

Date of Hearing: May 14, 2025

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 549 (Gabriel) – As Amended April 23, 2025

Urgency: No State Mandated Local Program: Yes Reimbursable: Yes

SUMMARY:

This bill requires the Office of Emergency Services (OES) to prepare for the safety and security, including reducing the risk of human trafficking, at mega sporting events and official watch parties in collaboration with host counties and other partners.

Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Requires OES to collaborate with host counties, host committees, and partners to prepare for the planning, resourcing, management, and delivery of safety and security, including reducing the risk of human trafficking, at the 2026 FIFA World Cup, 2027 Super Bowl, 2028 Summer Olympic Games, and 2028 Paralympic Games, as well as at official watch parties for these mega sporting events.
- 2) Requires OES to enter into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the counties hosting mega sporting events by a specified timeframe to implement safety and security measures.

FISCAL EFFECT:

- 1) Annual cost pressures of approximately \$698,000, through 2028, to OES for three additional positions to coordinate federal, state, and local partners and provide security planning and training to first responders and event stakeholders (federal funds or General Fund (GF)). OES also anticipates potential one-time costs of approximately \$250,000 to enter into an outside contract to finalize the training courses specializing in combatting human trafficking. OES notes that these costs may be funded through the federal Homeland Security Grant Program or Emergency Management Performance Grant, but such federally allocated funds have been declining in recent years, and the new federal administration's priorities may shift, leaving the state responsible for backfilling costs with a GF appropriation.
- 2) Costs of an unknown, but potentially absorbable, amount to the two host counties to enter into MOUs with OES, as the host counties are likely already undertaking related safety and security planning efforts in preparation for the mega events. If the Commission on State Mandates determines this bill's requirements to be a reimbursable state mandate, the state would need to reimburse these costs to counties (GF).

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose.** According to the author, “This bill is an essential step towards ensuring security and protecting the most vulnerable during global sporting events. It will ensure that California prioritizes the safety of both our international guests and local residents.”
- 2) **Mega Events.** The federal government may designate major public events that are considered nationally significant as National Special Security Events (NSSEs). The U.S. Secret Service is the lead federal agency responsible for developing and implementing security operations for NSSEs. Previous NSSEs include Super Bowls, Olympic Games, and other large international sporting events.

AB 1754 (Jones-Sawyer), Chapter 693, Statutes of 2019, required OES to establish the California Olympic and Paralympic Public Safety Command to facilitate public safety and security at the 2028 games, and required OES to enter into an MOU with the Los Angeles Organizing Committee and other necessary parties to implement the command’s safety and security activities. This bill requires OES to enter into another MOU regarding the safety and security of the 2028 games, but more focused on preventing human trafficking. This bill also requires OES to collaborate and enter into MOUs with host counties to prevent human trafficking at other upcoming mega sporting events.

- 3) **Support and Opposition.** This bill is supported by the Los Angeles Sports and Entertainment Commission (LASEC), Bay Area Host Committee, and law enforcement and tourism associations. LASEC argues mega events create “both opportunities for celebration and the risk of exploitation” and this bill addresses these concerns “by enforcing a coordinated and comprehensive approach to human trafficking prevention and public safety at these major international sporting events.”

This bill is opposed by erotic service provider groups, with the Erotic Service Providers Legal, Education and Research Project arguing, “Every year the same fake stories about sex-trafficking at major sporting events resurface” and are “used to justify high profile law enforcement prostitution sting operations masquerading as ‘rescue’ operations.”

- 4) **Prior Legislation.** AB 1450 (Gabriel), of the 2021-22 Legislative Session, would have required OES to collaborate and enter into MOUs with cities hosting large-scale sporting events, including the 2026 FIFA World Cup, to prepare for safety and security. AB 1450 was held on this committee’s suspense file.

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