

Comer, Scalise, Jordan Call on Scientists Who Privately Supported Lab Leak Theory to Provide Answers Under Oath

Seven scientists suddenly reversed course after speaking with Fauci and Collins

WASHINGTON—Today, House Committee on Oversight and Reform Ranking Member James Comer (R-Ky.), Republican Whip and Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis Ranking Member Steve Scalise (R-La.), and House Committee on the Judiciary Ranking Member Jim Jordan (R-Ohio) called on seven scientists who initially believed COVID-19 may have leaked from the Wuhan lab to provide answers under oath. These scientists suddenly reversed course after privately speaking with Dr. Francis Collins, former director of the National Institutes of Health, and Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. It is unclear how the scientists changed their hearts in a matter of time.

“We are conducting oversight of the U.S. government’s response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and specifically apparent conflicts of interest, suppression of scientific discourse, and abuse of official government resources. Documents in the custody of the National Institutes of Health reveal how a group of scientists—including you—initially believed COVID-19 to be man-made before reversing course and claiming otherwise following discussions with senior government health officials. This sequence of events suggests a possible coordinated effort to conceal evidence pointing to a lab leak in Wuhan, China, and make your cooperation vital to our investigation. To restore public confidence in the scientific process regarding the origins of COVID-19, it is imperative you provide answers under oath about what, if any, underlying science changed in a matter of days after meeting with top government health officials,” **wrote the Republican lawmakers.**

On February 1, 2020, several scientists took part in a teleconference with Dr. Francis Collins and Dr. Anthony Fauci. Before, during, and after the call, some scientists expressed grave concerns that COVID-19 may have leaked out of the Wuhan Institute of Virology and that COVID-19 may have been partially engineered. Yet 48 hours later, several of the scientists were involved in the drafting and subsequent publication of a correspondence in *Nature Medicine* entitled, “The Proximal Origin of SARS-CoV-2” that dismissed the lab leak theory. Newly released communications suggest Dr. Collins hoped the correspondence would silence debate on the origins of the virus.

“Alarming, it appears that the decision to suppress the lab-leak hypothesis was rooted in political calculations rather than scientific principles. NIH documents show that scientists on the February 1, 2020, teleconference pushed the natural evolution theory because they believed the lab-leak hypothesis could cause China too much scrutiny,” **continued the Republican lawmakers.**

“Transparency is a bedrock of scientific credibility. Continuing to shield the truth equates to hiding information that may inform future pandemic responses, advise the United States’ current national security posture, and restore confidence in our public health experts.”

In letters to seven scientists, the Republican lawmakers call for all documents and communications related to the February 1, 2020 conference call, the drafting and publication of “The Proximal Origins of SARS-CoV-2,” and the origins of COVID-19. They also call on the scientists to appear for a transcribed interview under oath.

The letters can be found here:

- **Dr. Kristian Andersen, Professor, Department of Immunology and Microbiology, Scripps Research** (<https://oversight.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Letter-to-Dr-Andersen.pdf>)

- Dr. Jeremy Farrar, Director, Wellcome (<https://oversight.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Letter-to-Dr-Farrar.pdf>)
- Dr. Michael Farzan, Professor, Department of Immunology and Microbiology, Scripps Research (<https://oversight.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Letter-to-Dr-Farzan.pdf>)
- Dr. Robert Garry, Professor, School of Medicine, Tulane University (<https://oversight.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Letter-to-Dr-Garry.pdf>)
- Dr. Edward Holmes, Professor, Sydney Medical School, University of Sydney (<https://oversight.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Letter-to-Dr-Holmes.pdf>)
- Dr. W. Ian Lipkin, Director, Center for Infection and Immunity, Columbia University (<https://oversight.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Letter-to-Dr-Lipkin.pdf>)
- Dr. Andrew Rambaut, Professor, School of Biological Sciences, University of Edinburgh (<https://oversight.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Letter-to-Dr-Rambaut.pdf>)

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