

# A HEARING WITH DR. ANTHONY FAUCI

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## HEARING

BEFORE THE  
SELECT SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE CORONAVIRUS  
PANDEMIC

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND  
ACCOUNTABILITY

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS

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- \* Letter, May 31, 2024, Public Health Associations; submitted by Rep. Ruiz.
  - \* Article, *The Hill*, “Let’s honor Anthony Fauci and his 50 years of advancing public health”; submitted by Rep. Ruiz.
  - \* Interim Report, June 2024, the Minority staff, “Republican’s Fauci Flop: Select Subcommittee’s Fifteen-Month Probe Fails to Find Evidence of Extreme Claims Linking Dr. Fauci to COVID-19’s Origins”; submitted by Rep. Castor.
  - \* Letter, May 31, 2024, Association of State and Territorial Health Officials; submitted by Rep. Ruiz.
- Documents are available at: docs.house.gov.*



## **A HEARING WITH DR. ANTHONY FAUCI**

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**Monday, June 3, 2024**

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

SELECT SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

*Washington, D.C.*

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:01 a.m., in room 2154, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Brad R. Wenstrup (Chairman of the Subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Representatives Wenstrup, Malliotakis, Lesko, Cloud, Joyce, Greene, Jackson, McCormick, Ruiz, Dingell, Mfume, Ross, Garcia, Bera, and Tokuda.

Also present: Representatives Comer, Griffith, Raskin, and Castor.

Dr. WENSTRUP. The Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic will come to order.

I want to welcome everyone this morning.

Pursuant to Committee on Oversight and Accountability rule 7(d), Members of the Committee may participate in today's Select Subcommittee hearing for purposes of questions.

At the discretion of the Chair and pursuant to an agreement with the Committee on Energy and Commerce, the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, Mr. Morgan Griffith and Ms. Kathy Castor, are permitted to participate in today's hearings for the purposes of questions and give 3-minute opening statements.

Without objection, pursuant to clause 4(a)(iii)(a) of House Resolution 5 and clause 2(j)(ii)(c) of House rule XI, the Chair may recognize staff of the Select Subcommittee for questions for equal periods of time, not to exceed 30 minutes.

Pursuant to rule 7(d) of the Committee on Oversight and Accountability, Mr. Jordan and Mr. Moskowitz, Members of the Full Committee, may participate in today's hearing for the purposes of questions.

I would like to remind Members that the issues we are debating today are important ones and Members feel deeply about them. While vigorous disagreement is part of the legislative process, Members are reminded that we must adhere to established standards of decorum in debate.

There is a reminder that it is a violation of House rules and the rules of this Committee to engage in personalities regarding other Members or to question the motives of a colleague. Remarks of that

type are not permitted by the rules and are not in keeping with the best traditions of our Committee.

The Chair will enforce these rules of decorum at all times and urges all Members to be mindful of their remarks.

Finally, without objection, the Chair may declare a recess at any time.

I now recognize myself for the purpose of making an opening statement.

Good morning.

And welcome, Dr. Fauci. First, I want to thank you for your decades of public service. You served your country through multiple epidemics, pandemics, and health crises.

I do want to say I'm sorry about the threats that you have received. As someone who's been shot at and received threats as well, my heart goes out to you. This should never happen in America.

Regardless of any disagreements we may have, you chose to serve, and I want to extend our appreciation and gratitude. I want to thank you publicly for working with our Doctors Caucus during Operation Warp Speed and the time you spent with us and Dr. Collins.

I also want to thank you for your willing cooperation with the Select Subcommittee. You have voluntarily sat for more than 14 hours of testimony and are appearing voluntarily today. This is more than we can say about other witnesses we have called, and we appreciate it.

Dr. Fauci, we're here to investigate the COVID-19 pandemic and to explore lessons learned, positive or negative, and to better prepare for future pandemics. Simply put, America cannot move forward, though, without looking back. We must know what went right and what went wrong in order to best engrain proficiencies and remedy deficiencies.

In 15 months, the Select Subcommittee has sent more than 115 investigative letters, conducted 30 transcribed interviews, resulting in hundreds of hours of testimony; held, including today, 27 hearings or briefings; and reviewed more than 1.5 million pages of documents.

We aren't here to throw the baby out with the bath water. That's not the intent. We are following the facts, holding wrongdoers accountable, and planning for a better, more prepared future.

Beginning early in 2020, you became the figurehead of public health. There were drinks named after you. You got bobbleheads made in your likeness. You were on the cover of *Vogue*. You threw out the first pitch at a Washington Nationals game. Almost overnight, you became a celebrity and a household name in addition to being a public health official.

Americans from coast to coast and beyond listened to your words. And this is where I think we could've done better. And this goes to both sides of the aisle. We should've been more precise. We should've used words and phrases that are accurate and not misleading. And we should've been honest, especially about what we didn't know.

Dr. Fauci, I'm not a virologist, but I am a physician. And, like most physicians, we are constantly learning, which is why we do continuing medical education, and we always seek new informa-

tion. We learn new things, based on new data. And we want to give our patients the best possible care, based on new findings and improvements in science.

At a time when you were prompting the “Proximal Origin” paper, whose focus was to, quote, “disprove the lab leak theory,” end quote, I was in lockdown, researching with another physician in Ohio to try and understand the pathology, the affected physiology, and what treatments worked, and even how to diagnose COVID before we had specific COVID tests. My friend even made a phone call to an infectious disease doctor in China, looking for help.

As well during that time, we discovered the Baric-Shi 2015 article on creating a chimera using gain-of-function-type technology.

While policy decisions should’ve been based on scientific data, some, frankly, were not. The burdensome six-foot social distancing rule did not have sufficient scientific report. In your words, it just sort of appeared. Distancing made sense, but the six feet was arbitrary. Even Dr. Collins said he still hasn’t seen any empirical evidence to support the six-foot rule—a rule that shut down schools and businesses, a rule that will have negative ramifications for decades.

As the pandemic wore on, more mandates also just sort of appeared, but the American public didn’t get to see the scientific data to support these mandates.

Americans were aggressively bullied, shamed, and silenced for merely questioning or debating issues such as social distancing, masks, vaccines, or the origins of COVID.

Many Americans were willing to comply with the 15 days to slow the spread and understood the necessity of banning travel from certain countries in an attempt to slow down the virus, but many Americans became very frustrated when components of those 15 days stretched into years.

And it should not have been the case that Americans were forced to comply with oppressive mandates when those who chose to illegally cross our southern border were not, or when Governor Newsom, or Governor Whitmer, were throwing parties at nice restaurants. Not a good look. Americans do not hate science, but Americans know hypocrisy when they see it.

Dr. Fauci, under your leadership, the United States health agencies adopted specific policy aims as a single dogmatic truth, without the benefit of debate, out of a desire for a single narrative.

Dr. Fauci, you once said, “If you disagree with me, you disagree with science.” Science doesn’t belong to any one person. I was never taught that science turns a blind eye to hypotheses. They serve to be proven or disproven, and done so with irrefutable facts, if able.

It was interesting that you chose not to pursue an aggressive and transparent scientific investigation of both natural spillover and lab leak. We have been investigating both hypotheses.

You testified before the Select Subcommittee in your transcribed interview that the lab leak theory was not a conspiracy theory. You embraced the “Proximal Origin” letter—it wasn’t necessarily a full peer-reviewed research paper—but you embraced “Proximal Origin” letter, and you shared it with the public from the White House lawn.

You stated during your transcribed interview that you did not review published articles that considered a potential lab leak of COVID-19. This is especially concerning if the works in question were conducted at a more risky and less safe BSL-2 lab.

Nevertheless, any dissent from your chosen scientific position was immediately labeled as anti-science. Anything less than complete submission to the mandates could cost you your livelihood, your ability to go into public, your child's ability to attend school. Families were thrown off planes and shamed when their 2-year-olds struggled to wear a mask.

Children with disabilities lost access to therapy that they and their families depended on. Students were out of the classroom and told to attend school remotely, even when the science clearly demonstrated it was safe for them to go back in the classroom. This harmed low-income students the most. And how were single-parent households supposed to teach their own children and work at the same time?

Dr. Fauci, you oversaw one of the most invasive regimes of domestic policy the U.S. has ever seen, including mask mandates, school closures, coerced vaccinations, social distancing of six feet, and more.

We've learned many lessons. Our early fear and confusion was understandable. COVID-19 was clearly a novel virus.

Under your leadership, NIAID allowed disgraced characters like Dr. Peter Daszak to use millions in taxpayer dollars to conduct risky gain-of-function experiments in Wuhan, China. The actions of EcoHealth and Dr. Daszak call into question the integrity of NIAID's policies and procedures as a whole, as well as your role, Dr. Fauci, as NIAID's Director. You did sign off on his research grant.

We need to know why Dr. David Morens, your direct report for more than two decades, assisted Dr. Daszak in avoiding oversight and scrutiny and said that you were involved. Your senior advisor and seemingly your chief of staff repeatedly attempted to evade transparency laws to shield information from public scrutiny.

We have senior officials from your office, in their own writing, discussing breaking Federal law, deleting official records, and sharing private government information with grant recipients. The office you directed and those serving under your leadership chose to flout the law and bragged about it.

Why did you allow your office to be unaccountable to the American people? You were the highest paid person in the government. This makes you more accountable to the people, not less.

Dr. Fauci, whether intentional or not, you became so powerful that any disagreements the public had with you were forbidden and censored on social and most legacy media, time and time again. This is why so many Americans became so angry—because this was fundamentally un-American.

If I make a mistake, I answer to the people of Ohio who elected me and to my own conscience. When you and your agency made mistakes, Dr. Fauci, what happened?

We all need to be held accountable. Sometimes it's as simple as saying, "We were wrong."



You took the position that you presented the science. Your words came across to so many people as final and as infallible in matters pertaining to the pandemic. But such rigid demands of an ideologically diverse people like Americans shattered public trust in American health institutions. “Because I said so” has never been good enough for Americans, and it never will be.

It’s built into the American spirit: We have a thirst for information, a drive for advancement. Americans were first in flight. We landed on the Moon. We’ve cured diseases. You’ve been part of that. And we’ve made enumerable discoveries and explorations that forever changed humanity.

Americans do not want to be indoctrinated; they want to be educated. And they prefer to make their health decisions in conjunction with the doctor that they know and trust.

To be successful, our Federal public health institutions must be accountable to the people again. To be successful, our health organizations must do what they are supposed to do: protect Americans.

I look forward to a robust and on-topic discussion. I thank you.

I would now like to recognize Ranking Member Ruiz for the purpose of making an opening statement.

Dr. RUIZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Hello, Dr. Fauci, and thank you for being here.

When I was named Ranking Member of the Select Subcommittee last February, I made a commitment to follow the facts in objectively analyzing the origins of the COVID–19 pandemic. I made a promise to keep an open mind about how the pandemic started, because understanding whether the novel coronavirus emerged from a lab or from nature is essential to better preventing and preparing for future public health threats and to better protecting the American people.

And as the origins of the novel coronavirus still remain inconclusive, I stand by these commitments to this day.

But nearly a year and a half into House Republicans’ extreme and chaotic majority, I believe we need to take stock of what the Select Subcommittee has accomplished and whether it has meaningfully improved our preparedness for the next public health threat in our Nation.

Under the guise of investigating the pandemic’s origins, House Republicans have abdicated their responsibility to objectively examine how COVID–19 came to be and, instead, weaponized concern about a lab-related origin to fuel sentiment against our Nation’s scientists and public health officials for partisan gain.

They have done so with one particular public health official in mind: Dr. Anthony Fauci. And they have done so in an effort to deflect blame and anguish for the damage the pandemic inflicted on our society away from the former President, whose stumbling pandemic response, by some estimates, led to 400,000 unnecessary COVID–19 deaths, and onto Dr. Fauci, who worked tirelessly to stem the crisis.

Over the past 15 months, the Select Subcommittee has pored over more than 425,000 pages of documents provided to us by government agencies, universities, and private citizens. We have conducted more than 100 hours of closed-door interviews with 20 current and former Federal officials and scientists.

And what we have found is the following: Dr. Fauci did not fund research through the EcoHealth Alliance grant that caused the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr. Fauci did not lie about gain-of-function research in Wuhan, China. And Dr. Fauci did not orchestrate a campaign to suppress the lab leak theory.

After 15 months, the Select Subcommittee still does not possess a shred of evidence to substantiate these extreme allegations that Republicans have levied against Dr. Fauci for nearly 4 years.

Now, I want to make something very clear. In the past month, the Select Subcommittee has held hearings where we have examined various serious issues of misconduct.

In following the facts, Select Subcommittee Democrats uncovered troubling misconduct by Dr. Peter Daszak and EcoHealth Alliance, including potential efforts to mislead the Federal Government about the nature of its work through the evasion of reporting and transparency requirements.

And less than 2 weeks ago, we heard from Dr. David Morens about his flagrant violation of the Freedom of Information Act's transparency requirements and the potential destruction of Federal records.

Both Dr. Daszak and Dr. Morens deserve to be held accountable for betraying the public's trust. To hold them accountable is not anti-science; it is the defense of our Federal scientific and research institutions' decades-long legacy of advancing the scientific enterprise to safeguard human health.

But baselessly suggesting, without evidence, that these discrete instances of misconduct are equivalent to our Nation's scientists and public health officials causing the COVID-19 pandemic, which has killed more than 1 million Americans and inflicted an immeasurable toll on our society, is also a betrayal of the public's trust, which each of us are stewards of as elected Members of this body.

Today's hearing comes at a pivotal moment for our Nation's public health. With the darkest days of the COVID-19 pandemic behind us, thanks to the Biden administration's leadership, we are now faced with a crisis of declining confidence in the very science and public health interventions that lifted our society from one of the most challenging periods in our Nation's history.

And as we look to the future, we find ourselves at a fork in the road: We can go down the path of fueling mistrust in the interventions that saved us, like vaccines, masking, and social distancing, and the public health officials, like Dr. Fauci, who worked tirelessly and with extremely limited and evolving information about a novel virus to save lives during one of the greatest crises of our time, or we can work constructively on the forward-looking policies and solutions that we know are necessary to prevent and better prepare us for the public health threats that are yet to come.

Since my first day as Ranking Member, I set out to take the latter path—the path of putting people over politics and prioritizing solutions to better prepare us for the next pandemic. And it has been my hope that Republicans would join Democrats in the forward-looking work that will better protect our constituents.

Strengthening oversight of potentially risky research, domestically and abroad, is an essential part of this conversation. And so is closing pathways for zoonotic transfers of viruses in nature and

investing in our public health infrastructure to ensure that when future viruses arrive, we are ready.

When Democrats were in the majority, we made important strides in these objectives by passing the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023, which strengthened the protections against undue influence in our biomedical research, improved training and transparency for the handling of select agents, paved the way for the interagency collaboration to fortify zoonotic disease prevention, invested in our infectious disease work force, and enhanced our supply chain preparedness and ability to rapidly develop and deploy medical countermeasures.

And ahead of today's hearing, more than 90 health and medical organizations, including the American Public Health Association, the American College of Physicians, the American Academy of Family Physicians, the Infectious Disease Society of America, the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, and the National Association of County and City Health Officials, wrote to the Select Subcommittee, urging us to, quote, "stand against efforts to weaken the ability of the Nation's public health agencies to protect the Nation's health" and to take additional action to fortify our Nation's public health work force and infrastructure.

I seek unanimous consent to enter this letter into the hearing record.

Dr. WENSTRUP. Without objection.

Dr. RUIZ. As we sit here today, I have not lost hope that in the remaining months of the Select Subcommittee we can work together to build on this legacy and make objectively examining the origins of the novel coronavirus a part of this forward-looking work. I stand by my commitments I mentioned earlier to take a serious, balanced look at all possibilities for the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic. And I stand ready to work with every Member of the Select Subcommittee on this critically important mission so that we can save future lives.

And I believe I still have some time left, so, at that, I would like to recognize Mr. Raskin with the remaining time.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you, Dr. Ruiz.

Public health is a matter of urgent and comprehensive public concern.

Under Donald Trump, when the COVID-19 pandemic began and spun out of control, we came close to becoming a failed state, which the political scientists define as a state that cannot deliver the basic goods of existence to its people.

According to Dr. Deborah Birx, Donald Trump's own COVID-19 advisor, America unnecessarily lost hundreds of thousands of people because of the recklessness and indifference of Donald Trump and his administration.

Now the people who brought you the political big lie, claiming absurdly that Trump won the 2020 election, which he lost by more than 7 million votes, now bring you the medical big lie, making the outlandish claim that Dr. Fauci was responsible for causing COVID-19.

Using the Select Subcommittee as a platform for this disinformation, House Republicans now find themselves in the fa-

miliar position where their own investigation debunks their runaway political rhetoric.

Just like the broader Committee's impeachment drive proved only that there were no Presidential crimes, much less high crimes and misdemeanors, attributable to Joe Biden, the investigation of Dr. Fauci shows he is an honorable public servant who has devoted his entire career to the public health and the public interest and he is not a comic book super-villain.

He did not fund research to create the COVID-19 pandemic. He did not lie to Congress about gain-of-function research in Wuhan. And he did not organize a lab leak suppression campaign.

Today, Dr. Fauci's testimony, along with the thousands of pages of documents and dozens of closed-door testimony provided to House Republicans as part of the COVID origins investigation, will dispel these hysterical claims and reveal that the people bowing down to a twice-impeached convicted felon who told Americans to inject themselves with bleach now want you to believe not only a big political lie but a big medical lie too.

I hope that this Committee will be able to correct all of the propaganda and disinformation today and we will be able to actually return to what the good Ranking Member has said, which is an authentic investigation of the origins of the pandemic.

And I will yield back to the gentleman.

Dr. RUIZ. And I yield back.

Dr. WENSTRUP. I now recognize Mr. Griffith for a 3-minute statement.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Good morning. I want to again thank the leadership of this Committee for including the Energy and Commerce Committee in this hearing.

Dr. Fauci, the recent revelations that Dr. Morens, a senior advisor, and your chief of staff, Greg Folkers, routinely evaded Federal records laws, including the Freedom of Information Act, or FOIA—and those were a shock. That was a shock. I've been doing oversight now for over 14 years, or right at 14 years, and the scale of the effort to evade FOIA by some at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, or NIAID, has surprised even me.

These men were among your most senior and trusted staff at an agency you led for nearly 40 years. They worked for you for decades. Your calendars show that you met with them multiple times a week during the pandemic. You co-authored dozens of papers with Dr. Morens. He directly implicates you. Even the head of the NIAID FOIA office was apparently in on some of this conspiracy.

And I know that my colleagues on the other side love to say we're always talking conspiracy, but when the facts lead you there—whether you knew about it or not, when the facts lead you to that your agency was involved in some form of a conspiracy related to COVID origins, we have to follow those facts. It is hard to believe that all of this occurred without your knowledge and/or approval.

In civil law, when one party has destroyed or refuses to produce evidence that's within its possession, a jury is allowed to draw an adverse inference, that the information destroyed or not produced was unfavorable.

Therefore, until we get a full accounting of all of the communications among NIAID's leadership, it's reasonable for us to assume that missing information would mirror the private doubts expressed by so many virologists and other scientists related to your public positions.

While telling the public, the media, and Congress that COVID-19 almost certainly emerged from nature, experts you convened as a team privately worried that a research-related incident was a possible, if not the probable, origin of the virus.

Dr. Kristian Andersen even said in February 2020, quote, "I think the main thing still in my mind is that the lab escape version of this is so friggin' likely to have happened because they were already doing this type of work and molecular data is fully consistent with that scenario."

Further, while you and other NIAID officials were assuring us that the virus could not have come from the Wuhan Institute of Virology, NIAID didn't actually have an idea as to what the full scope of Wuhan's coronavirus research was or even the trajectory of its gain-of-function research. Now, that may be because EcoHealth wasn't giving you the reports, I grant that. But this joint investigation has shown just how little oversight NIAID does of risky experiments involving potential pandemic pathogens.

NIAID set up a system designed to green-light potentially risky experiments while avoiding HHS Department-level review. The same program officers who act as advocates for their scientific area are responsible for assessing whether an experiment is too dangerous. That creates a conflict of interest.

I think that means that when we're taking—when an agency is taking the final approval, we ought to take that final approval away from the agencies like NIAID that fund it.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Dr. WENSTRUP. I now recognize Ms. Castor for a 3-minute statement, and I will oblige you an extra 30 seconds as well.

Ms. CASTOR. Well, thank you, Dr. Fauci, for your appearance today and for your decades of service to our country.

During your 39 years at the helm of America's leading health research institute, the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, you tackled some of the most serious health threats, including AIDS, Zika, Ebola, SARS-CoV-1, and COVID-19. Your leadership and service to Republican and Democratic administrations and all Americans saved countless lives and resources. We owe you a debt of gratitude.

While the evidence to date points to COVID-19 having originated from an animal market in China, the Chinese Communist Party has blocked access to important information that could help confirm the origin of the virus.

This Committee should be doing more to fight for those answers but, instead, has wasted significant time and taxpayer money fueling conspiracy theories and ignoring the importance of preparing for the next deadly pandemic.

Some GOP Members falsely claimed you secretly broke into CIA headquarters and coerced analysts. Others claimed that you committed crimes.

America's adversaries, like China, Russia, and Iran, love it when Americans are divided and distracted. It provided fertile ground for the spread of misinformation about COVID-19 by our adversaries.

And, unfortunately, fringe, far-right conspiracy theories have permeated even mainstream media outlets, and some Republican Members of Congress have played along.

I regret that many of the conspiracies have smeared you, Dr. Fauci, as you and our top scientists did everything to keep Americans safe during the deadly days of COVID-19.

Over 1.1 million Americans lost their lives to COVID-19, and today it's still more deadly than the flu.

As we learned from Zika and Ebola, the ways viruses are transmitted are not obvious at first, and the development of treatments and vaccines takes time.

What you and your team did to speed the development of the safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine was remarkable. That fast timeline was only possible due to years of Federal investment in the National Institutes of Health and support for medical research in the United States.

So one of the lessons learned from the pandemic is the need to continue to invest in medical health research in the U.S.—for cancer, for heart disease, for diabetes, but also to prepare for the next pandemic. We must learn from the past so that we can keep Americans safe.

That's why Democrats have worked hard to update America's pandemic preparedness law, the Pandemic and All Hazards Preparedness Act, to shore up public health and make us more prepared to tackle the next pandemic threat.

It's not too late for Republicans to join us and turn the least productive Congress in modern history into one where we are all focused on solutions for the American people to make our country safer and stronger.

Democrats were able to prevent harmful rollbacks in medical research last year, and I urge my GOP colleagues to join us and move away from threatening and undermining American medical research at every turn.

Public health threats are constantly emerging. In the past month alone, we have been tracking new strains and variants of H5N1, Mpox, and SARS-CoV-2.

Dr. Fauci, I'm sorry for the personal attacks you have received and may have to deal with today. But while you are here, I want you to know that the vast majority of Americans appreciate your work over the years.

I look forward to continuing to learn from you, to learn everything possible about how we can take the pandemic lessons learned and put them to use to help keep our communities safe and healthy.

Thank you, and I yield back my time.

Dr. WENSTRUP. Thank you.

Our witness today is Dr. Anthony Fauci. Dr. Fauci was the Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases from 1984 to 2022 and Chief Medical Advisor to President Joe Biden from 2021 to 2022.

Pursuant to Committee on Oversight and Accountability rule 9(g), the witness will please stand and raise his right hand.

Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony that you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Dr. FAUCI. I do.

Dr. WENSTRUP. Thank you.

Let the record show that the witness answered in the affirmative.

The Select Subcommittee certainly appreciates you for being here today, and we look forward to your testimony.

Let me remind the witness that we have read your written statement, and it will appear in full in the hearing record. As requested, please limit your oral statement to 6 minutes.

As a reminder, please press the button on the microphone in front of you so that it is on, and the Members can hear you. When you begin to speak, the light in front of you will turn green. After 5 minutes, the light will turn yellow. And when the red light comes on, your 6 minutes has expired, and we would ask that you please wrap up.

I now recognize Dr. Fauci to give an opening statement.

**STATEMENT OF ANTHONY FAUCI, M.D.,  
FORMER DIRECTOR  
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ALLERGY  
AND INFECTIOUS DISEASES**

Dr. FAUCI. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Ruiz, Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Prior to my retirement from Federal service in December 2022, I had been at the NIH for 54 years and Director of NIAID for more than 38 years. In those posts, I was deeply involved in the scientific and public health response to several infectious diseases outbreaks, including HIV/AIDS, pandemic flu, Ebola, and Zika. And so, under my leadership, we were well positioned to respond to COVID-19.

For at least two decades prior to the COVID outbreak, we at NIAID had invested billions of dollars in research on mRNA technology and immunogen design, both of which led to the swift development of COVID vaccines. Less than 11 months after the identification of this new virus, safe and highly effective vaccines were widely available—an unprecedented accomplishment in the history of vaccinology that saved tens of millions of lives worldwide.

I will now use my remaining time to directly address certain issues that have been seriously distorted concerning me.

The first issue concerns my actions regarding the possibility that SARS-CoV-2 might've resulted from a lab leak.

On January 31, 2020, I was informed through phone calls with Jeremy Farrar, then-director of the Wellcome Trust in the U.K., and then with Kristian Andersen, a highly regarded scientist at Scripps Research Institute, that they and Eddie Holmes, a world-class evolutionary biologist from Australia, were concerned that the genomic sequence of SARS-CoV-2 suggested that the virus could've been manipulated in a lab.

I participated in a conference call the next day with about a dozen international virologists to discuss this possibility versus a spillover from an animal reservoir. The discussion was lively, with arguments for both possibilities. Two participants have testified before this Subcommittee that I did not try to steer the discussion in any direction.

It was decided that several participants would more carefully examine the genomic sequence. After this further examination, several who at first were concerned about lab manipulation became convinced that the virus was not deliberately manipulated.

They concluded that the most likely scenario was a spillover from an animal reservoir, although they still kept an open mind. They appropriately published their opinion in the peer-reviewed literature.

The accusation being circulated—that I influenced these scientists to change their minds by bribing them with millions of dollars in grant money—is absolutely false and simply preposterous. I had no input into the content of the published paper.

The second issue is a false accusation that I tried to cover up the possibility that the virus originated from a lab. In fact, the truth is exactly the opposite.

I now quote from an email that I sent to Professor Farrar on February 1, 2020.

Quote, “Jeremy, I just got off the phone with Kristian Andersen, and he related to me his concern about the furin site mutation in the spike protein of the virus. I told him that as soon as possible he and Eddie Holmes should get a group of evolutionary biologists together to carefully examine the data to determine if his concerns are validated and they should report it to the appropriate authorities. I would imagine that in the USA this would be the FBI and in the U.K. it would be MI5. In the meantime, I will alert my U.S. Government official colleagues of my conversation with you and Kristian and determine what further investigation they recommend. Let us stay in touch. Best regards, Tony,” unquote.

It is inconceivable that anyone who reads this email could conclude that I was trying to cover up the possibility of a lab leak. I have always kept an open mind to the different possibilities.

Another issue is that of Dr. David Morens, who has the title of Senior Advisor to the NIAID Director and who recently began—has been investigated for conduct unbecoming a government official. Naturally, given his title, a connection is made to me.

With respect to his recent testimony before this Subcommittee, I knew nothing of Dr. Morens’s actions regarding Dr. Daszak, EcoHealth, or his emails.

It is important to point out for the record that, despite his title and even though he was helpful to me in writing scientific papers, Dr. Morens was not an advisor to me on Institute policy or other substantive issues.

At NIAID, we had weekly Executive Committee meetings of the Institute leadership and daily morning meetings of my immediate staff, and, to the best of my recollection, he attended neither of these. Furthermore, his office is located in a different building from that of the NIAID Director.



Finally, in a Majority Staff memorandum of May 22, 2024, there is this statement: Quote, “Dr. Fauci may have conducted official business via personal email,” unquote.

Let me state for the record that, to the best of my knowledge, I have never conducted official business using my personal email.

Thank you for listening. I would be happy to address these and any other issues in the discussion period.

Dr. WENSTRUP. Thank you.

I now recognize myself for as much time as I may consume for questions, with equal time being afforded to the Ranking Member.

Dr. Fauci, on February 1, 2020, you were on a call with Dr. Farrar, Dr. Collins, and other scientists regarding the potential that COVID-19 was engineered.

Was CDC Director Redfield on that call?

Dr. FAUCI. No, he was not.

Dr. WENSTRUP. OK.

Dr. Fauci, you’ve said that you had to rely on virologists and evolutionary biologists regarding origins because you are not an expert.

Is Dr. Redfield a virologist?

Dr. FAUCI. I believe he is.

Dr. WENSTRUP. He is.

Prior to the pandemic, NIAID awarded at least three grants via the New York Blood Center to Dr. Zhou Yusen.

Are you aware of these?

Dr. FAUCI. I’m sorry? To Dr.—

Dr. WENSTRUP. Yusen Zhou. Are you aware of those grants?

Dr. FAUCI. I’m sorry. The name of the person?

Dr. WENSTRUP. Dr. Yusen Zhou.

Dr. FAUCI. [Inaudible.]

Dr. WENSTRUP. Your microphone is not on, Doctor.

Dr. FAUCI. Excuse me?

Dr. WENSTRUP. Your microphone is not on.

Dr. FAUCI. I’m not familiar with that name.

Dr. WENSTRUP. OK. Well, NIAID awarded at least three grants via the New York Blood Center to that scientist.

He was a high-ranking Chinese PLA official and director of a lab at the Chinese Academy of Military Medical Sciences.

Does it concern you if U.S. taxpayer dollars are funding someone like this?

Dr. FAUCI. Grants that are submitted to the NIAID go through a very—

Dr. WENSTRUP. Does it concern you—I’m not talking about the process right now.

Dr. FAUCI. Well, I don’t know anything—

Dr. WENSTRUP. Does it concern you that U.S. taxpayer dollars would be going to someone who’s a high-ranking Chinese PLA official? Yes or no?

Dr. FAUCI. I would have to know more about that, Mr. Chairman—

Dr. WENSTRUP. OK.

Dr. FAUCI [continuing]. Because I don’t even—

Dr. WENSTRUP. Well, it concerns me.

Dr. FAUCI [continuing]. Know the person you’re talking about.

Dr. WENSTRUP. Are you or were you ever aware that the U.S. State Department in 2005 issued warnings that the Chinese Government was working on the creation of bioweapons?

Dr. FAUCI. I was not aware of that.

Dr. WENSTRUP. Thank you.

Did you ever discuss the Chinese bioweapons program with anyone in the intelligence community?

Dr. FAUCI. I have never discussed the Chinese bioweapons program, to my knowledge, with anybody.

Dr. WENSTRUP. Before, during, or after the COVID-19 pandemic, did you speak to the FBI, CIA, DIA, or any U.S. intelligence agency concerning viral research of any kind?

Dr. FAUCI. What timeframe are you talking about, sir? Because—

Dr. WENSTRUP. I said, before, during, or after the COVID-19 pandemic, did you speak to the FBI, CIA, DIA, or any U.S. intelligence agency concerning viral research of any kind?

Dr. FAUCI. I can't give you the specifics of it, but back in the time of the anthrax attacks, we certainly had a number of briefings by agencies that were intelligence agencies—I don't remember who they were; it could've been any of the above that you mentioned—about the possibility that there were bioweapons that had fallen into the hands of bad actors, i.e., terrorists, that might have been used potentially as a bioterror attack.

That was at a time when we had thought that the anthrax—

Dr. WENSTRUP. So, I appreciate—I appreciate that. I appreciate your expertise in that. But—

Dr. FAUCI. Well, that's the answer.

Dr. WENSTRUP. But did you at any time talk to—concerning viral research of any kind?

Dr. FAUCI. Again I say that, at the time that there was concern about the fact that al-Qaida may have been using or potentially using bioweapons, we had discussions with intelligence agencies about that—

Dr. WENSTRUP. Sure.

Dr. FAUCI [continuing]. Possibility.

Dr. WENSTRUP. But not as related to, say, COVID-19?

Dr. FAUCI. Not, to my knowledge—

Dr. WENSTRUP. OK.

Dr. FAUCI [continuing]. About COVID—now, well, let me just make sure we get the facts.

After the investigations began about COVID, I was briefed by intelligence agencies about possibilities of there being activities going on in different laboratories. I was briefed by intelligence—

Dr. WENSTRUP. Yes.

Dr. FAUCI [continuing]. Agencies.

Dr. WENSTRUP. Thank you.

Science is always open to debate, and that's a benefit. The science supported restricting travel from certain countries at the beginning of the pandemic, and after these orders went into effect, the President was called racist and xenophobic.

Dr. Fauci, you said in your transcribed interview that you supported those orders. Dr. Fauci, were those orders racist and xenophobic?

Dr. FAUCI. No, they were not.

Dr. WENSTRUP. Thank you.

The vaccine saved millions of lives, and I want to thank you for your support and engagement on that.

However, despite statements to the contrary, it did not stop transmission of the virus.

Did the COVID vaccine stop transmission of the virus?

Dr. FAUCI. That is a complicated issue, because, in the beginning, the first iteration of the vaccines did have an effect—not 100 percent, not a high effect—they did prevent infection and, subsequently, obviously, transmission.

However, it's important to point out, something that we did not know early on that became evident as the months went by is that the durability of protection against infection, and hence, transmission was relatively limited, whereas the duration of protection against severe disease, hospitalization, and deaths was more prolonged.

We did not know that in the beginning. In the beginning, it was felt that, in fact, it did prevent infection and, thus, transmission, but that was proven, as time went by, to not be a durable effect.

Dr. WENSTRUP. Yes, it definitely had positive effect for many people, especially those that were vulnerable. But we knew from the trials that people that got vaccinated still were subject to getting COVID.

So, was the COVID vaccine 100 percent effective?

Dr. FAUCI. I don't believe any vaccine is 100 percent effective.

Dr. WENSTRUP. I now recognize the Ranking Member, Dr. Ruiz from California, for 5 minutes of questions.

Dr. RUIZ. Thank you.

Over the past year and a half, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have relentlessly vilified Dr. Fauci under the guise of investigating the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic.

But after reviewing nearly half a million pages of documents, conducting 20 closed-door interviews, and receiving testimony from nearly a dozen witnesses brought before the Select Subcommittee for public hearings, they have come up empty-handed for evidence of their extreme allegations that Dr. Fauci lied about gain-of-function research at the Wuhan Institute of Virology and caused the COVID-19 pandemic.

So, I'd like to address both of the Republican claims in turn.

Throughout the Majority's investigation, the Select Subcommittee has heard three definitions for "gain-of-function" research.

Of the three, Republicans have relied heavily on an overly broad definition that has no regulatory significance. Let me repeat that: no regulatory significance. In fact, their definition is so broad that it would include the manufacture of flu vaccines as gain-of-function.

Because it is so broad, the National Institutes of Health does not use that definition when assessing whether proposed research is or is not, quote/unquote, "gain-of-function" research. For those assessments, NIH has instead appropriately used the definitions provided in regulations.

And, to be clear, the Select Subcommittee has been reminded by witnesses after witness that NIH at all times referred to regulations for the definition of “gain-of-function” research and not to a nebulous, expansive definition with no legal bearing that is so broad it could apply to, again, the manufacturing of flu vaccines.

Dr. Fauci, according to the regulatory definitions, for example, in P3CO, that NIH applied to proposed research, did NIH ever fund gain-of-function research in Wuhan, China?

Dr. FAUCI. As you said, Congressman Ruiz, according to the regulatory and operative definition of P3CO, the NIH did not fund gain-of-function research at the Wuhan Institute of Virology.

Dr. RUIZ. Thank you. And despite my Republican colleagues’ effort to fit a square peg into a round hole, it seems to me that you’ve been consistent on this issue from the beginning of the pandemic. And they know this, but they still use the term “gain-of-function” loosely.

And with respect to NIAID’s staff assessments of whether proposed research was or was not gain-of-function research, were you personally involved in those assessments, or were those assessments made several levels removed from you and by subject-matter experts?

Dr. FAUCI. Those assessments were done by highly qualified and experienced program people several levels below me.

Dr. RUIZ. Thank you.

And your public statements that NIH did not fund gain-of-function research in Wuhan reflected the assessments made by NIAID subject-matter experts applying a definition found in the regulation known as the P3CO framework.

Is that correct?

Dr. FAUCI. That is correct.

Dr. RUIZ. Thank you. And thank you for clarifying that.

In fact, all of that is abundantly clear in your 2021 Senate testimony on this matter. When asked by the Senate about gain-of-function research, you testified, quote, “That is why we have committees, we have a P3CO committee.”

You also testified in 2021, quote, “Gain-of-function’ is a very nebulous term. We have spent—not us, but outside bodies—a considerable amount of effort to give a more precise definition to the type of research that is of concern that might lead to a dangerous situation. You are aware of that. That is called P3CO.”

That was back in 2021. At the time of your May 2021 testimony, P3CO had been the operative definition of gain-of-function research for several years, correct?

Dr. FAUCI. That is correct.

Dr. RUIZ. So I will note that, at your transcribed interview in January, the Majority conceded that NIH did not fund research in Wuhan that met the criteria of P3CO.

I encourage the audience to read the transcript of that interview so you can evaluate the merit of the Majority’s claims for yourselves.

So, now, if we could quickly turn to the irresponsible and false accusation that you created SARS-CoV-2, the virus responsible for the COVID-19 pandemic.

So this accusation centers on a grant NIAID awarded to EcoHealth Alliance, with a sub-award to the Wuhan Institute of Virology. And we have been entertained earlier about the suggestion that this funding could've possibly gone to a bioweapons research capacity as well.

So, I want to be clear: No evidence provided to the Select Subcommittee demonstrates that the work performed under NIH funding, including at the Wuhan Institute of Virology, led to the creation of SARS-CoV-2.

The Majority has failed to demonstrate or even credibly suggest that any of the viruses studied under the grant could even possibly have been the progenitor virus.

Dr. Fauci, could you briefly explain why none of the viruses studied under the EcoHealth Alliance grant could've been the progenitor virus of the SARS-CoV-2?

Dr. FAUCI. When you're talking about the evolution of a virus from one to another, the viruses that were studied under the sub-award to the Wuhan Institute that have been reported in progress reports and the literature and published papers, those viruses were phylogenetically so far removed from SARS-CoV-2 that it is molecularly impossible for those viruses to have evolved or been made into SARS-CoV-2.

It's just a virological fact. They were so far removed that it could not possibly be a progenitor of SARS-CoV-2.

Dr. RUIZ. So I want to be very clear on this point: that the funding and the research conducted by EcoHealth Alliance did not produce SARS-CoV-2.

That doesn't negate that this lab could've—another lab could've been doing research and it could've leaked from a lab. That still is a possibility. But it was not directly—or it was not funded by NIAID or NIH.

And, just for the record, this information was provided by NIH to then-Oversight Ranking Member James Comer nearly 3 years ago, in October 2021.

So, despite the clear evidence that Dr. Fauci and his agency did not fund gain-of-function research under the P3CO regulatory definition and that the viruses studied under the federally funded EcoHealth Alliance grant could have not have been the progenitor virus for SARS-CoV-2, Republicans have levied these unsubstantiated allegations, knowing very well that they are not true. And they have done so to push their extreme, partisan narrative that Dr. Fauci and our Nation's public health officials caused the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr. WENSTRUP. Do you yield back?

Dr. RUIZ. Yep.

Dr. WENSTRUP. I now recognize the Chairman of the Full Committee, Mr. Comer from Kentucky, for 5 minutes of questions.

Mr. COMER. Thank you.

Dr. Fauci, in your opening statement, you attempt to distance yourself from your previous senior advisor, Dr. Morens. You say that Dr. Morens' title was just made up, that he was not an advisor to you, and that his office was in a different building.

So, Dr. Fauci, did Dr. Morens report directly to you?

Dr. FAUCI. Actually, I'm not sure exactly what the on-paper report is. He is Senior Advisor to the Director, but it is conceivable—we can get that information—he might have reported through someone lower, like my deputy.

Mr. COMER. So your senior advisor did not report directly to you?

Dr. FAUCI. There were very few people who report directly to me.

Mr. COMER. OK.

Dr. Morens testified that he could walk into your office anytime he wanted to. Is that true?

Dr. FAUCI. No. That's not true. You don't just walk into the office. I mean, he's there. I mean, it's conceivable that he—

Mr. COMER. Did he ever walk into your office?

Dr. FAUCI. I would say he did occasionally, but the idea—can I finish the answer to you, sir?

Mr. COMER. No, because I've got a lot of questions.

Dr. FAUCI. OK.

Mr. COMER. Dr. Fauci, did you ever delete an official record?

Dr. FAUCI. No.

Mr. COMER. Dr. Fauci, did you ever conduct official business via email?

Dr. FAUCI. To the best of my recollection and knowledge, I have never conducted official business via my private email.

Mr. COMER. So, there's a troubling pattern of behavior from your inner circle, not just Dr. Morens but also your chief of staff, Mr. Folkers.

Do you agree that it violates NIAID policy to use personal email for official purposes?

Dr. FAUCI. The Dr. Morens issue that was discussed by this Committee violates NIH policy, yes.

Mr. COMER. But does using official email—using a personal email for official business, does that violate policy?

Dr. FAUCI. Using a personal email for official business violates NIH policy.

Mr. COMER. Does it violate NAID—NAI—NA—NIAID policy to delete records to intentionally avoid FOIA?

Dr. FAUCI. Yes.

Mr. COMER. OK.

On April 28, 2020, Dr. Morens edited an EcoHealth press release regarding the grant termination.

Does that violate policy?

Dr. FAUCI. That was inappropriate, for him to be doing that for a grantee, as a conflict of interest, among other things.

Mr. COMER. So, on March 29, 2021, Dr. Morens edited a letter that Dr. Daszak was sending to NIH.

Does that violate policy?

Dr. FAUCI. Yes, it does.

Mr. COMER. On October 25, 2021, Dr. Morens provided Dr. Daszak with advice regarding how to mislead NIH on EcoHealth's late progress report.

Does that violate policy?

Dr. FAUCI. That was wrong and inappropriate and violated policy.

Mr. COMER. On December 7, 2021, Dr. Morens wrote to the chair of EcoHealth's board of directors to, quote, "put in a word," end quote, for Dr. Daszak.

Does that violate policy?

Dr. FAUCI. He should not have done that. That was wrong.

Mr. COMER. And that violates policy?

Dr. FAUCI. Well, I'm not sure of a specific policy, but I imagine it does violate policy. He should not have been doing that.

Mr. COMER. In addition to all those actions, Dr. Morens wrote to Dr. Daszak, quote, "Peter, from Tony's numerous recent comments to me, they are trying to protect you," end quote.

Did you ever talk to Dr. Morens about Dr. Daszak or EcoHealth Alliance?

Dr. FAUCI. I can tell you, regarding what you said, I never spoke about protecting him. I mean, obviously, we knew that Daszak was a grantee, so I may have mentioned and discussed Dr. Daszak because he's a grantee—

Mr. COMER. So he just made that up?

Dr. FAUCI [continuing]. But I never spoke about—

Mr. COMER. You're testifying—

Dr. FAUCI [continuing]. Protecting him.

Mr. COMER [continuing]. That he just made that up?

Dr. FAUCI. Excuse me?

Mr. COMER. You're testifying that Dr. Morens just made that up?

Dr. FAUCI. I don't know where he got that, but that's not true.

Mr. COMER. So, by this point, Dr. Fauci, when these emails were written, you should've known that Dr. Daszak was more than 2 years late on a required progress report with his grant, Dr. Daszak conducted an experiment that resulted in a novel virus showing excess growth, that Dr. Daszak failed to report that experiment, that Dr. Daszak was protecting the Wuhan lab in not sharing its lab notebooks, and that Dr. Daszak failed to disclose obvious conflicts of interest.

So why were you trying to protect Dr. Daszak and EcoHealth Alliance?

Dr. FAUCI. I repeat on the record, I have not tried to protect Dr. Daszak. And that's No. 1.

No. 2, you said something that's not true, because I did not know about the compliance issues until well after the fact, when I was being briefed for going before a congressional committee. So it wasn't that as these things were going on I knew that he was withholding—

Mr. COMER. Well, did you know about Dr. Morens' close relationship with Dr. Daszak?

Dr. FAUCI. Dr. Morens made it clear that Dr. Daszak was his friend. I did not engage in any of that interaction between them.

Mr. COMER. And, just last, if I might, Mr. Chair, you testified and answered the Chairman's question that you never had any communication with the intelligence community throughout all of COVID? Did I understand that correctly?

Dr. FAUCI. No, you heard wrong. I said I did have communication. I was briefed by the intelligence community multiple times during the COVID issue.

Mr. COMER. And you never—

Dr. WENSTRUP. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. COMER. All right.

Dr. WENSTRUP. I now recognize the Ranking Member of the Full Committee, Mr. Raskin from Maryland, for 5 minutes of questions.

Mr. RASKIN. OK.

First, Dr. Fauci, thank you for your testimony and your extraordinary service to the American people.

Let me just start, was there anything you wanted to clear up in that last exchange that—where you were interrupted?

Dr. FAUCI. No, I think I made it clear. I mean, they were talking about my knowing about a lack of compliance. That became clear, Congressman Raskin, well after the fact. It isn't as if they were not complying and I was not monitoring their noncompliance. I didn't know about it until it was a done deal.

Mr. RASKIN. Gotcha.

You've been a scientist and a scientific administrator for 54 years; is that right? More than a half-century?

Dr. FAUCI. That's correct.

Mr. RASKIN. And you were Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases for more than three decades. Is that right?

Dr. FAUCI. Thirty-eight-plus years.

Mr. RASKIN. Thirty-eight years. OK.

And I assume that you've never been accused of trying to start a disease before. Is that right?

Dr. FAUCI. That is correct.

Mr. RASKIN. You have devoted your life to fighting infectious diseases for the American people. Is that right?

Dr. FAUCI. That is correct.

Mr. RASKIN. I want to go back to this email that you cited in your opening, because I think it goes right to the heart of this campaign of character assassination against you.

The claim was, essentially, that you tried to cover up the possibility of there having been a laboratory leak—which, of course, is perfectly possible, and if this Committee were doing its job, we could actually be working to advance the investigation of that. But they would rather assert that you tried to cover up this possibility.

Here's the email that you sent on February 1 at 12:38 a.m. to Kristian Andersen—with a copy to Kristian Andersen, but you sent it to Professor Jeremy Farrar.

"Jeremy, I just got off the phone with Kristian Andersen, and he related to me his concern about the furin site mutation in the spike protein of the currently circulating 2019 nCoV. I told him that as soon as possible he and Eddie Holmes should get a group of evolutionary biologists together to carefully examine the data to determine if his concerns are validated. He should do this very quickly. And if everyone agrees with his concern, they should report it to the appropriate authorities. I would imagine that in the USA this would be the FBI and in the U.K. it would be MI5. It would be important to quickly get confirmation of the cause of his concern by experts in the field of coronaviruses and evolutionary biology. In the meantime, I will alert my U.S. Government official colleagues of my conversation with you and Kristian and determine what fur-



ther investigation they recommend. Let us stay in touch. Best regards, Tony.”

Was this the email where you were putatively trying to cover up the possibility of a lab leak?

Dr. FAUCI. Yes, Congressman Raskin. And that’s the reason why I mentioned in my opening statement that it is inconceivable that anyone could get out of that that I was covering anything up.

Mr. RASKIN. Would you have any reason to cover up any new scientific evidence relating to the origins of the COVID–19 virus?

Dr. FAUCI. Absolutely not. And that’s the reason why it was important to get people together to discuss this in a transparent way.

Mr. RASKIN. Have you spent your whole life trying to determine the causes of infectious diseases and then to stop them to protect the American people?

Dr. FAUCI. Yes, I have.

Mr. RASKIN. Well, Dr. Fauci, I want to join my colleague from Florida in apologizing to you that some of our colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives seem to want to drag your name through the mud.

They’re treating you, Dr. Fauci, like a convicted felon. Actually, you probably wish they were treating you like a convicted felon. They treat convicted felons with love and admiration. Some of them blindly worship convicted felons.

Is there anything else you would like to say to the American people about your service to America during the course of the COVID–19 pandemic?

Dr. FAUCI. My main job during the COVID pandemic was to play a role with my team at the Vaccine Research Center to develop a safe and effective vaccine. And we did that in an unprecedented short period of time never seen before in the annals of vaccinology.

As we all know, that vaccine and those vaccines have resulted in saving of hundreds of thousands of lives in the United States and millions of lives throughout the world.

Mr. RASKIN. Well, you have fought AIDS and HIV, you have fought COVID–19, and you are fearless in doing so.

Do you have any reason to be afraid of scientific evidence or data or the truth?

Dr. FAUCI. Not at all.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you.

I will yield back to you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. WENSTRUP. I now recognize Mr. Griffith from Virginia for 5 minutes of questions.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It’s good to see you, Dr. Fauci.

So take a deep breath, because my questions change sometimes based on things that happen in the hearing, and I want you to follow the bouncing ball with me. And there’s no “gotcha” at the end of this; I’m just trying to figure this out.

You told Dr. Ruiz in his questioning that it was absolutely impossible for any of the viruses that you all were funding—I get that—to—it was impossible for SARS-Covid-2, or SARS-CoV-2, known as COVID–19, to have come from any of the work that was being done at Wuhan.

At the same time, you told Mr. Comer that you didn't know about the noncompliance by EcoHealth until after the fact and when the virus is already out there, however it got there.

In light of the fact that part of that noncompliance was a report where we uncovered—and I believe that Dr. Daszak was untruthful to this Committee—in one of his reports to NIAID, and, further, that in the two most sensitive years related to the humanized mice experiments, we never got lab notebooks from Wuhan Institute of Virology, can you understand, following the bouncing ball, why some of us doubt that—not that you had some hand in it or that you knew about it, but doubt that you can state with certainty that it was impossible because they might've been doing stuff you didn't know about? Isn't that true?

Dr. FAUCI. Actually, it's not incompatible at all, Congressman, what I said.

The viruses that were studied, whether you did or did not give a 5-year report on time, were still the viruses that phylogenetically would be impossible to be the precursor of SARS-CoV-2.

So it was completely compatible with the statement that I made—

Mr. GRIFFITH. And is that—

Dr. FAUCI [continuing]. To Dr. Ruiz.

Mr. GRIFFITH [continuing]. Is that accurate as well, knowing that they had worked on adding a furin cleavage site to MERS?

Dr. FAUCI. But, sir, there's a difference between the viruses that were funded by the NIH sub-award versus anything else anybody else in China might be doing.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Excellent.

Dr. FAUCI. We were talking about, did the NIH—

Mr. GRIFFITH. You were talking about what you funded.

Dr. FAUCI. What we funded. And—

Mr. GRIFFITH. All right.

Dr. FAUCI [continuing]. That's the point.

Mr. GRIFFITH. And that goes to my next question, because I thought you might go there. And I appreciate that.

Dr. FAUCI. Right.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Because, in an off-the-record Member-level briefing in February 2022, I asked about the likelihood in nature of a SARS-related coronavirus to have a furin cleavage site, particularly since it takes the 12-nucleotide change in there to make it so—to make it as viral as this was going on.

And, at the time, you said to me pretty much what you just said—and I want you to just confirm it for the record—"Well, that wasn't us. If that was being done, it wasn't us."

Dr. FAUCI. Yes.

Mr. GRIFFITH. And you confirmed that for the record, yes?

Dr. FAUCI. No, what I'm—

Mr. GRIFFITH. It wasn't you? It wasn't what you were funding?

Dr. FAUCI. What I'm saying is that I cannot account, nor can anyone account, for other things that might be going on in China, which is the reason why I have always said and will say now, I keep an open mind as to what the origin is.

But the one thing I know for sure is that the viruses that were funded by the NIH phylogenetically could not be the precursor of SARS-CoV-2.

Mr. GRIFFITH. And I appreciate that, because I've never thought that NIH or NIAID went out to create this thing. But I am a believer that it came out of the lab.

And I think you've just made it clear—and sometimes people miss this, Dr. Fauci—one side says one thing, one side says the other, and the actual fact may be that, at some time, working on that, maybe they used some of our money to get started, maybe they didn't, but a group of scientists getting together might very well at Wuhan have said, "Hey, let's see what happens if we go over here and do this"—not that NIH funded it, but they, on their own, went off and did something.

Isn't that accurate? Isn't that possible?

Dr. FAUCI. Well, I actually would also want to say that one thing we should put out on the table, that you were talking about a \$120,000-a-year grant in a \$6 billion budget. So, I mean, if they were going to do something on the side, they had plenty of other money to do it. They wouldn't necessarily have to use a \$120,000 NIH grant to do it.

Mr. GRIFFITH. And I appreciate that, because it means something could happen, and I'm glad you kept an open mind.

I would ask this one final thing, though. Do you think they could've done it without the humanized mice that we gave them?

Dr. FAUCI. Could've done what, sir?

Mr. GRIFFITH. Could they have done any other research with the humanized mice that we gave them? Would they be successful? China didn't have the humanized mice before we gave them to Wuhan. Isn't it accurate that they might've been able to do extra stuff with our mice?

Dr. FAUCI. That's a hypothetical that I can't really answer, what they could or could not—

Mr. GRIFFITH. But you can't say it couldn't have happened either.

Dr. FAUCI. Well—

Mr. GRIFFITH. I yield back.

Dr. FAUCI [continuing]. You want me to prove a negative.

Dr. WENSTRUP. I now recognize Ms. Castor from Florida for 5 minutes of questions.

Ms. CASTOR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

You know, these special investigative committees are intended at the outset to bring light to difficult matters, and I think, unfortunately, this Select Committee has brought more heat than light to things.

And one example is, nearly 5 months ago, Dr. Fauci sat for a 14-hour voluntary interview with the Subcommittee—I was there for that interview—which included exchanges on many important questions on research safety, long COVID, vaccine development, and the importance of strong public health systems in our local communities. And also, we discussed pandemic preparedness, like stockpiling supplies for our hospitals in advance of the next pandemic.

But I want the public to know that for 5 months the Republicans sat on that transcript. They could have released it at any time. It was released last Friday.

If the public had seen it 5 months ago, they would know that they—the Republicans failed to find a shred of evidence of their far-fetched conspiracy linking Dr. Fauci to a cover-up of the origins of the pandemic. Instead, the Republicans contorted and mischaracterized Dr. Fauci's words over Twitter to gin up conspiracies about NIH's role in the origins of the pandemic.

In the lead-up to this hearing, parts of that interview have again been cherry-picked and distorted in press releases and tweets.

So, Dr. Fauci, I want to make sure that you have an opportunity to publicly clear anything up. Does anything come top of mind right off the bat in how they cherry-picked parts of your 14-hour transcript?

Dr. FAUCI. I don't want to be casting stones at the distortions of what was said in that, but, you know, there are a couple of things that come to mind.

You know, one I'm sure is going to come up later is the issue of the six-foot distance, and I made the statement that it "just appeared." And that got taken like, "I don't know what's going on. It just appeared."

It actually came from the CDC. The CDC was responsible for those kinds of guidelines to schools, not me.

So, when I said that it just appeared, it appeared. Was there any science behind it? What I meant by "no science behind it" is that there wasn't a controlled trial that said, compare 6-foot with 3 feet with 10 feet. So there wasn't that scientific evaluation of it.

What I believe the CDC used for their reason to say six feet is that studies years ago showed that when you're dealing with droplets—which, at the time that the CDC made that recommendation, it was felt that the transmission was primarily through droplet, not aerosol, which is incorrect, because we know now aerosol does play a role.

That's the reason why they did it. It had little to do with me, since I didn't make the recommendation. And my saying there was no science behind it means there was no clinical trial that proved that.

That's just one of the things that got a little distorted in the response to that.

Ms. CASTOR. And I've learned and watched you over the years. I have to go back to the Zika outbreak, where we didn't know how exactly it was being transmitted. And, at one point, we weren't aware that some of the—some of it was sexually transmitted.

That's an example of why, with these public health threats, that you learn—you learn, unfortunately, as we go along.

Talk a little bit about the Zika health threat and how that—we didn't know what was happening in early days.

Dr. FAUCI. Well, Congresswoman—

Ms. CASTOR. Your microphone.

Dr. FAUCI [continuing]. I'm glad you brought that up, because it really is also reflective of what went on in the early months of COVID.

When you're dealing with an outbreak that's a novel outbreak—the Zika outbreak that caused microcephaly was novel. We had never seen that before. COVID was novel. We'd never seen that before. When you're dealing with a new outbreak, things change. The scientific process collects the information that will allow you, at that time, to make a determination, a recommendation, or a guideline.

As things evolve and change and you get more information, it is important that you use the scientific process to gain that information and perhaps change the way you think of things, change your guidelines, and change your recommendation.

And that really goes across the board, because you're dealing with something that needs to be modified because it's a moving target. Zika was a moving target. COVID was a moving target.

Ms. CASTOR. Well, thank you very much.

And I want to thank the Democratic staff for your Minority report.

And if it's not already submitted for the record, I'd like to ask unanimous consent to offer into the record the Democratic staff report, just completed, "Republicans' Fauci Flop: Select Subcommittee's Fifteen-Month Probe Fails to Find Evidence of Extreme Claims Linking Dr. Fauci to COVID-19's Origins."

Dr. WENSTRUP. Without objection.

Ms. CASTOR. And thank the staff. This is an outstanding report that folks should read.

Thank you.

Dr. WENSTRUP. I now recognize Ms. Malliotakis from New York for 5 minutes of questions.

Ms. MALLIOTAKIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I think many of us on the Committee are really disturbed by revelations to this Committee that there were officials at NIH that deleted government records, that deleted personal—or they used personal information—personal emails to communicate and circumvent freedom-of-information laws. So, I just had a couple questions about that.

Dr. Fauci, did you delete any emails or records related to the Wuhan lab or the origins of the virus?

Dr. FAUCI. No, I did not.

Ms. MALLIOTAKIS. OK.

Dr. Morens said in a May 2021 email—he indicated that he was connecting people to you in a, quote, "secret backchannel."

Do you know what he was referring to?

Dr. FAUCI. I don't have any idea what he's talking about. There is no backchannel at NIAID.

Ms. MALLIOTAKIS. OK.

"There is"—he also said in another email that "there is no worry about Freedom of Information Act. I can send stuff to Tony on his private email."

Did you communicate with anyone relating to anything regarding NIH or with Dr. Morens on a private email?

Dr. FAUCI. I do not do government business on my private email.

Ms. MALLIOTAKIS. OK. So have you communicated with Dr. Morens via private email, even if it was not necessarily your definition of government business?

Dr. FAUCI. It might have been—because, as I mentioned in my opening statement, one of his functions is to write chapters, medical scientific chapters, with me. So it is conceivable that I communicated with him on my private email when we were writing a chapter, and that was not official business.

Ms. MALLIOTAKIS. What about Peter Daszak?

Dr. FAUCI. No.

Ms. MALLIOTAKIS. OK.

I just want to clarify for the record, because today you testified that you did not suppress the lab leak theory, yet in the past you have said, quote, “It is a distortion of reality,” unquote. You’ve said, quote, “I’ve heard these conspiracy theories, and, like all conspiracy theories, they’re just conspiracy theories.” That’s what you told the American people.

And so would you like to clarify, what science were you following then versus now?

Dr. FAUCI. Yes. No, I—actually, I’ve also been very, very clear and said multiple times that I don’t think the concept of there being a lab leak is inherently a conspiracy theory.

What is conspiracy is the kind of distortions of that particular subject. Like, it was a lab leak, and I was parachuted into the CIA like Jason Bourne and told the CIA that they should really not—

Ms. MALLIOTAKIS. OK.

Dr. FAUCI [continuing]. Be talking about a lab leak.

Ms. MALLIOTAKIS. Thank you.

Dr. FAUCI. That’s the conspiracy.

Ms. MALLIOTAKIS. Appreciate that.

Dr. Fauci, how much have you earned from royalties from pharmaceutical companies since the pandemic began in 2021?

Dr. FAUCI. Zero.

Ms. MALLIOTAKIS. It says, “NIH scientists made \$710 million in royalties from drug makers.”

You’re saying that you did not receive any of the \$710 million?

Dr. FAUCI. On COVID? I received I think \$122 for a monoclonal antibody that I made 27 years ago—

Ms. MALLIOTAKIS. OK. So, just in general, though, how much have you received—not related to COVID, just in general, how much have you received in royalties between 2021 and 2023?

Dr. FAUCI. I think none.

Ms. MALLIOTAKIS. OK. So somebody received the \$710 million—

Dr. FAUCI. Somebody did, but not me.

Ms. MALLIOTAKIS. You didn’t receive any royalties? OK.

Dr. FAUCI. I see no royalties associated with COVID. I mentioned—

Ms. MALLIOTAKIS. Yes, I said—

Dr. FAUCI. No, I want to—

Ms. MALLIOTAKIS. No, I just said—

Dr. FAUCI. I’m on the record, and I want to make sure that this is clear: that I’ve developed a monoclonal antibody about 25 years ago that’s used as a diagnostic that has nothing to do with COVID, and I receive an average of about \$120 a year from that patent.

Ms. MALLIOTAKIS. OK.

But the bottom line here is that scientists at NIH did receive \$710 million in royalties. And I guess my question is, don't you think that if these experiments are made using American tax dollars, that any of those royalties, this nearly billions of dollars, should be going back to the American taxpayer, not in the pockets of the scientists? Do you believe that's a law that we should consider changing?

Dr. FAUCI. If you want to change the patent laws and the Bayh-Dole Act, then go ahead.

Ms. MALLIOTAKIS. OK.

Dr. FAUCI. But that's not for me to say.

Ms. MALLIOTAKIS. Well, I'm asking your opinion. OK.

Well, anyway, moving on, I just want to say that, you know, we know billions of dollars have been funding these animal experiments, both here domestically and in foreign lands. I'm very troubled by the animal—the cruel, horrific animal research that has been done on U.S. land and in foreign laboratories of—taxpayers are footing the bill for billions of dollars. These beagle puppies that have their throats slit. They are being injected with ticks. They are murdered after just a few months. Piglets, rabbits, you name it.

FDA is saying we no longer need to be testing human medications on animals, that there's other ways to achieve this.

Can you comment on that, if it's time for the United States of America to be moving on from these cruel animal and horrific costly tests?

Dr. FAUCI. I'd be happy to comment, but I'm puzzled as to what that has to do with the origins of COVID.

Ms. MALLIOTAKIS. Well, I have a question about it, and—

Dr. FAUCI. OK. I'd be happy to answer it.

Ms. MALLIOTAKIS [continuing]. You're before this Committee, and it has to do in general—

Dr. FAUCI. Yes.

Ms. MALLIOTAKIS [continuing]. With the amount of waste of tax dollars that NIH is using.

Dr. FAUCI. Well, the animal experiments that are conducted by and funded by NIH go through strict regulations of the proper use of animals in research.

So, I'm not—Congresswoman, with all due respect, I'm not trying to be confrontative. I'm not sure what you're talking about, but the experiments that the NIH funded go through strict regulatory processes of the treatment of animals, the humane treatment of animals.

Ms. MALLIOTAKIS. Well, they're not very humane. And I will say, as the former Director, you signed off on these experiments.

And so my time has expired, and we will—

Dr. FAUCI. Well, I signed off on them because they were approved by a peer-review process.

Dr. WENSTRUP. I now recognize Mrs. Dingell from Michigan for 5 minutes of questions.

Mrs. DINGELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

You know, instead of actually taking a serious look at the various ways by which this virus could've emerged in a lab or in nature, my Republican colleagues and friends have spent the last 15

months trying to pin blame on NIH, NIAID, and specifically Dr. Fauci for the COVID-19 pandemic.

And now—and just, you know, let’s bring everything in. Look, I want to have a discussion about animal testing too, but I’m really not sure how that comes into here.

But I want to be perfectly clear, though, that the Select Subcommittee has seen no evidence of this. However, allegations by my Republican colleagues, amplified in the media, have led to real, tangible consequences for Dr. Fauci in his personal life in a way that should be unacceptable to all Americans.

Dr. Fauci, you and I have known each other for a long time, and I’m not even going to admit how long. But, during that time, I’ve seen your commitment not just to science but to advancing the greater good.

And I know that this isn’t a topic you enjoy discussing, and I’m sorry I’m going to have to ask you about it, but I think the American people need to know what we are doing to those who are serving the common good and public health. I think it’s important to make clear the harms that you and your loved ones have suffered because of these deeply irresponsible accusations. Because you know what? You’re human, just like the rest of us.

So, Dr. Fauci, can you please share with us the nature of the threats you have received since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Dr. FAUCI. Yes. There have been everything from harassments by emails, texts, letters, of myself, my wife, my three daughters. There have been credible death threats, leading to the arrests of two individuals. And “credible death threats” means someone who clearly was on their way to kill me. And it’s required my having protective services essentially all the time.

It is very troublesome to me. It is much more troublesome because they’ve involved my wife and my three daughters.

Mrs. DINGELL. At these moments, how do you feel?

Dr. FAUCI. [Inaudible.]

Mrs. DINGELL. Keep your mic on.

Dr. FAUCI. Terrible.

Mrs. DINGELL. Do you continue to receive threats today?

Dr. FAUCI. Yes, I do. Every time someone gets up and says I’m responsible for the death of people throughout the world, the death threats go up.

Mrs. DINGELL. It’s unacceptable that you’ve been treated this way, especially after you’ve dedicated your life to science and research for the public interest. You deserve better. Every human being deserves better.

And I’m afraid that the treatment you’ve received will also have far-reaching consequences for the future of science, particularly when done for the public good.

Dr. Fauci, how do you think the threats toward you and other public health officials have received will impact bright young scholars thinking about going off into science or public service? Do you think as many people will want to follow in your footsteps as they did when I first met you?

Dr. FAUCI. You know, Congressman Dingell, I think this is a powerful disincentive for young people to want to go into public



health and maybe even science and medicine in the public arena, because it's very clear that not only I, because I'm very much of a public figure, but many of my colleagues who are less visible than I, whenever they speak up in defense of the kinds of things that we're trying to do to protect the American public, they too get threats.

And when they see that their colleagues get threats, they say to themselves, "I don't want to go there. Why should I get involved in that?" And you have some potentially very good talent that would be important to maintain the integrity and the excellence of the public health enterprise in the United States—we're not getting the best people coming in, because they're reluctant to put themselves and their family through what they see their colleagues being put through.

Mrs. DINGELL. Well, you're right, you're not alone in feeling that way. In fact, ahead of today's hearing, the Select Subcommittee received a letter from the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, which represents public health officials in communities of all political persuasions, detailing the surge of harassment, intimidation, hate speech, threats of violence, and deaths threats that their members faced during the pandemic.

Can I just—I'm going to ask to insert the—into the letter, but I wanted to just make the point before I close, Mr. Chairman, that as many as 40 percent of public health workers have been bullied, threatened, or harassed. And I think we all need to take that on as a public health issue.

I'd ask to enter the letter into the record, and yield back.

Dr. WENSTRUP. Without objection.

Mrs. DINGELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. WENSTRUP. I now recognize Mrs. Lesko from Arizona for 5 minutes of questions.

Mrs. LESKO. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Dr. Fauci, did the National Institute of Health fund the potentially dangerous enhanced potential pandemic pathogens gain-of-function research at the Wuhan Institute of Virology?

Dr. FAUCI. I would not characterize it the way you did.

The National Institutes of Health, through a sub-award to the Wuhan Institute of Virology, funded research on the surveillance of and the possibility of emerging infections.

I would not characterize it as "dangerous gain-of-function research." I've already testified to that effect—

Mrs. LESKO. So—

Dr. FAUCI [continuing]. A couple of times.

Mrs. LESKO. So you're saying no, correct?

In his May 16—

Dr. FAUCI. I'm saying no because I've said no multiple times—

Mrs. LESKO. Thank you.

Dr. FAUCI [continuing]. Including in the transcribed interview.

Mrs. LESKO. In his May 16, 2024, testimony, the NIH Deputy Director Tabak said, and I quote, "I can tell you that the failure of the Wuhan Institute of Virology to provide us with the data that we requested and the lab notebooks that we requested certainly impeded our ability to understand what was really going on with the experiments that we have been discussing this morning."

My question to you, Dr. Fauci: If the NIH didn't inspect the Wuhan Institute of Virology and NIH didn't receive the lab books and data from China and the required reports from EcoHealth Alliance were not submitted—in fact, they were late—how can you definitively say that the NIH did not fund the dangerous gain-of-function research?

Dr. FAUCI. I go back to what I said, that the gain-of-function research by the operative and regulatory definition of P3C0 does not include, at all, the viruses that were studied under the sub-award—

Mrs. LESKO. How do you know that, sir, if there were no lab books—

Dr. FAUCI. Because we—

Mrs. LESKO [continuing]. Nothing from China?

Dr. FAUCI [continuing]. Know what viruses they were studying.

Mrs. LESKO. How? How do you know? You never went there.

Dr. FAUCI. By their—but you—I'm telling you that the NIH funded research on these viruses. If someone else somewhere in China was doing something else, that is not—

Mrs. LESKO. Well, that's the problem, because NIH didn't go there, you didn't get the reports that were needed. How in the world would you know?

I'm going to go on to—

Dr. FAUCI. Well—

Mrs. LESKO [continuing]. The next question.

Dr. FAUCI. And you're not hearing what I'm saying.

Mrs. LESKO. Dr. Morens, your senior advisor for over 20 years, said in an email dated February 24, 2021, "I learned from your FOIA lady here now how to make emails disappeared when I am FOIA'ed but before the search starts, so I think we are all safe. Plus, I deleted most of these earlier emails after sending them to Gmail."

In another email, dated 4/21/21, Dr. Morens said, "I forgot to say, there is no worry about FOIAs. I can either send stuff to Tony," meaning you, "on his private email or hand it to him at work or at his house. He is too smart to let colleagues send him stuff that could cause trouble."

Dr. Fauci, were you ever engaged in attempts to obstruct the Freedom of Information Act and the release of public documents?

Dr. FAUCI. No.

Mrs. LESKO. Did you—did Dr. Morens communicate with you about official business using his private email?

Dr. FAUCI. Official business? No.

Mrs. LESKO. Did you ever encourage Dr. Morens to use his private email address for official business?

Dr. FAUCI. No.

Mrs. LESKO. My next question, sir, is: On February 1, 2020, you, yourself, Dr. Fauci, the NIH Director Collins, and at least 11 other scientists were on a conference call to discuss the origins of COVID. A number of the scientists said that they were concerned that COVID was the result of a lab leak at the Wuhan Institute of Virology and were concerned that a revelation of the lab leak theory would hurt their relationship with China.

The CDC Director Redfield testified that he was not invited on this conference call, and he believes it's because he believed the lab leak theory was possible.

Three days later, on February 4, 2020, four participants on the conference call authored a paper, "Proximal Origin," which was sent to you for editing. "Proximal Origin" pushed the natural origin theory.

On April 16, 2020, the NIH Director, Dr. Collins, emailed you, expressing dismay that the Nature Medicine article, which was based on "Proximal Origin," didn't suppress the lab leak theory and asked you for more public pressure to suppress the lab leak theory.

The very next day, in response to Dr. Collins' request to suppress the lab leak theory, you cited the Nature Medicine article, which discounted the lab leak theory, from the White House podium.

My question to you, sir: Did you cite this article at the White House because the NIH Director asked you to suppress the lab leak theory?

Dr. FAUCI. No. I did not do that in response to anybody's suggestion to suppress anything. It was in response to a question that someone asked at the podium.

And I did not edit any paper, as shown in my official testimony.

So you said about four or five things, Congressman, that were just not true.

Mrs. LESKO. Well, we have emails to prove it.

Dr. FAUCI. No, you don't.

Mrs. LESKO. Thank you, and I yield back.

Dr. WENSTRUP. I now recognize Mr. Mfume from Maryland for 5 minutes of questions.

Mr. MFUME. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

And, by the way, no, we don't have it. So I get tired of hearing "we've got it," and then when we ask for it, it's not there. We do not have it, Dr. Fauci, and for everyone watching this. That's just incorrect.

Now, let me just say a couple of things. If I sound a little outraged, it's because, you know, we sit here and we watch one conspiracy theory after another get debunked.

And, if I might, on a point of personal privilege, to the gentleman from New York who wanted to argue that we should be worrying about testing of human medicines on animals, if this Committee really wants to do something, let's talk about the most infamous biomedical research study in the United States, the Tuskegee study, where 400 Black men in this country were injected deliberately with syphilis and allowed to die slowly over a 40-year period without any attempt to help them at all. It was condoned by the U.S. Public Health Service. And if we want to talk about testing, let's talk about that as well.

[Disturbance in the hearing room.]

Mr. MFUME. I'm going to talk about COVID right now.

Mr. Chairman, point of—I have the floor, Mr. Chairman.

I want to say to you, Mr. Chairman—

Dr. WENSTRUP. If the gentleman would suspend, please.

I want to remind the audience of decorum.

I recognize Mr. Mfume.

Mr. MFUME. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank you and Ranking Member Ruiz for this opportunity.

Dr. Fauci, we owe you an apology for the way we have raked you through the mud, and none of us have said to you, here's where you go to get your good name and your reputation back. It's the most unfair thing I have seen.

If there were evidence, if there were facts that supported the charges, I, like everybody else, would be interested. But we haven't seen a damn thing to suggest that these accusations are accurate.

You've been a hero to many for 54 years, five-plus decades. You helped lead this country through the anthrax scare, through AIDS, through Zika, through Ebola, through SARS, and through COVID-19, pandemics and epidemics. We owe you a collective "thank you."

You are a world-renowned scientist and an American patriot. And whether or not people want to believe that, that's on them, but those facts are undisputable.

For a year and a half, the Republican Majority on this Committee has sought to weaponize genuine scientific questions over COVID-19 and to vilify—vilify—our public health officials and our Nation's scientists with unsubstantiated, with baseless, with—allegations that just can't stand the light of day. And so they've tried to do that with COVID-19, and we are here now as a result of the aggregated amount of foolishness that has taken place.

And I've always said to this Committee every time I've had a chance to speak, let's go back to when we were in the heart of the pandemic, when our family members and friends and coworkers were dying left and right, when we were afraid to get near anybody, when we wanted to wash down our groceries before we brought them into the house, where we were willing to put on masks or headgear if it would keep us from being infected.

And we turned to our leaders and the public health officials and scientists for answers. And we got some, but then we didn't get some. And then we got some later, like Dr. Deborah Birx, who was Donald Trump's expert on the virus, who said, "No, bleach won't do it, don't inject yourself with it," and who also said publicly on the record that thousands of American lives could have been spared—spared—if we had done what we were being told to do by the scientific community.

At least one thing is clear: Those 1 million people who died as a result of these conspiracy theories will never come back, and those families have empty seats at the table year after year. And we do a disservice if, at the very least, we don't acknowledge their deaths and the harm and the hurt that has been done to their families and learn—learn—how to find a way to trust science going forward in this country.

Dr. Fauci, you've been accused over and over again of going to the CIA headquarters and sitting down and having a meeting with the CIA to construct a way to make sure that COVID raged in this country.

Is that correct?

Dr. FAUCI. That is incorrect.

Mr. MFUME. Dr. Fauci, have you been to the CIA office in the last 20 years, or headquarters?

Dr. FAUCI. I went to the CIA decades ago during the anthrax attacks to discuss the possibility of terrorist attacks.

Mr. MFUME. Thank you. I wanted to get that on the record, because that's just the latest theory now, that you and the CIA Director conspired. This is foolishness.

People are not going to agree with you, I understand that. But we take and besmirch somebody's good name? Think about if it were one of us. We'd be jumping up and down, trying to find a way to get justice.

And so, on behalf of those of us who are thankful, who are part of many in a grateful Nation, thank you for your service, sir.

I yield back.

Dr. WENSTRUP. I now recognize Mr. Cloud from Texas for 5 minutes of questions.

Mr. CLOUD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you for being here.

And I do want to echo some of what Mr. Mfume said, because I do think we need to focus on the people. And I think that's really what—the angst that's left with the American people. It's what they had to walk through during this time.

I'm going to go down a list of mitigation measures that you supported over the course of the pandemic and ask you just to give a “yes” or “no” as to whether you still believe these measures were justified.

Business closures?

Dr. FAUCI. Congressman, I'm not hearing you at all. Could you please speak louder into the mic?

Mr. CLOUD. Sure. I'm going to go through a list of COVID mitigation measures that you supported over the course of the pandemic and ask you to give me a “yes” or “no” as to whether you believe these measures were justified.

Business closures?

Dr. FAUCI. Early on, when 5,000 people were dying a day, yes.

Mr. CLOUD. Church closures?

Dr. FAUCI. Same thing.

Mr. CLOUD. School closures?

Dr. FAUCI. Again——

Mr. CLOUD. Stay-at-home orders?

Dr. FAUCI. These were important when we were trying to stop the tsunami of deaths that were occurring early on. How——

Mr. CLOUD. Early on.

Dr. FAUCI [continuing]. Long you kept them going is debatable.

Mr. CLOUD. Mask mandates for adults? Mask mandates for children? Mask mandates for children under 5?

Dr. FAUCI. And going back to what I said before, all of that is in the context of, at the time, 4,000——

Mr. CLOUD. Mask mandates for children under 5, there——

Dr. FAUCI [continuing]. To 5,000 people a day were dying.

Mr. CLOUD [continuing]. Was scientific evidence for that?

Dr. FAUCI. Excuse me?

Mr. CLOUD. Mask mandates for children under 5, there was scientific evidence supporting that?

Dr. FAUCI. There was no study that did masks on kids before—you couldn't do the study. You had to respond——

Mr. CLOUD. Right.

Dr. FAUCI [continuing]. To an epidemic that was killing 4,000 to 5,000 Americans—

Mr. CLOUD. Vaccine—

Dr. FAUCI [continuing]. Per day.

Mr. CLOUD [continuing]. Mandates for employees? Vaccine mandates for students? Vaccine mandates for military?

Dr. FAUCI. Vaccines save lives. It is very, very clear that vaccines have saved hundreds of thousands of Americans and—

Mr. CLOUD. I'm not debating—

Dr. FAUCI [continuing]. Millions of people worldwide.

Mr. CLOUD. We're talking about COVID-19. Did or do the vaccines, the COVID-19 vaccines, stop anyone from getting COVID?

Dr. FAUCI. I have answered that question to the Chairman. Early on, it became clear that—

Mr. CLOUD. They did?

Dr. FAUCI. No, actually, no. In the beginning—

Mr. CLOUD. They did not?

Dr. FAUCI [continuing]. It clearly prevented infection in a certain percentage of people, but the durability of its ability to prevent infection was not long. It was measured in months—

Mr. CLOUD. And they didn't stop you from spreading it either, correct?

Dr. FAUCI. Early on, it did if it prevented infection. But what became clear, that it did not prevent transmission when the ability to prevent infection waned.

Mr. CLOUD. All right.

I think what's troubling is when the American people look at the certainty and the ease at which people lost jobs, they lost livelihoods. I had rural hospitals in my area that did not have a single case of COVID in their rural community that had to shut down and people not get care that they did need for cancer, and some passed away because of those kind of things. And, time after time, we had people's lives that are destroyed, and we have not seen the same sort of—once the new data came available, we did not see a change of course.

And you'll point out, for example, on the schools, that the CDC, you know, put out the guidelines, for example. But we know that those guidelines end up being protection from lawsuits. It's, "If you don't want to be sued, you'd better follow the guidelines." So they are not mandates, de facto mandates, but they turn out to be such a mandate.

And when the science began to change—we all understand that in the first couple weeks, first few weeks, even a couple months, we were all trying to figure it out. I think there's a lot of grace for that.

The concern is that, as the science became available, there wasn't like a, "Oh, maybe we should consider the lab leak theory," "Oh, maybe we should consider natural immunity." We never heard this messaging coming from you or from anyone else who stood on the sidelines talking about these things. And it's left the American people with a tremendous distrust.

I want to talk a little bit about the grant process. My understanding from your testimony to us—it says that the NIH process

for awarding grants is that, basically, a research proposal goes to a peer-review committee to receive a priority score. Then it goes to an advisory council for NIH personnel. It receives a final—basically, the group votes on it. And then eventually it ends up on your desk for signature, right?

Now, you said in that that sometimes, if I recall correctly, those grants are often approved en bloc, en masse, when they're voted on, and then you sign off on them.

Dr. FAUCI. That's correct.

Mr. CLOUD. This is one of the things that's really troubling to the American people. Because they look at their lives being destroyed, and there's no one to hold accountable, because these systems of accountability have become systems of plausible deniability.

And so your name is on every single grant, but yet you absolve yourself of any sort of responsibility by saying, well, you know, it goes to this Committee that's, you know—that has a number of people on it, and they're approved en bloc. And so there's no accountability for anything, any of the taxpayer dollars that are going forth.

Dr. FAUCI. I disagree with you, Congressman. Because, if you look at the number of grants, we fund thousands of grants. It would be physically impossible for me to go through every single grant in a detailed way to understand it. That is true not only for me but for virtually every institute at the NIH.

Mr. CLOUD. Then why does your signature go on it?

Dr. FAUCI. Because somebody has to sign off on it, and you trust the expertise and the competence of the staff that go over—

Mr. CLOUD. And what is the mechanism—

Dr. FAUCI [continuing]. It very carefully.

Mr. CLOUD [continuing]. For holding people accountable?

Dr. WENSTRUP. The gentleman's time has expired.

I now recognize Ms. Ross from North Carolina for 5 minutes of questions.

Ms. ROSS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank you, Dr. Fauci, for your voluntary testimony today; also, for so much grace in your 14 hours of testimony.

And I again want to thank you for your service and your patience. It's truly remarkable. Because it bears repeating, let me just remind everyone that, after 15 months, my Republican colleagues' extreme allegations against you remain unsubstantiated. Unsubstantiated.

And, now, during your 2-day closed-door interview in January, you discussed a number of topics regarding the public health response to the COVID-19 pandemic, some of which we've touched on briefly, but I just want to dive in a little bit deeper here.

For example, you discussed, both then and here with Congresswoman Castor, the recommendation that we maintain six feet of distance between one another to reduce the spread of COVID-19. And you discussed how social distancing recommendations were developed, that you yourself didn't pick this six feet, and it was just really kind of a guideline in the moment.

In your view, though, do social distancing recommendations and other public health measures to reduce transmission save lives?

Dr. FAUCI. Definitely.

Ms. ROSS. OK.

I'd also like to go back and take a deeper dive into the COVID-19 vaccine discussion that we just had, and you were also asked about that during your interview in January.

In the Select Subcommittee, we've heard suggestions that the vaccine was ineffective because of breakthrough infections that occur after vaccination. We just heard about that right here.

But, as I understand it, perhaps the strongest measure of COVID-19 vaccines' effectiveness is the reduction of severe disease and death, not necessarily getting a milder form of COVID.

Could you talk about that a little bit?

Dr. FAUCI. Yes. It's very clear that, when you're dealing with many vaccines but particularly when you're looking at COVID, as I mentioned—and I'll repeat it quickly for you—that, early on, there was a degree, not as much as against severe disease, of protection against infection. Unfortunately, that protection against infection, which is related to transmissibility, waned rather rapidly, in a matter of months.

What has stood firm well, much better than transmission and much better than infection, is the ability to prevent someone from hospitalizations and deaths.

And, in fact, the curves, Congresswoman, are stunning. When you look at the deaths and hospitalizations of people who are unvaccinated, it's like this.

[Indicating.] When you look at the deaths and hospitalizations for people who are vaccinated and boosted, it's like this.

[Indicating.] The difference is profound. When you're dealing with infection, again, less so, because of the waning of protection against infection.

Ms. ROSS. Well, and that was also confirmed by a Commonwealth Fund December 2022 report, which came out 2 years after the Biden administration's effort to get COVID-19 vaccines in arms, and your effort too, that it prevented more than 3 million deaths and averted 18 million hospitalizations. And that came out in 2022, but it seems to corroborate what you're saying.

Dr. FAUCI. Indeed. And \$1.15 trillion in healthcare costs.

Ms. ROSS. Thank you for that add.

One pillar of the vaccine requirements was to have an increased uptake in the COVID-19 vaccines. And that, at the time, was supported by leading physicians, including the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and more.

Were the vaccine requirements a clinically sound tool for improving uptake of a safe and effective vaccine?

Dr. FAUCI. Yes. You would like people to get vaccinated voluntarily, realizing the important effect on it, but the fact that people were vaccinated by whatever the motivation was clearly saved many, many lives.

Ms. ROSS. And just with the 17 seconds I have, what steps can public health officials take to bolster confidence in these life-saving interventions, since there has been so much misinformation circulating?

Dr. FAUCI. That's going to be very difficult, Congresswoman, because there is so much mis- and disinformation around that we've



got to do a better job of reaching out and trying to get the correct information. But that's difficult when you have a very energetic group of people continually spreading mis- and disinformation about vaccines. We've got to be more proactive in putting out the facts and the data and the information that's correct.

Ms. ROSS. Thank you very much for your testimony.

And I'll yield back.

Dr. WENSTRUP. I now recognize Dr. Joyce from Pennsylvania for 5 minutes of questions.

Dr. JOYCE. Thank you, Chairman Wenstrup, for convening this important hearing.

And thank you, Dr. Fauci, for testifying.

Dr. Fauci, one of the controversial regulations of the pandemic was the six-foot distancing rule. This rule became an important policy consideration in subsequent regulations. However, you testified recently, and I'm quoting, this six-foot rule "sort of just appeared."

Do you think that a rule that "sort of just appeared" is substantial justification for the regulations that we saw based on that six-foot rule?

Dr. FAUCI. Congressman, thank you for that question. I answered that, but I'll summarize it briefly for you.

When saying it "just appeared," it came from the CDC—

Dr. JOYCE. OK. You stated that earlier.

What was your relationship with the CDC when you saw a regulation which was not based in the current science?

Dr. FAUCI. Well, when I say it was not based in science, I meant a prospective clinical trial to determine whether 6-foot was better than 3, was better than 10. What—

Dr. JOYCE. But once we realized that the virus was not spread by droplets and was aerosolized, did you feel an indication to go back to the CDC and say, let's base this on science, let's get rid of this six-foot rule?

This six-foot rule crippled businesses.

Dr. FAUCI. Right.

Dr. JOYCE. It allowed students to stay at home and not learn. Americans suffered. And that suffering continues, because the fracture of trust in American scientists continues to this day.

Did you not feel an obligation, for something that just sort of appeared, not to go back to the CDC and say, let's base this on what we know?

Dr. FAUCI. It was a CDC decision, and it was clear—

Dr. JOYCE. Were you dialoguing with the CDC?

Dr. FAUCI. Excuse me?

Dr. JOYCE. Were you in communication with the CDC?

Dr. FAUCI. CDC was part of the coronavirus response team, yes.

Dr. JOYCE. And you didn't feel an obligation to go to them and say, look, Americans aren't going to trust—

Dr. FAUCI. Yes.

Dr. JOYCE [continuing]. Us, we're providing them with misinformation?

Dr. FAUCI. We had discussions at the White House about that. We did. But the CDC's decision—and it was their decision to make, and they made it.

Dr. JOYCE. And you didn't feel an obligation, as the lead scientist at the NIH, to challenge that?

Dr. FAUCI. I've challenged the CDC multiple times——

Dr. JOYCE. Publicly on this regard?

Dr. FAUCI. Excuse me?

Dr. JOYCE. Publicly you challenged them on this six-foot distancing rule?

Dr. FAUCI. It is not appropriate to be publicly challenging a sister organization.

Dr. JOYCE. Do you agree that Americans now have lost their trust in science, in lead science, from government because of misinformation like this?

Dr. FAUCI. Well, I—you know, when you talk about misinformation, I think that you have to be careful. That's not disinformation. It was information that ultimately proved, when you put the aerosolization in, that——

Dr. JOYCE. That it was not an effective rule——

Dr. FAUCI. All right.

Dr. JOYCE [continuing]. To have six feet of distancing.

Dr. Fauci, let's move on. On April 21, Dr. Morens wrote to Dr. Daszak in an email that "there is no worry about FOIAs. I can either send stuff to Tony on his private Gmail, hand it to him at work, or at his house. He is too smart to let colleagues send him stuff that could cause trouble."

Do you realize that this impact still considers today? This is your lead, trusted researcher who works with you, your advisor. Do you realize the impact of that?

Dr. FAUCI. It was a terrible thing, it was wrong, and it was inappropriate, and he——

Dr. JOYCE. Thank you. I think we——

Dr. FAUCI [continuing]. Should not have said that.

Dr. JOYCE. I think we all agree it was incredibly inappropriate.

Recently, in an op-ed that Senator Roger Marshall published just yesterday, he raised concern about HHS FOIA compliance following your testimony in front of the Senate HELP Committee.

Dr. Fauci, what involvement did you have in HHS not responding to FOIA requests following your testimony in the Senate in 2021?

Dr. FAUCI. I had no role whatsoever in anything to do with the request. When FOIA is made, it doesn't go directly to a person like me. It goes to a department, which then takes care of it. So, I don't have any role, one way or the other, in FOIA.

Dr. JOYCE. Let's go on.

Were you aware that NIAID employees conducting official work on unofficial emails and inappropriately assisting grantees during your time as the Director?

Dr. FAUCI. I was not aware of that as it was occurring. It, obviously, came out during the Committee hearings. But I was not aware of that as it was occurring.

Dr. JOYCE. And I think that you put an exclamation point on how important these hearings are.

Dr. Fauci, would you agree that this demonstrates the need for more accountability and increased oversight of NIAID?

Dr. FAUCI. What you saw, I believe, with Dr. Morens was an aberrancy and an outlier. The individuals at the NIH and NIAID are a very committed group of individuals, and this one instance that you point out is an aberrancy and an outlier. That does not—

Dr. JOYCE. From your senior advisor for 20 years.

Dr. FAUCI. Well, he is—well, the title is senior advisor. We wrote scientific papers together. He didn't advise me, as I mentioned—

Dr. JOYCE. Are your senior advisors not trusted staff?

Dr. FAUCI. Again, I told you that his title was senior advisor, but he is not an advisor on policy. He writes—

Dr. JOYCE. That's very confusing to have someone's title—

Dr. FAUCI. Right.

Dr. JOYCE [continuing]. And not having that to be their obligation.

Dr. FAUCI. But that is the fact, though.

Dr. JOYCE. I think that that supports what we said. There needs to be more oversight, and there needs to be more accountability.

Mr. Chairman, my time has expired, but these points are very clear to all of us today in this hearing room.

I yield back.

Dr. WENSTRUP. I now recognize Mr. Garcia from California for 5 minutes.

Oh, he left?

I now recognize Ms. Greene from Georgia for 5 minutes of questions.

Ms. GREENE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Fauci, you were quoted on CBS' "Face the Nation" saying, "It's easy to criticize, but they're really criticizing science, because I represent science."

Do you represent science, Mr. Fauci?

Dr. FAUCI. I am a scientist who uses the scientific method to gain information.

Ms. GREENE. Yes. You said you represent science.

Do you represent science, Mr. Fauci, yes or no?

Dr. FAUCI. Again—

Ms. GREENE. Yes or no?

Dr. FAUCI. No, that's not a yes or no—

Ms. GREENE. Yes, it's a yes or no.

Dr. FAUCI. I don't think it is.

Ms. GREENE. OK. Well, we'll take that as a you don't know what you represent.

Dr. Fauci. Oh, I—

Ms. GREENE. But this—as Director of the NIH, you did sign off on these so-called scientific experiments. And as a dog lover, I want to tell you, this is disgusting and evil, what you signed off on, and these experiments that happened to beagles paid for by the American taxpayer. And I want you to know Americans don't pay their taxes for animals to be tortured like this.

So the type of science that you are representing, Mr. Fauci, is abhorrent, and it needs to stop.

Mr. Fauci, you also represent the type of science where you confess that you made up the COVID rules, including—

Dr. FAUCI. I didn't hear what you said.

Ms. GREENE [continuing]. Six feet social distancing and masking of children. You just——

Dr. FAUCI. I never said I made anything up.

Ms. GREENE. You admitted that you made it up, you made it up as you went.

Dr. FAUCI. I never said I made it up.

Ms. GREENE. So are you saying this is fake news, Mr. Fauci?

Dr. FAUCI. I didn't say I made anything up.

Ms. GREENE. What did you say?

Dr. FAUCI. I said that it is not based in science and it just appeared.

Ms. GREENE. But this is science?

Dr. FAUCI. What do dogs have to do with anything that we're talking about today?

Ms. GREENE. These are scientific experiments. This is what you signed off on.

But you also told the American people they had to distance by six feet, they had to wear masks.

But let's also talk a little bit further about the type of science that you represent.

"NIH scientists made \$710 million in royalties from drug makers," a fact that's been hidden.

Let's talk about the fact about, is it right for scientists and doctors getting paid by the American people, government taxpayer paychecks, to get patents where they're paid millions and hundreds of millions of dollars in royalty fees, especially when the NIH and these government agencies, the most powerful agencies in our country, are recommending medical suggestions and advice and making up guidelines, like six feet distancing and masking of children?

Do you think that's appropriate? Do the American people deserve to be abused like that, Mr. Fauci? Because you're not Dr., you're Mr. Fauci in my few minutes.

Dr. FAUCI. Am I going to be allowed to answer the question?

Ms. GREENE. No, I don't need your answer.

I want to talk about this right here.

Mr. Fauci——

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Chairman, objection.

Ms. GREENE. I reclaim my time.

Mr. RASKIN. Objection.

Ms. GREENE. I reclaim my time. I reclaim my time, Mr. Raskin.

Dr. WENSTRUP. The gentlelady will suspend.

Mr. RASKIN. Point of order.

Dr. WENSTRUP. The gentlelady will suspend.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Chairman——

Dr. WENSTRUP. Point of order.

Mr. RASKIN [continuing]. In terms of the rules of decorum, are we allowed to deny that a doctor is a doctor just because we don't want him to be a doctor?

Ms. GREENE. Yes. Because in my time that man does not deserve to have a license. As a matter of fact, it should be revoked, and he belongs in prison.

Dr. WENSTRUP. The gentlelady will suspend.

The gentlelady should recognize the doctor as a doctor.

Mr. MFUME. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, is this what we have become? Is this what we have devolved into, no decorum?

Ms. GREENE. You know what, we can do that hearing about the poor men that were injected with syphilis, because I support you in that. That's horrific.

VOICE. I would urge—

Ms. GREENE. And this government that does things like that to Americans doesn't have decorum to the American people.

Mr. GARCIA. Mr. Chairman—

Dr. WENSTRUP. The gentleman is out of order.

Mr. GARCIA. Point of regular order, please.

Dr. WENSTRUP. The gentleman is out of order.

Mr. GARCIA. Decorum.

Dr. WENSTRUP. I recognize a point of order.

Go ahead with your point of order.

Mr. GARCIA. No. I mean, I was going to say what Mr. Raskin said, is that it's completely unacceptable to deny Dr. Fauci, who's here, a respected member of the medical community, his title. And that's actually a personal attack on his character.

Dr. WENSTRUP. And I have instructed her—

Ms. GREENE. He's not respected.

Dr. WENSTRUP. I've instructed her to address him as doctor.

The gentlelady shall continue.

Ms. GREENE. I'm not addressing him as doctor.

Let's talk about—

Mr. MFUME. And I would—

Ms. GREENE. Let's talk about this—

Mr. MFUME. Mr. Chairman, I would—

Ms. GREENE. I'm reclaiming my time.

Mr. MFUME [continuing]. Move that the woman's—

Ms. GREENE. I'm reclaiming my time.

Mr. MFUME [continuing]. Words get taken down then.

Ms. GREENE. I'm reclaiming my time.

VOICE. Point of order.

Dr. WENSTRUP. Suspend.

A Member can only move to have words—I'm sorry. The issues we are debating are important ones that Members feel deeply about. And while vigorous disagreement is part of the legislative process, as I said at the beginning, Members are reminded that we must adhere to established standards of decorum in debate.

This is a reminder that it is a violation of House rules and the rules of this Committee to engage in personalities regarding other Members or to question the motives of a colleague. Remarks of that type are not permitted by the rules and are not in keeping with the best traditions of our Committee. The Chair will enforce these rules of decorum at all times and urges all Members to be mindful of their remarks.

Does the gentleman from California have anything further?

Mr. GARCIA. We should take—we should take her words down.

Mr. MFUME. Yes. I made—I offered that her words be taken down, Mr. Chair.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Point of order, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. GREENE. Mr. Chairman, I'd like to make a point of order.

Dr. WENSTRUP. Mr. Griffith is recognized—Mr. Griffith—

Ms. GREENE [continuing]. Because they accuse us of worshipping President Trump.

Dr. WENSTRUP. The gentlelady—

Ms. GREENE. We don't worship President Trump.

Dr. WENSTRUP. The gentlelady will suspend.

Mr. Griffith, you have a point of order.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Mr. Chairman, while it may not be polite, I believe the rule only applies to Members of this body, the Senate, and the President of the United States. I do not believe that it applies—the rule on taking down words does not apply to a witness.

Again, I'm not condoning the words. I'm just relating—or asking whether or not it applies to individuals who just happen to be here in front of us.

Dr. WENSTRUP. I agree. The Chair overrules the point of order by the gentleman from Maryland but asks that Members please afford all other Members the respect they're entitled, refrain from using rhetoric that could be construed as an attack on the motives or character of another Member or the witness.

You may proceed.

Ms. GREENE. Thank you.

This was a time in history where you got to throw out the first pitch at the Washington Nationals baseball game, while Americans were forced to stay home and watch such events that they love from at home, alone, on their televisions.

And what a hypocrisy this picture shows. Here you are without your mask, with empty seats everywhere. Remember the cardboard cutout fans? That was one of the most insulting things to Americans, having to watch the games from home where you got to go and enjoy the game and sit right next to people, not following the six feet of distancing, not wearing your mask, and everyone else was forced to stay home and stop enjoying life.

And your science—here your science is displayed perfectly in this picture where children, children in school, were put in plastic bubbles because of your science, your repulsive, evil science.

And let's go back to your very own email. You said earlier you don't use email. Oh, you do. Right here, this is your own email where you said, "The typical mask you buy in the drugstore is not really effective in keeping out virus . . . I do not recommend that you wear a mask." This is your email. This is your own words.

But yet children, children all over America were forced to wear masks, healthy children forced to wear masks, muzzled in their schools. And then they were forced to learn from home because of your so-called science and your medical suggestions, while you and all your cronies get paid from Big Pharma.

You know what this Committee should be doing? We should be recommending you to be prosecuted. We should be writing a criminal referral because you should be prosecuted for crimes against humanity. You belong in prison, Dr. Fauci.

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Chairman, I have another point of order.

Dr. WENSTRUP. I recognize Mrs. Dingell.

Mrs. DINGELL. I just want to make sure the record is clear.

Dr. Fauci testified that he did not use his personal email for official business. He did not say he did not use email. And I think

today this particular has been full of lies and disregard and disrespect, and we need to stick to facts.

Dr. WENSTRUP. Thank you.

The gentlelady's time had expired before the point of order.

I now recognize Mr. Garcia from California for 5 minutes of questions.

Mr. GARCIA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Fauci, I am so sorry you just had to sit through that. That was completely irresponsible. Quite frankly, some we're hearing—this might be the most insane hearing I've actually attended. I've only been in Congress for a year and a half, but I am so sorry that you are subjected to those level of attacks and insanity.

Your, quote/unquote, "so-called science" that the gentlewoman is referring to has saved millions of lives in this country and around the world, and I want to thank you for that.

I also think it's important to note that my opinion is that you are an American hero, and your team has done more to save lives than all 435 Members of this body on both sides of the aisle.

You guys have worked not just during this pandemic but over time to save millions of lives in this country and across the world.

We lost 1.1 million American lives, 1.1 American lives, 7 million lives around the world. We were having 9/11-like events, death events, daily in this country, losing 4,000, 5,000 people every single day.

I was mayor during the time of the pandemic. I remember how painful it was to close businesses, to shut down schools. But how quickly we forget the pain and how scared we were as a country. We were washing our groceries as they were coming in. We were keeping seniors at a distance. The tragedy that was happening in our nursing homes. Thousands of people were dying a day.

And you and your team of the best and the brightest scientists in this country and the world were doing everything that you could and working night and day to save more and more of those lives.

A lot of my colleagues know that my mom was a healthcare worker during the pandemic. My mom died of COVID. My stepfather died of COVID. I lost both of my parents during the pandemic.

So I take this very personally, especially when other Members of this body, who are tasked to be responsible and to actually help the American people, attack medical professionals like you and across the world.

Vaccines. The vaccine that you and your team helped foster has saved millions of American lives.

These attacks are ridiculous.

Now, even before this Committee started—I want to point a few things out.

Even before this Committee started, this same Member that just went on this rant introduced the Fire Fauci Act and promoted on a podcast saying that COVID was a bioweapon. That is how insane some of these comments are.

And I want to quote this. This is a quote from this same Member.

“I don’t believe in evolution. These viruses were not making people sick until they created them. They weaponized these viruses to be able to attach to our cells and make us sick. It’s a bioweapon.”

The “they created them,” sir, is you. They are attacking you and our medical community for actually creating COVID that has caused the deaths of millions. And we know that these extreme comments are targeting public health officials across the country.

I also want to show you this other comment, same Member who just attacked you.

“The Fauci-funded Wuhan lab created the virus.”

This is so crazy and irresponsible.

In this post, this same Member of this Committee is accusing you of orchestrating a global conspiracy to create COVID on purpose just to make people get vaccines, that you’ve done this, sir.

This same Member routinely promotes complete misinformation about vaccines and actually has encouraged the routine prevention of vaccinations that even eliminate diseases like the measles.

Dr. Fauci, you brought together our Nation and the world’s best and brightest scientists to take on COVID and create a vaccine that works.

I want to ask you a question. I want to be crystal clear for the public.

You brought together the world’s and America’s best scientists. Do you believe that the vaccine that you all helped create and ensure is safe and effective for the public?

Dr. FAUCI. Yes, and its track record has proven that.

Mr. GARCIA. And do you also agree that it saved hundreds of thousands and possibly millions of lives in America and across the world?

Dr. FAUCI. That is absolutely correct, and it’s very clear that it saved millions of lives here and throughout the world. The Europeans have done the same studies that we have, and the data are incontrovertible that they save lives.

Mr. GARCIA. Sir, and do you think the American public should listen to America’s brightest and best doctors and scientists or instead listen to podcasters, conspiracy theorists, and unhinged Facebook memes?

Dr. FAUCI. No. Listening to people who you’ve just described is going to do nothing but harm people because they will deprive themselves of lifesaving interventions, which has happened.

And, you know, some have done studies. Peter Hotez has done an analysis of this and shows that in people who refuse to get vaccinated for any of a variety of reasons probably responsible for an additional two to three hundred thousand deaths in this country.

Mr. GARCIA. Thank you, sir, and your entire team for saving lives in this country. And I’m sorry you have to continue going on with these attacks.

I yield back.

[Disturbance in the hearing room.]

Mr. GARCIA. Oh, thank you. You’re not allowed. Thank you very much.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Chairman, can you have her removed from the—please just have her removed.



Dr. WENSTRUP. Please, excuse me. I ask the Capitol Police to escort.

Mr. GARCIA. Yes. Thank you. She can be removed.

[Disturbance in hearing room.]

Mr. GARCIA. You can be removed. Actually you're not allowed to speak.

Mr. RASKIN. Take your Starbucks with you.

Dr. WENSTRUP. Your time has expired, Mr. Garcia.

Mr. Raskin, you're out of line.

Your times have expired.

I now recognize Dr. Jackson from Texas for 5 minutes of questions.

Dr. JACKSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Fauci, I have to say I, as so many Americans, am deeply disappointed in your actions during a critical time in our Nation's history while you were in key leadership roles as the Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease and as the chief medical advisor to President Biden.

Put quite simply, you failed miserably, in my opinion.

Based on all we have learned during the pandemic and all that we have since learned through this Committee's work, I believe your failures stem from both an effort of self-preservation manifested by a series of lies and cover-up and by a total failure of leadership.

It was obvious to everyone that you and your organization, NIH, had a lot to lose if the American people were to discover that COVID-19 was most likely leaked from a lab in Wuhan, China, and that you, via EcoHealth Alliance and Peter Daszak, actually funded this research, and that this lab was actively and recklessly conducting gain-of-function research.

As such, you did everything in your power to deflect and cover up this possibility. You even recruited others to help you in this effort.

Unfortunately, this cost our country and the world valuable time, time that may have led to answers regarding the origin, may have blunted the spread, and would have almost certainly saved lives.

While I think most of us have known all along what I just described, what I have been appalled to discover through sworn testimony to this Committee is the level at which you and those that worked with you went to cover up the obvious.

Just a few examples, and I know these have been touched on, but they're important for everyone to hear.

Dr. Lawrence Tabak, former Acting Director of NIH, testified that under the generic definition, that NIH did, in fact, fund gain-of-function research.

This was based on a definition that was initially used by NIH and a definition that was abandoned and removed from the website in October 2021 and replaced by a new, much more detailed definition with a much higher bar that you have since conveniently used to define gain-of-function testing and to deny what Dr. Tabak has since confirmed.

He also said that EcoHealth Alliance failed to properly and promptly report that their research violated the terms of the grant, something that went completely unaddressed during your watch.

Dr. Morens, your senior advisor, who you have tried today to distance yourself from, but whose large volume of emails clearly demonstrate that you had a very close and personal relationship with and who reported to you directly, has openly bragged about how he subverted FOIA requests.

I remind you that the law requires you and your former organization to comply with Freedom of Information Act requests. It is not optional.

If you or your employees or your organization that you oversaw were systemically avoiding transparency and illegally hiding or destroying documents that rightfully belong to the American people, then you should be criminally charged and they should be as well.

In addition, Dr. Gregory Folkers, your chief of staff, also engaged in illegal practices in which he crafted messages using symbols instead of letters to avoid FOIA exposure.

In an email April 2020 from Dr. Morens to Peter Daszak, he says, quote, "There are things I can't say."

Well, I wonder what he couldn't say.

He also went on to say, quote, "Except Tony is aware and I have learned there are ongoing efforts within NIH to steer through this with minimal damage to you, Peter, and colleagues, and to NIH and NIAID," end quote.

And then a few days later he said, quote, "I have reason to believe that there are already efforts going on to protect you," end quote.

In February 2021, Dr. Morens wrote to Boston University scientist Gerald Keusch saying, quote, "I learned from our FOIA lady here how to make emails disappear after I'm FOIA'd but before the search starts, so I think we are all safe," end quote.

Dr. Fauci, I want to know what you were being protected from and what you needed to be safe from.

I'm going to go on because I have little time here.

He went on to say, quote, "Plus I deleted most of the earlier emails after sending to gmail."

Once again, illegal and an actual crime.

Dr. Morens noted in another email to Dr. Keusch saying, quote, "I learned the tricks last year from an old friend, Marg Moore, who heads our FOIA office and also hates FOIAs," end quote.

It is absolutely amazing to me that Dr. Morens and Marg Moore still have jobs and taxpayers are still paying their salaries.

Dr. Morens wrote to Dr. Daszak in April 2021, quote, "PS, I forgot to say there is no worry about FOIAs. I can either send stuff to Tony on his private email or hand it to him to work or at his house. He is too smart to let colleagues send him stuff that could cause trouble," end quote.

Apparently, you neglected to surround yourself with equally smart individuals.

Dr. Morens wrote to another collaborator, Peter Hotez, in June 2021, at Baylor College of Medicine, that he had deleted all of his emails related to COVID origin when, quote, "the shit hit the fan," end quote. He said, quote, "I feel pretty sure Tony would too. The best way to avoid FOIA hassles is to delete all emails when you learn the subject is pretty sensitive."

In October 2021, Dr. Morens wrote to Peter Daszak, quote, “Peter, from Tony’s numerous recent comments to me, and from what Francis has been vocal about over the past 5 years, we are trying to protect you,” and they are protecting their own reputations as well, end quote.

I’ll just jump ahead.

The American people can rest assured that we are going to continue to pursue answers and we continue to push for full accountability from you and your colleagues despite continuing efforts to try to cover this up.

Dr. Fauci, history will not be kind to you, and you’ll be known as the man who put his personal interests before the interests of the American people, the very people that you were supposed to be protecting.

Your actions, along with several others we have had before this Committee, have completely eroded America’s trust in our public health system and the agency that you represented for half a century.

With that, I yield back.

Dr. WENSTRUP. The gentleman’s time has expired.

I now recognize Ms. Tokuda from Hawaii for 5 minutes of questions.

Ms. TOKUDA. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I hope I’ll have an additional 30 seconds like the previous gentleman.

And, Dr. Fauci—

Dr. WENSTRUP. I have allowed that today—

Ms. TOKUDA. Thank you.

Dr. WENSTRUP [continuing]. On several occasions.

Ms. TOKUDA. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Dr. Fauci, you deserve better than this. The other side suddenly cares about puppies, ironic given recent book publications, versus the millions of people that you have kept safe and alive over your lifelong commitment to public health.

I’d like to use my time to dispel some of the myths about you that have circulated in right-wing circles.

We can all acknowledge that, yes, suspension of in-person activities during the early days of COVID, it was necessary to save lives and to stop the spread, and it was not without its challenges. It was difficult, particularly for our Nation’s students, like my two sons in public schools, and our business owners. But to completely blame these policies on you, Dr. Fauci, is absolutely ridiculous.

I would like to make the record clear on something. The decision to suspend in-person learning, dining, and other activities, that was not a decision that you were somehow solely responsible for, including in your role as NIAID Director. Is that correct?

Dr. FAUCI. Yes.

Ms. TOKUDA. In fact, these decisions were actually made at the state and local level in communities across the country, like my home state of Hawaii which was particularly aggressive, in part as a response to the Trump administration’s early failure to contain the initial outbreak of the virus. Is that not correct?

Dr. FAUCI. I’m sorry. I did—ma’am, I’m not really hearing you very well. Could you just put your—

Ms. TOKUDA. We’ll put it a little bit closer.

But to be clear, the decisions were actually made at the state and local levels in communities across the country.

Dr. FAUCI. That is correct.

Ms. TOKUDA. OK. Thank you.

Now I'd like to shift topics and turn to the allegation that you sought to suppress opposing viewpoints about the pandemic response.

Over the past 15 months, Majority Members of this Subcommittee have levied the allegation that Federal health officials censored proposals, like the Great Barrington Declaration, which were inconsistent with the overwhelming consensus of the scientific and medical community.

Much attention has been paid to an email Dr. Francis Collins sent you regarding the Great Barrington Declaration where he called for a quick and devastating published takedown of its premises.

To be clear, this was not Dr. Collins suggesting that you suppress or censor the Great Barrington Declaration. Rather, he was suggesting that the points you just explained be memorialized to substantively refute the scientific premises of the Great Barrington Declaration. Is that correct?

Dr. FAUCI. Yes.

Ms. TOKUDA. And there was good reason for Dr. Collins to have substantive concerns. The Great Barrington Declaration proposed lifting mitigation measures for the vast majority of society and preserving them only for certain populations, including the elderly and people with underlying health conditions.

This was months before a vaccination was available and public health systems are already being overwhelmed and thousands of Americans were dying daily.

Dr. Fauci, what percentage of the population did we estimate needed to be infected with COVID before we would achieve so-called herd immunity?

Dr. FAUCI. Herd immunity was very elusive with COVID. And the Great Barrington Declaration was flawed both conceptually and in practice; conceptually that you could shield vulnerable people as if the only vulnerable people are those in nursing homes.

We have tens and tens of millions of vulnerable people that you couldn't possibly shield. People with underlying conditions, the elderly, those would be the individuals. So it would be conceptually impossible to do that.

Herd immunity, as we know, means if you have a virus that doesn't change and a virus in which when you get infected or vaccinated you have highly durable, perhaps lifelong immunity. That's not the case with COVID. We know immunity wanes, and we have multiple variants.

So, in practical purposes, the Great Barrington Declaration was invalid, both conceptually and practically.

Ms. TOKUDA. Thank you, Dr. Fauci.

You've answered a few of my other questions in terms of the fact that for many of us that live in multigenerational communities, thousands, hundreds of thousands, millions more lives would have been impacted by this so-called approach. And given the fact that

the virus' rapid evolution that we have seen since 2020, herd immunity approaches would be absolutely ineffective against COVID.

If you would answer one more question. Considering the mortality rates at the time, how many more deaths might we have seen, just briefly?

Dr. FAUCI. I mean, if we had done that, just let it rip, there very likely would have been another million people would have died, I would imagine.

Ms. TOKUDA. Thank you, Mr. Fauci.

So, it wasn't the Federal Government suppressing the Great Barrington Declaration. Rather, it was about protecting and saving millions of American lives.

The COVID-19 pandemic wasn't some academic exercise. It was real. It was in real time. It was about saving lives in real time.

Theories like herd immunity may seem plausible on paper, but we have to remember that it is based upon the assumption that enough people would have to be infected, and that would likely have meant that our family members, our friends, our neighbors, our constituents, especially those in our most marginalized multigenerational rural communities, would have died.

So, thank you, Dr. Fauci. I want to thank you, not blame you. Thank you for your science. Thank you for your science that have saved millions of American lives, kept us safe, including my children, many of our families right here on this dais.

And thank you for clarifying these points for the record and for all of your efforts to keep us safe during the pandemic and so many other health crises we have faced over the decades that you have served.

Mahalo, Mr. Chair, and I yield back.

Dr. WENSTRUP. I now recognize Dr. McCormick for 5 minutes of questions.

Dr. MCCORMICK. Thank you, Dr. Wenstrup, Chairman.

It's been insinuated that politicians—only politicians, only bloggers, only conspiracy theorists are disagreeing with you.

I want to point out that I'm probably the only Member of Congress that actually treated patients during the pandemic, from the very beginning to the very end of the pandemic, during night shifts in the ER, thousands of patients during that time.

And in 2020, I was censored, my medical license was threatened, because I disagreed with bureaucrats, literally taken off the internet as a person who was treating patients with leading-edge technologies, developing theories, but doing my very best, but being censored by the U.S. Government, for the first time stepping in and taking the place of medical professionals as the experts in healthcare.

Any dissent surrounding COVID-19 treatments, mask mandates, and any public policy surrounding the pandemic was immediately labeled as anti-science. I watched as public health officials and politicians told my patients what treatment options were best for them, regardless of their comorbidities or their medical history.

Despite my education and my training and my experience, my opinions were relegated to conspiracy and misinformation by so-called healthcare experts who had never treated a patient throughout the entire pandemic.

This has been a black eye on medicine and has highlighted why government should never, never insert itself in between patients and their healthcare providers. The American people deserve to make medical decisions through conversations with their physicians rather than politically motivated mandates.

Dr. Fauci, did you ever treat a patient for COVID during the pandemic?

Dr. FAUCI. I was part of a team that was at the NIH that took care—we didn't take care of many of them because—

Dr. MCCORMICK. OK. So not hands on. Got it. Thank you.

Why would I be criticized by a bureaucrat for doing my very best as a healthcare—this is a rhetorical question. But why? Why would the government, who's never treated a patient for COVID? You can read all the things you want, but you're not there. You're not seeing patients. You're not watching people die, intubating patients right there with that disease in your face, watching it happen, watching the development of this disease and actually learning from it. But I'm being told by bureaucrats what's right and wrong.

And what's funny is everything I was censored on, I was proven to be right. Pretty crazy, isn't it?

You said in your interview that you gave as part of an audio book written by Michael Specter that you believed an institution should make it hard for people to live their lives so they'd feel pressured to get vaccinated.

Could we run the audio clip on that, please?

[Audio recording played.]

Dr. MCCORMICK. Thank you.

Are all objections to COVID vaccinations ideological bullshit, Dr. Fauci?

Dr. FAUCI. No, they're not.

Dr. MCCORMICK. Thank you.

Dr. FAUCI. And that's not what I was referring to.

Dr. MCCORMICK. Well, in reference to making it hard for people to get education, traveling, working, I'd say it very much was in context, and I take great offense to this.

Ms. Allison Williams testified before this Committee about losing her job because she sought an exemption for ESPN's vaccine mandate which came from a recommendation from bureaucrats like yourself.

She and her husband were actively working with a fertility expert, a physician, on how to get pregnant and agreed with the premise that she was young, healthy, wanted to get pregnant, and shouldn't get the vaccination for medical purposes.

But she was fired, because you made it hard, just like you said in your statement, because you didn't want to make sure that the ideological bullshit got in the way of her working, of living her life, of making a medical decision with her healthcare professional.

I think America should take great offense to this. That's exactly what you meant when you said making it hard for people to live without getting a vaccination. You affected people's ability to work, travel, be educated, to actually flourish in America, in fact to self-determine as well given God-given rights. Shame on you.

Dr. Fauci, you've become Dr. Fear. Americans do not hate science. I don't hate science. The American people hate having their freedoms taken from them.

You inspired and created a fear through mask mandates, school closures, vaccine mandates that have destroyed the American people's trust in our public health institutions.

This fear you created will continue to have ripple effects over generations to come. You have already seen its effects in education, in the economy, and everything else. Quite frankly, you said, "If you disagree with me, you disagree with science."

Dr. Fauci, I disagree with you because I disagree with fear.

And with that, I yield.

Dr. WENSTRUP. I now recognize Mr. Moskowitz from Florida for 5 minutes of questions.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Fauci, good to be with you here today.

I was not here, but I saw a Member of this Committee questioned whether or not you represent science and tried to make that in some offensive way. I just want you to know most Americans don't think she represents Congress.

[Audio recording played.]

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. So I hear now double Fauci.

So, I don't want you to be offended by that.

I actually, similar to Representative McCormick, who was serving in the field as a doctor during COVID, I was running the logistics operation and the Florida response as the director of emergency management for the state of Florida for Governor DeSantis.

So, I was deploying masks and gowns and gloves. We were setting up field hospitals, we were setting up testing sites, we were setting up vaccine sites throughout the pandemic.

And the one thing that became clear to me: As a country we were not prepared. In fact, we actually had many preparations for a pandemic, but both the states collectively and the Federal Government threw that out and kind of was just making it up as we go.

One of the things I wanted to ask you—and I understand you're not in the response field—but do you feel since you've left that we are better prepared today than we were several years ago when COVID hit?

Dr. FAUCI. In some respects, we are; but in others, I'm still disappointed. And I think one of the things that was really a problem with the response was the degree of divisiveness that we had in the country about a lack of a coherent response where we were having people, for reasons that had nothing to do with public health or science, refusing to adhere to public health intervention measures.

What I think that we will do better, hopefully, is that the CDC, I believe, has now recognized some of the failings of the lack of communication and interaction between the Federal response and the local public health officials.

One of the weaknesses that we had in the United States that other countries didn't have was a disconnect between the healthcare system and the public health system, whereas the CDC can't demand information from local public health individuals, they have to volunteer to give it to them. And it isn't given to them in real time. So we were at a disadvantage.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. Oh, no question. I saw that. I saw how—the lack of investment in technology, right? We had states trying to share information with the Federal Government using, you know, Windows 2000.

Dr. FAUCI. Or fax machines.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. Fax machines, exactly.

Dr. FAUCI. Yes.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. And so, you know, we spent \$7 trillion in two packages in two administrations. And one of my concerns is, is that I feel that, especially in supply chain, I feel like we're not that much better off than we were before COVID. Am I wrong in that assessment?

Dr. FAUCI. Yes, I don't think you're wrong, but I hope that—the CDC has made it very clear that they are trying to change that and correct that deficit of a separation between the local and the Federal CDC so that we can get information in real time.

It was very frustrating for us that often we had to go to the U.K. or South Africa or Israel to get real-time information because they had a connection between what was going on on the ground and their public health system. So they knew right away what was happening. We didn't.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. Dr. Fauci, you talked about how, you know, we live in partisan times, a lot of misinformation. And, you know, colleagues on this body said, you know, you should be, you know, charged and found guilty. Of course, the only one that that's happened to is your former boss.

But, you know, the question I have is, when you saw a lot of that disinformation, whether it was, you know, we can use a disinfectant to do, like, a cleaning or do light in the body or that, you know, China is working super hard, President Xi's got it contained, all of the stuff that was being put out, were you concerned—you know, what was your feeling at that time working in the administration seeing that come from the podium?

Dr. FAUCI. Well, I was very frustrated by that. It was very clear. I was put in a very difficult position that I didn't like of having to contradict publicly the President of the United States. I took no great pleasure in that, but I felt it was my responsibility to preserve—

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. He must have thought you did a great job. He gave you a commendation right before he left.

Dr. FAUCI. Well, I felt it was my responsibility, you know, to preserve my own personal integrity and my major responsibility to the American public to tell them the truth.

And if I could just take this opportunity. When I was saying that if you attack me, you attack science, I didn't mean that I am science. What I meant was that when the data showed that hydroxychloroquine does not work and there are people saying, "Oh, it does, I'll give it to people," and we know it can be hurtful to them, then when you're attacking what I'm saying, that the science shows it doesn't work and the science shows that bleach doesn't work, that when you attack that, you really are attacking science, because science has shown that it doesn't work. That's what I meant when you're attacking me, you're attacking science.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. Thank you, Doctor.



Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Dr. WENSTRUP. The gentleman's time has expired.

I now recognize Mr. Jordan from Ohio for 5 minutes.

Mr. JORDAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Doctor, why was it so important that the virus not have started in a lab?

Dr. FAUCI. We don't know where it started, and that's the reason why I keep an open mind. So I don't know what you mean by, why was it so important? It wasn't important.

Mr. JORDAN. You still don't know where it started? The guys you gave money to figured it out in 3 days.

Dr. FAUCI. No, no, no. They—

Mr. JORDAN. Mr. Andersen said on January 31, 2020, "Virus looks engineered. Virus not consistent with evolutionary theory."

The very next day Dr. Garry said, "I don't know how this happens in nature. It would be easy to do in a lab."

And then 3 days later, shazam, they switch and say it didn't—it has to be nature.

So they figured it out in 3 days, but you still don't know?

Dr. FAUCI. No. In fact, if you look at what they were saying, Congressman Jordan, they were saying that it was not a manufactured virus. It still could have evolved out of a lab—

Mr. JORDAN. Let me read something here to you. In our—

Dr. FAUCI. They're not incompatible.

Mr. JORDAN. In our study on the censorship of the Biden administration working with Big Tech, I want to read you a WhatsApp message from Mark Zuckerberg.

"Can we include that the White House put pressure on us to censor the lab leak theory."

So this is a communication on July 16, 2021, Nick Clegg, Joel Kaplan, Sheryl Sandberg, Mark Zuckerberg. They're certainly feeling the pressure to downplay any lab leak theory and go with the natural origin theory.

Dr. FAUCI. Is there a question there?

Mr. JORDAN. It's coming. One's coming.

Here's another email to Mark Zuckerberg. It says, Subject line: "COVID misinformation. Wuhan lab leak theory. In response to continued public pressure, intense conversations with the new administration, we started removing five COVID claims, including the lab leak theory."

Mr. Zuckerberg responds, "This seems like a good reminder that when we compromise our standards due to pressure from an administration, in either direction, we often later regret it."

Why was it so important the virus not have started in a lab?

Dr. FAUCI. It wasn't so important that the virus not. We don't know. We know—

Mr. JORDAN. Well, it was important to someone in the Biden administration, so much so that the top people at Meta, the top people at Facebook are asking, "Why are we getting all this pressure to downplay the lab leak theory?" And we have an email from June of the same year, June 4, 2021, saying the same thing. It was certainly important to somebody.

Dr. FAUCI. Well, what does that got to do with me?

Mr. JORDAN. I'm asking you because you're the expert on coronavirus. I'm saying why was the administration—

Dr. FAUCI. Am I on this email?

Mr. JORDAN [continuing]. Why was the administration so pushing not to have the lab leak theory as something that was viable.

Dr. FAUCI. I can't answer that. I've kept an open mind throughout the entire process.

Mr. JORDAN. You've kept an open mind. Dr. Fauci, open mind.

Dr. FAUCI. That is correct.

Mr. JORDAN. What happened in those 3 days? Why did Dr. Andersen and—excuse me—Mr. Andersen and Dr. Garry, why did they change their mind 180 degrees? Because what Kristian Andersen says 3 days later, after he said, "Virus looks engineered. Virus not consistent with evolutionary theory," 3 days later he says, "The main crackpot theories going around at the moment relate to this virus being somehow engineered, and that is demonstrably false."

How did they figure all that out in 3 days, Dr. Fauci—

Dr. FAUCI. You can do that—

Mr. JORDAN [continuing]. If you still have an open mind?

Dr. FAUCI. Well, what they did is that—you know, they testified before this Committee what they did. They went back and looked at the sequences and realized that their initial concern was unfounded about that and it did not look at all like it was manufactured. But as they said in their paper, even though they feel it was more likely—

Mr. JORDAN. Three days they figured it out.

Dr. FAUCI. That's exactly. You could do that in 3 days.

Mr. JORDAN. OK.

Dr. FAUCI. You can scan sequences in a day.

Mr. JORDAN. OK.

Dr. FAUCI. You don't need 3 days.

Mr. JORDAN. OK. Who's Robert Redfield?

Dr. FAUCI. The former Director of the CDC.

Mr. JORDAN. Dr. Redfield, right? And he was also on the Coronavirus Task Force. Is that accurate?

Dr. FAUCI. He was a member of the Coronavirus Task Force.

Mr. JORDAN. Here's what he said to this Committee. He said—Redfield said that Fauci and Collins "left him out because Redfield suspected that coronavirus had leaked from the Chinese lab."

Is that accurate?

Dr. FAUCI. Well, he said that, but that's not true.

Mr. JORDAN. You're saying—

Dr. FAUCI. That is incorrect, Congressman.

Mr. JORDAN [continuing]. Dr. Redfield was lying to the Committee—

Dr. FAUCI. No.

Mr. JORDAN [continuing]. When he sat right where you sat?

Dr. FAUCI. When he said that I kept him out, that is an incorrect statement. The roster who was on the phone—

Mr. JORDAN. Was Dr. Redfield in that conference call on February 1 when you had Mr. Andersen and Dr. Garry on that call?

Dr. FAUCI. He was not. And the conference call was put together by Jeremy Farrar. So no one kept him out. He said he was kept out because he felt—

Mr. JORDAN. Did U.S. tax dollars—

Dr. FAUCI. Do you want me to answer the question?

Mr. JORDAN. Yes. I just wondered why he wasn't on the call. It seems to me the head of CDC, part of the Coronavirus Task Force which was formed 2 days prior to that call, would have been on the call.

Dr. FAUCI. Well, the call was arranged by Jeremy Farrar. You should ask him.

Mr. JORDAN. OK. Did U.S. tax dollars flow through a grant recipient to the lab in China?

Dr. FAUCI. I'm sorry? What was—

Mr. JORDAN. Did U.S. tax dollars flow through a grant recipient to the lab in China.

Dr. FAUCI. Yes, of course. It was a subaward to the Wuhan Institute—

Mr. JORDAN. And who approved that award.

Mr. FAUCI. Excuse me?

Mr. JORDAN. And who approved that award? What agency approved that award.

Dr. FAUCI. The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.

Mr. JORDAN. Your agency approved that, right.

Dr. FAUCI. Yes, it did, after—

Mr. JORDAN. Does that have anything to do with this downplaying of the lab leak theory.

Dr. FAUCI. No.

Mr. JORDAN. Nothing to do with it?

Dr. FAUCI. Nothing.

Mr. JORDAN. Do you agree that there was a push to downplay the lab leak theory?

Dr. FAUCI. Not on my part.

Mr. JORDAN. Really?

Dr. FAUCI. Really.

Mr. JORDAN. Wow. I think most of the country would find that amazing.

I've still got 11 seconds.

Dr. FAUCI. Well, look at the facts. I've kept an open mind throughout the entire process.

Mr. JORDAN. All right. I yield back.

Dr. WENSTRUP. I now recognize the Majority Staff for no longer than 30 minutes of questions.

MAJORITY STAFF. Dr. Fauci, it's good to see you again. I want to ask a couple of questions about some of the Members' questions and then get into some follow-ups.

The issue of the CIA trip was brought up. That was brought to us by a whistleblower. That was not an allegation made by the Committee. It was an allegation made by the whistleblower.

You testified at a transcribed interview back in early January. Do you recall me asking you about that allegation?

Dr. FAUCI. About going to the CIA?

MAJORITY STAFF. Yes.

Dr. FAUCI. Yes.

MAJORITY STAFF. And do you recall—and you denied it then as well, and you denied it here today. Do you recall the Subcommittee publishing that you denied it?

Dr. FAUCI. I don't recall.

MAJORITY STAFF. We did.

Dr. FAUCI. You did. OK.

MAJORITY STAFF. We put it out in a press release afterwards that you denied the whistleblower's allegation.

Dr. FAUCI. OK.

MAJORITY STAFF. And then today, during the course of the last couple hours, have any Members on the Majority side of the dais asked you about a trip to the CIA?

Dr. FAUCI. Yes.

MAJORITY STAFF. They have?

Dr. FAUCI. No, they have. I'm sorry. Mitch, I'm not hearing you so well. Let me turn this off.

Mr. MFUME. I have a point of order, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. WENSTRUP. What's the gentleman's point of order?

Mr. MFUME. I have an inquiry about whether or not I'm hearing things or whether or not you just yielded 30 minutes of Committee time to staff.

Dr. WENSTRUP. That is correct, both sides.

Mr. MFUME. And the question that the gentleman just raised was a question that I raised. So apparently he was not listening when I was questioning Dr. Fauci.

Dr. WENSTRUP. Thank you for your point of order.

You may continue.

MAJORITY STAFF. What I asked was we asked you about this in a transcribed interview. You testified that you did not go to the CIA.

Dr. FAUCI. Yes.

MAJORITY STAFF. We published that you refuted that allegation.

Dr. FAUCI. Yes.

MAJORITY STAFF. And then today no Members of the Republican side of the dais have asked you that question. Is that accurate?

Dr. FAUCI. Yes.

MAJORITY STAFF. Thank you.

You've been asked a number of times about your former senior advisor, Dr. Morens, and have said—and I want to make sure I characterize it correctly because it goes a little back and forth—that you didn't conduct official business over a personal email with Dr. Morens.

Has Dr. Morens emailed to your personal email before on nonofficial purposes?

Dr. FAUCI. As I mentioned, we wrote scientific papers together, so he very well may have used that because that's the email I use when I write a scientific paper, right.

MAJORITY STAFF. And that's because NIAID policy allows you to write, on semi-official time, write papers, but you just have to put a disclaimer that this is not the—

Dr. FAUCI. Yes. In other words, if you're doing something as official business, you shouldn't use your emails that are official business. So in order to be compliant with the regulations, you would use a personal email.

MAJORITY STAFF. I appreciate it.

I want to ask about some of the public health policies enacted during the pandemic.

Dr. Francis Collins, the former NIH Director, recently said at an interview, and I'm quoting, "You attach an infinite value to stopping the disease and saving a life. You attach a zero value to whether this actually totally disrupts people's lives, ruins the economy, and has kept many kids out of school in a way that they never quite recovered."

Understanding the COVID Task Force had a lot of voices at the table, is that an accurate description of the public health advisors and then you could fit in other advisors along the way?

Dr. FAUCI. Yes. You know, Mitch, what I believe that Dr. Collins was saying was that we give a advice based on pure public health issues.

It's very, very clear now, retrospectively, looking at the potential collateral negative effects of things like mandating, it would be important for us now, since the purpose of, I believe, why we're here, is to how we can do better next time, is to consider the balance.

I think things that we did in the beginning were in the context of a horrible situation of four to five thousand deaths per day. But that doesn't mean that you don't go back and look and say: Did everything we do at that point and the duration for which we did it, was that appropriate and do we need to reexamine?

I believe that's what Dr. Collins was referring to, and I agree with him on that.

MAJORITY STAFF. And you got to my next question, that we are here trying to figure out how to do better next time, lose fewer lives next time.

Dr. FAUCI. Yes.

MAJORITY STAFF. Would that be a better thought process going forward of thinking about the possible unintended consequences of public health measures?

Dr. FAUCI. Absolutely.

MAJORITY STAFF. And you've heard from both sides of the dais today, first weeks, months, novel virus, nobody knew what was going on, called for some drastic measures.

Understanding—once there was a better understanding of who the most affected demographics were, do you think it would be important to more narrowly craft public health measures to specifically favor those demographics?

Dr. FAUCI. The answer is yes, but you have to be careful, because if you have a certain group that is being predominantly afflicted, if you're really, really clear that another group is really quite protected, then you should fashion it demographically related.

But what often happens with outbreaks is that they're a moving target, and you only hear about other vulnerables as you get further into the outbreak.

So, the answer to your question is you're partially correct, that you need to do that, but you've got to be careful when you're dealing with a moving target.

MAJORITY STAFF. And we can appreciate that.

You've been asked a little bit again about the theories of natural immunity and herd immunity. Those are both real scientific theories in infectious diseases. Is that correct?

Dr. FAUCI. Yes.

MAJORITY STAFF. And between infection-acquired immunity and vaccinated-acquired immunity, did the United States hit herd immunity?

Dr. FAUCI. The answer is no, and I've written a paper on that, is that when you're dealing—just let me take 30 seconds. I don't want to run out the clock on you, but I think it's important to make this point.

When you talk about herd immunity, it's predicated on two principles: that you're dealing with a pathogen that's not changing; and, No. 2, that when you either get infected or vaccinated, the duration of the immunity is measured in decades, if not a lifetime.

So, that if you have a pathogen that stays the same—like measles doesn't change. So I was infected with measles when I was a child. It's the same measles that's infecting people in certain countries in the developing world.

No. 2, when you get either infected or vaccinated with measles, you have immunity that's durable minimally in decades and possibly for life.

So, if you get the same pathogen and you get a large percentage of the people who have either been infected or vaccinated, then you have herd immunity. We did not ever have that with COVID.

MAJORITY STAFF. And you've also been asked a number of times about the vaccine and vaccine mandates. Were you the one that recommended to the President to mandate vaccines for certain individuals?

Dr. FAUCI. No.

MAJORITY STAFF. Do you know who did?

Dr. FAUCI. No. It was more of a—it was a combination of a group and just saying that, you know, certain agencies, like the Labor Department or what have you, would feel that this were to be done. But it was not like I 1 day said, "Hey, we should mandate vaccines." That did not happen.

MAJORITY STAFF. And I want to echo the comments of the Chairman that we agree the vaccine saved hundreds of thousands of lives. And we talked about this a little bit in January, and I think you touched on it a little bit today.

Could issuing these mandates and removing the notion of informed consent from some certain sects of the citizenry lead to vaccine hesitancy?

Dr. FAUCI. Yes. I mentioned this, I believe, in the TI, that as a matter of fact that's something that I think we need to go back now, when we do an after-the-event evaluation, about whether or not, given the psyche of the country and the pushback that you get from those types of things, we need to reevaluate the cost-benefit ratio of those types of things.

MAJORITY STAFF. And then I won't belabor the point, but we talked about the six-foot distance an awful lot today.

Do you recall if it was ever suggested to be 10 feet?

Dr. FAUCI. You know, I don't recall, Mitch, if it was ever suggested it was 10 feet. But when I made my explanation of what it

was, I was saying that there was no trial that looked at 10 versus 6 versus 3 versus not even worrying about it at all.

MAJORITY STAFF. And you said today that there were discussions at the White House about the six-foot rule. You don't recall if it was discussions about whether or not it should be 3 or should be 10 or should be 6?

Dr. FAUCI. You know, I don't recall, Mitch, what the exact discussion was. But as I've said in response to multiple questions, what we had was it came to CDC was said that on the basis of their evaluation, which was based on the droplet approach, that six-foot would be the go. And since there was no clinical trials going one way or the other, that's why it was accepted by the group.

MAJORITY STAFF. And then it hasn't been a large topic today, and we talked about kind of like in the many unknowns in early 2020 schools were closed through the semester, some schools reopened for the fall semester, some remained closed going through into 2021.

Looking back, were there—are there current academic ramifications of remote schooling or kids not being in school?

Dr. FAUCI. I think there have been a number of studies—not I think, I know—that there have been a number of studies to show that there are lasting effects, at least up to this point. They tend to attenuate over time. But there have been substantial negative effects on learning and on children when you keep them out of school for a prolonged period of time.

MAJORITY STAFF. Have you seen any studies suggesting physical health ramifications?

Dr. FAUCI. I haven't seen physical health ramifications.

MAJORITY STAFF. Mental health?

Dr. FAUCI. I believe that there are some that show psychological issues that relate to keeping kids out of the environment, of the social environment of the school.

MAJORITY STAFF. I'm—and apologize for bouncing around. We don't have 14 hours with you today. I've got 30 minutes. So, I'm going to—

Dr. FAUCI. Yes, I'm so sorry about that.

MAJORITY STAFF. I'm going to move quickly.

Dr. FAUCI. Yes.

MAJORITY STAFF. Again, across the dais, both sides of the aisle, a lot of questions on the origins of COVID and finding out the origins and how that could better lead to both protecting against spillover and wildlife trade, but also increase biosafety standards.

As you sit here today, is it possible that COVID-19 was the result of a laboratory-related accident?

Dr. FAUCI. Oh, absolutely. And I keep, like I mentioned multiple times, I keep an open mind.

I feel, based on the data that I have seen, that the more likely—not definitive—but the more likely explanation is a natural spillover from an animal reservoir. But since there has not been definitive proof one way or the other, we have to keep an open mind that it could be either.

MAJORITY STAFF. And based on that answer, I think, is the hypothesis that COVID-19 accidentally leaked from a lab a conspiracy theory?

Dr. FAUCI. No. I mentioned that several times. Conceptually, the concept of it is not a conspiracy theory.

MAJORITY STAFF. We've talked a little bit about "The Proximal Origin of SARS-CoV-2," the paper authored by Dr. Andersen. It came to two primary conclusions, and I'm quoting.

"Our analyses clearly show that SARS-CoV-2 is not a laboratory construct or a purposefully manipulated virus" and "we do not believe that any type of laboratory-based scenario is plausible."

Do you disagree with those conclusions?

Dr. FAUCI. I think, Mitch, if I'm not mistaken—I don't have the paper in front of me—I think they also said the possibility of if you passaged it in, you could have done that.

MAJORITY STAFF. And they—

Dr. FAUCI. And that—and if you passage it, it's in a lab. So it is—I mean, that could be.

MAJORITY STAFF. And they dispelled that at the end with the "we do not believe that any type of laboratory-based scenario is plausible."

So, I'm just—I'll ask again. Is a laboratory-based scenario plausible?

Dr. FAUCI. Well, I mean, again, I'm not—I don't want to speak for what they meant in that paper, but I have said multiple times I keep an open mind that it could be either a laboratory leak or it could be what I think the data is leaning toward mostly, which is a natural occurrence from an animal reservoir.

MAJORITY STAFF. And this email was brought up, too, on April 16, 2020. Dr. Collins wrote to you and said, "Wondering if there's something NIH can do to help put down this very destructive conspiracy," referencing the lab leak. "I hoped the Nature Medicine article on the genomic sequence of SARS-CoV-2 would settle this, but probably didn't get much visibility. Anything more we can do?"

The next day, you were at a White House press conference and cited Proximal Origin and said that Proximal Origin established that COVID-19, quote, "is totally consistent with a jump of a species from an animal to human."

Dr. FAUCI. Right.

MAJORITY STAFF. Did anyone tell you to cite Proximal Origin from the White House podium?

Dr. FAUCI. No. It was in response, I believe, to a question that might have been asked by a reporter. But I wasn't stimulated to say that at all. I was responding to a question.

MAJORITY STAFF. At that time back in April 2020, was it also your belief that a lab leak was possible?

Dr. FAUCI. Yes. I've always had an open mind about it.

MAJORITY STAFF. And then I want to correct the record again a little bit on the drafting and publication of the Proximal Origin paper.

Did Dr. Andersen send you drafts to review?

Dr. FAUCI. He sent drafts, but I'm going to jump ahead of you if I might dribble around. I did not edit it.

MAJORITY STAFF. That was—

Dr. FAUCI. It was mentioned by a few of the Congressmen.

MAJORITY STAFF. It was.

Dr. FAUCI. I did not edit the paper.



MAJORITY STAFF. And I appreciate that. I just wanted to get on the record.

Dr. FAUCI. Right.

MAJORITY STAFF. I want to talk about Dr. Morens and what you wrote in your opening testimony and some of the answers that you gave today.

And just for clarity, you were, in addition to being unaware of his use of personal email and potentially intentionally deleting Federal records, were you also unaware of his actions to assist Dr. Daszak and EcoHealth?

Dr. FAUCI. I am—I was aware of his friendship. I was not aware of his attempts to assist him to respond to an NIH inquiry.

MAJORITY STAFF. So not aware of the editing of press releases or editing of letters?

Dr. FAUCI. No, I was not.

MAJORITY STAFF. On November 11, 2021, Dr. Morens wrote in an email to Dr. Daszak that he attempted to discuss the EcoHealth grant with you and you, quote, “got upset” and told him to have no more communications with Peter.

Why did you tell Dr. Morens to no longer communicate with Dr. Daszak?

Dr. FAUCI. Because I think it’s inappropriate to do what he did, I mean, and your Committee has called him out very definitively about that. And it was inappropriate to do that.

MAJORITY STAFF. This is back in 2021. What did you know about what he was doing then?

Dr. FAUCI. I didn’t know exactly what he was doing, but I don’t think it’s appropriate for people to be communicating and helping a grantee in a response. I didn’t know exactly what he was doing, but I didn’t think it was appropriate.

MAJORITY STAFF. When did you—you testified to Chairman Griffith—or, excuse me, Chairman Comer—that you knew about the compliance issues later on with EcoHealth.

When did you first become aware?

Dr. FAUCI. I became aware during briefings by my staff in preparation for congressional hearings well after the fact where the compliance issues actually happened. And I didn’t know—as I mentioned to you in the TI, Mitch—I didn’t even know the grant existed before the outbreak.

And then, finally, when there was this issue about congressional hearings, I needed to know, what is this grant, what are we doing with it, and are there any issues? That’s when they said there was a compliance problem of the fourth year versus the fifth year progress report.

MAJORITY STAFF. Some of the other emails from Dr. Morens I just want to read into the record and ask you if his recollection is accurate.

On April 27, 2020, Dr. Morens wrote, “I am sure privately he would love to see Peter and EcoHealth fully restored, although he did once make the comment to me that Peter had screwed himself with the late report. I already told him that all that crap wasn’t true.”

The late report was true, despite what Dr. Morens said.

On April 21, 2021, Dr. Morens wrote that he was sure you would do anything you could to restore the funds to EcoHealth.

On June 5, 2021, Dr. Morens wrote that you were working behind the scenes to undo the damage to EcoHealth.

On October 21, 2021, Dr. Morens wrote, “Peter, I had my regular meeting with Tony this morning. He immediately inquired about you and several times asked how you were doing. He used a lot of colorful language about the situation with attacks on EcoHealth.”

On October 25, 2021, Dr. Morens wrote that you were trying to protect EcoHealth.

On March 22, 2021, Dr. Morens wrote, “The most important is within NIH to get the decision reversed and the grant refunded. I believe Tony would like to do this.”

And on February 24, 2022, Dr. Morens wrote, “It will be a small consolation to hear the following, but in my face-to-face meeting with Tony this morning he once again brought up, as he usually does, your plight, Peter.”

Did you ever have any discussions with Dr. Morens about protecting EcoHealth or helping restore funding?

Dr. FAUCI. Not at all. I don’t know what—to be honest with you, Mitch, I just don’t know what Dr. Morens is talking about with that. Maybe he’s trying to, as he said, cheer up—he said that in front of this Committee—cheer up Dr. Daszak. But to say that I’m getting involved in trying to help him or protect him, not so.

MAJORITY STAFF. Did you ever have any conversations with Dr. Morens about what Dr. Daszak was facing or about the termination of the grant?

Dr. FAUCI. You know, I may—he may have mentioned to me something like Dr. Daszak is going through terrible times. But I don’t recall. It is conceivable that he would have mentioned that to me, because, as he mentioned to you, that Dr. Daszak and he are very good friends.

So, it would not be surprising if sometime he had mentioned to me, “Boy, Dr. Daszak’s going through some really tough times.” Fine. That doesn’t mean that I say you should help him.

MAJORITY STAFF. No, it absolutely doesn’t. So, that’s why we want to ask the questions—

Dr. FAUCI. Yes.

MAJORITY STAFF. [continuing] And get the answers.

During your transcribed interview with us, you were asked about whether or not Dr. Daszak had a conflict of interest in reviewing the origins of COVID-19.

And you testified, “You know, I hesitate to speculate about what someone else should do. The only people that I am involved with is my own staff, who we’ve mentioned many times in this discussion, who don’t have a conflict of interest.”

With the benefit of hindsight and the work of this Committee, do you believe Dr. Morens had a conflict of interest regarding EcoHealth?

Dr. FAUCI. Well, from what we know now, he definitely had a conflict, because he was communicating with a grantee and helping him in response to an NIH issue, which is a conflict of interest. I did not know that at the time when I made your statement.

MAJORITY STAFF. And I appreciate that.

Dr. FAUCI. Yes.

MAJORITY STAFF. Sticking with EcoHealth, in April 2020 NIH terminated and then subsequently reinstated and then suspended the EcoHealth grant that had the Wuhan Institute as a sub-grantee.

Do you recall that decision?

Dr. FAUCI. Yes.

MAJORITY STAFF. Were you involved at all in that decision?

Dr. FAUCI. No.

MAJORITY STAFF. You previously testified to House Energy and Commerce that you were, in essence, told to cancel the grant. Do you recall who told you?

Dr. FAUCI. We got it from a number of—now, retrospectively, we found out how it was. It was the White House told the Department to tell the NIH to cancel the grant.

MAJORITY STAFF. Did you agree with the cancellation?

[Disturbance in the hearing room.]

Dr. FAUCI. What is that? Do we need to listen to that?

MAJORITY STAFF. He was escorted out.

Dr. FAUCI. Yes. OK. Good.

I'm sorry, repeat the question, Mitch.

MAJORITY STAFF. Did you agree with the cancellation?

Dr. FAUCI. You know, it wasn't a question of agreeing or disagreeing. It was like, "Can we really do that? I don't think that you can do that." And as it turned out, I was right, because the general counsel of HHS said, "By the way, you can't do that. You've got to restore the grant."

MAJORITY STAFF. And that's why they restored it and then suspended it, pending the compliance review.

Dr. FAUCI. Yes, exactly.

MAJORITY STAFF. Not to keep reading Dr. Morens' emails, but on June 24, 2020, Dr. Morens wrote an email.

"He," referencing you, "made some additional comments to the effect that this came from the White House and he was totally opposed to it."

You weren't totally opposed to it?

Dr. FAUCI. Well, see, that's his—you know, he's doing a lot of interpretation, Mitch. His interpretation I was totally opposed to it. It was more of, can we really legally do that? And the answer turned out I was right, no, you can't.

MAJORITY STAFF. Do you recall the—did the Department ask you first or Dr. Collins first to terminate the grant?

Dr. FAUCI. I think it went directly to Building 10—excuse me, Building 1, the Director's Office.

MAJORITY STAFF. Is that the NIH Director's Office?

Dr. FAUCI. Yes, yes. I think it—it went from the Department to NIH to us.

MAJORITY STAFF. OK. Were you, prior to your retirement in December 2022, were you involved in any of the compliance actions NIH took against EcoHealth?

Dr. FAUCI. I don't believe so. I think the actual—and, again, I'm a little unclear about the time—but I think most of the disciplinary actions actually occurred after I left, if I'm not mistaken.

MAJORITY STAFF. Yes, the actual suspension and debarment occurred after you left, but there were a number of letters requesting lab notebooks or further information—

Dr. FAUCI. Yes, I—

MAJORITY STAFF. [continuing] While you were still there.

Dr. FAUCI. Yes. What happened, Mitch, and it's important to point this out, once it was clear that there was compliance issues while I was still there, we were told at NIAID, stay out of it, compliance is going to be handled by Building 1—i.e., the NIH Director—and Mike Lauer. So the compliance was said, don't touch it, don't go near it, just we'll take care of it.

MAJORITY STAFF. And you just brought this up. Since the original termination, then suspension, NIH found numerous major violations of grant policies, has since debarred the Wuhan Institute of Virology and suspended and proposed for debarment both EcoHealth as an institution and Dr. Daszak individually.

Are you aware of those?

Dr. FAUCI. Yes, I am.

MAJORITY STAFF. During previous TIs and hearings, when asked if they supported every one of these actions and supported the suspension and debarment, both Dr. Collins and Dr. Tabak said yes.

Sitting here today, do you support the suspension and debarment of EcoHealth?

Dr. FAUCI. Yes.

MAJORITY STAFF. I want to move on to the kind of, like, "known unknowns" of COVID origins, to quote Dr. Lipkin's paper from early 2020.

On October 20, 2021, Dr. Tabak sent a letter to then-Ranking Member Mr. Comer that said the bat coronaviruses studied under the EcoHealth Alliance grant could not have been the source of SARS-CoV-2 and the COVID-19 pandemic. You've testified similarly both back in January and today.

Some of the things that I believe Chairman Griffith brought up was just kind of that statement results on some things—rests on some things that we just can't know.

In your experience, Dr. Fauci, do researchers publish every virus that they sequence?

Dr. FAUCI. No. I mean, I think researchers don't always publish every single thing they do.

MAJORITY STAFF. Do they routinely publish every experiment that they conduct?

Dr. FAUCI. I'm sure there are people who don't publish every single experiment that they do.

MAJORITY STAFF. And then is there a lag time between the sampling, the analysis, and the publication?

Dr. FAUCI. Yes. I mean, publications often take months before they come out.

MAJORITY STAFF. Is it possible, if not plausible, that EcoHealth and the Wuhan Institute of Virology have samples from between 2020, when they originally published a paper—or, excuse me, 2015, when they originally published a paper with all their samples, and now that are unpublished?

Dr. FAUCI. Sure, it's possible. But, Mitch, I'm—I might just throw in there you can't get away from the fact that the viruses that were

studied, that we—that the NIH gave them a grant to study, don't pull back on the fact that, no matter what you did with those viruses, they were phylogenetically so different they could not possibly be the precursor of SARS-CoV-2.

MAJORITY STAFF. And I agree with that. I guess my only point is that you don't know all the viruses they were working with.

Dr. FAUCI. Yes. And let's make that clear, because Griffith—Congressman Griffith—asked it, and I answered you quite honestly, that none of us can know everything that's going on in China or in Wuhan or what have you. And that's the reason why I say today and I've said at the TI, I keep an open mind as to what the origin is.

MAJORITY STAFF. The last thing, last topic I want to touch on is gain-of-function. We touched on it in January. You touched on it a little bit today.

I know the pandemic has resulted, as I'm sure you're aware, with a rather large debate, including with the NSABB updating their dangerous research policies surrounding gain-of-function, P3CO, and dual use research of concern.

At the—prior to October 2021, the NIH website listed gain-of-function as a type of research that modifies a biological agent so that it confers new or enhanced activity to that agent.

And the P3CO framework that the U.S. Government uses to further regulate a subpart of that research, that it's more dangerous, specifically that could cause widespread and uncontrolled death or disease in humans.

Putting aside what's regulatory—I agree with you, the P3CO definition is regulatory—are there types of research that could fall under the broad definition but not the P3CO definition?

Dr. FAUCI. Well, I believe Members on the Minority side have mentioned that. Influenza is a gain-of-function to a virus to make it grow better in eggs. Making an *E. coli* manufacture insulin is telling the *E. coli* to do something it wasn't able to do before by mutation. Of course that's the case.

MAJORITY STAFF. So, in kind of the Venn diagram of this research, something could fall under gain-of-function without falling under further regulation?

Dr. FAUCI. I know where you're going and you're not going to get there. But go ahead.

MAJORITY STAFF. According to EcoHealth's year five progress report, they facilitated an experiment in Wuhan that had seven mice infected with Wuhan Institute of Virology-1 as the backbone. Five survived. Then eight mice were infected with a chimera of WIV1 and the spike from another virus, and two survived.

In EcoHealth's own words, these results suggest that the pathogenicity of that full-length chimera is higher than others.

Dr. FAUCI. Right.

MAJORITY STAFF. You were asked today and it was read back to you a little bit, but on May 16, just a few weeks ago, Mrs. Lesko asked Dr. Tabak, "Did NIH fund gain-of-function research at the Wuhan Institute of Virology through EcoHealth?"

And Dr. Tabak answered, "If you're speaking about the generic term, yes, we did."

Dr. FAUCI. Right.

MAJORITY STAFF. On May 11, you were asked a similar question, and you answered, “The NIH has not ever and does not now fund gain-of-function research at the Wuhan Institute of Virology.”

I’m going to ask it and you can answer it how you want to answer it.

According to the broad definition of gain-of-function research and the definition Dr. Tabak was testifying pursuant to, did NIAID fund gain-of-function research via EcoHealth in Wuhan?

Dr. FAUCI. The broad definition of gain-of-function, in my mind, is not applicable here and does nothing but confuse the situation.

And that is the reason why, after 3 years of deliberation by the bodies, including the NSABB as well as the National Academies, it was decided to make an operative and regulatory definition.

If you harken back to the original broad definition, it does nothing but confuse people. And that’s why every time I have mentioned gain-of-function, at the Senate hearing with Senator Paul and the TI and today, the definition that I use is not my personal definition. It’s a codified regulatory and operative definition made by a body that has nothing to do with me.

MAJORITY STAFF. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Dr. WENSTRUP. I now recognize the Minority Staff for not longer than 30 minutes.

MINORITY STAFF. Dr. Fauci, nice to see you. We’ve covered many different topics today. We just want to make sure that you have the opportunity to provide your full perspective on any and all of them.

Is there anything you’d like to add, clarify, or say about any of the topics we’ve discussed here today?

Dr. FAUCI. Actually, I think we’ve covered just about everything, but if you come up with something you want to ask me, I’d be happy to try to fill it in. But I think we’ve been rather extensive today.

MINORITY STAFF. I think that’s great, and I think we agree.

And so, with that, we’ll yield back the remainder of our time.

Dr. WENSTRUP. I would like to yield to Ranking Member Ruiz for a closing statement if he would like one.

Dr. RUIZ. Dr. Fauci, I’d like to thank you for your testimony today. And I would like to thank you for your decades of service to our Nation, especially with the HIV epidemic that our Nation suffered through, the pandemic flu, Ebola, Zika, and COVID–19, and your years of research and investment in—that led to the rapid development of the COVID–19 vaccine that saved millions of lives. Thank you.

And over the past 4 years, you have been personally targeted by extreme narratives about the origins of the COVID–19 pandemic and the U.S. Government’s response to it. They began in force in retaliation to wisdom you offered that contradicted the reckless and dangerous therapeutic recommendations by President Trump and have remained part of House Republicans’ political playbook.

These extreme narratives have been the bedrock of the Select Subcommittee’s Republican-led probe and the untenable inferences they’ve somehow drawn despite the overwhelming evidence that it is inconvenient to those narratives.

I want to be clear. The evidence uncovered from more than 425,000 pages of documents and 20 closed-door interviews of current and former Federal officials has undermined the extreme narratives behind the Republicans' own probe.

As I alluded to at the beginning of this hearing, my Democratic colleagues and I are committed to speaking objectively and truthfully about what the evidence shows, and this is what it shows:

Dr. Fauci did not fund research through the EcoHealth Alliance grant that caused the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr. Fauci did not lie about gain-of-function research in Wuhan, China.

Dr. Fauci did not orchestrate a campaign to suppress the lab leak theory.

These findings are apparent from the evidence. In fact, this much was clear by the time of Dr. Fauci's 2-day transcribed interview this past January.

In the 5 months since, the Select Subcommittee has conducted several more closed-door interviews and reviewed several thousand more pages of documents. This additional evidence and Dr. Fauci's testimony today has only made Republicans' claims less plausible and more preposterous.

And when I was named Ranking Member of the Select Subcommittee, I made a commitment to follow the facts in objectively analyzing the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic.

If the Select Subcommittee is to meaningfully improve our Nation's preparedness for future pandemics, then we must take an objective approach to the factual and scientific evidence available to us.

The origins of the COVID-19 pandemic remain uncertain. I would like to remind my Republican colleagues that that uncertainty is not an opportunity for them to author fiction for partisan gain. It could have been a lab leak and it could have been an animal transmission.

And, at the cost of meaningfully advancing our understanding of COVID-19's origins, Republicans have levied extreme allegations of creating SARS-CoV-2 against Dr. Fauci.

The result is that Republicans' own probe has failed to shed any additional light on a central question for our Select Subcommittee.

In fact, we are actually entering the fourth quarter of this Congress and this Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic, and what have we focused on? It's not an objective investigation on the origin as either a lab leak or animal transmission.

We have spent the vast majority of time, like in this hearing, with Republicans trying to prove that Dr. Fauci and Collins funded research through EcoHealth that created the SARS-CoV-2 virus. And in order for that to be true, it is dependent on proving the lab leak theory to be true.

So it has not been an objective investigation as to whether or not the virus came from a lab or an animal transmission in order to prevent and prepare for the next pandemic. It has been to push this narrative. And this hearing is their climax, their star witness, to finally prove their narrative. And they did not do so.

Instead of focusing on solutions, like fortifying our public health work force and infrastructure, securing domestic supply chain of

vital public health equipment and medication, or equipping schools, churches, synagogues, mosques, and businesses to safely stay open during the next deadly novel viral pandemic, instead they focused on accusation without evidence.

And it seemed like even though the evidence was there that the accusations were false, it didn't matter. They still accused him on a cover-up, suppressing the truth, that he initiated, prompted, or edited the proximal origins paper, that he funded gain-of-research that created the SARS-CoV-2 virus, even that he received royalties.

You know, his answers today and his transcribed interviews and his countless emails refuted all of this. They always have. And his testimony today did again. But I guess that doesn't matter for the Majority.

The truth is that there is no evidence to prove this narrative that we've spent so much time addressing. Their accusations are without evidence. But it doesn't matter to them.

Intentionally misleading the public is propagating disinformation, and it's wrong and dangerous not only because it manufactures distrust in our public health leaders and our public health agencies, but also because it targets Dr. Fauci and other public health officials for violent death threats.

Dr. Fauci just said that any time anybody alludes to the false accusation that he created the COVID-19 pandemic, his death threats go up. But irresponsibly and recklessly, Members on this Subcommittee continue to accuse him of that.

So, for the remaining months of the Select Subcommittee I reaffirm my commitment to take a serious, balanced look at the question and the possibilities of whether the novel coronavirus emerged from a lab or from nature.

And I emphasize to my colleagues that any uncertainty about those origins is an opportunity for us to work constructively together on forward-looking measures to improve our Nation's readiness for future public health threats.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back.

Dr. WENSTRUP. Thank you again.

Dr. Fauci, I want to thank you for coming here today. I, again, truly appreciate your willingness to come voluntarily before the Select Committee for both your transcribed interview and hearing today.

You know, this hearing was an opportunity to learn about our COVID-19 response and how we can improve and do better. And we did some good things during that, and I'll say Operation Warp Speed is one of them.

It's also an opportunity to more closely examine the office in which you served, because there seemed to have been some significant wrongdoings that took place. And I believe that we can make changes and prevent that from happening in the future. That's my goal.

It's an opportunity to take a close look about the processes and the procedures in place in our health institutions in the United States. That's our job, is oversight, in Congress. That's what we're supposed to do.



I don't know what playbook some are talking about, because it's been my goal as Chairman—and I think you've seen the staff speaking the same way—to take a hard look at the facts so that we can do better in the future.

I know that at the end of the transcribed interview, not only during the interview, we talked about other types of vaccines we may be able to create, mucosal vaccines, maybe inhibitors of furin, if there's a furin cleavage site as part of the vaccine. I appreciated that conversation so very much. And at the end, you thanked me for the fairness, and we had the opportunity to share a lot that day.

I think what I'm most concerned about as we go forward as a country and from our agencies is that we can be trusted and that we are better in our messaging and talk about clarity.

Dr. McCormick today talked about what it was like actually treating COVID patients day in and day out. I had recommended early on that America needed to hear more from doctors that were treating COVID patients, what they were seeing, what was working, what was not working.

I compared it to General Schwarzkopf during the Gulf War. Everyone tuned in every night to hear what General Schwarzkopf had to say, not the politician, but what the general in charge had to say. And I think that was important, the one who was in the trenches.

But, look, you know, we've gone back and forth on the definition of gain-of-function. I think it's been pretty clear what you said was on your mind. And there were two different definitions, if you will, a generic definition and an operative regulatory definition.

But so, you know, when we go through this what America hears is that you say NIH did not fund and Dr. Tabak said NIH did fund. Clarity matters.

I think it would have helped when you were in front of Dr. Paul in the Senate if you were clear about what you meant. The American people had never heard of gain-of-function until this came about. Clarity matters.

You know, we conducted great trials on the vaccines. I thought they were phenomenal. Normally, you have eight to ten thousand people. We had about 40,000 people in each one of the trials.

And what we knew from the trials is that, one, it saved a lot of lives. That's one thing. But we also knew that if you got vaccinated you could still get COVID. We didn't make that clear to the American people, in my mind, and that you could still get sick.

And so, if someone stands up, not you, but if someone stands up and says, if you get vaccinated you're never going to go to the ICU and you're not going to die, well, it was still happening.

So, where was the messaging? I wish you would have corrected that right then and there.

You know, the President says, oh, maybe we just inject bleach. Well, some people maybe thought that was serious. We made it clear it was not, and that was important.

But here we have Operation Warp Speed, which I know firsthand you were working on, and you were kind enough to work with the Doctors Caucus to explain what was going on with Operation Warp Speed. And we have a Presidential candidate who says, "Well, if

that's developed, I'm not taking it"—I'm paraphrasing—and then takes it.

The American public deserve a lot better from their government. And what should have been a 9/11 moment for this country, this pandemic, was turned into a political nightmare.

We need to do better. These are agnostic issues, not political.

And I think from what we have learned from you in the TI and here today, there's a lot of things that we can do better, and the grant process being one of them. I mean, if you—look, when I sign a prescription, I'm responsible for it.

Somebody needs to be responsible. And if you're signing for grants but not responsible for it, you just sign it, then you're not responsible for the dollars that are going out.

And then maybe it's the Advisory Committee that needs to be signing the grant so that there's some level of responsibility, and responsibility for compliance. I think that's one of the biggest lessons learned through all this.

We can do better. America is a great country. We can fix our problems. But we have to take a good hard look at what we did, what we didn't do, be honest with ourselves, be better in our messaging to the American people, especially when it comes to health.

And that's why I felt it was very important that we don't do things like mandates, but let patients have a conversation with the doctor that they know and trust and make sure that we're getting the doctors all the information and data that they need, from adverse effects of the vaccine, which we've always done, adverse effects of the vaccine, to what the vaccine can and can't do, whether you're at risk or not at risk, what are your risks.

Those are personal conversations that need to take place. And I look forward to try and establish the system that does a better job at that.

I'm going to conclude and just say thank you once again, Dr. Fauci. As a matter of fact, I'd be glad to have more off-the-record conversations about things we can do in the future, the drugs we may be able to develop, treatments we may be able to provide, and vaccines we may be able to produce.

And so, if you're amenable, I might reach out to you for that, and other scientists as well that may have varying opinions.

So, again, thank you again for being the witness today.

With that, without objection, all Members will have 5 legislative days within which to submit materials and to submit additional written questions for the witnesses, which will be forwarded to the witnesses for their response.

If there's no further business, without objection, the Select Subcommittee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 1:30 p.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

