



COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Opening Statement of Ranking Member Nellie Pou (D-NJ)

Task Force on Enhancing Security for Special Events in the United States: Briefing with FIFA and LA28

September 17, 2025

It is essential that Congress and the American people hear directly from FIFA about security planning. After all, the games begin in just nine months. So, I am glad that Mr. Jones, the Chief Safety and Security Officer for the 2026 World Cup, is here today.

The World Cup isn't the only global sporting event that the United States will host in the coming years. In 2028, we will roll out the red carpet for nations competing in the Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games. So, thank you to Ms. Morgan for briefing us on LA's Olympics security preparations.

These two events alone will draw tens of thousands of athletes and millions of spectators from across the world to our shores. It is imperative that we make these the safest and most secure events ever hosted by the United States or any other country. The investments of federal, state, and local taxpayer dollars into these events is massive, including \$1.63 billion appropriated by Congress to help with security at the World Cup and Olympic and Paralympic Games.

To that end, on August 11, the Chairman and I wrote to FIFA and LA-28, requesting that each designate a "Senior executive with direct responsibility for event security and coordination with U.S. government partners to testify at a public hearing." I am dismayed that FIFA responded that it would only appear before Congress on the condition that they not testify under oath or publicly answer questions. LA-28 expressed similar opposition to testifying in public.

The Chairman and I want this bipartisan task force to be a partner to both FIFA and LA-28 – not an antagonist. But at the same time, we are responsible for "Conducting rigorous oversight of federal planning and preparedness efforts." That includes making sure our private partners like FIFA and LA-28 are transparent about who is covering security costs and how responsibilities will be divided.

I understand the reluctance to testify publicly about ongoing security planning and potential gaps, but this Committee regularly hears testimony from law enforcement and intelligence agencies in a public setting. Our Members have discretion on sensitive matters, but we were given no opportunity. While I would have preferred the open and transparent hearing we called for, I thank FIFA and LA-28 for appearing to brief us on event security and coordination. These events are an opportunity to show off American hospitality and demonstrate that security does not conflict with our values of freedom and democracy.

FIFA and LA-28 will be on the world stage, and we want to ensure that they – and their state, local, tribal, territorial, and private-sector partners – have the full backing of the federal government. Ensuring these special events are safe and successful requires a whole-of-government approach that gets resources where they are needed.

I look forward to hearing from FIFA and LA-28 about what is going right in security planning, what more needs to be done, and where Congress may be able to help. Together, we can make sure that government resources and experience are getting where they need to be.

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