

Ranking Members Comer and Scalise, Members of the House Committee and Select Subcommittee, thank you for allowing me to provide my perspectives on the origins of COVID-19.

Perspective #1: Although we do not yet have indisputable evidence pinpointing the exact origin of the virus that causes COVID-19, I assess that the most likely origin was an accidental infection of laboratory personnel from the Wuhan Institute of Virology, with secondary transmission to the local population, and subsequent spread to hundreds of millions of people around the world.

It is essential that Congress provides leadership for a comprehensive, transparent, and unbiased investigation to determine:

1. The most likely origin of the virus
2. Whether the NIH funded, directly or indirectly, or approved of – explicitly or tacitly – potentially dangerous research within the Wuhan Lab, and
3. What the US can do to minimize the possibility of future pandemics and enable rapid global containment of any suspicious infectious outbreak

Perspective #2: There is now an increasing body of circumstantial evidence pointing to a lab leak origin of the virus:

1. The comprehensive WHO investigation published March 1 failed to detect the presence of the virus after testing more than 80,000 wildlife, livestock and poultry samples from 31 provinces in China. Moreover, the closest virus found in nature was **several decades** of evolution removed from the COVID-19 virus. And we now know definitively that the Wuhan wet market was NOT the origin of the virus, but was a site of secondary spread.
2. We know that the Wuhan lab was conducting potentially dangerous research on bat coronaviruses and their ability to cause pandemics, including gain of function research. This was proven by a 2015 Nature Medicine publication in which investigators from Wuhan and collaborators across the globe reported the creation of a new, hybrid bat coronavirus that could bind to and infect human airway cells.
3. Since then, there have been multiple NIH grants to the EcoHealth Alliance all entitled “Understanding the Risk of Bat Coronavirus Emergence” and from the limited publically available information, appear to be using the same laboratory methods that could create novel, hybrid, pandemic causing pathogens.
4. Independent scientific studies have concluded that the first cases of COVID in China occurred sometime between mid-October to mid-November of 2019. This is the exact time frame, according to US Intelligence, that some Wuhan lab workers became ill with a respiratory infection, and that according to the Wall Street Journal,

three Wuhan lab workers sought hospital care for an unknown respiratory illness. And finally...

The bottom line is: I believe it's just too much of a coincidence that a worldwide pandemic caused by a novel bat coronavirus that cannot be found in nature, started just a few miles away from a secretive laboratory doing potentially dangerous research on bat coronaviruses.

Sometimes the most obvious explanation is indeed the correct one.

Perspective #3: The WHO cannot be relied upon to do an authoritative investigation, because it is a multi-lateral organization with no authority to do anything in China that is not directly approved by the Chinese Communist Party.

On behalf of the Trump Administration in September 2020, I delivered a comprehensive roadmap of reform to the Executive Board of the WHO that would Strengthen the WHO's Global Emergency Preparedness and Response capabilities. This Roadmap would better equip the WHO for future pandemics, but by its very nature as a multilateral organization, the WHO can NEVER be relied on to guarantee transparency from repressive regimes, nor assure the health and safety of the American Public.

Finally with regard to WHO, when this pandemic first emerged in China and began spreading around the world, the only eligible nation that did NOT have a Member on the WHO Executive Board was the United States. That is because after I was nominated for the Executive Board by President Trump in November 2018, my nomination was repeatedly blocked by Senator Schumer and his democrat colleagues, and I was not

confirmed, and thus the US did not have visibility at the Executive Board level, until May of 2020.

Perceptive #4: The investigation of the origins of COVID-19, and the regulation of gain of function research, cannot be left to scientists alone, many of whom have serious conflicts of interest.

These conflicts include hundreds of thousands of dollars in annual salary, pharmaceutical company paid advisory board seats, millions of dollars in grants, rights to inventions that could result in 10s of millions of dollars in royalties, and perhaps most important, their reputations among an often-elitist scientific community that is overwhelmingly biased against anything related to the Trump Administration.

Similarly, Americans should be careful of defenses of China by experts who are employed by, or on the boards of, companies with billions of dollars at stake in China and who fear reprisals from the Chinese communist party.

In conclusion, its ‘critical’ to our nation, to the American people, to the world, and to future generations, that we develop a bipartisan consensus on the truth of what happened... and I respectfully encourage the entire Congress to come together as truth seekers and truth tellers to accomplish this objective.

I thank all the Members for inviting me today, and look forward to your questions.