your Congressional district that need to be protected in the plan that goes into that as well, and those take resources.

Funding is essential. If we don't have the offset, this is a planned event. It doesn't qualify for most mutual aid plans, which means no reimbursement unless it's financed or funded up front. For the ability to recover cost and planning, that needs to take place in my opinion today to put those funds and make those funds available for the planning stages.

Ms. POU. Thank you. I can't agree with you more. Thank you so very much for your answer. You know, I also would want to speak about the home-grown violent extremists and domestic terrorists that preys on events like the World Cup that brings together different communities. That is why our New Jersey office of Homeland Security identified attacks from these groups as the highest threat to New Jersey.

Earlier this year, I traveled to New Orleans with the Chairman and with some of our other colleagues here to learn about the devastating attack on Bourbon Street carried out by a homeland extremist. During this trip, we heard from local law enforcement about the threats our Nation faces from home-grown terrorism at highly-attended events.

Sheriff Barnes, if you would, please, what are the unique threats posed by the home-grown extremists and domestic terrorists to mass gatherings events and how are you working to combat these threats?

Mr. BARNES. Yes. Thank you. I think you mentioned several of those already. Vehicle rammings. They are mostly spontaneous actors that are not even on the grid or even known to either Federal authorities or locals, so spontaneous bad actors are an evolving trend that we're seeing. Some of these people weren't even, had a case open or had any threats.

Open-source information is important. That's why the fusion centers play such a critical role. They're oftentimes trip-wire events that we see immediately prior to postings or some things that happen on open-source information, like social media. Going back after 9/11 reinvigorated the "see something, say something" campaign that worked so well several decades ago, so people who do have information of individuals can be brought to the attention of law enforcement.

I preface all of this with first and foremost the protection of first amendment rights. When people do decide to take to the streets and protest responsibly or have actions, we're always focused on Constitutional rights of our citizenry first, but have to be prepared when it crosses over into illegal activities to keep our Nation safe.

Ms. POU. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. STRONG. The gentlewoman yields back. I now recognize the gentlelady from Texas, Ms. Johnson, for 5 minutes of questioning.

Ms. JOHNSON. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. As a Member of Congress serving the city of Dallas, you can see I'm very interested in the FIFA World Cup and this will bring in millions of dol-

lars of revenue for small businesses in surrounding communities and millions of new visitors to the north Texas area and from around the world. We are thrilled to be hosting 9 matches, which is the largest amount of matches in the country.

We're also the broadcast hub for the FIFA World Cup and so it's going to become not only a unique—it's a sustained security need that we have, because we're going to have media professionals throughout the world in the city for a prolonged period of time, not just for the unique time lines of the matches themselves.

I was thrilled to have the opportunity to travel with you, Mr. Chairman, to New Orleans, and some of my colleagues on this committee in advance to the Super Bowl, and we saw an immense amount of planning that goes into these events to keep attendees safe.

Meanwhile, Secretary Noem and President Trump are expected to propose significant cuts to the FEMA preparedness grants, funding that is critical for major event security. The proposed budget also eliminates the national domestic preparedness consortium, which has trained thousands of emergency response teams. In just my district alone, they have trained almost 12,000 participants. These programs not only train our local first responders at no cost to them or our cities, but also partner with the city for domestic preparedness, FEMA, and other Governmental agencies. When we do not have adequate funding to keep these programs afloat. We will not have the work force to keep the public safe. By cutting funding to these programs, this administration is setting our cities up for failure and putting the lives of attendees and our security personnel at risk.

The World Cup is anticipated to bring in more than 6 million visitors from around the world in a time where cybersecurity work force is significantly understaffed and cyber attacks are on the rise. Illegal freezes on grant funding and TSA agents are being terminated and we need to take a serious look at how prepared we actually are in just 1 year before the event takes place. I look forward to working alongside my colleagues to ensure every step of the way.

You know, Mr. Chairman, I'm just really concerned that this Congress right now—while having this hearing is fabulous, we need to focus on the security of our country. We want to have a successful Olympics. We want to have a successful World Cup. We have the chance to see up close and personal just how much goes into the planning of the Super Bowl. It was an enlightening experience to see just the effort, the expense, and the coordination that's required among so many agencies.

While we're shining that, we're talking about it, which is fabulous, but on the other hand in this very building in the Rules debate in our Capitol, we're having a budget that guts all the funding for it. So how can we do that? How can we gut all the funding and then still say we are prioritizing the security?

So, you know, gentlemen, my question for you is, you know, what potential threats do you see and do you have enough resources? Are you—do you think that we have allocated enough resources for this country and the visitors to come here to be safe when they come for World Cup?

Mr. JUNELL. Congresswoman, whether it's the World Cup, the Super Bowl, a large festival, or a smaller festival, we all show the same concerns. What's concerning at this moment is the threat persists from UAS, and at this time the thresholds are too high. The authority to act upon the threats are very limited, and it's—we just need a streamline process to help facilitate the protection that is warranted.

Ms. JOHNSON. You know, I want to ask you a question about that. So at a different hearing or actually maybe when we were in New Orleans, one of the things that was brought up to us was the lack of local law enforcement's ability to actually deal with the drones. You had to go through just this crazy red tape in order to take down a potential threat. Is that still in place? Has that been corrected, or—and are you aware of efforts on the table to correct that?

Mr. JUNELL. So the FAA Reauthorization Act was a step in the right direction, but it is implemented inconsistently across all the different events, and having the ability to work with venues, to work with our law enforcement partners, to be able to successfully apply for a TFR is challenging. Then whether or not the Federal resources are available from the agencies and then whether or not FAA approves, it's a complicated process that really needs some attention to streamline and make more consistent across all the events.

Ms. JOHNSON. Do you feel—and at Live Nation, you see lots of stuff. I can only imagine. You see all the things, so besides, you know, drones and besides this lack of coordination between the agencies to give the men on the ground the ability to deal with an immediate threat, besides that issue, what other security threat issues are you concerned with in particular to these large-scale events that are coming up?

Mr. JUNELL. Of course. It's home-grown violent extremists. It's terrorism. It's just crime in general. Managing large crowds. It's all the things that my colleagues have spoken about today and making sure that we have coordinated collaborated plans in partnership with all of our stakeholders to include Federal, State, and local partnerships, and we're all singing from the same sheet of music with planning, operations, and response.

Ms. JOHNSON. Yes. Then at the same time, we're laying off record numbers of FBI agents and we're going to make our country less safe. Gentlemen, I think my time is expired and thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. STRONG. The gentlewoman from Texas yields back. I thank Sheriff Barnes, Mr. Junell, and Mr. Hammond for their valuable testimony and the Members for their questions. The Members of the subcommittee may have some additional questions for the witnesses and we would ask the witnesses to respond to these in writing.

Pursuant to committee rule VII(E), the hearing record will be held open for 10 days. Without objection, the subcommittee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:14 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

## APPENDIX

### QUESTIONS FROM CHAIRMAN DALE W. STRONG FOR JEREMY HAMMOND

#### IMPACT OF SEAR RATINGS ON PERSONNEL, LAW ENFORCEMENT, AND FEDERAL SUPPORT

*Question 1a.* Mr. Hammond, you note in your written testimony that while major international events like the World Cup and the Olympics tend to dominate discussions around mass gathering events, large public events with high-threat profiles are produced every day in this country. You further specify that “in a list of the largest sports venues (by capacity), college football in America accounts for 8 of the top 10 globally.” On game day, college towns that are often small communities expand by the tens of thousands, and your campuses, infrastructure, and personnel need to be able to support this population. Yet, you explain, rarely do any of these events register on the SEAR rating system higher than a 4 or 5.

How have these SEAR ratings affected stadiums’ abilities to acquire the necessary personnel, law enforcement, and Federal funding for games?

Answer. The SEAR (Special Event Assessment Rating) system, in its current form, is helpful and necessary for major events but is insufficient for capturing the real risks associated with major collegiate sporting events. It no longer reflects the realities of today’s threat environment, or the scale of events routinely hosted on college campuses. Despite hosting events that routinely exceed 100,000 attendees, most SEC football games are assigned a SEAR rating of 4 or 5—levels that do not trigger meaningful Federal assistance.

This has serious implications:

- *Federal Support is Limited.*—Current SEAR ratings prohibit the deployment of critical assets, such as counter-UAS technologies, for regular-season games—even though drone threats have escalated globally.
- *Personnel Shortages.*—Due to nationwide law enforcement attrition and limited mutual aid resources, several universities have had to reduce key positions such as K9 units and SWAT personnel—roles that require extensive training and cannot be filled on short notice.
- *Funding Inaccessibility.*—Institutions note that Federal agencies are willing to collaborate, but the inability to qualify for Federal financial support through SEAR leaves campuses to shoulder the full burden of security for massive events.

Without SEAR reform, the largest regular gatherings in the United States—and the college towns that host them—will continue to operate without the level of protection their risk profile warrants.

#### SECURITY POSTURE IMPACT FROM GAME-DAY CAMPUS-WIDE ACTIVITIES

*Question 1b.* With the additional activities occurring around the stadium and across campus, how does this change the security posture for a college game day?

Answer. College game days are no longer confined to stadiums. Game-day operations now extend well beyond the stadium and encompass large fan zones, tailgating, concerts, and other events.

- *Resource Strain.*—Simultaneous events stretch law enforcement, EMS, and support personnel. These overlapping demands dilute the ability to secure the stadium itself.
- *Complex Incident Management.*—Most institutions use unified command approaches to manage these multifaceted environments, but prolonged hours and resource limitations remain a concern.
- *Infrastructure and Response Delays.*—At several institutions, geographic separation between venues means delayed response times during crises.
- *Growing Threat Surface.*—More events mean more centralized crowds and softer targets—with limited resources to scale up security appropriately.

This wide-spread activity means:

- Security resources are diluted, often pulled away from the stadium—the primary target—to cover adjacent areas.
- Law enforcement and security staff face extended shifts, reducing peak readiness and resilience.
- Increased vulnerability to threats, as larger crowds concentrate in open, unsecured areas across campus.

Unified command structures and integrated risk assessments help manage this complexity, but limited access to Federal resources restricts how robust our security postures can be under growing demand.

#### IS THE SEAR SYSTEM FLAWED? RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

*Question 1c.* Do you believe that the SEAR system as currently devised is flawed, and how can a better methodology for determining risk for special events be envisioned?

Answer. Yes, the consensus among institutions is that the SEAR system is in need of modernization. Several key concerns include:

- *Outdated Threat Assumptions.*—The system was designed around high-profile, one-time events like the Olympics or Super Bowl. However, regular college games now exceed those events in attendance and frequency.
- *Lack of Local Context.*—Events in smaller towns place outsized burdens on local public safety agencies, unlike larger cities with greater infrastructure.
- *Insufficient Consideration of National Impact.*—These events often involve VIPs, including children of national leaders, and are nationally televised—making them potential high-value targets.
- *Media and Institutional Risk.*—A single high-profile incident on a college campus could produce devastating reputational and financial consequences—potentially deterring enrollment and participation for years.

Suggested Improvements:

- Develop and implement a standardized risk matrix considering stadium capacity, open vs. enclosed environments, concurrent events, alcohol sales, available law enforcement resources, and national/local threat levels.
- Conduct preseason and per-event threat assessments jointly with DHS to determine support levels.
- Empower DHS and SMEs to re-evaluate gaps in State/local capability and support legislative efforts to authorize broader threat mitigation tools. Pursue legislative authority to enable State and local law enforcement to deploy modern threat mitigation tools.

#### ENSURING SUPPORT FOR EVENTS WITH LOWER SEAR SCORES

*Question 1d.* How can we ensure that large-scale events that are determined to have lower-risk scores still receive the adequate help that they need to deter threats?

Answer. Many large-scale events remain excluded from needed Federal resources simply because of their lower SEAR ratings. To address this:

- *Prioritize Crowd Size.*—Attendance should be a triggering factor for support and access to counter-drone systems and other Federal resources. Adopt policies similar to SETFR (Sporting Event Temporary Flight Restrictions) which use venue capacity (30,000+) to trigger protections, while closing the loophole that excludes non-athletic events in the same venue.
- *Assess Local Capability.*—Events should be judged not only by symbolic threat, but by the community's capacity to respond.
- *Specialized Resource Pools.*—Create mechanisms for campuses to request limited but critical Federal resources—e.g., counter-drone teams, EOD K9s, or mobile security support—even at SEAR 4 or 5 levels.
- *Establish a Threat-Based Best Practices Model.*—Develop guidelines for use of screening, drone mitigation, air space control, and unified command based on evolving threats and lessons learned by creating a Best Practices library.

#### DHS SAFETY ACT AND ANTI-TERRORISM TECHNOLOGIES

*Is the Liability Protection Sufficient to Incentivize Use?*

*Question 2a.* The DHS SAFETY Act provides incentives for the development and deployment of anti-terrorism technologies by creating systems of risk and litigation management. Currently, more than 1,000 anti-terrorism technologies have now been approved for coverage under the SAFETY Act.

Is the level of liability offered for the use of approved anti-terrorism technologies sufficient to incentivize greater use of these technologies?

Answer. The SAFETY Act provides helpful protections, but its incentive value is limited by 2 factors:

- *High Costs.*—Many SAFETY Act-approved technologies are prohibitively expensive for university settings without Federal grants.
- *Practicality Over Coverage.*—Institutions adopt technologies based on operational need, not liability coverage alone.

*Is the Rate of Technology Approval Keeping Pace with Threats?*

*Question 2b.* How effective is the current rate at which the Science and Technology (S&T) Directorate approves anti-terrorism technologies? Is the rate of approval keeping up with the threat landscape?

Answer. The approval process is generally effective, but needs improvement in priority areas, particularly:

- Drone detection and tracking, which remains underrepresented among approved technologies despite being one of the fastest-growing threats.
- Institutions recommend including end-users (i.e., campus law enforcement and emergency managers) in the evaluation and approval process to ensure solutions are operationally relevant.

*Are There Critical Technologies Still Lacking Approval?*

*Question 2c.* Are there any critical anti-terrorism technologies or groups of technologies which have yet to receive official approval under the SAFETY Act?

Answer. The most critical unmet need across campuses is counter-drone technology and the authorization for State and local law enforcement to detect and mitigate drone threats. With the rise in drone use for surveillance and potentially hostile purposes, U.S. stadiums are high-profile, high-density soft targets that remain unprotected and is an immediate concern.

#### CONCLUSION

We strongly support efforts to modernize the SEAR system, expand the scope of SAFETY Act technologies, and enable law enforcement to meet today's rapidly-evolving threat landscape. The current SEAR framework does not reflect this operational reality and leaves critical vulnerabilities unaddressed. We support a modernized risk-based approach that considers crowd size, community capacity, and current threats.

We thank you for your commitment to public safety and we stand ready to work alongside Congress, DHS, and educational leadership to enhance safety and preparedness for all mass gathering events.

#### QUESTIONS FROM CHAIRMAN DALE W. STRONG FOR JOHN JUNELL

*Question 1.* Mr. Junell, last August, 3 Taylor Swift concerts were canceled in Vienna after uncovering a terrorist plot against her shows. Three teenagers were arrested after bomb-making materials were discovered in their home, and an interview quickly revealed the attack was inspired by ISIS. Over 150,000 tickets were sold between the 3 concerts.

The Eras Tour famously attracted tens of thousands of young fans. These plots were clearly targeted to a specific audience and would have inflicted unthinkable damage. The cancellation of these shows and capture of the would-be perpetrators is a victory for international law enforcement, and a testament to the necessity of information sharing.

Were there any lessons learned from the incident with the Eras Tour shows in Vienna that would prevent these threats from manifesting?

Answer. Thank you for the questions, Chairman Strong.

Live Nation Entertainment (LNE) did not promote or operate Taylor Swift's Eras Tour, including the Vienna shows in question, and we were not involved in the decision to cancel them. Even though these events were not LNE's, incidents like this reinforce the deployment of best practice security measures we already prioritize in every country we operate—including persistent risk assessment, close coordination with law enforcement and all other public safety stakeholders, robust intelligence sharing, and collaborative, layered security planning to mitigate or manage identified or evolving risks posed to mass gatherings. We're constantly learning from global threats, even if it's not our event, and adjusting our protocols accordingly to help ensure the safety of fans, artists, and staff.

*Question 2a.* The DHS SAFETY Act provides incentives for the development and deployment of anti-terrorism technologies by creating systems of risk and litigation management. Currently, more than 1,000 anti-terrorism technologies have now been approved for coverage under the SAFETY Act.

Is the level of liability offered for the use of approved anti-terrorism technologies sufficient to incentivize greater use of these technologies?

Answer. Yes. From LNE's perspective, the liability protection provided under the SAFETY Act plays a substantial role in driving the adoption of innovative anti-terrorism technologies and practices across the live events industry. The potential liability stemming from an act of terrorism can be enterprise-crippling. For some organizations, the risk of such liability is a deterrent to pursuing emerging technologies, implementing bold operational procedures, or exploring new services.

The SAFETY Act reduces that barrier by providing strong protections, which gives organizations the confidence that not only are the approved technologies and services effective but that the organizations are protected for implementing them. One of the most powerful aspects of the SAFETY Act is the flow-down liability protection it affords to users of approved technologies and services. This flow-down effect makes the protections not only possible but practical—enabling venue operators like ours to confidently adopt SAFETY Act-approved tools and processes and incorporate them into baseline security standards across all venues.

*Question 2b.* How effective is the current rate at which the Science and Technology (S&T) Directorate approves anti-terrorism technologies? Is the rate of approval keeping up with the threat landscape?

Answer. The SAFETY Act program is one of the most impactful tools available to the Federal Government in promoting the private sector's role in counterterrorism. From LNE's perspective, it serves as both a legal incentive and an operational benchmark—encouraging organizations to invest in technologies, services, and programs they may not otherwise have pursued. The program's liability protections create a unique value proposition that not only reduces risk but helps justify security investments to corporate boards and leadership. It is no exaggeration to say that the SAFETY Act has become a de facto standard across much of the live entertainment and venue operations industry, with many organizations aligning their security posture to meet its expectations and protections.

As a result, companies are doing more in the fight against terrorism. They are adopting technologies sooner, refining processes to meet rigorous SAFETY Act standards, and participating in internal and external audits that drive accountability and continuous improvement. These enhancements translate directly into better protection for the public.

Despite this growing importance, the SAFETY Act Office has not received a commensurate increase in resources. Over the last several years, both the volume and complexity of applications have increased significantly, yet the staffing and budget allocated to the program have remained flat. This imbalance has led to extended review time lines that now regularly exceed the Congressionally-established target of 120–150 days. Delays of this kind not only create uncertainty for applicants but also delay the deployment of advanced security capabilities.

The program's impact could be significantly expanded with appropriate resourcing. A more robustly staffed and funded SAFETY Act Office would not only reduce delays but also allow DHS to more proactively engage with sectors facing emerging threats—further amplifying the program's value to homeland security and the private sector alike.

*Question 2c.* Are there any critical anti-terrorism technologies or groups of technologies which have yet to receive official approval under the SAFETY Act?

Answer. Yes. From LNE perspective, there are several high-priority security capabilities that have yet to achieve consistent or wide-spread SAFETY Act coverage—despite their increasing importance in the current threat environment.

Foremost among these is the deployment of drone mitigation technologies. While venues have begun implementing systems to detect unauthorized unmanned aerial systems (UAS) in their air space, detection alone is not enough. The ability to identify a drone's operator and—when necessary—safely bring the drone down before it can cause harm is critical. Given the low cost, high accessibility, and growing weaponization potential of drones, this represents one of the most urgent and sophisticated threats facing mass gathering venues today. Yet many drone mitigation solutions, particularly those capable of countermeasure functions, face regulatory and legal uncertainty that has delayed their pursuit of SAFETY Act coverage. Assisting in the change of legislation to allow companies to even use drone mitigation technologies would be an important start.

Expanding the SAFETY Act's application to high-priority categories, such as drone mitigation systems, would have a meaningful impact on public safety. It would also provide venue operators with the legal protections and confidence needed to accelerate adoption and further professionalize these critical capabilities.

## QUESTIONS FROM HONORABLE NELLIE POU FOR JOHN JUNELL

*Question 1.* What role, if any, will Live Nation have in the security planning and/or broader planning efforts for the 2026 World Cup and 2028 Olympics? Please provide details regarding any and all involvement of Live Nation in these events.

Answer. Thank you for your questions, Congresswoman Pou.

Live Nation is not directly involved in the core security planning for the 2026 FIFA World Cup or the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics. However, certain affiliated companies are supporting aspects of these events and as more events are being planned, we are more than willing to coordinate and share best practices.

For example, Live Nation and Diversified Production Services (DPS) are producing the FIFA Championship Game halftime show and the 39-day Fan Fest for the FIFA NY and NJ Host Committee. In that role, Live Nation and DPS are coordinating closely with the Host Committee and the New Jersey State and local police on security and event operations.

We have also had conversations with representatives from the FIFA World Cup and understand that they share similar concerns about gaps in temporary flight restriction (TFR) coverage for their events. Like us, they are focused on ensuring strong coordination with Federal partners to address evolving threats, including the risk posed by unauthorized drones.

If our venues are used for official events, concerts, or affiliated programming during the World Cup or Olympics, we will fully coordinate with all relevant security and public safety stakeholders to ensure a safe experience for all attendees.

*Question 2.* On November 5, 2021, a tragic stampede at the Astroworld Music Festival killed 10 people and injured hundreds more. What lessons, if any, did Live Nation learn from the Astroworld and other tragedies to prevent future security failures?

Answer. The tragedy at the Astroworld Music Festival on November 5, 2021, remains a sad and difficult memory for everyone who puts on concerts. We continue to extend our deepest sympathies to the victims, their families, and everyone impacted by the event. Live Nation continues to take major steps to evolve and strengthen its approach to event security through:

- *Industry-leading Safety and Security Standards.*—Recognizing that security measures must be continually assessed and refined, Live Nation conducts on-going reviews of festival and event operations and routinely updates its code of practice to ensure consistent standards for crowd safety, security, emergency response, and risk management aligned with global best practices.
- *Incident Response Technology.*—Live Nation has invested in a comprehensive incident management system platform that has been implemented across its global portfolio of venues and festivals to streamline communication and improve coordination during emergencies.
- *Research-driven Enhancements.*—Live Nation has partnered with MIT Lincoln Laboratory to assess and validate crowd barrier deployment standards, and with the University of Sussex to study crowd psychology and collective behavior.
- *On-going Training and Technology.*—Live Nation continues to invest in best-in-class security and counter-terrorism measures as part of its on-going DHS SAFETY Act designation efforts. The company also partners with leading crowd safety management experts to deliver advanced training for operational teams and supports on-going improvements in crowd management through emerging technologies.

As public attendance at live events reaches historic levels, Live Nation remains committed to advancing safety through data, technology, and close coordination with public safety partners at every level.

