

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 25, 2024

The Honorable William J. Burns
Director
Central Intelligence Agency
1000 Colonial Farm Rd.
Langley, VA 22101

Director Burns:

We write to follow-up on a previous request for information regarding whistleblower allegations disclosed by the House Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic (Select Subcommittee) and House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (HPSCI) related to the Central Intelligence Agency's investigation into the origins of COVID-19.¹ According to Chairman Wenstrup and Chairman Turner:

A multi-decade, senior-level, current Agency officer has come forward to provide information to the [Select Subcommittee and HPSCI] regarding the Agency's analysis into the origins of COVID-19. According to the whistleblower, the Agency assigned seven officers to a COVID Discovery Team (Team). The Team consisted of multi-disciplinary and experienced officers with significant scientific expertise. According to the whistleblower, at the end of its review, six of the seven members of the Team believed the intelligence and science were sufficient to make a low confidence assessment that COVID-19 originated from a laboratory in Wuhan, China. The seventh member of the Team, who also happened to be the most senior, was the lone officer to believe COVID-19 originated through zoonosis.²

These allegations raise serious questions about the Agency's investigation of the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in light of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence June 2023 unclassified report stating that CIA remained "unable to determine the precise origin of the COVID-19 pandemic".³

¹ See Press Release, House Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic, Testimony from CIA Whistleblower Alleges New Information on COVID-19 Origins (Sept. 12, 2023), <https://oversight.house.gov/release/testimony-from-cia-whistleblower-alleges-new-information-on-covid-19-origins/>; Letter from Senators Paul, Graham, Johnson, and Scott to CIA Director William J. Burns (Sept. 12, 2023) <https://www.ronjohnson.senate.gov/services/files/DD807198-DA91-4339-B77B-0AF4E25AB399>.

² Letter from Chairman Brad Wenstrup and Chairman Mike Turner to CIA Director William J. Burns (Sept. 12, 2023), <https://oversight.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/2023.09.12-SSCP-HPSCI-Letter-to-CIA-Re.-Origins-of-COVID.pdf>.

³ Off. of the Dir. of Nat'l Intell., Potential Links Between the Wuhan Institute of Virology and the Origin of the COVID-19 Pandemic 3 (2023) <https://www.dni.gov/files/ODNI/documents/assessments/Report-on-Potential-Links-Between-the-Wuhan-Institute-of-Virology-and-the-Origins-of-COVID-19-20230623.pdf>

On September 12, 2023, Senators requested you provide additional documents and information related to the Agency's investigation of the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic to assist in evaluating the whistleblower's allegations. On September 27, 2023, the Senators received a response from the Office of Congressional Affairs indicating the CIA was engaging directly with the congressional intelligence committees on this matter. However, the Agency failed to provide any of the requested information or documentation.

The Agency's refusal to cooperate with requests for information by members of the Senate regarding whistleblower allegations is unacceptable. The CIA has an obligation to be responsive to congressional oversight requests by all members of the Senate regardless of what committees they are assigned to. For this reason, we reiterate the following requests for information:

1. All documents and communications regarding the establishment of all iterations of the COVID Discovery Team(s);
2. All documents and communications between or among the members of all iterations of the COVID Discovery Team(s) regarding the origins of COVID-19;
3. All documents and communications between or among members of all iterations of the COVID Discovery Team(s) and other employees or contractors of the Agency regarding the origins of COVID-19;
4. All documents and communications between or among members of all iterations of the COVID Discovery Team(s) and employees or contractors of other federal government agencies, including but not limited to the U.S. Department of State, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (to include the National Institutes of Health and the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases), and the U.S. Department of Energy regarding the origins of COVID-19; and
5. All documents and communications relating to any conclusions of the COVID Discovery Team(s) and subsequent revision of such conclusions.

Please provide this information to our offices no later than February 8, 2024.

Sincerely,



Rand Paul, M.D.
United States Senator



Ted Cruz
United States Senator



Roger F. Wicker
United States Senator



Susan Collins
United States Senator



Ted Budd
United States Senator



Cynthia Lummis
United States Senator



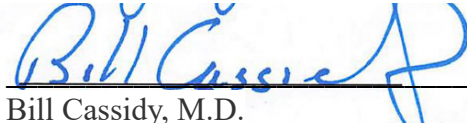
Markwayne Mullin
United States Senator



Ron Johnson
United States Senator




Cindy Hyde-Smith
United States Senator



Bill Cassidy, M.D.
United States Senator



Mike Lee
United States Senator



Rick Scott
United States Senator



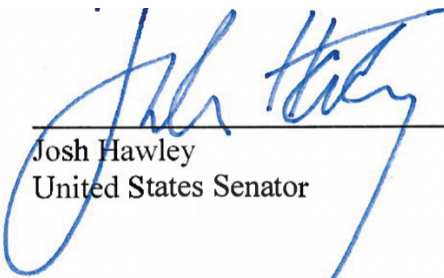
Bill Hagerty
United States Senator



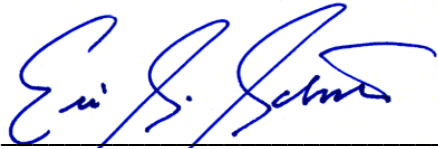
Mike Braun
United States Senator



Tommy Tuberville
United States Senator



Josh Hawley
United States Senator



Eric Schmitt
United States Senator



Roger Marshall
United States Senator



Lindsey Graham
United States Senator

Enclosures:

Letter from Senators Paul, Graham, Johnson, and Scott to CIA Director William J. Burns (Sept. 12, 2023)

Letter from James A. Catella, Director, Office of Congressional Affairs to Senators Paul, Graham, Johnson, and Scott (Sept. 27, 2023)