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Written Testimony
HJ 7 - 2026 FIFA World Cup - Protection of Human Rights
House Rules and Executive Nominations Committee
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SUPPORT

Good afternoon Chair Healey and members of the Committee. On behalf of the 20,000 state, municipal, and public education workers residing in Maryland, AFT-Maryland asks for a favorable report for HJ 7 - 2026 FIFA World Cup - Protection of Human Rights.

The World Cup is the largest sporting event in the world. Five million people traveled to Russia for the games in 2018, and over three billion people watched it live on television. The World Cup in 2026 will be held in North America (The U.S., Canada, and Mexico), and 12 cities within the U.S. will be selected to host World Cup games.

Baltimore and Washington, D.C. are finalists among 17 potential host cities, and they are now drafting and submitting their final bids to FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association), the governing body of the World Cup Games.

Due to its storied past, the World Cup Games have a checkered past on valuing human rights and workers' rights in host countries. In an effort to mitigate potential problems going forward, FIFA has worked with labor rights and human rights organizations to adopt the "Proposal for a United Human Rights Strategy" for the games in 2026. This agreement is FIFA's commitment to establish and integrate respect for human rights through the 2026 bidding. Baltimore and D.C. will receive a higher priority in the bidding process if they can demonstrate adherence to these human rights values within their proposal for bid.

It is for these reasons, AFT-Maryland calls for a favorable report on HJ 7 - 2026 FIFA World Cup - Protection of Human Rights.

Marietta English
President