

First and foremost, I want to thank Chairman Wenstrup for holding this important hearing on the horrific, malignant, and deadly COVID policies of disgraced former Governor Andrew Cuomo. It is long past time for Cuomo to be held accountable for his unscientific and baseless policies that are directly attributable to the untimely and cruel deaths of thousands of seniors and individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities (I/DD).

Early in the COVID-19 pandemic, studies showed that older adults and individuals with underlying conditions were particularly vulnerable to COVID-19. Cuomo knew this, hence his draconian order to prevent family members from providing care and companionship to their loved ones in nursing homes and long-term care facilities.

Despite the recognition that these individuals were particularly vulnerable, Cuomo issued orders that prevented nursing homes and long-term care facilities from refusing to admit COVID-19 positive patients. As a result, these facilities were forced to expose vulnerable patients to individuals infected with this deadly disease, leading to thousands of unnecessary and premature deaths. In response to these malignant policies, in March 2020, I was one of the first people to speak out against Governor Cuomo's actions, call for an investigation, and call for Governor Cuomo's resignation.

Instead of taking responsibility for these deadly policies, Governor Cuomo sought to cover-up the fatalities that resulted from his policies. New York Attorney General Letitia James and the New York State Assembly found that COVID-related deaths in New York State nursing homes were underestimated to hide COVID deaths from federal investigators and maintain Cuomo's reputation. Both the FBI and DOJ have opened investigations into Governor Cuomo's conduct.

While the COVID nightmare is now over, and Governor Cuomo is no longer in office, we cannot allow these malicious actions of Governor Cuomo to be ignored. Congress must expose Governor Cuomo's dangerous actions and criminal behavior. Cuomo must be held accountable for the lives that were lost and ruined due to his actions.

Additionally, I introduced the Essential Caregivers Act to ensure that long-term care facility residents have the right to visits from an essential caregiver, even during declared emergencies. I want to thank Chairman Wenstrup for his support for this critical bill and look forward to working with him and the House Ways & Means and Energy & Commerce Committees to get this bill passed and signed into law.