

U.S. Rep Gallagher: Outlines path forward on finding answers for COVID-19

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Contact: [Jordan Dunn](#)



WASHINGTON, D.C. – Rep. Mike Gallagher (R-WI) today testified before Republicans on the Select Subcommittee on Coronavirus Origins. In his remarks, he discussed immediate actions that the U.S. government should take to better understand the origin of this virus, and three broader lessons lawmakers should take from this experience.

In part, Gallagher called on the federal government to:

- Declassify all the relevant intelligence surrounding COVID-19 origins,
- Subpoena the EcoHealth Alliance for data and files regarding their collaboration with the Wuhan Institute of Virology,
- Audit all federal agencies for a thorough accounting of funding that may have gone to NGOs like the EcoHealth Alliance, and
- Continue the State Department's arms control investigation into the Chinese Communist Party.

You can watch his remarks [HERE](#), or read them below.

"Thank you Whip Scalise and Ranking Member Comer for this opportunity. I can't think of a more important question facing the world today than how this pandemic started, which makes it all the more tragic that we don't have the willing participation of our Democratic colleagues. I don't see this as a Republican question or a Democrat question. This is a forensic question of how this actually started.

"That being said, I strongly support the establishment of an independent bipartisan expert commission. I've had some experience in the cyber domain leading such a commission and I've seen the power of a hybrid commission of both legislators and outside experts to break through the noise and deliver serious bipartisan recommendations.

"But even in the absence of such a Congressionally mandated commission, I think there are a number of steps we can immediately take to better understand the origin of the virus so that we can prevent a similar crisis from happening again. I don't want to rehash a lot of the very compelling points my colleagues made, so I'll try and add a little bit to the discussion. Four things stand out in my mind.

"The first and most obvious is what Whip Scalise referenced, which is that we should declassify all intelligence products, reporting and assessments related to COVID-19's origin. And in particular, those underpinning the IC assessments related to President Biden's May 26, 2021 directive on his COVID investigation, the January 2021 State Department disclosures made by the outgoing Trump administration, and the material used to inform the April 30, 2020 DNI statement on COVID origins. That statement is openly available, and is worth revisiting, where our entire intelligence community concurs with what they called a strong scientific consensus that this was not man made or genetically modified. How did that happen? I would think we all have an interest in knowing.

"Number two, issue a subpoena to the EcoHealth Alliance for any and all data and files that have relating to their collaboration with the Wuhan Institute of Virology.

"Number three, auditing the records of all federal agencies for a thorough accounting of any funding that may have gone to the Wuhan Institute of Virology, either directly or indirectly through parties, such as the EcoHealth Alliance, over the past decade. Ranking Member McCaul mentioned the Wuhan Military Games. For example, I've written a letter to the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs asking have we interviewed the 284 Americans that went to those games? Were these Americans tested for antibodies? What do we learn from that process? And if we haven't started that process, it can still begin. It's not too late to get more information related to this.

"And then fourth, and finally, continuing the State Department's arms control investigation into potential biological weapons convention violations by the Chinese Communist Party.

"Regardless of the outcome of these investigations — and we should follow the data wherever they lead — there are at least three broader lessons I believe we can already take away from this experience. In the interest of brevity, I won't go into all in detail, I'm happy to answer any follow-on questions.

"But the first is the pervasive influence of what's called United Front Work. Perhaps the easiest way to understand the Chinese Communist Party's United Front Work is to think of it as inception, the CCP influences or co-ops, foreign elites, oftentimes without their direct knowledge to spread messages that align with the party's interests. And without speculating on their motivations, it's hard to escape noticing that many of the individuals who have been most critical of the lab-leak hypothesis...they have direct and long standing relationships with Chinese entities.

"The second is the need to enhance American biological defenses. The tragic deaths of over 600,000 Americans and the losses throughout our economy have signaled to our adversaries that biological warfare could be a highly effective mechanism to attack our homeland. And given the rapid advances in synthetic biology, we need to act quickly, so our adversaries cannot weaponize biology against us.

"And third and finally, I believe it is long past time for us to completely decouple our scientific collaboration with the People's Republic of China. Like many Americans, I was startled to discover that taxpayer resources made their way to the Wuhan Institute of Virology, which we know from the January 2021 State Department factsheet engaged in classified research on behalf of the Chinese military. While scientific collaboration is an important part of our technological leadership, we have plenty of like minded allies and partners that are not actively engaged in genocide, nor threatening their neighbors with invasion, that we can work with. And unfortunately, given the direction of the CCP's policy, scientific collaboration is likely only to enhance the party's grip on power through new ways to surveil or control their population, or in the worst case, develop the ability to wipe out entire populations depending on the whims of the party.

"Ranking Member Scalise, you started off by commenting that this is worse than Chernobyl. I agree with that. I've called this the CCP's Chernobyl. If you've seen the HBO miniseries "Chernobyl," there's a moment at the end when the lead scientist, Valery Legasov, makes a comment. And he says, "Every lie we tell incurs a debt to the truth. And sooner or later, the debt is paid."

"Well, the debt incurred by the CCP's lies has cost us over 600,000 American lives and counting. And we owe it to these people and to their families to get to the truth.

"Thank you. I yield back."