

LCQ15: Combating ticket scalping

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Kin-por and a written reply by the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Miss Rosanna Law, in the Legislative Council today (January 8):

Question:

There are views pointing out that the problem of ticket scalping, which has existed all along, is rampant. Section 6 of the Places of Public Entertainment Ordinance (Cap. 172) provides that any person who sells or offers for sale any ticket authorising admission to any place of public entertainment in any public thoroughfare, or in the entrance hall of, or approaches to, any such place, or at a price exceeding the amount fixed by such proprietor, manager or organiser to be charged shall be liable on conviction to a fine of HK\$2,000. However, events held in venues managed by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) (e.g. the Hong Kong Coliseum, the Queen Elizabeth Stadium, the Hong Kong Stadium) are not subject to the regulation of the aforesaid Ordinance. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the respective numbers of reports of ticket scalping received by the Hong Kong Police Force and relevant departments in the past two years, and the number of convicted cases among them;
- (2) whether it will consider amending Cap. 172 to bring the venues managed by the LCSD under the regulation of the Ordinance; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (3) whether it will consider increasing the penalty to effectively deter ticket scalping; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (4) whether it will consider implementing real-name registration for ticket sales, as well as setting up an official transfer platform, so as to eradicate the problem of ticket scalping?

Reply:

President,

In consultation with the Home and Youth Affairs Bureau and the Security Bureau, my consolidated reply to the question raised by the Hon Chan Kin-por is as follows:

The Places of Public Entertainment Ordinance (Cap. 172) (PPEO) aims to ensure public safety and order at places of entertainment where members of the public congregate. It covers a number of aspects such as fire safety, building safety, electrical and mechanical equipment, ventilation, crowd management and hygiene. The relevant provision on prohibiting the resale of

tickets at a price higher than its original amount aims to prevent nuisance and public order problems created by gangs and roughs who resell tickets.

Venues under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) are managed by the LCSD in accordance with the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132) (PHMSO) and its subsidiary legislation. According to the PHMSO, no person shall sell any article within the area of the performance venues under the LCSD without authorisation. During the period when activities are held in the relevant LCSD venues, additional venue and security staff will also be deployed to patrol the area. If anyone is found engaging in trading or reselling tickets bought within such area, the venue staff will immediately stop the activity and request the person concerned to leave the venue. Assistance will be sought from the Police as and when necessary.

In respect of any place of public entertainment licensed under the PPEO, any person who sells, or offers or exhibits or has in his possession for sale, or solicits the purchase of, any ticket or voucher at a price exceeding the amount fixed by the organiser for such a ticket or voucher shall be guilty of an offence, and shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine of \$2,000.

According to the records of the relevant departments, no person was convicted for contravention of section 6 of the PPEO among the cases concluded from 2022 to the second quarter of 2024. With regard to reporting, the Police do not maintain the number of reports of ticket scalping in places of public entertainment. The LCSD had not received relevant reports during the period.

At present, the LCSD seeks to facilitate orderly and fair sales of tickets through official channels for the performances that are staged in its venues and use the ticketing services of URBTIX under the LCSD through implementing different administrative measures. When handling ticketing for large-scale and popular events, URBTIX proactively liaises with the organisers on ticketing proposals which cater to individual programmes. These include adopting real-name ticketing arrangement; offering Internet, mobile app and telephone booking services only to prevent problems of order management, public safety and queuing gangs engaged by ticket scalpers that may arise from on-site queuing; setting a cap for the number of tickets each patron can purchase per transaction as well as imposing a limit on the number of tickets that can be purchased with the same credit card on the first day of ticket sales; increasing the transparency of ticketing information (including announcing in advance the date of sales, number of performances, number of tickets available for public sales, seating plan of the tickets available for sale, designated channels used by organisers for releasing ticketing information); implementing delayed ticket collection arrangement; and encouraging organisers to increase the ratio of tickets for public sale to provide more tickets of this kind for the public.

The Government has always been concerned about issues relating to ticket scalping and fake tickets, and has been studying the introduction of such

measures as legislation and criminalisation to address ticket scalping activities concerning the LCSD performance venues, while maintaining communication with stakeholders in this connection. Legislative control has its pros and cons given the multiple causes of ticket scalping, which involve various factors including supply and demand, market structure, regulation. The Government will consider legislative options in a prudent manner and continue to closely monitor the situation of ticket sales for events held in the LCSD venues to combat illegal ticket scalping activities.

Purchasing or obtaining unauthorised tickets carry risks and encourage ticket scalping. The Government advises members of the public to buy tickets through official channels to prevent loss from frauds.