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

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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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