



# COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Statement of Ranking Member Nelie Pou (D-NJ)**

### ***Lessons Learned: An Examination of Major Security Incidents at Mass Gathering Events July 22, 2025***

I want to express my deepest sympathy to the victims of the attack in Los Angeles over the weekend. I pray for everyone's recovery. This tragedy – which injured more than 30 people – demonstrates how important it is for law enforcement to have plans in place to prevent, mitigate, and respond to threats, including threats that may arise outside of venues.

This Task Force has a deeply important mission as our country prepares to host some of the world's largest gatherings and celebrations over the next three years. Events like the 250th Anniversary of America's Founding, the 78 matches of the 2026 FIFA World Cup, and the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games will put American hospitality on display for the world to see. I am so excited that the final match of the 2026 World Cup will be held in Bergen County in my district. And our Fan Festival will be right down the road at Liberty State Park.

Congress and the Executive Branch must be ready to roll out the red carpet and ensure our state, local, Tribal, and territorial partners have the resources they need to ensure the safety, security, and success of these mass gatherings. And as we go forward, we must keep in mind that it's not just stadiums and parking lots we need to protect – it's Fan Festivals, entertainment districts, bars, and gathering spaces where people will be celebrating. I want to thank our witnesses for testifying. Each of you has an important perspective on lessons learned as we examine past security incidents at mass gathering events.

At the 2013 Boston Marathon, terrorists detonated homemade bombs. Three died and over 500 were injured. In February 2024, the Kansas City Chiefs won the Super Bowl, and the city turned out for a massive celebration and parade. Sadly, after the parade, two men began arguing and shot at each other. Within minutes, more shots were fired, one person was killed, and more than 20 people were injured. During the 2024 Copa America final in Florida, thousands of fans without tickets crashed the gates, jumped barriers, and entered the stadium – bypassing security and police. And we all were devastated this year when a terrorist rented a pickup truck and rammed through a crowd on Bourbon Street, killing 14 people and injuring dozens. Our committee traveled to New Orleans to hear directly from those involved in the response.

Today's witnesses are law enforcement officers who faced these tragic events, and they are here to help us apply the lessons they learned to the hundreds of mass gathering events that will unfold over the next three years. But we also want to take a look forward and hear about what state, local, Tribal, and territorial partners need from us to prepare for the America 250 celebrations, 2026 FIFA World Cup, and 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Two of our witnesses today will play leading roles in securing FIFA World Cup Matches next year.

Before closing, I want to point out that while our cities prepare for these wonderful celebrations of sport and global fellowship, the Administration has cut, frozen, and slowed disbursement of DHS and FEMA grants that help cities address terrorism and regional preparedness. Cities and states needed that money yesterday.

I hope to hear from our witnesses how grants like the State Homeland Security Program and Urban Area Security Initiative keep Americans safe at mass gathering events. I am also worried that the Administration's treatment of immigrants has sent a message to the world that "You are not welcome here." Tourism is already down across the country, and our state and local economies are suffering.

If the Administration's visa policies keep people from traveling to the US for the World Cup or Olympics, our communities will suffer. That's bad policy and bad economics.

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