

**United States House of Representatives
Homeland Security Committee
Task Force on Enhancing Security for Special Events**

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

**Written Statement of Proposed Testimony by
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Thank you Chairman McCaul, Ranking Member Pou, and Members of the Task Force for convening today’s hearing.

I lead the Kansas City Missouri Police Department, a department with a full strength of over 1,400 sworn law enforcement officers who serve a city with over half a million residents. Our police department covers over 300 square miles in Kansas City, touching four counties. Kansas City has hosted, planned and responded to numerous large-scale events. We have hosted the 2012 MLB All-Star Game, 2015 World Series Championship parade/rally, the 2023 NFL Draft, the 2020, 2023 and 2024 Superbowl World Championship parades and rallies, in addition to several events, celebrations, parades and protests.

FIFA World Cup 2026

The Kansas City Missouri Police Department is steadfast in its commitment to delivering a safe and successful World Cup experience. Drawing on valuable lessons learned from past incidents and embracing innovative strategies in resource management and collaboration, the department stands ready to meet the unprecedented challenges that lie ahead. The opportunity to host the World Cup is not only a testament to our city’s vibrant spirit but also an occasion to showcase Kansas City, Missouri on the global stage.

Full time dedicated planning for the World Cup events in Kansas City, Missouri started in January of 2024. Since then, the Police Department has dedicated even more full-time staff members in planning for all aspects of the upcoming FIFA World Cup 2026 events. Regional coordination has been key in planning from the beginning, with six planning committees comprised of various public safety leaders, as well as non-governmental organizations. Committees have now grown to over 20 distinct areas of planning to ensure the best possible preparations are in place. Planning committees ranging from intelligence analysis and sharing, interoperability, command control and coordination, critical infrastructure protection, and tactical coordination, to name a few.

Lessons learned regarding large crowd, mass gatherings and best practices have been implemented and have resulted in a layered security screening approach, expanded perimeters around venues, enhanced vehicle screening areas and additional transportation safety and security. Multiple training opportunities have been sought out and brought directly to our region in preparing specifically for World Cup events. The learning opportunities involve crowd management, public

communication, critical infrastructure protection and advanced incident command system training. Full Scale exercises and tabletop exercises have been executed and continue to be planned as we test and retest our plans and readiness.

Lessons Learned / Confirmed

Kansas City has witnessed a remarkable era of championship sports over the past decade. The Kansas City Royals and Chiefs' World Championships have provided opportunities for celebration. The Kansas City Missouri Police Department plans large events using an all-hazards approach, integrating parade organizers, medical and fire personnel, federal partners, city services, state agencies, and regional law enforcement. This continued cooperation in our pre-planning has only enhanced our partnerships and has allowed for comprehensive contingency plans to be in place.

After each mass gathering celebration, the Police Department has conducted after-activation reviews which have led to improved security plans at subsequent events. For example, after the Royals Championship parade in 2015, we improved ingress and egress areas and created pathway barriers for first responders for an improved emergency response. Although we had vehicle mitigation along the route for the Chiefs' Super Bowl parade in 2020, an intoxicated driver drove through the start of the parade barricade and made it on to the route, causing officers to utilize a tactical vehicle intervention to stop the threat, resulting in no injuries. In 2020, we began utilizing DMAT (Disaster Medical Assistance Teams) to ensure a proper response to a potential mass casualty event. These lessons learned in 2020 and 2023, led to additional security measures such as enhanced vehicle mitigation, improved public communication, comprehensive traffic plans, and integrated operations at the 2024 Super Bowl parade and rally.

On February 14, 2024, a tragic shooting occurred during the Kansas City Chiefs' Super Bowl LVIII (58) celebration parade and rally. Despite careful planning and the implementation of lessons learned from previous large-scale events, an act of violence disrupted what was intended to be a joyous occasion for Kansas City. The incident resulted in significant harm and cast a somber tone over the day, underscoring the unpredictable nature of such open-air, public events and the critical importance of coordinated emergency response and planning.

The swift actions of first responders and mutual aid personnel, whose roles had been expanded based on prior experience, played a vital part in mitigating further harm and provided aid to those impacted at the scene. This tragedy stands as a solemn reminder of the ever-present need for vigilance and preparedness in planning for mass gatherings.

Staffing for the 2024 parade was comprised of 900 law enforcement personnel from 71 different Federal, State and local law enforcement agencies. In addition to route security, specialized law enforcement personnel for explosive device detection and response, police K9s, SWAT, traffic control, and drone mitigation were included in the plan. Hundreds of additional first responders such as fire department and medical personnel also assisted with parade planning and implementation.

The 2020 implementation of DMAT (Disaster Medical Assistance Teams) at strategic locations was instrumental in providing immediate medical attention to victims in 2024, which saved lives.

Rapid triage and transport of critically injured patients to nearby hospitals, combined with pre-MCI standard medical treatment, minimized hospital transport and should be standard practice for large events.

The Kansas City Missouri Police Department completes risk assessments as part of the planning process. This allows for the pre-planning of both known and assumed factors leading to the correct allocation of resources. Placing the needed number of law enforcement officers in areas throughout the footprint allows for a quick and appropriate response. In addition, the priority placed on continuous training aligned with the latest standards. This was evident after shots rang out at the rally in 2024, as all law enforcement officers ran towards the threat. It is the direct result of this proper deployment and continued training that put law enforcement officers in the right place to apprehend the suspects quickly and secure the scene within minutes. By utilizing risk assessments, we can plan for complex-coordinated attacks, as well other acts of violence and public disorder.

Recommendations for Congress

FIFA World Cup 2026 will arrive in 11 American cities in approximately 10 to 11 months. As we draw near, there are two key areas of concern in preparing for the events.

Funding: To date, the Kansas City Missouri Police Department has not received any federal funds toward the planning and preparation for the FIFA World Cup 2026. We have submitted a budget request for personnel costs and equipment to the KC 2026, FIFA World Cup, Planning Committee which was then used in a comprehensive Kansas City regional budget submission to the Federal Government.

We are grateful for the One Big Beautiful Bill (OB BB), providing \$625 million for planning and security costs relating to the 2026 FIFA World Cup host cities. It is our understanding that funding will be allocated among Host Committees based on their budget estimates submitted as part of the \$625 million, and will follow the general structure of the State Homeland Security Grant Program in the form of separate grants for each Host City Committee. Unfortunately, not much else is known about the timing, program restrictions and application process for this grant.

From experience, applying for and being sub-awarded State Homeland Security Program grants, funding most likely will not be available until this fall. This puts host cities in a compressed timeframe to procure equipment, train members for usage and deploy the equipment in time for the FIFA World Cup 2026 events. We anticipate we will likely be trying to purchase the same type of equipment, at the same time, as all (eleven) other host city agencies, which may negatively impact delivery times.

We respectfully urge the parties to work quickly to finalize the funding execution process to secure the necessary equipment and resources identified in the Host Committee budget estimates.

Detection and Counter UAS Authority: Despite our responsibility to safeguard the public, local law enforcement agencies are currently constrained by federal regulations that prohibit, or severely limit our ability to detect, disrupt, or disable unauthorized drones in real time. This creates a significant operational gap and hinders our capacity to respond effectively to aerial threats. The

proliferation of consumer drones, their affordability and their potential use by bad actors amplifies this concern.

At times, our officers are put in the position of observing potentially dangerous drone activity without the legal authority or technical tools to mitigate the threat. This not only endangers the safety of event attendees and infrastructure, but also undermines public confidence in our ability to provide a secure environment.

We respectfully request Congress to prioritize the following:

1. Authorize the deployment of Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) detection and counter-UAS technology at local and regional levels.
2. Current FAA BVLOS (Beyond Visual Line of Sight) waivers without visual observers are limited to 200 feet Above Ground Level (AGL), while standard UAV operations allow up to 400 feet AGL. This restriction hampers our ability to monitor and secure wide areas, particularly around stadiums and large venues. For events like the FIFA World Cup 2026, authorization for BVLOS operations at 400 feet AGL is essential.
3. Ensure Federal UAS teams are embedded at each FIFA World Cup 2026 host sites to provide airspace security.

Without these changes, the increasing use of drones, whether by careless hobbyists or bad actors, will continue to outpace the ability of local law enforcement to respond. We stand ready to collaborate with federal partners to close this critical gap in public safety.

American law enforcement officers are invested in the safety and betterment of our country. We are the first responders to violence and terrorism in our cities and stand ready to keep the people safe from all threats, every day. We look forward to working together to ensure the FIFA World Cup 2026 events hosted in American cities are safe and secure.