

**Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure**

**Member Day Remarks**

**January 14, 2026**

Chair, Ranking Member, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

Like millions of Americans, I would wager that everyone in this room has attended a major league baseball game, a football game, or a concert. Yet current aviation safety laws don't consistently ensure their protection.

That's why I am proud to have introduced the Protecting Outdoor Concerts Act of 2025, commonsense legislation to close that gap and keep people safe.

Under current law, the Federal Aviation Administration already issues temporary flight restrictions, what we call TFRs, around major sporting events like NFL games, Major League Baseball games, NCAA Division I football, and other large stadium events.

These restrictions prevent manned aircraft and unmanned aircraft systems, like drones, from flying in defined airspace around these venues one hour before until one hour after the event, specifically to protect people on the ground and in the air.

But here is the inconsistency: that protection does not currently extend to outdoor concerts or music festivals, even when they draw the same or more people or more than a sold-out NFL game.

Under current law, low-flying aircraft and drones are restricted during sporting events, but the same protections don't automatically apply when a stadium hosts a concert, leaving concertgoers unprotected. This bill closes that gap.

To put this in real terms: imagine a scenario where a major pop artist, say, Taylor Swift, were to perform at the same outdoor football stadium where her fiancé, Travis Kelce, just finished a game earlier that day.

An NFL game in a stadium like this routinely draws 65,000 to 70,000 fans, and a sold-out Taylor Swift concert can exceed 70,000 attendees, with her most notable concert having 96,000 people in attendance.

One might say the stadium is already in its *Taylor's Version* era.

Meaning tens of thousands of people could be gathered in the same venue, under the same conditions, but receive very different safety protections under current FAA rules.

Under current rules, the crowd at the football game benefits from an FAA-issued TFR with restricted airspace above them from an hour before kickoff until an hour after the game ends.

But once the game is over and the field is turned over to a concert audience of 60,000 or more, there is no guarantee that the same temporary flight protections apply to that crowd of concertgoers, artists, staff, and nearby residents, even though the risks from airborne threats like drones or low-flying aircraft remain the same.

This bill would correct that discrepancy so that concerts, festivals, and other large outdoor gatherings with 30,000 or more people receive the same baseline airspace protections that major sporting events do today.

This is especially important in my district, where annual events like the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival and Stagecoach Festival attract hundreds of thousands of attendees over multiple weekends and currently lack a clear statutory pathway for FAA to issue these temporary flight restrictions under uniform standards.

Congressman Raul Ruiz

By directing the FAA to issue or revise regulations for TFRs over qualifying outdoor concerts and festivals, this legislation enhances public safety, gives law enforcement and event organizers clear tools to secure the airspace, and aligns the treatment of these events with longstanding protections already afforded to major sporting events.

I look forward to working with the Committee to move this bill forward and to closing this safety gap for concertgoers, workers, artists, and communities across our country.

Thank you.