

COVID-19 ORIGIN ACT OF 2023

MARCH 30, 2023.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. TURNER, from the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany H.R. 1376]

The Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 1376) to require the Director of National Intelligence to declassify information relating to the origin of COVID-19, and for other purposes, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon without amendment and recommends that the bill do pass.

PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF THE BILL

The purpose of H.R. 1376 is to require the Director of National Intelligence to declassify information relating to the origin of COVID-19.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

The COVID-19 pandemic wreaked havoc across the country, with almost every household feeling its effects. The United States' death toll from this virus has surpassed one million people.¹ Although concrete data is hard to lock down, millions of Americans are suffering from the long-term effects directly attributed to this virus. COVID-19 has also negatively affected communities, especially our school systems. It is becoming increasingly clear that school-age children face major educational hurdles because of long-term school closures. The American public deserves answers to every aspect of the COVID-19 pandemic to include how this pandemic started and specifically whether it was a natural occurrence or was the result of a lab-related event. It is imperative that information held by the United States Intelligence Community help in-

¹Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Covid Data Tracker *CDC COVID Data Tracker: Case, Death, & Laboratory Testing Trends by Location*.

form the public on the question of whether the origin of this pandemic was natural or lab related.

Scientists have called for additional investigations and broader government cooperation to address the circumstances surrounding COVID's emergence. Since the People's Republic of China has not been transparent in sharing information, the Intelligence Community is uniquely situated to provide relevant insights. The Intelligence Community owes the American people transparency on the information it already has, especially regarding all theories that plausibly explain SARS COVID's origins, and, consistent with the protection of sources and methods, should be fully transparent about what it knows.

Taking steps to prepare for and prevent the next pandemic is a vital national security objective, and understanding the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic is an important component of achieving that objective.

COMMITTEE ACTION

H.R. 1376 was introduced on March 3, 2022, by Representative Michael Turner (R-OH). The bill was referred to the House—Intelligence (Permanent Select); Energy and Commerce. On March 8, 2023, the Select Committee on Intelligence met to consider the bill. The bill was adopted and ordered favorably reported to the House of Representatives by unanimous consent.

HEARINGS

For the purposes of clause 3(c)(6) of House rule XIII, the following hearings was used to develop or consider this measure:

The Committee held no hearings on H.R. 1376.

COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Regarding clause 2(b)(1) of rule X and clause 3(c)(1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the oversight findings and recommendations are reflective in the descriptive portion of the report.

NEW BUDGET AUTHORITY, ENTITLEMENT AUTHORITY, AND TAX EXPENDITURES

1. Cost of Legislation and the Congressional Budget Act. With respect to the requirements of clause 3(c)(2) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives and section 308(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 and with respect to requirements of clause (3)(c)(3) and clause 3(d) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives and section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the Congressional Budget Office has informed the Committee that H.R. 1376 has no new budget authority, spending authority, credit authority, or an increase or decrease in revenues or tax expenditures.

2. General Performance Goals and Objectives. As required by clause 3(c)(4) of rule XIII, the general performance goals and objectives of this bill are to inform the public of information held by the intelligence community regarding the Wuhan Institute of Virology and its possible association with COVID-19 origins.

EARMARK STATEMENT

This bill does not contain any Congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined under clause 9(e), 9(f), and 9(g) of rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives.

UNFUNDED MANDATES REFORM ACT STATEMENT

H.R. 1376 does not contain any unfunded mandates pursuant to section 423 of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act.

EXISTING PROGRAMS

This bill does not establish or reauthorize a program of the federal government known to be duplicative of another program.

APPLICABILITY TO LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

The Committee finds that the legislation does not relate to the terms and conditions of employment or access to public services or accommodations within the meaning of section 102(b)(3) of the Congressional Accountability Act.

PREEMPTION OF STATE, LOCAL, OR TRIBAL LAW

Any preemptive effect of this bill over state, local, or tribal law is intended to be consistent with the bill's purposes and text and the Supremacy Clause of Article VI of the U.S. Constitution.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW MADE BY THE BILL, AS REPORTED

In compliance with clause 3(e) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, this bill makes no changes to existing law.

SECTION-BY-SECTION

Section 1. Short title: COVID-19 Origins Act of 2023

Section 2. Sense of Congress

Section 3. (a) Not later than 90 days after date of enactment the Director of National Intelligence shall (1) declassify any and all information relating to the possible links between the Wuhan Institute of Virology and the origins of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) including (A) activities performed by the Wuhan Institute of Virology with or on behalf of the People Liberation Army; (B) coronavirus research or other related activities performed at the Wuhan Institute of Virology prior to the outbreak of COVID-19 and (C) researcher's at the Wuhan Institute of Virology who fell ill in the autumn 2019 including for any such researcher (i) the researchers name; (ii) the researchers symptoms; (iii) the date of the onset of the researchers symptoms; (iv) the researchers role at the Wuhan Institute of Virology; (v) whether the researcher was involved with or exposed to coronaviruses research at the Wuhan Institute of Virology; (vi) whether the researcher visited a hospital while they were ill; and (vii) a description of any other actions taken by the researcher that they may suggest they were experiencing a serious illness at the time; and (2) Submit to Congress an unclassified report that contains (A) all the information described

above (1); and (B) only such redactions as the Director determines necessary to protect sources and methods.

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COMMITTEE CORRESPONDENCE

The following letter exchange will be inserted into this report:

1. March 29, 2023 letter from The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers, Chair, House Committee on Energy and Commerce.
2. March 30, 2023 letter from The Honorable Mike Turner, Chair, House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

SUPPLEMENTAL, MINORITY, ADDITIONAL, OR DISSENTING VIEWS

None.

CATHY McMORRIS RODGERS, WASHINGTON
CHAIR

FRANK PALLONE, JR., NEW JERSEY
RANKING MEMBER

ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
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2125 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
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March 29, 2023

The Honorable Mike Turner
Chairman
Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence
Capitol Visitor Center HVC-304
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Washington, DC 20515-6415

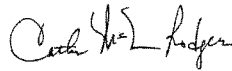
Dear Chairman Turner:

I write regarding H.R. 1376, the "COVID-19 Origin Act of 2023," which was referred in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce. I wanted to notify you that the Committee will forgo action on the bill so that it may proceed expeditiously to the House floor for consideration.

The Committee on Energy and Commerce takes this action with our mutual understanding that by foregoing consideration of H.R. 1376, the Committee does not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in this or similar legislation and will be appropriately consulted and involved as this or similar legislation moves forward to address any remaining issues within the Committee's jurisdiction. The Committee also reserves the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this or similar legislation and asks that you support any such request.

I would appreciate your response confirming this understanding with respect to H.R. 1376 and ask that a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter be included in your committee's report on the legislation or the Congressional Record during its consideration on the House floor.

Sincerely,



Cathy Morris Rodgers
Chair

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ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
JAMES A. HIMES, CONNECTICUT
RANKING MEMBER

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE
ON INTELLIGENCE

March 30, 2023

Chairwoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman McMorris Rodgers:

I write in response to your letter referencing H.R. 1376, the "COVID-19 Origin Act of 2023." As you know, the Senate concurrently introduced S. 619, an identical bill. Thanks to unanimous and bipartisan support in both the House and the Senate, S. 619 was signed by the President on March 20, 2023.

While no further action on H.R. 1376 is required, I understand from your letter that the House Committee on Energy and Commerce is not waiving any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in the COVID-19 Origin Act of 2023. The House Committee on Energy and Commerce will be consulted and involved as appropriate on any remaining issues within the Committee's jurisdiction on this or similar legislation. Although no House-Senate conference is anticipated on H.R. 1376 given that S. 619 has already been enacted, I will support your Committee's request to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees should such House-Senate conference on this or similar legislation occur.

A copy of our exchange of letters on this matter will be included with H.R. 1376 report from the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael R. Turner".

Michael R. Turner
Chairman
House Permanent Select
Committee on Intelligence

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