

**United States House of Representatives
Committee on Homeland Security**

**“Before the Whistle: Assessing Information Sharing and Security
Collaboration Ahead of Major Events”
February 24, 2026**

**Written Statement of Joseph Mabin
Deputy Chief, Patrol Bureau
Kansas City Missouri Police Department**

Chairman Garbarino, Ranking Member Thompson, and distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on “Information Sharing and Security Collaboration Ahead of Major Events.”

My name is Deputy Chief Joseph Mabin, and I command the Patrol Bureau of the Kansas City Missouri Police Department, which is a member of the Major Cities Chiefs Association. I lead the Department’s largest bureau within an agency of over 1,100 sworn law enforcement officers serving a city of more than half a million residents.

In less than 16 weeks, Kansas City is projected to welcome more than 650,000 visitors during the 2026 FIFA World Cup. Kansas City has hosted major events in the past—including championship parades and iconic American sporting events such as the MLB All-Star Game and the NFL Draft. However, this event will require the largest coordinated deployment of mutual aid partners in our city’s history.

The 2026 FIFA World Cup is the single largest sporting event in the world. For the Kansas City metropolitan area, it represents both an extraordinary opportunity and a historic operational challenge.

Kansas City is the smallest market among the 11 U.S. host cities, yet we will operate one of the largest overall footprints. We will host six matches and four team base camps, including three of the top ten ranked teams in the world. In addition, Kansas City is planning an ambitious FIFA Fan Festival that will operate for 18 days throughout the tournament.

Our tournament footprint spans ten counties across two states—Missouri and Kansas. This bi-state effort requires a unified approach to emergency preparedness, response, and recovery. Crossing state lines adds complexity to communication and coordination, making seamless information sharing essential.

The scope and visibility of this event require thoughtful, comprehensive planning. Safety and security remain our top priorities. Our goal is to deliver a safe, seamless, and welcoming experience for residents and visitors alike. As with any event of this scale, we are preparing for a range of potential public safety considerations, including unauthorized unmanned aircraft systems, cyber disruptions, routine criminal activity, and increased demand on emergency and healthcare services. Central to our approach is timely, actionable information-sharing with local, state, federal, and international partners to ensure coordinated and effective operations.

Since 2003, federal homeland security grants—particularly the Urban Area Security Initiative and the State Homeland Security Grant Program—have allowed our region to build a mature, multi-disciplinary preparedness framework. These investments helped establish and continue to sustain the Kansas City Regional Fusion Center, our primary intelligence hub.

Through this federal support, we have built interoperable radio communications and strengthened intelligence sharing. We have enhanced specialized response capabilities—including hazmat, explosive ordnance disposal, and tactical WMD teams—that train together and can deploy regionwide. We conduct thousands of training hours each year through tabletop, functional, and full-scale exercises. All of this allows for real-time situational awareness and response across jurisdictions.

These capabilities are the direct result of sustained federal-local partnerships, which are critical to our success. They are the foundations on which we are building our World Cup security posture.

The challenges facing Kansas City are driven primarily by the scale and complexity of the tournament's footprint within our region. This is not a single-venue or single-day event—it involves coordination of operations across multiple sites, jurisdictions, and weeks, requiring sustained planning and collaboration at every level.

At the same time, we must operate with finite resources. Law enforcement personnel, specialized teams, and critical equipment are limited not only locally, but nationally. Host cities will draw from the same pool of federal resources and specialized capabilities. Additionally, federal funding timelines create uncertainty in operational planning, staffing and logistics.

We have strengthened communications across agencies, but at the scale of a global event, this remains a challenge. The World Cup requires coordination not only locally, but nationally and internationally. Beyond connected systems, the greater challenge is identifying and communicating actionable intelligence to support real-time decision making.

We are grateful for this committee's work and support towards World Cup safety and security. The counter-UAS authorities under the 2026 National Defense Authorization Act provide critical resources to detect, track and mitigate UAS threats. The FIFA World Cup Security Grant Program is necessary to fund the personnel, equipment and operational needs required to deliver a safe event. We appreciate continued support and partnership as we approach this historic World Cup tournament.

Kansas City's investments—backed by federal homeland security grants, and state and local commitments—enhance not only our regional readiness, but our nation's preparedness for high-profile international events. These capabilities represent thousands of hours of planning, training, and coordination among public safety partners.

Before the first whistle blows later this year, we want to ensure that information flows faster than threats, that partnerships are stronger than vulnerabilities, and that everyone experiences a safe and secure World Cup.

Thank you for your continued partnership and support. I look forward to your questions.

Statement for the Record

Mike Sena, President, National Fusion Center Association

Hearing: “Before the Whistle: Assessing Information Sharing and Security Collaboration Ahead of Major Events”

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Introduction

Chairman Garbarino, Ranking Member Thompson, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on information sharing, intelligence coordination, and security preparations for major national events - where timely, accurate intelligence and effective coordination are essential to public safety.

My name is Mike Sena, and I serve as President of the National Fusion Center Association (NFCA), representing the 80 state and major urban area fusion centers that make up the National Network of Fusion Centers nationwide. I also serve as Executive Director of the Northern California Regional Intelligence Center (NCRIC) and the Northern California High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (NC HIDTA), where our team works daily with federal, state, local, tribal, territorial, and private-sector partners on threat identification, intelligence analysis, investigative support, information sharing, and operational coordination in collaboration with Real-Time Crime Centers (RTCCs), Fusion Centers, High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTAs), the Regional Information Sharing Systems’ (RISS) Watch Centers, and the Center for Internet Security (CIS).

I want to thank Members of this Committee, including Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence Chairman Pfluger and Ranking Member Magaziner and Chairman Strong and Ranking Member Kennedy, for including NFCA and our law enforcement association partners in broader discussions on major event security, information sharing, and proposed reforms to DHS intelligence and field operations at the Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A). These discussions are critical as we all recommit to securing the homeland from a wide range of threats. Decisions about intelligence reform, field engagement, investigative tools, training, and information sharing systems directly affect how fusion centers and state and local agencies identify threats and respond in real time - especially during major events, where timelines are compressed and consequences are immediate.

Across the National Network of Fusion Centers, more than 3,200 personnel from state, local, federal, and private-sector partners collaborate every day to analyze threats, share intelligence, and support operational coordination, while safeguarding privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties. Since 2001, fusion centers have become a cornerstone of the homeland security enterprise, complementing federal partners such as the FBI’s Joint Terrorism Task Forces, the Homeland

Security Task Forces, as well as other DOJ and DHS components. During major national events in particular - such as the upcoming FIFA World Cup, America 250 celebrations, and the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games - fusion centers function as the primary hubs for consolidating threat information, coordinating across jurisdictions, and ensuring that actionable intelligence reaches decision makers and frontline agencies when it matters most. There is no substitute for the National Network of Fusion Centers – they fill a unique role that cannot be replicated by any one entity. Working together with the Intelligence Commanders Groups of the Major Cities Chiefs Association (MCCA) and the Major County Sheriffs of America (MCSA), and in collaboration with statewide investigative agencies that are part of the Association of State Criminal Investigative Agencies (ASCIA), fusion centers play an essential role helping to protect America.

Today, I will focus on how information sharing should function during major events, what we have seen work well in recent large-scale security operations, and where gaps remain - particularly in threat reporting, real-time coordination, staffing, training, and access to intelligence. I will also discuss the role of DHS I&A and other federal partners in supporting fusion centers in both steady-state operations and during major events, including the resources and authorities needed to ensure this system functions effectively in the years ahead.

Major Event Preparation

Major events such as the FIFA World Cup, America 250 celebrations, and the Olympic Games place extraordinary demands on the homeland security enterprise. These events are not single venue or single jurisdiction challenges. They extend across multiple cities, counties, and states well beyond the secured perimeter.

Threats associated with major events often emerge far from the venue and long before the event itself, surfacing through routine law enforcement encounters, online activity, and tips from the public. The scale and duration of these events test how well our information sharing systems work in practice, making real time, multi-jurisdictional coordination mission critical. Fusion centers exist to meet this challenge by consolidating tips and leads, integrating intelligence from multiple sources, identifying patterns across jurisdictions, and ensuring actionable information reaches the right partners in time to act.

What Is Working

When federal, state, and local partners are aligned in the field, our nation's information sharing apparatus works the way it was intended by the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Report. When federal partners deploy alongside fusion center analysts and threat liaison officers with a shared mission and real time access to disparate sources of information, communication improves immediately. Intelligence products become more timely and relevant, questions are resolved more quickly, and operational decisions move faster.

The collaboration that occurred in my area of responsibility during and preceding Super Bowl LX, which happened in the City of Santa Clara, Santa Clara County, and included NFL events in the City and County of San Francisco, is a clear example of how the information sharing environment approach was intended to work. Sustained planning and real time coordination between the FBI, HSI, the U.S. Attorney's Office, and other Department of Justice and

Department of Homeland Security components, including the Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A) and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), along with fusion centers, the Bay Area Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI), Center for Internet Security (CIS), and state and local public safety agencies, enabled integrated threat reporting and shared situational awareness. That coordination allowed partners to identify risks early, align protective measures, and respond quickly as conditions evolved.

For example, days before the Super Bowl, the Central California Intelligence Center (CICC) in Sacramento identified a subject that had shared on-line content indicating his intention to violate restricted air space during the game at Levi's Stadium with an Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS). The significance of the threat was that the subject had been convicted of violating the same restricted air space and dropping objects from a drone after entering Levi's Stadium on November 26, 2017. Thanks to CICC's swift action in passing the lead to the NCRIC, all the personnel that were protecting the venue were aware of the threat and law enforcement partners in Sacramento were able to mitigate the planned drone incursion by seizing the drone.

The night before the Super Bowl, the NCRIC team and our public safety intelligence and transportation security partners were briefed in the Super Bowl Regional Coordination Center (RCC) in the City of San Jose, on passenger rail sabotage threats related to the 2026 Winter Olympics in Italy by our CISA and I&A partners. The tactics, techniques, and patterns were quickly identified and a team of local, state, and federal analysts worked with our fusion center personnel to develop a bulletin that was quickly disseminated to front-line personnel from multiple agencies around the San Francisco Bay Area to increase awareness and improve the ability to detect and mitigate potential threats to the public.

During the weeks ahead of this month's Super Bowl, law enforcement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) worked together to fight against human trafficking and contacted 73 adult and 10 juvenile human trafficking victims, including a 12-year-old child, and offered the victims of sex trafficking support to escape their traffickers. Law enforcement also arrested 29 suspected human traffickers by the time the first whistle was blown on Super Bowl Sunday. The Santa Clara County Human Trafficking Task Force spearheaded the collaboration with over 60 partner agencies in 11 counties, with the support of NCRIC analysts.

By consolidating human trafficking data sources through an information sharing environment that combined the technologies from a common public safety Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis tool with a commonly used chat, video, and file sharing technology, analysts and officers were able to integrate tips, online threat indicators, field reporting, and investigators' requests for information across multiple jurisdictions. The fusion center analysts were able to identify patterns and support the joint investigative effort of the partner agencies with real – time analysis that would not have been possible through isolated reporting or other information sharing platforms.

Persistent Gaps in Threat Reporting and Coordination

Despite these successes, it is imperative that we improve how information sharing, information access, and analytical collaboration function when those functions must operate at scale and speed ahead of and during major events.

Threat reporting overall, despite improvements, remains fragmented. Tips and leads enter the system through multiple pathways - including local agencies, federal partners, private entities, venue security, and the public. But there is no single, reliable workflow to rapidly consolidate, deconflict, and disseminate that information across jurisdictions. During fast moving events, this fragmentation can undermine shared messaging and situational awareness.

At the same time, federal systems used by DHS and the FBI are not fully interoperable with state and local platforms. Agencies are often working from partial information, and critical data does not always reach the right analysts or decision makers in time, which means that front-line personnel who are best positioned to recognize, report, and respond to potential threats are less aware. During major events, these gaps are not theoretical, as during the Super Bowl, we had several information sharing platforms that operated at the same time. This creates an operational risk at large scale events and creates stress on an already overtaxed network of analysts and officers.

The upcoming FIFA World Cup highlights these challenges in very real ways. In some host regions, state and local law enforcement agencies are facing significant security responsibilities without clear coordination or operational alignment across all partners involved in the sprawling events from practice locations, team hotels, to official and unofficial events for fans. As a result, local agencies are not as connected as they should be for planning, staffing, coordination, and real time information sharing for a complex, multi-jurisdictional event.

For events of this scale, that approach means serious risks may go unaddressed. World Cup security is not confined to a single venue or jurisdiction; it extends across host cities and surrounding communities. Without clear coordination, defined roles, and aligned support, information sharing becomes more difficult, and local agencies whose resources are already stretched too thin, are left to manage complex, multi-jurisdictional threats under significant time pressure.

These challenges underscore why major international events require a coordinated, multi-jurisdictional approach that aligns federal, state, local, and private-sector partners around shared information, shared expectations, data security, and shared responsibility.

DHS Office of Intelligence and Analysis

Within the broader information sharing framework, the DHS Office of Intelligence and Analysis plays a unique and irreplaceable role. I&A is the only element of the U.S. intelligence community statutorily charged with facilitating intelligence sharing with state, local, tribal, and territorial partners, including the National Network of Fusion Centers, regarding terrorism and other threats to the homeland.

From our perspective in the field, I&A is most effective when it is forward-deployed with access to federal information and the authority to appropriately share it with state and local partners. I&A personnel embedded in fusion centers enable a timely two-way flow of information and the collaborative analysis and development of intelligence – increasing the likelihood that the reporting of threats reaches state and local partners quickly, while insights developed at the local

level inform the national intelligence picture. During major events, this field presence can determine whether threat-related information and intelligence arrives in time to help personnel on the ground recognize and prevent an incident, or whether it is too late to be useful.

In major urban areas that host major events, a single I&A representative is insufficient. Effective support requires that field teams have access to the right information and the authority to share that information and develop joint intelligence products with state and local partners. I was lucky enough to have the highest tier of support possible from DHS I&A during the Super Bowl, as they sent 14 members of their team from their Field Intelligence Directorate and Special Events Program to assist the NCRIC. Those forward-deployed intelligence analysts and officers must also be supported by a headquarters structure at I&A that is capable of sustaining and scaling those efforts for future major events and daily fusion center operations.

For these reasons, we are grateful that the Committee has included NFCA and our law enforcement partners in discussions on proposed legislative reforms to strengthen I&A's ability to support state and local law enforcement and all our communities. Stakeholder input is essential. Decisions about staffing, authorities, release processes, and coordination mechanisms directly affect whether intelligence sharing works under the compressed timelines and heightened risk of major events. Any reform effort should strengthen – not weaken – I&A's field presence and ensure it is backed by a robust headquarters enterprise with access to relevant information from other federal partners and the Intelligence Community and the authority to share appropriately with state and local partners including fusion centers.

Drone Threats at Major Events

Unmanned aircraft systems present a growing threat to both major events and everyday public safety. We appreciate Congress's action in December 2025 through the *Safer Skies Act*, which passed as part of the FY26 National Defense Authorization Act, which granted state and local law enforcement and correctional agencies the authority to detect, track, and mitigate malicious and unauthorized drones, subject to appropriate training and equipment requirements.

From the field perspective, the challenge now is implementation. Access to the FBI's required counter-UAS training is severely limited, and demand already far exceeds available capacity. As a result, many state and local agencies - particularly those preparing for major events - do not yet have trained personnel in place to operationalize this authority in a meaningful way. We are encouraged by the administration's intent to consult closely with state and local law enforcement and corrections as implementation of the *Safer Skies Act* begins this year. We encourage Congress to allocate the funding necessary to increase availability of FBI training for state and local agency personnel so we can take quick action to mitigate drone threats to our major events and every-day community safety.

Under the *Safer Skies Act* Congress also authorized the use of existing Justice Department grant programs, specifically Byrne JAG and COPS grants, to support the acquisition of drones for public safety missions and also counter-UAS systems. In addition, funding provided in the *One Big Beautiful Bill Act* through FEMA's State Homeland Security Grant Program supports law enforcement activities that include counter-UAS and other capabilities relevant to major event security. These tools are critically important, but they are not sufficient on their own. Counter-

UAS capabilities require sustained investments in training, staffing, equipment, and operational integration that exceed what these programs can support. I urge Congress to consider how the federal government can support state and local efforts to build and maintain robust drone first-responder capabilities and counter-drone operations to protect the public.

Addressing these gaps will require additional, flexible federal resources. Without that support, state and local agencies will continue to face challenges translating the new authority that Congress has provided into effective protection for our communities.

Grants and Resources

Federal grant programs play a critical role in enabling state and local agencies to contribute to the national security mission every day and to scale those capabilities for major events. These resources support the personnel, training, technology, and coordination that make timely information sharing and threat detection possible across jurisdictions.

Fusion centers and our state and local partners use programs such as the State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP) and the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) to support analysts, training, analytical technology, and multi-jurisdictional exercises and coordination. These programs are central to local, regional, and national threat prevention efforts, yet agencies continue to take on expanding responsibilities and increasingly complex threat environments while planning and execution have been complicated by uncertainty around grant guidance, eligibility requirements, and the timing of fund disbursements that if not resolved soon, will hinder or derail national priority projects that have been designed to prevent and mitigate major threats to our nation.

Information sharing capacity does not scale up on demand without dedicated planning and resourcing. The analytical workforce and coordination mechanisms required for major events such as the FIFA World Cup, America 250 celebrations, and the Olympic Games must be built and sustained over time. Because threat actors routinely cross state lines and international borders, and because each part of federal, state, and local governments may have information, capabilities, or resources, the federal government has a responsibility to contribute funding and personnel to supplement and help sustain state and local capabilities. Delayed guidance or funding timelines directly affect readiness across the system.

As this committee considers homeland security and public safety priorities, it should ensure that FEMA preparedness grant programs provide predictable funding, timely guidance, and sufficient flexibility to support sustained information sharing capabilities across jurisdictions. These investments enable fusion centers and our partners to fully contribute to the homeland security and national security missions and ensure coordinated readiness for major national and international events.

Cyber Threats

Cyber threats may represent the greatest vulnerability surrounding major events because adversaries do not necessarily need physical proximity to cause harm. A successful cyberattack against power, water, communications, or transportation systems during a major event could create cascading effects that overwhelm response capabilities.

For major events, cyber threats underscore the need for real time information sharing well beyond the event's geographic footprint. Fusion centers often lack timely access to cyber threat indicators and trend data, and despite progress in recent years there is no fully integrated national approach to state and local cyber threat response. Fusion center and partner agency analysts also need continued DHS ITA Cyber Analyst Seminar and Webinar training, as well as advanced cyber analyst training.

Strengthening information sharing in this area will require better integration between federal cyber partners, fusion centers, and other state and local officials. It will also require clearer pathways for sharing actionable cyber threat information from federal entities to state and local agencies, and sustained investment in analytic capacity at the state and local levels. Without these connections in place, cyber risks associated with major events will continue to outpace our ability to detect and respond in time.

Law Enforcement Tools and Investigative Technology

Effective information sharing for major event security depends on access to a range of lawful tools and data - not a single technology. Fusion centers and their partners rely on investigative technologies, including commercially available data, to identify potential threats early, connect disparate data points, and support timely operational decisions before and during large-scale public events.

Tools such as automated license plate recognition (LPR), facial recognition, and social media open-source intelligence analysis support threat detection and situational awareness for planned and unplanned events. These tools help identify patterns and emerging risks early enough to share information across jurisdictions, enabling coordinated prevention and response efforts before harm occurs.

As Congress considers consumer data privacy frameworks, it is critical that any approach be developed in consultation with state and local law enforcement and account for the real-world public safety needs. Data privacy proposals could have a major impact on investigative efforts given the ubiquity of data across our world today. One of those proposals – the Fourth Amendment Is Not For Sale Act (FANFSA) – would force analysts and investigators who are trying to prevent harm and protect the public to be blind to information that others can readily access. That makes no sense from a public safety or homeland security standpoint. Efficient, timely, and privacy-protective sharing of digital evidence is essential. Legislative frameworks must preserve lawful access necessary for timely information sharing while maintaining strong privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties protections.

Communications and Information Access

Effective information sharing for major event security depends on reliable communications and timely system access. Fusion centers require access to local, regional, state, and federal information at both the classified and unclassified levels, including law enforcement records, criminal intelligence databases, the Homeland Security Information Network, the Homeland Security Data Network, FBI Criminal Justice Information Services systems, DHS law enforcement and screening systems, and tip and lead intake platforms.

This access allows fusion centers to add critical local context to national intelligence and support coordinated, multi-jurisdictional threat prevention efforts. During major events, delays or barriers to system access directly undermine situational awareness and slow decision making for personnel responsible for public safety on the ground.

Current federal platforms offer some functionality, but they remain limited in their ability to support real-time, large-scale coordination across agencies and jurisdictions. As Congress considers legislative reforms to DHS I&A and other federal components, any legislative or policy changes should ensure fusion centers retain timely, operational access to necessary systems and prioritize interoperability and real-time communications across jurisdictions that allow analysts and officers to enter the data once, instead of the several times that they have to enter the same data today into multiple systems. Without these capabilities, fusion centers are far less able to support major event security or rapidly share threat information before harm occurs.

Security Clearances

Timely security clearances are essential to effective information sharing during major events. Ongoing delays limit fusion center personnel's ability to access critical intelligence and fully participate in secure coordination with federal, state, and local partners.

During major events, personnel without timely clearances may be unable to access or share threat information or participate in secure coordination spaces, directly undermining joint situational awareness and response planning.

As Congress and the Administration consider reforms to personnel security and information sharing policies, I urge you to prioritize timely clearance processing and access for state and local fusion center personnel, including appropriate use of reciprocity and provisional access to meet time-sensitive operational needs.

Closing

The upcoming World Cup, America 250 celebrations, and Olympic Games will test the homeland security enterprise in ways we have not experienced in decades. Threat-related analysis and information sharing is not a supporting function for these events – it is an essential mission that must be developed and exercised routinely to protect our communities.

Fusion centers sit at the center of that mission, connecting federal intelligence with state and local operational response. When information sharing is timely, integrated, and properly resourced, threats can be identified and mitigated before they reach the public.

We appreciate the Committee's engagement and its inclusion of the NFCA in discussions on major event security, information sharing, and I&A reform. We stand ready to continue working with you to ensure our analytical and information sharing systems and practices are prepared for the challenges ahead.

U.S. House Committee on Homeland Security Hearing
***“Before the Whistle: Assessing Information Sharing and Security Collaboration Ahead of
Major Events”***
February 24, 2026

Written Testimony for Ray Martinez, Chief Operating Officer
Miami FIFA World Cup 2026 Miami Host Committee

INTRODUCTION

Chairman Garbarino, Ranking Member Thompson, and distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today regarding public safety and security preparations associated with the FIFA World Cup 2026™ and, specifically, Miami’s role as one of the official host cities. I appreciate the Committee’s leadership and continued oversight in ensuring that major international events hosted in the United States are conducted safely, securely, and in a manner that reflects the highest standards of intergovernmental coordination and operational readiness.

OVERVIEW OF THE FIFA WORLD CUP 2026™ IN MIAMI AND OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

The FIFA World Cup 2026™ represents the largest sporting event ever conducted globally. Miami has been designated as one of sixteen host cities for the FIFA World Cup 2026™, and will host seven official matches at Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens, which will be rebranded as Miami Stadium for the duration of the tournament. These matches will include group stage matches, a Round of 32 match, a quarterfinal match, and the bronze, or third-place, game. The tournament will run from June 11 through July 19, 2026, and will also include a twenty-three-day FIFA Fan Festival in downtown Miami’s Bayfront Park, which will serve as a major public gathering and celebration site.

This global event is expected to attract hundreds of thousands of international visitors, and the Miami metropolitan area faces both an extraordinary opportunity and a historic operational challenge. Public safety planning encompasses law enforcement, fire rescue, emergency management, healthcare infrastructure, transportation, cybersecurity, and community engagement components to ensure coordinated and resilient operations across all venues and activation zones. We thank the Committee for providing \$625 million in security funding in P.L. 119–21. These funds will be vital to support the complex safety operations associated with an event of this scale.

To support state level preparation, the South Florida Regional Multi-Agency Coordination Group (MAC) was formally established to ensure unified planning, coordinated response capabilities, and strategic policy alignment across jurisdictions. At the federal level, the White House Task Force on the FIFA World Cup has been established to coordinate nationwide interagency support, accelerate security and infrastructure readiness, and align host city preparations with federal capabilities, intelligence resources, and operational support frameworks. We are grateful for the White House Task Force and Executive Director Giuliani's efforts to support and partner with the FIFA World Cup.

The MAC structure is designed to coordinate executive-level policy decisions, resource prioritization, and strategic guidance for complex incidents or major planned events. It serves as the bridge between executive leadership and operational Incident Command, ensuring unity of effort across multiple jurisdictions and disciplines. Public safety planning for the World Cup in Miami is centered on a unified command structure led by the Miami-Dade Sheriff's Office. The Sheriff's Office is responsible for stadium security, perimeter control, and crowd safety operations, working in close coordination with Miami-Dade Fire Rescue, which provides emergency medical support, fire safety services, specialized rescue capabilities, and on-site incident response. The City of Miami Police Department and Fire Rescue Department provide operational support for downtown venues, including festival operations and transportation hubs. State law enforcement and transportation agencies support traffic management, surge staffing, and specialized operational needs.

Federal partners, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, United States Secret Service, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, and the Department of Homeland Security, play critical roles in threat assessment, intelligence integration, cybersecurity protection, and contingency planning. The White House Task Force on the FIFA World Cup has played an essential role in ensuring that federal partnerships are maximally leveraged to create a safe environment for fans to enjoy the event.

The United States Department of Homeland Security classifies special events using Special Event Assessment Ratings (SEAR) Levels 1 through 5 with SEAR 1 events being the most significant. These designations reflect factors such as the presence of high-profile attendees, international media interest, geopolitical considerations, and the level of federal coordination required. The seven matches scheduled in Miami carry significant SEAR designations, with the first six matches classified as SEAR 2 events and the Bronze Medal match classified as a SEAR 1 event. The concurrent FIFA Fan Festival is rated as a SEAR 2 event. These ratings necessitate elevated interagency coordination at the federal, state, and local levels.

The Miami-Dade Department of Emergency Management has hosted several full-scale and tabletop exercises available for all public safety agencies during the past year. In January 2026, a multi-agency Region 4 World Cup tabletop exercise was conducted to test emergency response protocols, evacuation procedures, intelligence sharing, cyber disruption scenarios, and incident command coordination under the National Incident Management System framework. These exercises strengthen interagency coordination, validate operational communications, and enhance preparedness for complex and evolving threat scenarios.

INFORMATION SHARING FRAMEWORK AND OPERATIONAL INTEGRATION

The South Florida Fusion Center, in coordination with its regional intelligence partners—including the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force—continues to conduct proactive intelligence collection, comprehensive threat assessments, and robust information sharing across local, state, federal, tribal, and international agencies.

This effort includes close collaboration with FIFA’s Safety and Security Intelligence Group to ensure unified situational awareness and operational alignment. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s Office of Intelligence and Analysis provides weekly intelligence briefings to support planning and decision-making. The Intelligence Operations Center serves as the regional clearinghouse for intelligence matters, maintaining direct liaison with federal agencies and host city fusion centers nationwide. Sensitive information is disseminated to all participating partners through the Department of Homeland Security’s Homeland Security Information Network.

VENUE SECURITY, PUBLIC SAFETY OPERATIONS, AND EMERGING THREAT PREPAREDNESS

Security planning at Miami Stadium incorporates lessons learned from prior high-attendance events and international best practices. These measures include multi-layered security perimeters, early ticket verification and credential screening, expanded screening capacity including bag checks and X-ray systems, hardened fencing and engineered pedestrian flow corridors, and rapid deployment crowd control units.

Operational readiness is supported through real-time situational awareness platforms and joint operations centers, enabling continuous coordination and rapid decision-making among participating agencies. These capabilities support proactive threat identification and coordinated operational responses.

Bayfront Park will serve as the official FIFA Fan Festival site, accommodating up to 30,000 daily visitors over twenty-three days. Public safety measures at this location include secured perimeters with controlled entry and exit points, magnetometer screening, dedicated emergency access lanes, and coordinated ingress and egress management. On-site public safety

infrastructure includes emergency medical services, fire suppression capabilities, rapid medical transport access, and coordinated law enforcement and private security staffing. High-visibility patrols and a robust volunteer program will support situational awareness, public safety, and visitor assistance.

One of the most significant emerging threat vectors associated with this event involves Unmanned Aerial Systems, commonly referred to as drones. Recent threat assessments indicate a significant rise in malicious or unauthorized drone activity at large-scale events worldwide. These systems present risks including aerial surveillance of security operations, delivery of hazardous payloads, unauthorized incursions that could disrupt operations or create panic, airspace conflicts with law enforcement and emergency aircraft, coordinated swarm activities, and signal interference affecting communications systems.

Mitigation measures include the implementation of Temporary Flight Restrictions coordinated with federal aviation authorities, deployment of counter-UAS detection technologies such as radio frequency sensors and radar systems, joint counter-drone coordination with federal technical teams, public awareness and enforcement campaigns, rapid interdiction protocols, and specialized response team training. Counter-UAS planning is fully integrated into operational planning and emergency response exercises. We appreciate this committees' support for \$500 million in C-UAS grant funding through the Department of Homeland Security and the Trump administration's efforts to prioritize the first half of that funding for FIFA World Cup 2026™ host cities.

In addition, the Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office leads proactive human trafficking prevention initiatives, including enforcement operations, victim services coordination, public awareness campaigns, and reporting mechanisms. Regional transportation agencies are implementing adaptive signal timing, expanded transit operations, managed ride-share staging, pedestrian safety corridors, and coordinated traffic management strategies to ensure safe and efficient movement of visitors and residents.

FEDERAL COORDINATION, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, AND OPERATIONAL SUPPORT

The White House Task Force on the FIFA World Cup serves as the central federal coordination body supporting World Cup Host Committees. The Task Force assists host cities synchronizing federal agency support across security, transportation, border operations, and infrastructure protection, facilitating intelligence sharing and threat assessments, coordinating federal grant pathways and resource allocations, and aligning national counterterrorism and cybersecurity capabilities with local operational planning. This coordination enhances host city access to federal intelligence streams, specialized technical capabilities, and rapid federal surge support if

threat conditions evolve. We are grateful for the good relationship between Host Committees and the Task Force. In particular, Executive Director Giuliani and his team have been extremely helpful and attentive to addressing Host Committee issues as they arise. This relationship has been fundamental in ensuring that federal resources are leveraged to enhance our security operations.

Community engagement and public communication are essential components of World Cup preparation. Pre-event outreach includes presentations to community organizations, businesses, and local stakeholders. During the event, a large-scale volunteer deployment will support multilingual visitor assistance, safety messaging, crowd flow management, and emergency reporting awareness. Public communications will emphasize entry procedures, prohibited items, drone restrictions, emergency contacts, and transportation guidance.

CONCLUSION

Miami's World Cup preparedness reflects a layered, intelligence-driven, and federally integrated public safety framework. Unified command leadership by the Miami-Dade Sheriff's Office, supported by municipal police departments, fire rescue agencies, federal partners, counter-UAS capabilities, and coordinated federal support through the White House Task Force on the FIFA World Cup, positions Miami to deliver a secure, resilient, and globally credible tournament environment.

These efforts ensure the safety of participants, visitors, and residents while establishing a model for interagency coordination and public safety operations for future major international events hosted in the United States.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to answering your questions.



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
Wes Moore

TESTIMONY OF
Travis Nelson
Deputy Chief of Staff & Homeland Security Advisor
Office of Governor Wes Moore

BEFORE THE
One Hundred Nineteenth Congress
Committee on Homeland Security
United States House of Representatives

February 24, 2026

Chairman Garbarino, Ranking Member Thompson, and distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I serve as the Deputy Chief of Staff and Homeland Security Advisor for Wes Moore, Governor of Maryland. I oversee public safety and homeland security for Governor Moore, with direct oversight of state departments including the Maryland Department of Emergency Management, Maryland State Police, Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, the Governor's Office of Homeland Security, and others representing first responders, emergency managers, and law enforcement professionals who work tirelessly to secure our communities. I am deeply grateful for and appreciate the essential work of our local, state, and federal public servants, who continue their duties in a constantly evolving environment.

As you all know, our nation is entering a time of major special events that we have not encountered in decades - from the semi-quincentennial celebrations of America 250 to the multi-city hosting of the 2026 FIFA World Cup and 2028 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles, California. While these events are proud moments for our nation, they also can strain local resources and come with an increased threat to our critical infrastructure. However, as the threat profile expands and the demand on state and local resources increases, the financial support provided by the federal government to state and local partners is diminishing.

The events of September 11, 2001, underscored the critical need for seamless collaboration between local, state, and federal agencies during major incidents. This realization drove the development of coordinated planning and preparedness strategies. With crucial federal financial

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assistance, standardized and interoperable plans, training, and equipment were adopted nationwide. This foundational work, centered on the Incident Command System and the National Response Framework, ensures that limited resources can be rapidly deployed and integrated across the country, as personnel share a common operational framework.

Advisory councils composed of subject matter experts from local jurisdictions have guided policies and procedures based on unique experiences. FEMA training centers allow first responders, hospital clinicians, and emergency managers to learn alongside their colleagues from across the country. This model empowers federal field office personnel from local offices to become familiar with their local government counterparts, developing trusting relationships to share information and plan collaboratively for upcoming events. It has also helped us to adapt to the constantly evolving threats that we are faced with.

Following the Paris Attacks of 2015, when nine terrorists launched coordinated shootings and suicide bombings in Paris and Saint-Denis - killing 130 people and injuring over 400 - I chaired a work group in the National Capital Region focused on ensuring we could quickly share resources and information across jurisdictional boundaries with little notice. This identified the need for dedicated liaisons embedded within state and local organizations for speedy assessments and to prevent cascading incidents. Effective public safety preparedness for special events relies heavily on Emergency Management and fusion center personnel and programs. This approach builds upon the established success of our fusion centers, which are significantly bolstered by federal grant funding and personnel. They dedicate themselves to months and years of advanced planning to dramatically reduce risk and ensure adequate resources are efficiently positioned and utilized. Based on my experience participating in the planning and execution of numerous special events, our most significant vulnerabilities and oversights have consistently stemmed from rushed or inadequate planning due to insufficient resources. The tools we have developed over the years are now essential to our success.

Maryland's CCTV situational awareness platform, MView, networks 399 federal, state and local first responder agencies to over 40,000 cameras used to prepare for, prevent and respond to major events or incidents. The program supports first responders in Virginia, DC, Maryland, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. This includes over 950 federal first responders from 44 agencies. Many of the federal users of the platform are directly responsible for the security of federal assets. The MView platform is a proven tool, having been deployed for hundreds of major planned events, including fleet weeks, inaugurations, and professional sporting

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competitions. It has also been vital during emergency responses, such as the aircraft collision over the Potomac River and the Key Bridge collapse. The MView team is currently collaborating with organizers for the upcoming FIFA World Cup to integrate Delaware and New York onto the platform. Furthermore, MView is scheduled for use as a force multiplier to assist in monitoring potential threats during tonight's State of the Union Address. A large portion of this program is directly dependent upon the National Capitol Region (NCR) Urban Area Security Initiative funds. Unfortunately, the dramatic reduction in the NCR allocation has left the future of the program uncertain. Although nearly all of the National Special Security Events that Maryland supports within the National Capital Region are located in D.C., we understand the significant risk and impact and the need to be a part of the process.

Recent incidents, such as the 2024 France railway arson attacks during the Summer Olympics Opening Ceremony and the suspected network attack that recently disrupted Italian rail service during the 2026 Winter Olympics, highlight the vulnerability of critical infrastructure. These events underscore the urgent need for robust cyber resilience, demonstrating how quickly and with little warning operations and services can be significantly disrupted.

The Maryland License Plate Reader program is another initiative that directly supports criminal investigations, critical infrastructure security, and major event security throughout the region. The program is carefully managed to uphold citizens' civil rights and civil liberties, exclusively focusing its support on criminal investigations. In recent years, this program has directly contributed to thousands of federal partner criminal investigations, including national security cases. For instance, in 2025 alone, the Maryland Fusion Center responded to over 670 requests from federal partners related to criminal cases. Unfortunately, the program has received only partial financial support through UASI grant funding.

The sudden reduction of federal funds from the State Homeland Security Grant Program, Emergency Management Preparedness Grant and Urban Area Security Initiative has left several states, including Maryland, very vulnerable and faced with no option but to reduce personnel and capabilities, which our neighboring states and federal partners have relied heavily upon. The cancellation of the Targeted Violence and Terrorism Program on July 21, 2025, is deeply concerning, especially given the unprecedented level of threats currently facing local and state elected officials. This program was vital for assisting states with early detection and intervention concerning individuals showing a pathway to violence.



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Between federal fiscal year 2024 and 2025, we saw a reduction of over \$1.3 million in the State Homeland Security Grant Program. The NCR UASI grant was cut by 44%, a total of over \$21 million. Then, with the FFY26 grant notification, the NCR was further decreased from \$25.5 million to \$4.4 million, a 90% reduction. Following a catastrophic flood in Western Maryland, which significantly exceeded the minimum state threshold for FEMA assistance, the much-needed federal funding was ultimately denied despite having bipartisan support from Maryland's Congressional Delegation. This decision forced the state and local jurisdictions to independently manage the devastating financial burden on the rural community. The inability to rely on federal FEMA funds further complicates budgeting for preparedness activities when there is such a high level of uncertainty for federal support following a disaster.

While we would welcome working with the Department of Homeland Security to reimagine grant distribution in the interest of being more efficient; this sudden reduction has left us with no choice but to decrease capabilities. Due to the upcoming special events, maintaining the service level of previous years will be extremely challenging.

Information sharing is one of the most basic and fundamental services the federal government can provide to states to enhance preparedness. In June 2025, the United States Fire Administration discontinued the EMR-ISAC. The EMR-ISAC shared unclassified intelligence products with a significant distribution list of over 187,000 police officers, emergency managers, firefighters and EMTs. Currently, this resource is unmanaged. In March 2025, at the direction of FEMA Headquarters, the US Fire Administration stopped hosting monthly Fire Service Intelligence Exchange calls. This regularly scheduled call was cancelled without discussion or input from any of the participating agencies. Recognizing the importance of information sharing among this community, the Maryland Fusion Center has managed the calls since then and has been working to expand its reach. Multiple agencies, including the FDNY Center for Terrorism and Disaster Preparedness appreciate the value of these calls and their role in continuing to protect the homeland. Currently, 123 unique agencies from 27 states and D.C. are represented.

The Administration and Congress deserve praise for their efforts in tackling the threat posed by Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS). This response highlights the readiness of local and state officials to collaborate seamlessly with federal agencies to address this complex threat, which spans multiple administrative jurisdictions. Maryland is eager to continue working with the National Security Council, FAA, US-DOT, DHS, DOW, and our neighboring jurisdictions to establish a leading model for Counter-UAS programs.

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Failure to address these funding shortfalls jeopardizes the safety of upcoming special events, regardless of their size or scope. The impact, though not immediately apparent, will certainly be felt by our already over-extended, hard-working public safety professionals. This moment offers the United States a chance to demonstrate our national strength and resilience. Thank you for your leadership and for your commitment to the safety of our homeland. I look forward to your questions.

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