

Own Goal: How the Trump Administration Undermined Security Preparations for the 2026 World Cup

Democratic Members of the Committee on Homeland Security Task Force on Enhancing Security for Special Events in the United States

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Executive Summary

The House Homeland Security Committee Task Force on Enhancing Security for Special Events in the United States (Task Force) was established to oversee security preparations for the 2026 FIFA World Cup, the July 4 America250 celebrations, and the 2028 Los Angeles Summer Olympics. With the FIFA World Cup now concluded and the 119th Congress nearing its end, this report recognizes the Federal, State, and local law enforcement partners and security organizers who kept the tournament free from major incidents. While the World Cup tournament's success demonstrated the value of effective collaboration, the Democratic members of the Task Force also identified security gaps and agency shortcomings that threatened this once-in-a-generation global event, offering lessons for future events.

Since its formation in May 2025, the Task Force has conducted extensive oversight of preparations for the World Cup. However, despite repeated requests from Democratic members of the Task Force, Republicans failed to hold any official oversight hearings examining how the Trump administration's immigration enforcement agenda impacted this event. The administration's actions created security risks, chilled economic participation in host cities and surrounding areas, and sowed confusion among the law enforcement agencies responsible for keeping fans safe. At the same time, the administration systematically undermined the very Federal agency Congress tasked with administering critical security funding — the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Together, these actions threatened the success of the tournament.

This Democratic report examines these failures, drawing on the public oversight record developed by Democratic members of the Task Force to identify the consequences of the administration's actions, and offers recommendations to ensure that the 2028 Summer Olympics and other future major events are conducted with the full confidence of the international community, the cooperation of State and local law enforcement, and the transparent and timely delivery of Federal resources Congress has committed to provide.

Introduction

The 2026 FIFA World Cup was, by any measure, an extraordinary undertaking. Seventy-eight matches across eleven American cities, millions of international visitors, and its overlap with the Nation's 250th birthday celebration made it among the most complex special event security challenges in American history.

Bipartisan efforts by the Task Force produced significant accomplishments including conducting oversight of and promoting investments in critical counter-unmanned aircraft systems ("C-UAS") capabilities for State and local law enforcement that helped protect stadiums and surrounding airspace.¹ For example, a bipartisan delegation of Task Force members conducted an oversight visit to Metlife Stadium to meet directly with State and local law enforcement officials to discuss the unique threat posed by drones and the need for expedited procurement of federally funded C-UAS technologies.²

1. Press Release, U.S. H. Comm. on Homeland Sec., Photos: Committee Members Visit Ground Zero to Commemorate 9/11, Tour Metlife Stadium Ahead of 2026 FIFA World Cup (Sept. 13, 2025), www.homeland.house.gov/2025/09/13/photos-committee-members-visit-ground-zero-to-commemorate-9-11-tour-metlife-stadium-ahead-of-2026-fifa-world-cup/.

2. Press Release, Office of Congresswoman Nellie Pou, Congresswoman Pou Joins World Cup Security Walkthrough (Sept. 15, 2025), www.pou.house.gov/media/press-releases/congresswoman-pou-joins-world-cup-security-walkthrough.



Rep. Pou and Task Force members tour MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, NJ.

However, a complete accounting of the Federal government's role in the 2026 World Cup record demands candor. The administration's immigration enforcement actions occurred in and around the same cities, stadiums, and communities where matches were held. The effects on fan safety, public trust, coordination between law enforcement agencies, and economic participation were significant and well-documented. At the same time, the administration diverted FEMA personnel to support immigration enforcement, and President Trump repeatedly called for eliminating the agency entirely. Together with widespread funding-related delays under then-Secretary Kristi Noem, these actions delayed the delivery of \$625 million Congress appropriated for World Cup security to State and local law enforcement.

The Role of Immigration and Customs Enforcement at the World Cup

Republicans have allocated over \$170 billion to DHS since January 20, 2025, to execute the administration's immigration enforcement agenda. This surge in funding has made Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) the largest Federal law enforcement agency in our country. ICE arrested at least 167,000 people in and around the eleven cities hosting World Cup matches between January 20, 2025, and March 10, 2026.³ Most of these individuals had no criminal record. Despite requests from Ranking Member Nellie Pou and Democratic members of the Task Force to hold hearings examining the civil and constitutional rights of individuals attending World Cup matches and related events,⁴ Republicans on the Task Force failed to act.

The consequences of the administration's violent, out-of-control immigration enforcement extended beyond concerns about civil liberties. As of October 12, 2026, Federal immigration agents had killed 9 people and injured 13 others in at least 30 shootings since January 2025.⁵ This figure includes Mr. Lorenzo Salgado Araujo, who was shot and killed in Houston on July 7, 2026, by ICE officers who acknowledged that Mr. Araujo was not a target of their operation. Houston hosted seven World Cup matches, including a Round of 16 match just three days before Mr. Araujo was killed.

³. The World Is Worried About the World Cup, Forbes (June 9, 2026), www.forbes.com/sites/minkyworden/2026/06/09/the-world-is-worried-about-the-world-cup/.

⁴. Letter from Nellie Pou, Ranking Member, H. Homeland Sec. Comm. Task Force on Enhancing Sec. for Special Events in the U.S., to Michael McCaul, Chairman, H. Homeland Sec. Comm. Task Force on Enhancing Sec. for Special Events in the U.S. (Feb. 12, 2026), www.pou.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/pou.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/task-force-letter-to-chariman-mccaul-on-ice-2-12-2026.pdf (hereinafter "Ranking Member Pou Feb. 2026 Letter").

⁵. Federal Immigration Agents Have Shot at Dozens of People During Trump's Deportation Crackdown. Here's What We Know, CBS News (Oct. 12, 2026), www.cbsnews.com/projects/2026/ice-shooting-tracker/

Immigration Enforcement Threatens Federal, State, and Local Coordination

From December 2025 to February 2026, DHS conducted Operation Metro Surge—a sprawling immigration enforcement operation in Minneapolis, Minnesota that led to the deaths of two American citizens and caused an estimated \$700 million in economic damage.⁶ Following these deaths, the Committee on Homeland Security held a hearing titled “Oversight of the Department of Homeland Security: ICE, CBP, and USCIS.”⁷ At that hearing, former ICE Director Todd Lyons told Task Force Ranking Member Pou that ICE would play a “key part” at World Cup matches and declined to rule out civil immigration enforcement at the events.⁸

To be clear, the Democratic members of the Task Force recognize that Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), a component of ICE, has a legitimate role in securing the World Cup matches. HSI has historically worked at large gatherings to combat human trafficking and other criminal activity. At a September 2025 site visit to MetLife Stadium, the Task Force heard from New Jersey State Police officials about the Federal-State partnership in combating human trafficking and other transnational crime. In December 2025, the Task Force convened a hearing on human trafficking at mass gatherings, where witnesses emphasized the need for coordination among Federal, State and local law enforcement partners to prevent traffickers and other criminals from exploiting large events. During the hearing, both Democrats and Republicans acknowledged that HSI coordination with local law enforcement has historically been helpful in combating human trafficking. However, the administration’s policy changes jeopardized this partnership and created broader confusion about ICE’s civil enforcement role at the World Cup. Fear of immigration enforcement is a well-documented barrier to victim reporting, raising concerns that uncertainty about ICE’s presence in host cities may have discouraged immigrant communities from cooperating with law enforcement and undermined efforts to combat human trafficking.

Congressional Oversight of Immigration Enforcement Blocked

Democratic members of the Task Force repeatedly sought answers about ICE’s planned immigration enforcement activities at the World Cup. In February 2026, Ranking Member Pou submitted questions for the record to ICE and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) leadership seeking a public account of any planned civil immigration enforcement at the World Cup. Those questions were never answered. That same month, Democratic Task Force members urged Chairman Michael McCaul to schedule an emergency hearing on the effects of the administration’s immigration enforcement policies on the World Cup.⁹ This hearing was never scheduled.

^{6.} Press Release, City of Minneapolis, Operation Metro Surge Caused Nearly \$700 Million in Economic Damage for Minneapolis (June 10, 2026), www.minneapolismn.gov/news/2026/june/updated-assessment/.

^{7.} Oversight of the Department of Homeland Security: ICE, CBP, and USCIS, Hearing Before the H. Comm. on Homeland Sec., 119th Cong. (Feb. 10, 2026).

^{8.} ICE Says it Will Play “Key Part” in 2026 World Cup Security, N.Y. Times (Feb. 11, 2026), www.nytimes.com/athletic/7038337/2026/02/11/world-cup-usa-ice-security/.

^{9.} Ranking Member Pou Feb. 2026 Letter, *supra* note 4.



Rep. McIver, Homeland Security Committee hearing February 10th, 2026.

At the Committee's February 24, 2026, hearing, "Before the Whistle: Assessing Information Sharing and Security Collaboration Ahead of Major Events," a senior operations official from the Miami Host Committee testified that he had no contact or coordination with ICE regarding its World Cup security plans, despite ICE's promise to play a "key role." As late as June, the Los Angeles County Sheriff stated that he had been told immigration enforcement "would not be occurring at any of the games," but added that "any of that's subject to change."¹⁰ These conflicting accounts exposed serious gaps in coordination between Federal and local partners. With millions of visitors expected at World Cup events, uncertainty about ICE's role created an avoidable security vulnerability.

Legislative Response

In response to these concerns, Democratic Task Force members introduced three bills to limit civil immigration enforcement at and near the World Cup.¹¹ Ranking Member Pou introduced H.R. 7986, the Save the World Cup Act, which would have prohibited DHS and the Department of Justice from conducting civil immigration enforcement within one mile of any FIFA World Cup match or Fan Festival. Rep. LaMonica McIver introduced H.R. 7982, the Protect World Cup Attendees Act, which would have barred the use of State Homeland Security Grant Program funds for civil immigration enforcement and prohibited State and local agencies from participating in Section 287(g) programs during host city matches. Democratic Task Force members also introduced H.R. 7988, the Safe Passage to the World Cup Act, which would have banned civil immigration enforcement on public transit routes serving matches and fan festivals. Republicans failed to hold hearings or markups on any of these bills at the Task Force or the full Committee.

Beyond Congress

Immigration enforcement concerns extended well beyond Congress. Last year, FairSquare and the Dignity 2026 coalition organized 90 civil society groups that wrote to FIFA expressing concern about U.S. immigration policies and their impact on the World Cup.¹² In April 2026, over 120 civil society

^{10.} LA County Sheriff: ICE Will Be at the World Cup in LA but Agents Won't Do Enforcement, Long Beach Post News (June 3, 2026), www.lbpost.com/news/immigration/la-county-sheriff-ice-will-be-at-the-world-cup-in-la-but-agents-wont-do-enforcement.

^{11.} "Save the World Cup": Trio of Bills Proposed to Limit ICE Involvement at Matches in U.S., N.Y. Times (Mar. 19, 2026) www.nytimes.com/athletic/7130431/2026/03/19/world-cup-2026-ice-bills-congress/.

^{12.} Press Release, FairSquare, Ninety U.S. Civil Society Groups Express "Deep Concern" to FIFA About Immigration Policies Ahead of 2026 World Cup (July 2, 2025), www.fairsq.org/civil-society-fifa-2026/.

organizations issued a travel warning to international fans, players, and journalists about the heightened risks of arbitrary denial of entry, arrest, detention, deportation, and racial profiling by law enforcement.¹³ In Los Angeles, unionized food and beverage workers at SoFi Stadium, which hosted eight World Cup matches, secured a contract provision protecting them from being required to work if ICE agents were present at their workplace.¹⁴

The World Cup promised millions of visitors and significant economic benefits to local businesses and workers. Reports before the opening matches, however, indicated lower-than-expected travel demand and weaker hotel bookings in several host cities.¹⁵ In communities surrounding the stadiums, fears of ICE enforcement among immigrant fans and American citizens in mixed-status families threatened participation in the event's economic and social activities.¹⁶ The climate of uncertainty surrounding immigration enforcement threatened the economic benefits the tournament was expected to deliver, even as the administration delayed distributing the \$625 million Congress had appropriated for security grants to local host communities.

The Secretary's Threats

Uncertainty about ICE's role persisted in the weeks before the first matches. Secretary of Homeland Security Markwayne Mullin repeatedly threatened to withdraw CBP officials from airports serving host cities, including Newark Liberty International Airport, if cities refused to cooperate with ICE on civil immigration enforcement. These threats had no apparent public safety justification and were made without input from the U.S. Department of Transportation. The New Jersey-New York airspace is the busiest, most complex in the country. Threats to divert and cancel international flights not only prematurely and unnecessarily caused panic weeks before the start of the World Cup but threatened public safety in our airports and airspaces.¹⁷ At a June 3, 2026, Committee hearing, Secretary Mullin declined to rule out withdrawing those customs personnel when pressed by Ranking Member Pou.¹⁸ The Secretary was effectively threatening to create the very security vulnerabilities DHS is responsible for preventing.

Secretary Mullin's press statements only compounded the uncertainty. In a late May 2026 social media post, he declared that "ICE and HSI are going to be out there every day" at the World Cup.¹⁹ On June 10, the Task Force sent a letter to DHS renewing its longstanding request for a public commitment that no civil immigration enforcement would take place at World Cup matches, fan festivals, or related events.²⁰

13. Press Release: ACLU et. al, United States Travel Advisory (Apr. 23, 2026), www.assets.aclu.org/live/uploads/2026/04/ACLUFINALWorld-Cup-Travel-Advisory_FINAL-April-2026.pdf.

14. SoFi Stadium Workers Given 'Kick ICE Out' Buttons by Union Ahead of USMNT-Paraguay, N.Y. Times (June 12, 2026), www.nytimes.com/athletic/7355396/2026/06/12/sofi-stadium-workers-ice-agents-usmnt-paraguay/.

15. Hotels in World Cup Host Cities Are Underperforming, Newsweek (May 21, 2026), www.newsweek.com/hotels-world-cup-cities-football-11976653.

16. FIFA Claim of a 'World Cup for Everyone' Doesn't Align with Immigrant Soccer Fans, like Me, N.Y. Times (Feb. 18, 2026), www.nytimes.com/athletic/7045374/2026/02/18/fifa-world-cup-immigration-trump-ice-infantino/.

17. DHS Threatens International Travel to U.S. as World Cup Looms, U.S. News & World Rep. (June 1, 2026), www.usnews.com/news/u-s-news-decision-points/articles/2026-06-01/dhs-threatens-international-travel-to-u-s-as-world-cup-looms.

18. Mullin Keeps Door Open to Pull Customs Agents from 'Sanctuary Cities' Airports, Politico (June 3, 2026), www.politico.com/live-updates/2026/06/03/congress/mullins-cbp-airports-00948522.

19. U.S. Immigr. & Customs Enf't, @ICE, X (May 19, 2026, 10:54 AM), <https://tinyurl.com/3d3bapc>.

20. Letter from Nellie Pou, Ranking Member, H. Comm. on Homeland Sec. Task Force on Enhancing Sec. for Special Events to Markwayne Mullin, Sec'y, U.S. Dep't of Homeland Sec (June 10, 2026), www.pou.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/pou.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/letter-to-dhs-secretary-mullin-on-world-cup-immigration-enforcement.pdf.

Recommendations on Immigration Enforcement at Future Events

With the World Cup now concluded, the record suggests that sustained oversight pressure through hearings, legislation, and broad public opposition helped keep matches and official fan events free from large-scale civil immigration enforcement. However, reports of heightened ICE enforcement in communities across northern New Jersey, Houston, and other metropolitan areas where World Cup matches were played raise serious questions about whether local fans could freely and safely participate in events or visit local businesses without fear of enforcement in their own neighborhoods.

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Republicans may point to the deployment of 450 consular staff worldwide, the FIFA PASS visa prioritization system, and Presidential Proclamation 10998 as evidence of a coordinated and welcoming security posture for international visitors. Yet those measures do not address what those visitors encountered once inside the country. The Administration cannot credibly claim credit for streamlining entry while ignoring concerns that its immigration enforcement policies discouraged visitors from participating in the local economies surrounding World Cup venues.

These concerns must inform preparations for the 2028 Olympics and other upcoming large-scale events. Congress should examine the economic and social consequences of months without clear agency guidance during the World Cup matches, particularly for international travelers and immigrant communities in host cities. Ahead of 2028, DHS must issue a clear, public directive committing that civil immigration enforcement will not take place at or near event venues, fan festivals, or related events absent exigent circumstances.²²

Federal Funding for World Cup Security

With 78 World Cup matches played across 11 host cities, State and local law enforcement agencies faced substantial pressure to provide security for fans, players and the broader community, straining local budgets. On July 1, 2025, Congress appropriated \$625 million to cover State and local FIFA World Cup security costs and an additional \$1 billion for the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games (LA28) through H.R. 1. Directing taxpayer dollars toward the security of private sporting events on this scale is without precedent in our Nation's history, reflecting the extraordinary magnitude of these events and the Federal government's responsibility to provide security resources. It was a Task Force priority to help ensure that these Federal dollars reached host cities, regional partners, and law enforcement agencies in time for adequate planning, procurement and preparation.

In August 2025, Chairman McCaul and Ranking Member Pou wrote to FIFA and LA28 leadership requesting that each organization designate a senior security executive to testify at a public Task Force hearing. Given the scale of public investment in these events, Congress and the American public had a legitimate interest in understanding how public and private security partners were

21. NJ Immigration Arrests Surge Amid ICE Crackdown, NorthJersey (July 18, 2026), www.northjersey.com/story/news/immigration/2026/07/18/ice-enforcement-in-nj-surges-advocates-say/90945372007/

22. Qualified exigent circumstances must be limited to (1) the imminent risk of death, violence, or physical harm to a person, including in the case of terrorism, (2) the imminent risk to the national security of the United States, (3) the immediate arrest or hot pursuit of an individual presenting an imminent risk to public safety, including relating to death, violence, or physical harm to a person, and (4) the imminent risk of destruction of evidence that is material to an ongoing criminal case. See H. R. 7986, Save the World Cup Act, § 2(b) (2026).

coordinating their efforts. Both organizations declined. The Task Force subsequently held a closed briefing with the organizations' representatives in September 2025.

Democratic Members recognize that certain security protocols cannot be publicly disclosed. However, Congress routinely receives public testimony on sensitive matters, and Members and witnesses can exercise discretion to protect confidential information. Allowing private organizations benefiting from substantial taxpayer dollars to avoid public congressional scrutiny sets a disturbing precedent.

An Opaque Grant Allocation Process

On October 28, 2025, FEMA issued a press release announcing that applications for the FIFA World Cup Grant Program would open that day, with a December 5 deadline. However, the announcement provided neither eligibility criteria nor instructions for submitting applications.²³ DHS stated in an advisory sent to congressional offices that FEMA was unable to post the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) on grants.gov, the Federal grant application website, “[d]ue to the current lapse in appropriations.”²⁴ However, other Federal agencies continued posting funding opportunities during the lapse. On November 7, over one week after initially claiming the application process was open, DHS opened the application portal on Grants.gov and published the terms for the eleven host cities to access the \$625 million Congress appropriated for World Cup security.²⁵ DHS stated that award selection would occur on December 18, 2025, and funding would be awarded “no later than January 30, 2026.”²⁶

Shortly after the NOFO was published, Ranking Member Pou wrote to then-Secretary Noem and the then-Senior Official Performing the Duties of FEMA Administrator David Richardson expressing serious concerns about the administration of the grants.²⁷ Rather than establishing a formal, objective, and auditable review process, the NOFO granted the DHS Secretary sole discretion over individual award amounts, creating a structure that invited political interference. That concern proved well-founded. When awards were finally announced in March 2026, DHS provided no explanation of the criteria used to determine funding allocations, making it difficult to assess with any objective measure. For example, Miami, which hosted seven matches, received \$7 million more than New Jersey, which hosted eight matches including the championship final.

Delays in Releasing Federal Funds to State and Local Law Enforcement

The failure to publicly post eligibility criteria, acceptable uses of funds, and grant conditions created confusion and delays for local law enforcement and emergency management agencies tasked with securing the matches. DHS further complicated preparations by missing its own funding deadline. The NOFO stated that awards would be made no later than January 30, 2026. Awards were not

^{23.} Press Release, Fed. Emerg. Mgmt. Agency, FEMA Advisory, FEMA Announces Over \$1 Billion in Federal Funding to Secure the FIFA World Cup Games and Protect Americans (Oct. 28, 2025), www.fema.gov/press-release/20260609/fema-announces-over-1-billion-federal-funding-secure-fifa-world-cup-games.

^{24.} (on file with committee)

^{25.} Off. of Mgmt. & Budget, DHS-FEMA-FWCGP-160 FIFA World Cup Grant Program (FWCGP), Search Grants (Nov. 7, 2025), www.grants.gov/search-results-detail/360832.

^{26.} U.S. Dep't of Homeland Sec., Notice of Funding Opportunity, FIFA World Cup, Preparedness Grants (Nov. 12, 2025) www.fema.gov/fact-sheet/notice-funding-opportunity-nofo-fifa-world-cup.

^{27.} Letter from Nellie Pou, Congresswoman, U.S. House of Reps., to Kristi Noem, Sec'y, U.S. Dep't of Homeland Sec. and David Richardson, Sr. Off Performing the Duties of Admin., Fed. Emerg. Mgmt. Agency (Nov. 17, 2025) <https://pou.house.gov/media/press-releases/congresswoman-pou-demands-answers-world-cup-security-funding>.

announced until March 18, 2026, nearly seven weeks later following pressure from members of the Task Force on a bipartisan basis. In the interim, host cities were left without clarity about when they would receive Federal funding. In Foxborough, Massachusetts, where Gillette Stadium hosted seven matches, town officials threatened to withhold permits necessary for matches to proceed because they could not commit to deploying law enforcement personnel without assurance that local taxpayers would be reimbursed.²⁸

The urgency was underscored at the Committee's February 24, 2026, hearing. Ray Martinez, Chief Operating Officer of the 2026 FIFA World Cup Miami Host Committee, testified that if funding did not arrive within 30 days, the city would be forced to cancel its 23-day fan festival in downtown Miami. Joseph Mabin, Deputy Chief of the Kansas City Police Department, also testified that his department needed an immediate commitment of Federal support to avoid jeopardizing planned security operations.²⁹



Rep. Green and Ranking Member Thompson host FIFA World Cup Fact-Finding Forum on Emergency Preparedness and Response at NRG Stadium in Houston, Texas.

Diversion of FEMA Personnel and Resources from its Core Mission

FEMA's delays in releasing funding cannot be viewed in isolation. The delays in delivering critical funding to State and local law enforcement in a timely manner were solely caused by leadership and policy decisions at the Department of Homeland Security. In one example, Secretary Noem repeatedly sought to blame government funding lapses as the reason why DHS delayed the delivery of the \$625 million³⁰—however, DHS and FEMA awarded other grant funding that followed a similar timeline as the World Cup funding.³¹ At the same time, Secretary Noem was simultaneously cutting personnel and encouraging resignations at the agency. Additionally, full-time personnel were being diverted from their primary responsibility to focus on immigration enforcement, leaving critical gaps in the

²⁸. Foxborough Demands Clarity on \$8M World Cup Security Funding, ESPN (Feb. 7, 2026), www.espn.com/soccer/story/_/id/47861632/world-cup-2026-foxborough-funding-security-gillette-stadium.

²⁹. Before the Whistle: Assessing Information Sharing and Security Collaboration Ahead of Major Events, Hearing Before the H. Comm. on Homeland Sec., 119th Cong. (Feb. 24, 2026).

³⁰. Kristi Noem Blames Democrats for Shutdown Holding Up \$625m in World Cup Funding, Guardian (Feb. 26, 2026), www.theguardian.com/football/2026/feb/26/kristi-noem-nellie-pou-world-cup-funding-dhs-shutdown.

³¹. See, e.g., Press Release, Federal Emergency Management Agency, In a Historic Announcement, FEMA Rapidly Awards \$250 Million to Secure U.S. Skies Ahead of the FIFA World Cup 2026 (Dec. 30, 2025), <https://www.fema.gov/press-release/20251230/historic-announcement-fema-rapidly-awards-250-million-secure-us-skies-ahead>.

ability of FEMA to perform its other critical duties like assisting States.³² In August 2025, months before the World Cup NOFO was announced, DHS diverted FEMA personnel to support ICE and CBP immigration enforcement operations, including planning for arrests and raids, recruiting new ICE officers, and managing detention facilities.³³ At the same time, workforce reductions had eliminated at least 2,000 permanent positions, nearly 30 percent of FEMA's full-time workforce.³⁴ Meanwhile, President Trump repeatedly called for eliminating FEMA entirely. Despite FEMA being responsible for delivering \$625 million in World Cup security funding, the administration was simultaneously hollowing out the agency and using its staff to support the administration's immigration enforcement agenda. The money was there—the administration's willingness and ability to deliver it to the States and host cities were not.

Recommendations for Preparation Funding and Federal Resources

DHS must ensure that FEMA is adequately staffed and focused on delivering Federal resources in time for local communities to prepare for large-scale events. FEMA must also establish a transparent, needs-based grant process with mandatory distribution deadlines. Furthermore, Federal law expressly prohibits diverting FEMA assets or functions in ways that reduce the agency's ability to fulfill its missions, and the administration must be held to account for any such action.³⁵

Looking Ahead

There are many lessons to be learned from the 2026 FIFA World Cup, and the Committee must promptly examine these failures and ensure they are not repeated during preparations for the 2028 Olympics and future major events. Looking ahead to the 2028 Olympics in particular, Congress must conduct rigorous oversight to prohibit DHS from diverting assets, personnel, and other resources to immigration enforcement at the expense of fulfilling its statutory mission, authorities, and responsibilities.

32. See, e.g., FEMA Workers Pulled From Chicago Storm Damage Surveys Because Of ICE, Wash. Post (Nov. 25, 2025), www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2025/11/25/chicago-fema-ice/; see also, Assigning FEMA Staff to Immigration Enforcement Hurt Disaster Work, House Report, Wash. Post (July 10, 2026), www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2026/07/10/assigning-fema-staff-immigration-enforcement-hurt-disaster-work-house-report-says/.

33. Brianna Sacks, Dozens of FEMA Staffers Involuntarily Reassigned to Support Deportations, Wash. Post (Aug. 6, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2025/08/06/fema-ice-mass-deportations-dhs/>

34. Amidst FEMA Staff Cuts, Worries Grow About Summer Hurricane, Tornado Seasons, USA Today (May 1, 2025), www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2025/05/01/fema-staff-cuts-agencys-future-uncertain/83267759007/.

35. 6 U.S.C. § 316(c)(2).