

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 30, 2024

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

As you know, the United States will host a number of major international sporting events over the next decade, including the 2026 FIFA World Cup, the 2028 and 2034 Olympic and Paralympic Games, and the 2031 Rugby World Cup. These events have the potential to deliver tremendous economic and diplomatic benefits for our nation. That is why we urge the White House to establish a White House Task Force on Global Sporting Events to oversee preparation and securing the games, specifically through international visa processing, security scenario training, incident response, transportation, diplomatic security, intelligence gathering and dissemination, and securing critical protective assets.

Major global sporting events are opportunities to strengthen our nation's economy and demonstrate America's leadership on the world stage. The 2026 FIFA World Cup, which will be the largest sporting event in U.S. history and held across Atlanta, Boston, Dallas, Houston, Kansas City, Los Angeles, Miami, New York New Jersey, Philadelphia, San Francisco Bay Area, and Seattle, will attract more than 5 million international visitors and is expected to generate \$5 billion in economic activity. Similarly, the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games are expected to generate another \$5 billion in economic activity, while attracting millions of visitors from all over the world.

To ensure the success of these events, preparations must be made to facilitate smooth and secure travel to the United States for our international guests. One challenge that must be an immediate and top priority is streamlining interview wait times for visitor visas. Currently, wait times for visitor visa interviews, particularly for first-time applicants, remain unacceptably high in many countries. As of June 2024, in the largest non-Visa Waiver Program countries, average interview wait times were nearly 300 days, with some locations reaching nearly two years. These wait times must be lowered in advance of these global sporting events. Consistent with the goals set by previous administrations, we encourage your Administration to target wait times of fewer than 31 days for 80 percent of applicants by the end of 2025.

Similarly, the success of these events is dependent on the ability of federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to work together to ensure the safety of the games and, if necessary, respond to critical incidents. As we saw with the Centennial Olympic Park Bombing during the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta, major sporting events pose an elevated risk for terrorist attacks and require heightened precautions and public safety presence. As we prepare for these upcoming events, a White House Task Force on Global Sporting Events could facilitate the interagency planning necessary to keep participants and visitors safe.

The creation of a White House Task Force on Global Sporting Events would help lead and coordinate federal efforts to address these and other concerns critical to the success of these marquee events. There is ample precedent for establishing such a task force for large-scale public events. In fact, previous administrations created these task forces years before the start of the event itself. For example, in 1998, then-President Clinton announced, “the creation of the White House Task Force on the 2002 Olympic and Paralympic Games.” Official federal government preparation for the 1994 FIFA World Cup began in June 1987 with Congress passing S.J. Res. 175 to provide support to meet the requirements of a host country. Similarly, in 2018, Congress passed H.Con.Res 111 to support the efforts of bringing the 2026 FIFA World Cup back to the United States.

We stand ready to work with your administration in any capacity to achieve our shared goals to ensure the success of both the 2026 World Cup and the 2028 and 2034 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Sincerely,



Sharice L. Davids
Member of Congress
Kansas Third District



Darin LaHood
Member of Congress



Kathy Castor
Member of Congress



Dina Titus
Member of Congress



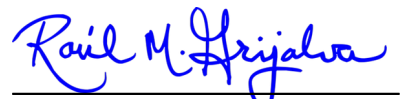
Mikie Sherrill
Member of Congress



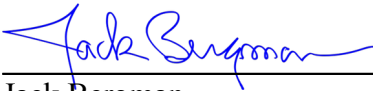
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Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress



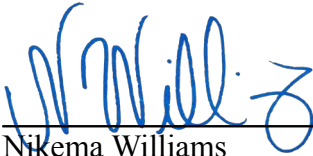
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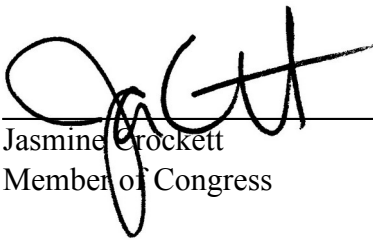
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Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



Marilyn Strickland
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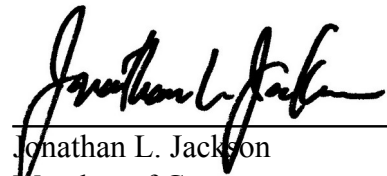
Jasmine Crockett
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Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress



Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



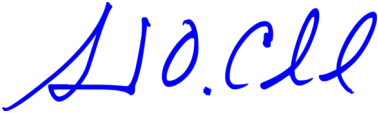
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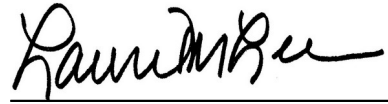
Robert Garcia
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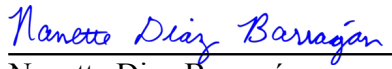
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