



May 19, 2025

**Chairman Dale Strong AL-05  
Emergency Management and Technology Subcommittee  
Homeland Security Committee**

Thank you, Chairman Strong, Ranking Member Kennedy, and the honorable members of the Emergency Management and Technology Subcommittee for the opportunity to participate in today's hearing.

My name is Jeremy Hammond, and I have the honor of serving the sixteen member institutions of the Southeastern Conference as Assistant Commissioner. I am the Conference liaison to the event management, operations and facilities departments on our member campuses. I lead our efforts to produce the SEC Football Championship, NCAA Championships hosted by the Southeastern Conference, and support our team at various other events.

Prior to the SEC, I held several roles spanning venue management (Georgia Dome), tour management & promotion (WWE), and most recently as Vice President of Live Events at an event management and public safety consulting firm (Ingress Events).

I appreciate the opportunity to share my perspective on the pressing public safety challenges facing mass gathering events, and particularly those unique to college athletics. I come to you today not only as someone involved in the day-to-day logistics of managing public events, but as someone deeply invested in safeguarding the environments where friends and families come together to celebrate traditions, community, and competition. However, we cannot share those experiences without the assurance that we can enjoy them in safe, well-managed environments.

Just as the rapid advancement of technology and weaponry has evolved global conflicts, the same can be said for the threats we must protect against at our favorite sporting event, concert, festival or convention.

My message today is not one of doom and gloom. As cities across the United States prepare to host the World Cup and the Olympics over the coming years, there is no group of professionals better prepared to plan for, manage, and mitigate challenges than those we call friends and colleagues here in this country.

The World Cup and the Olympics are the two largest international events in existence. They present a provocative and highly visible target for bad actors. However, as my counterparts here today will agree, large public events with high threat profiles are produced 365 days a year in this country. Whether in metropolitan cities or small college towns, college athletics welcomes fans week after week, from kickoff in late August to the last out in May.

Chairman Strong from Alabama can attest, in the SEC we like to say “It Just Means More”. During Saturdays in the fall, our campuses grow to the populations of a mid-size city. In 2024, five SEC schools averaged 100,000 fans in their venues at home football games. Accounting for schools in other leagues, that number grows to eight. It is also routine that campuses host 50,000-75,000 additional fans who take part in the fanfare around the stadium with tailgating and other activities. Nowhere else in the world do you see that volume of fans in such consistency.

If you follow college athletics, you know we love top 25 rankings. In a list of the largest sports venues (by capacity), college football in America accounts for 8 of the top 10 globally. Yet, rarely do any of these events register on the SEAR rating system higher than a 4 or 5 – meaning they have limited national importance to require federal interagency support.

I work with my colleagues at our member institutions to identify emerging challenges to their operations and I’d like to share a few of those with you today.

- Cost Management: with a consistently evolving threat picture, the tactics and tools of the trade are rapidly advancing. With that comes extreme growth in expenditure just to maintain the status quo.
- Staffing: to activate a security deployment that is in line with national standards, public safety officials on campuses routinely draw from surrounding city labor pools to supplement staffing needs. Spending on law enforcement personnel averages several hundred thousand dollars per game for SEC schools.
- UAS (Drone) Threat: we are encouraged by the efforts of both the Senate and the House to introduce legislation that would allow federal agencies to deputize local officials with the authority to mitigate drone threats with proper training and advanced technology. The proliferation of drones in modern warfare has exacerbated concern for this threat at full stadiums across the country.
- Vehicle Mitigation: as we experienced on January 1, 2025 in New Orleans as fans prepared to enjoy the Sugar Bowl as part of the College Football Playoff, a bad actor with a vehicle has become a hallmark of modern crowd attacks. Campus environments are full of soft targets at tailgates and team walks surrounding the stadium.

- Intelligence Sharing: It is critically important that our public safety officials on campus continue to receive and share important intelligence information from and with state and federal agencies.

In closing, as this committee evaluates the role of the federal government in supporting the host efforts for large public gatherings, I'd respectfully request that we remember the schools, venues, and promoters hosting large gatherings on a nightly and weekly basis throughout the calendar year. We are encouraged by the work of this committee and the collaboration and communication that will usher in progress.

Sincerely,



Jeremy Hammond  
Assistant Commissioner  
Southeastern Conference