

Date of Hearing:

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT, SPORTS, AND TOURISM

Christopher M. Ward, Chair

AB 549 (Gabriel) – As Amended April 3, 2025

SUBJECT: Emergency services: human trafficking

SUMMARY: This bill would require the California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES), in collaboration with host cities, host committees, and partners, to plan and prepare for safety and security of mega sporting events and official watch parties.

Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Defines “mega sporting events” as the 2026 FIFA World Cup games, the Super Bowl LXI 2027, the Summer Olympic Games 2028, and the Paralympic Games 2028.
- 2) Requires Cal OES, in collaboration with host cities, host committees, and partners, to prepare for the planning, resourcing, management, and delivery of safety and security of mega sporting events and official watch parties.
- 3) Requires Cal OES to consider their work under the Large Stadium Initiative and previous experiences in implementing the federal National Special Security Event (NSSE) planning and preparedness activities.
- 4) Requires Cal OES to consider ways to increase safety around and reduce the risk of human trafficking, racism, sexism, other forms of discrimination, and any other safety issue that may arise at a national-level sporting event.
- 5) Requires Cal OES, in furtherance of reducing the risk of human trafficking to include all of the following strategies:
 - (a) Urging businesses involved in the sporting events to monitor their supply chains for potential risks, such as human trafficking;
 - (b) Posting the Department of Justice’s notice informing the public and victims of human trafficking of hotline numbers, as specified;
 - (c) Training hotel staff to recognize and report signs of human trafficking, as specified;
 - (d) Collaborating with local law enforcement to reduce human trafficking, as specified; and
 - (e) Connecting victims of trafficking to existing resources.
- 6) Requires Cal OES to enter into a memorandum of understanding with the cities hosting the mega sporting events to implement the safety and security activities described above.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Under the California Emergency Services Act, establishes the California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) within the office of the Governor for the purpose of

mitigating the effects of natural, manmade, or war-caused emergencies. (Government Code 8550)

- 2) Under the California Emergency Services Act, provides Cal OES to be responsible for the state's emergency and disaster response services for natural, technological, or man-made disasters and emergencies, including responsibility for activities necessary to prevent, respond to, recover from, and mitigate the effects of emergencies and disasters to people and property. (Government Code 8585)
- 3) Requires the Cal OES to establish the California Olympic and Paralympic Public Safety Command (COPPC) to facilitate public safety and security at the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Los Angeles, California. (Government Code Section 8591.5-8591.7)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown. This measure has been keyed fiscal by the Legislative Counsel.

COMMENTS:

- 1) Author's statement. According to the author, "Californians are eager to host all of the major international events that will be held here, including the FIFA World Cup in 2026 and the Olympic and Paralympic Games of 2028. 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) Background. Based on the strength of both the Los Angeles and Paris bids for the 2024 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games, the IOC, on July 11, 2017, voted unanimously to approve a process by which they simultaneously awarded the 2024 Games to Paris and 2028 Games to Los Angeles. The 2028 Summer Olympics, officially known as the Games of the XXXIV Olympiad, will take place from July 21 to August 6, 2028. This will be the third time, and first since 1984, that Los Angeles will host the Summer Olympics, making it the third city after London and Paris to host the Games three times.
- 3) FIFA World Cup 2026. The FIFA World Cup 2026 will be one of the largest sporting events in history and will be hosted jointly by the United States, Mexico, and Canada. Hosting the tournament, which runs from June 11 to July 16, 2026, and includes 104 matches in 16 unique cities, including 8 matches at the SoFi Stadium and 6 matches at the Levi's Stadium.
- 4) National Special Security Events (NSSE). Following the end of the Cold War, policymakers began to be concerned with a rise in international and domestic terrorism threats. Because of this, Congress debated and legislated on the security of large federal government and public events. The President or his representative, the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), may designate major federal government or public events that are considered nationally significant as National Special Security Events (NSSEs). Some of these events are recurring and are predesignated including such NSSEs as presidential inaugurations, presidential nominating conventions, major sporting events, and major international meetings. Previous Super Bowls, Olympic Games, and large, international sporting events have been designated as NSSEs.

When an event is designated as an NSSE, the U.S. Secret Service (USSS) becomes the lead federal agency responsible for developing, exercising, and implementing security operations.

The goal of these security operations is to develop and implement a seamless security plan that will create a safe and secure environment for the general public, event participants, Secret Service protectees, and other dignitaries.

NSSE operational plans include the use of physical infrastructure security fencing, barricades, special access accreditation badges, K-9 teams, and other security technologies. To try to ensure consequence management, DHS pre-positions Domestic Emergency Support Teams, Urban Search and Rescue Teams, National Emergency Response Teams, Nuclear Incident Response Teams, and assets from the Strategic National Stockpile and Mobile Emergency Response System.

Specific teams and groupings of teams are designed for each event based on coordination with other federal entities, state and local jurisdictions, available local resources, and mutual aid agreements. Additionally, USSS sponsors training seminars for command-level federal, state, and local law enforcement and public safety officials to provide principles for managing security at major events and strategies for reducing vulnerabilities related to terrorism. The seminars also discuss key strategies and lessons learned from past NSSEs.

- 5) Human Trafficking. According to the California Attorney General's Office, "Human trafficking is among the world's fastest growing criminal enterprises and is estimated to be a \$150 billion-a-year global industry. It is a form of modern day slavery that profits from the exploitation of our most vulnerable populations. One common misperception is that human trafficking requires movement across borders. In reality, it involves controlling a person or group through force, fraud, or coercion to exploit the victims for forced labor, sexual exploitation, or both. This can occur entirely within a single country or it can cross borders. Human trafficking strips victims of their freedom and violates our nation's promise that every person in the United States is guaranteed basic human rights. It is also a crime. The Attorney General's Office is focused on combating the pervasive issue of human trafficking in California and has made it one of his top priorities."
- 6) Federal Law Enforcement Response to Human Trafficking. Human traffickers exploit vulnerable individuals for commercial sex and forced labor in a variety of legal and illegal industries, both across the United States and around the world. The federal approach to countering human trafficking employs interagency partnerships to prevent trafficking, protect victims, and prosecute perpetrators. Federal law enforcement agencies largely focus efforts on dismantling human trafficking networks and holding traffickers accountable. In the United States, federal human trafficking investigations are primarily the responsibility of ICE and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Federal law enforcement generally takes a victim-centered approach to human trafficking. This approach places equal value on identifying and stabilizing victims as well as deterring, investigating, and prosecuting traffickers. Part of this approach involves federal law enforcement relying on victim assistance specialists who can help support forensic interviews, which help law enforcement understand what happened and determine if a crime occurred, and connect victims with immediate assistance and long-term support. In addition to taking a victim-centered approach to trafficking investigations, federal law enforcement also uses trauma-informed, culturally sensitive approaches intended to avoid retraumatizing victims.
- 7) Human Trafficking and Large Sporting Events. A recent article in the Business Insider, "The dark side of the 2024 Paris Olympics," explored the extent to which the major sporting event

increased the risk of human trafficking.¹ According to the article, “young women and teens are actively being trafficked around the Paris Games and that “major sporting events like the Olympics tend to attract partying, alcohol, and people looking to pay for sex. Some of that sex, they said, is with vulnerable people who are not willingly participating in sex work, but who are victims of exploitative sex trafficking operations.”

- 8) Arguments in support. According to the California Travel Association (CalTravel) in support, “Travelers infused \$156.4 billion into California’s economy in 2024. This spending supported 1.2 million jobs and generated \$12.6 billion in local and state tax revenue. We anticipate these numbers will increase as California welcomes more visitors from around the world for the FIFA World Cup, the Super Bowl, and the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

“These mega sporting events are high-profile, international gatherings that create unparalleled opportunities for celebration—but they also create heightened security needs. As the host state for these events, California has an obligation to ensure the security and well-being of its visitors, and residents. With the world’s eyes on California, it is especially important that the state establishes a coordinated and comprehensive approach to public safety to support these major international events. Considering unfortunate past and recent incidents at mega events, and reports of human trafficking at other global tournaments, this bill offers the chance to proactively address safety, while demonstrating California’s support for major events and tourism more broadly.”

- 9) Arguments in opposition. According to the Erotic Service Providers Legal, Education and Research Project, “This ‘trafficking myth’ is used to justify high profile law enforcement prostitution sting operations masquerading as ‘rescue’ operations... The other danger of AB 549 is that it further empowers law enforcement to detain already marginalized people, who may then be deported without proper due process... It would be ironic for California (a Sanctuary state) and Los Angeles (a Sanctuary city) to collude in human rights abuses against immigrant people, migrant workers, people of color, and LGBT people at the hands of federal government agencies like Homeland Security.”

- 10) Double-referral. This measure was referred to both the Assembly Committee on Emergency Management and to the Assembly Committee on Arts, Entertainment, Sports, and Tourism. This measure passed the Assembly Committee on Emergency Management on a 7 to 0 vote.

- 11) Amendments and policy considerations. The committee has received amendments proposed by the author to shift responsibility for collaborating with host committees and partners on safety and security, from individual cities to the broader host counties. Counties are potentially better able to oversee issues with human trafficking and could have fewer financial limitations.

- 12) Prior and related legislation:

- a) AB 1450 (Gabriel), of 2021, would have required Cal OES, in collaboration with cities hosting large-scale sporting and associated events, specifically the 2026 FIFA World Cup, to prepare for the planning, resourcing, management and delivery of safety and

¹ [The dark side of the 2024 Paris Olympics | Business Insider Africa](#)

security at the potential hosting sites in the City of Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay area. The bill died in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

- b) AB 2026 (Gabriel), of 2020, would have required Cal OES, in collaboration with cities hosting large-scale sporting and associated events, specifically the 2026 FIFA World Cup, to prepare for the planning, resourcing, management and delivery of safety and security at the potential hosting sites in the City of Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay area. The bill died in the Assembly Governmental Organization Committee.
- c) AB 1754 (Jones-Sawyer), Chapter 693, Statutes of 2019, requires the Cal OES to establish the California Olympic and Paralympic Public Safety Command (COPPC) to facilitate public safety and security at the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Los Angeles, California. The law requires Cal OES to establish and oversee the development, approval and adoption of the COPPC to facilitate the planning, resourcing, management, and delivery of safety and security at the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Los Angeles. The law also required, no later than January 31, 2021, Cal OES to enter into a memorandum of understanding with the Los Angeles Organizing Committee for the 2028 Olympics and Paralympic Games and other necessary parties to implement safety and security activities.
- d) AB 132 (Jones-Sawyer), Chapter 836, Statutes of 2017, authorized the Governor to execute games support contracts, not to exceed \$270 million, in connection with the site selection process for the City of Los Angeles to become the host for the 2028 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games and established the Olympic Games Trust Fund in the State Treasury and would, upon appropriation by the Legislature, make the money in the fund available.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Bay Area Host Committee
California Hotel & Lodging Association
California Police Chiefs Association
California Travel Association (CalTravel)
San Diego County District Attorney's Office

Opposition

California Syringe Exchange Program (CASEP) Coalition
Erotic Service Providers Legal, Education, and Research Project
The Sidewalk Project
Stripper Worker Center
Two individuals

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