

# 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.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>*

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".<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 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>.

<sup>2</sup> 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>.

<sup>3</sup> 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,



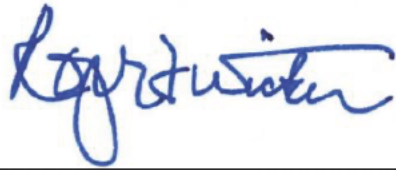
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Rand Paul, M.D.  
United States Senator



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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



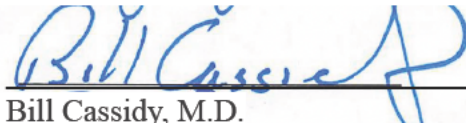
Markwayne Mullin  
United States Senator



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



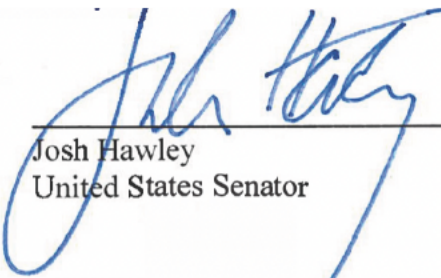
Bill Hagerty  
United States Senator



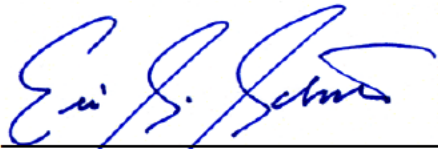
Mike Braun  
United States Senator



Tommy Tuberville  
United States Senator



Josh Hawley  
United States Senator



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Eric Schmitt  
United States Senator



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Roger Marshall  
United States Senator



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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)

UNCLASSIFIED//FOUO  
Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

27 September 2023

The Honorable Rand Paul  
United States Senate  
Washington D.C. 20510

The Honorable Lindsey Graham  
United States Senate  
Washington D.C. 20510

The Honorable Ron Johnson  
United States Senate  
Washington D.C. 20510

The Honorable Rick Scott  
United States Senate  
Washington D.C. 20510

Dear Senators Paul, Graham, Johnson, and Scott:

(U) Thank you for your 12 September 2023 letter related to CIA's investigation into the origins of COVID-19.

(U//FOUO) As you know, CIA is committed to the highest standards of analytic rigor, integrity, and objectivity. The Agency takes seriously its obligation to regularly brief the congressional intelligence committees, including with respect to the Agency's ongoing work related to the origins of COVID-19. In addition to regularly briefing the Senate Intelligence Committee on this topic, we are engaging directly with Chairman Turner and the House Intelligence Committee regarding the allegations raised in his 12 September 2023 letter. Please be assured that CIA will continue to keep the congressional intelligence committees fully and currently informed regarding these matters.

(U) Thank you for your continued support for the men and women of the CIA.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Catella", written over a large, stylized flourish.

James A. Catella  
Director, Office of Congressional Affairs

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# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 12, 2023

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

Director Burns:

We write in response to the whistleblower allegations recently 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.<sup>1</sup> According to Chariman 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. The whistleblower further contends that to come to the eventual public determination of uncertainty, the other six members were given a significant monetary incentive to change their position.<sup>2</sup>

These allegations are deeply concerning and raise serious questions about the Agency's investigation into the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic. For this reason, we request you provide our offices with the following information no later than September 25, 2023:

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;

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<sup>1</sup> 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/>.

<sup>2</sup> 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. 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 regarding the pay history, to include the awarding of any type of financial or performance-based incentive/financial bonus to members of all iterations of the COVID Discovery Team(s).

Sincerely,



Rand Paul, M.D.  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Homeland Security  
& Governmental Affairs



Lindsey Graham  
Ranking Member  
Committee on the Judiciary



Ron Johnson  
Ranking Member  
Permanent Subcommittee  
on Investigations



Rick Scott  
United States Senator

cc: The Honorable Robin Ashton  
Inspector General  
Central Intelligence Agency

The Honorable Thomas A. Monheim  
Inspector General of the Intelligence Community  
Office of the Intelligence Community Inspector General