

Republican Leader Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Oversight & Investigations Hearing
“Leading the Way Forward: The Biden Administration
Actions to increase COVID-19 Vaccines”
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As Prepared for Delivery

INTRO

Thank you, Chair DeGette and Republican Leader Griffith... and thank you to our distinguished panel.

SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT

Let's first set the record straight.

Regarding the COVID-19 vaccine development and distribution....

.... President Biden started on 3rd base, yet Democrats and the media suggest he hit a triple.

We keep hearing lies about what President Biden inherited.

FIRST CLAIM

The first false claim is that President Biden had to start from scratch.

On January 21st, CNN reported that anonymous Biden administration sources said ... quote “We are going to have to build everything from scratch.”

Three days later President Biden's Chief of Staff Ron Klain perpetuated this claim, and Vice President Harris repeated it just last month.

This is disinformation.

Dr. Fauci, you publicly stated that the Biden administration did **NOT** start from scratch.

The day President Biden entered the White House, more than 1.5 million new doses were administered.

Let's not forget the nationally televised *60 Minutes* segment with General Gus Perna on the Trump administration's distribution plans.

That was in early **NOVEMBER**—before we even had a COVID-19 vaccine to distribute.

The Trump administration first outlined their plan in September.

In October, the administration even announced partnerships to administer free vaccines.

SECOND CLAIM

Another false claim is that the Trump administration did not contract for enough vaccines.

On March 2, President Biden claimed that...quote “the prior administration had contracted for not nearly enough vaccine to cover adults in America.”

Again—this is disinformation... It's false.

Last year, the Trump administration entered into contracts with multiple companies to manufacture hundreds of millions of doses of COVID-19 vaccines.

To date—between just the three companies who have EUAs—we will have enough doses to vaccinate 300 million people... far more than our eligible adult population.

AND—that's not to mention the options to purchase additional doses included in those initial agreements, which the Biden administration appears to have recently used.

I'm disappointed that President Biden and Democrats refuse to acknowledge any successes of Operation Warp Speed.

Vaccines normally take more than **10 YEARS** to develop.

Yet, we have three safe and effective vaccines in less than **ONE YEAR**.

Imagine how many lives will be saved.

Every American—Democrat and Republican alike—should be proud and thankful for its success.

We should be looking at this model for America to lead a new era of innovation for medical breakthroughs...

... not downplaying its success to under promise and score political points.

[pause]

SCHOOL CLOSURES

I now want to turn to school closures.

Let's be clear—school closures are having devastating effects on our children.

As Dr. Hasan (Huh-sawn), the division chief of pediatric infectious diseases at R-W-J-Barnabas Health in New Jersey, put it... "The mental health crisis caused by school closing will be a worse pandemic than Covid."

WORSE than COVID...

...yet, schools remain closed.

One year ago—to this day—Governor Inslee closed schools in my home state of Washington... and we have been too slow to reopen. Washington ranks 46th in the nation in getting students back to classrooms.

This is **UNACCEPTABLE**.

Governor Inslee, why has it taken you so long to prioritize our children? It is time our kids return to the classroom.

Schools remain closed because of fear and politics, **NOT** science.

Dr. Walensky, on February 3rd, you stated ... “schools can safely reopen.”

Dr. Fauci for months last year you agreed schools should reopen. As you put it last fall... “close the bars and keep the schools open.”

But—now teachers’ unions have an ally in the Oval.

President Biden should be **LEADING** to get our kids back in school...

.... but, following public backlash from the White House about your remarks Dr. Walensky—the CDC published guidance that kept many schools from fully reopening.

We now know the CDC misinterpreted some of the research it relied on.

Four doctors wrote in USA Today and confirmed fear—not science—led to harmful policy.

Enough is enough.

Our kids are in crisis.

Today, I call on you Dr. Walensky and you Dr. Fauci to do as this administration promised it would...

...follow science and truth.

Update CDC’s guidance to open schools immediately.

Surely, we can all agree that is the right thing to do.

Thank you. I yield back.