

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

December 22, 2021

Mr. Michael Rapino
President and Chief Executive Officer
Live Nation Entertainment, Inc.
9348 Civic Centre Drive
Beverly Hills, CA 90210

Dear Mr. Rapino:

We are writing to request information regarding the tragic events on November 5, 2021, when a stampede crushed concertgoers, killing ten people and injuring hundreds more during Astroworld Music Festival. Those who died ranged in age from 9 to 27 years old.¹ Concert attendees have provided firsthand accounts of being crushed within the crowd as it surged towards the stage.² Live Nation Entertainment (Live Nation) was the concert promoter reportedly responsible for “planning, staffing, putting up money, securing permits, finding vendors, communicating with local agencies,” for Astroworld Festival.³

Recent reports raise serious concerns about whether your company took adequate steps to ensure the safety of the 50,000 concertgoers who attended Astroworld Festival. For instance, reports indicate that security and medical staff were inexperienced or ill-equipped to deal with mass injuries.⁴ Some attendees stated that the placement of barricades made it difficult to escape.⁵ Experts have stated that Astroworld Festival organizers failed to heed warning signs. For example, hundreds of fans broke through metal barricades at the same festival in 2019, causing injuries. Just hours before the November 5, 2021, performance, dozens of fans broke

¹ *What to Know About the Houston Astroworld Tragedy*, New York Times (Nov. 15, 2021) (online at www.nytimes.com/article/astroworld-festival-what-to-know.html)

² See e.g., *“I Just, Like, Took My Last Breath. and I Passed Out,”* Washington Post (Nov. 11, 2021) (online at www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2021/11/11/astroworld-survivor/); *“Scared for my Life”: Concertgoers Recount Terror of Deadly Astroworld Festival*, NBC News (Nov. 7, 2021) (online at www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/scared-my-life-concertgoers-recount-terror-deadly-astroworld-festival-n1283426).

³ *Who Will Be Held Responsible for the Astroworld Disaster?*, Pitchfork (Nov. 15, 2021) (online at <https://pitchfork.com/the-pitch/who-will-be-held-responsible-for-the-astroworld-disaster-travis-scott-live-nation/>).

⁴ *Astroworld Medics were “Overwhelmed” by Incident that Left 8 Dead at Concert*, New York Post (Nov. 6, 2021) (online at <https://nypost.com/2021/11/06/astroworld-medics-were-overwhelmed-by-incident-that-left-8-dead-at-concert/>); *“People Are Dying”: Witnesses Describe the Horror of Astroworld Tragedy in Houston*, Rolling Stone (Nov. 6, 2021) (online at www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/eyewitnesses-astroworld-houston-travis-scott-1254208/); *Astroworld Guards Says Security Staff Were Inexperienced and “Rushed” Into the Job*, Business Insider (Nov. 10, 2021) (online at www.insider.com/astroworld-security-inexperienced-rushed-into-job-report-2021-11).

⁵ *Crowd Surge Kills At Least 8 at Houston Music Festival*, AP News (Nov. 7, 2021) (online at <https://apnews.com/article/travis-scott-astroworld-dead-injured-crowd-surge-6c697502318c50ba4b57aa1c6f71f9bf>).

through an entrance at the festival, indicating that organizers may have not been prepared for the crowd that day.⁶

According to reports, the main performer took the stage around 9:00 p.m., and approximately 20 minutes later, medical staff responded to the first reports of injuries.⁷ The police activity log shows that, by 9:38 p.m., Houston Police officers and firefighters responded to reports of a “mass casualty event.”⁸ Houston Fire Chief Sam Peña stated that after local law enforcement received the initial reports of people sustaining injuries in the crowd, “our people stepped up and immediately went to the producers and told them, ‘Hey, people are going down.’”⁹ However, the concert continued until Live Nation stopped the concert at approximately 10:10 p.m.¹⁰

We are also concerned by reports about Live Nation’s conduct following Astroworld Festival. Live Nation and its subsidiary reportedly have withheld pay until part-time employees who worked the festival have signed a revised employment contract, correcting the original version signed prior to the festival that was dated 2018. The revision makes it clear that the contract, which includes a broad provision releasing Live Nation from liability, applies to the 2021 festival.¹¹

The tragedy at Astroworld Festival follows a long line of other tragic events and safety violations involving Live Nation. For example, Live Nation has been fined or sued numerous times over safety issues at previous events, including other incidents involving surging fans or stampedes.¹² In 2011, a stage collapse in Indiana killed seven and injured 61, and in 2013, a concert staffer in New York suffered brain damage after a forklift crashed into his booth.¹³ From

⁶ “*They Weren’t Prepared*”: *Experts Point to Missed Warning Signs at Astroworld*, Rolling Stone (Nov. 6, 2021) (online at www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/warnings-astroworld-fest-tragedy-1254261/).

⁷ *Most of the Dead Astroworld Victims Were in One Highly Packed Area, Video Timeline Shows*, Washington Post (Nov. 24, 2021) (online at www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/interactive/2021/what-happened-astroworld-travis-scott/).

⁸ *Astroworld Festival Timeline: How the Tragedy Unfolded*, ABC News (Nov. 18, 2021) (online at <https://abcnews.go.com/Entertainment/astroworld-festival-timeline-tragedy-unfolded/story?id=81036039>).

⁹ *Within Minutes, the Astroworld Festival Turned Deadly. Here’s What We Know About the Show’s Timeline*, CNN (Nov. 8, 2021) (online at www.cnn.com/2021/11/08/us/astroworld-festival-crowd-surge-timeline/index.html).

¹⁰ *Id.*; *What to Know About the Houston Astroworld Tragedy*, New York Times (Nov. 15, 2021) (online at www.nytimes.com/article/astroworld-festival-what-to-know.html).

¹¹ *Promoters to Astroworld Employees: Promise Not to Sue Us If You Want to Get Paid*, Rolling Stone (Dec. 17, 2021) (online at <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/astroworld-workers-contract-liability-1273226/>).

¹² *Astroworld Promoters Oversaw Other Events Where Concertgoers Trampled Fellow Fans, Broke Barricades*, Houston Chronicle (Nov. 6, 2021) (online at www.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/astroworld-fest-tragedy/article/Astroworld-Festival-concert-producer-has-history-16597508.php).

¹³ *Live Nation, a Company Behind Astroworld, Has a Long History of Safety Violations*, National Public Radio (Nov. 8, 2021) (online at www.npr.org/2021/11/08/1053548075/live-nation-a-company-behind-astroworld-has-a-long-history-of-safety-violations).

2016 to 2019, Live Nation and its subsidiary Live Nation Worldwide were cited ten times for safety violations and incurred fines.¹⁴

We are deeply saddened by the deaths that occurred at Astroworld Festival and are committed to investigating what went wrong to inform possible reforms that could prevent future tragedies. To that end, we ask that Live Nation Entertainment provide written answers addressing the following topics related to the Astroworld Festival by January 7, 2022:

1. Please provide a narrative detailing the roles and responsibilities for Astroworld Festival, including, but not limited to, venue security, crowd control, mass casualty incident planning, emergency communications, and medical care, between Live Nation Entertainment, its subsidiaries, partners, and subcontractors;
2. Describe any pre-show security assessments, planning, and briefings conducted by Live Nation Entertainment or its partners, subsidiaries, or subcontractors, including any details regarding any safety concerns raised prior to the performance;
3. Please provide details regarding Live Nation Entertainment's actions in response to same-day reports of fans breaking through security barriers;
4. What precise time was Live Nation Entertainment first made aware of casualties on the evening of November 5, and what steps were taken in response to that information;
5. What precise time was Live Nation Entertainment first made aware that law enforcement had declared the event a "mass casualty event," and what actions did Live Nation Entertainment take between that report and the performance's termination at approximately 10:10 p.m.;
6. Please share your assessment of the cause of the stampede and whether it could have been prevented;
7. Please address reports that Live Nation has withheld pay from Astroworld employees until they have signed revised employment contracts that release Live Nation from liability; and
8. What steps does Live Nation plan to take to prevent another injury or death at a promoted or held event.

In addition, please produce the following documents no later than January 7, 2022:

¹⁴ *Astroworld Promoters Oversaw Other Events Where Concertgoers Trampled Fellow Fans, Broke Barricades*, Houston Chronicle (Nov. 6, 2021) (online at www.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/astroworld-fest-tragedy/article/Astroworld-Festival-concert-producer-has-history-16597508.php).

Mr. Michael Rapino

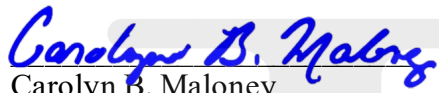
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1. Contracts related to Astroworld Festival security, communications, and medical care.

The Committee also requests a briefing on the topics listed above by January 12, 2022. Please be prepared to address additional concerns regarding Live Nation Entertainment's safety practices, including those relating to Astroworld Festival and other events organized by your company. Please confirm your availability for this briefing no later than January 7, 2022.


The Committee on Oversight and Reform is the principal oversight committee of the House of Representatives and has broad authority to investigate "any matter" at "any time" under House Rule X. If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Committee staff at (202) 225-5051.

Sincerely,


Carolyn B. Maloney
Chairwoman
Committee on Oversight and Reform


James Comer
Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and Reform


Al Green
Member of Congress


Kevin Brady
Member of Congress


Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress