

FRANK PALLONE, JR., NEW JERSEY  
CHAIRMAN

CATHY McMORRIS RODGERS, WASHINGTON  
RANKING MEMBER

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS  
**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

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WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6115  
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October 27, 2021

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.  
Chairman  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Chairman Pallone:

We write to request you hold a hearing on the Biden Administration's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This hearing would be similar to the Committee hearing held on June 23, 2020, on "The Trump Administration's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic".<sup>1</sup> As such, we would also request that you invite similar witnesses, such as Dr. Anthony Fauci, Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID); Dr. Francis Collins, Director of National Institutes of Health (NIH); Dr. Rochelle Walensky, Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); Dr. Rachel Levine, the Health and Human Services (HHS) Assistant Secretary for Health; and Dr. Janet Woodcock, Acting Commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

President Biden promised that his Administration would lead with science and truth.<sup>2</sup> Clearly, he has failed. During the June 23, 2020 hearing, many Democrats accused the Trump Administration of prioritizing politics and special interests over public health. Now, the Biden Administration is "transforming" America in the name of responding to COVID-19. As the committee of jurisdiction over public health, a hearing on the Biden Administration's response to

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<sup>1</sup> Full Committee Hearing on "Oversight of The Trump Administration's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic", (June 23, 2020) *available at* <https://energycommerce.house.gov/committee-activity/hearings/full-committee-hearing-on-oversight-of-the-trump-administrations>

<sup>2</sup> Bill Barrow and Seth Borenstein, *Biden says his advisers will lead with 'science and truth'*, AP News (Jan. 18, 2021), *available at* <https://apnews.com/article/joe-biden-technology-francis-collins-022fc771e262e6f1c7e33ffe80e1d37b>

the COVID-19 pandemic is long overdue. It is imperative we exercise our oversight responsibilities to demand answers for the American people on the following:

### I. Failed COVID-19 Response

As the Democratic nominee, Joe Biden promised to “shut down the virus,”<sup>3</sup> yet more Americans have now died from COVID-19 in 2021 than in 2020.<sup>4</sup> Further, on July 4, 2021, President Biden declared “success” in beating the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>5</sup> However, within days of his speech, the Delta variant became the dominant strain, accounting for more than half of all infections.<sup>6</sup> And this is in spite of Democrats rushing through a \$1.9 trillion partisan bill to address COVID-19. Unfortunately, only 9 percent of that spending was targeted to COVID-19. Among a number of other issues, Dr. Fauci, Dr. Walensky, Dr. Levine, and Dr. Woodcock should come before the Committee to answer questions about:

1. The Biden Administration’s response to the Delta variant, including what the Administration knew and when;
2. Actions taken by the Biden Administration that may have contributed to vaccine hesitancy, including the decision to pause the Johnson & Johnson vaccine<sup>7</sup> and the CDC’s reversal of mask-guidance for vaccinated people;<sup>8</sup>
3. President Biden’s failure to nominate an FDA commissioner and how the lack of leadership at the agency has hurt this Administration’s COVID-19 response;
4. President Biden flouting the FDA process to announce booster shots prior to FDA reviewing the data in an apparent effort to change the news cycle around his catastrophic withdrawal from Afghanistan;

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<sup>3</sup> Jake Lahut, *Biden says he would ‘shut down the virus, not the country’ during the final presidential debate*, Business Insider (Oct. 22, 2020) available at <https://www.businessinsider.com/biden-shut-down-the-virus-not-the-country-2020-10>

<sup>4</sup> Marisa Dellatto, *U.S. COVID-19 Deaths For 2021 Surpass Toll From 2020*, Forbes (Oct. 6, 2021) available at <https://www.forbes.com/sites/marisadellatto/2021/10/06/us-covid-19-deaths-for-2021-surpass-toll-from-2020/?sh=12e6506b6cc2>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-07-04/biden-to-appeal-for-vaccinations-after-u-s-missed-july-4-target>

<sup>6</sup> Peter Nicholas, *How Delta Beat Biden*, The Atlantic (Sept. 8, 2021), available at <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2021/09/how-delta-beat-biden-covid-pandemic/620003/>

<sup>7</sup> Jennifer Welsh, *Johnson & Johnson Pause Leads to Spike in Vaccine Hesitancy*, Verywell Health (May 14, 2021), available at <https://www.verywellhealth.com/vaccine-hesitancy-rises-alongside-johnson-and-johnson-pause-5184589>

<sup>8</sup> Berkeley Lovelace Jr., *CDC reverses indoor mask policy, saying fully vaccinated people and kids should wear them indoors*, CNBC (July 27, 2021), available at <https://www.cnbc.com/2021/07/27/cdc-to-reverse-indoor-mask-policy-to-recommend-them-for-fully-vaccinated-people-in-covid-hot-spots.html>

5. Whether political pressure forced a number of career public health leaders at the CDC<sup>9</sup> and FDA<sup>10</sup> to resign; and
6. President Biden blindsiding health care providers and States by changing monoclonal antibody ordering and distribution process.

## II. Political Corruption at the CDC

Although Dr. Walensky pledged to lead the CDC with “facts, science, and integrity,”<sup>11</sup> her agency appears to be one of the most politically compromised agencies in this Administration. Under her leadership, the CDC’s actions have prioritized Biden campaign donors and special interests over children. Teachers’ unions edited the CDC’s “scientific” guidance on schools, which likely led to more closures than reopening<sup>12</sup> and successfully pressured the CDC to adjust their mask-guidance.<sup>13</sup> Among a number of other issues, Dr. Walensky should come before this Committee to answer questions about:

1. Why she believes vaccinated kids should be required to wear masks in school and when, if ever, she will stand up to teachers’ unions and reject their desires for a forever pandemic;
2. Why the CDC advises children under the age of 12 to wear masks when the WHO and UNICEF specifically advise against masking children under the age of 5<sup>14</sup> and our European counterparts<sup>15</sup> do not require kids in primary school to wear masks;
3. Why the CDC does not consider other factors, such as mental health, social and emotional development, and learning ability when making recommendations for children, especially given the lack of good data on benefits of masking in children;
4. How the CDC is working with States and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAHMSA) to address the mental health crisis caused by

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<sup>9</sup> Erin Banco and Adam Cancryn, *Top CDC official resigns from post following reassignment*, Politico (May 7, 2021) available at <https://www.politico.com/news/2021/05/07/nancy-messonnier-resigns-485684>

<sup>10</sup> Jacqueline Howard, *Two departing FDA leaders among scientists who say Covid-19 vaccines do not currently ‘show need for boosting’*, CNN (Sept. 13, 2021) available at <https://www.cnn.com/2021/09/13/health/boosters-not-needed-lancet-review/index.html>

<sup>11</sup> Rochelle P. Walensky, *As the New C.D.C. Chief, I’ll Tell You the Truth* (Jan. 11, 2021) available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/11/opinion/rochelle-walensky-cdc-director.html>

<sup>12</sup> Jon Levine, *Powerful teachers union influenced CDC on school reopenings, emails show*, New York Post (May 1, 2021), available at <https://nypost.com/2021/05/01/teachers-union-collaborated-with-cdc-on-school-reopening-emails/>

<sup>13</sup> Joe Schoffstall, *CDC tightened masking guidelines after threats from teachers union, emails show*, Fox News (September 8, 2021) available at <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/cdc-tightened-masking-guidelines-after-threats-from-teachers-union>

<sup>14</sup> World Health Organization, *Coronavirus disease (COVID-19): Children and masks*, (last accessed Oct. 19, 2021), available at <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-children-and-masks-related-to-covid-19>

<sup>15</sup> European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, *Questions and answers on COVID-19: Children aged 1-18 years and the role of school settings*, (last accessed Oct. 19, 2021), available at <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/covid-19/questions-answers/questions-answers-school-transmission>

school closures among our Nation's children in light of the American Academy of Pediatrics declaring it a "national emergency"; and

5. Whether President Biden, Vice President Harris, or any other White House official acting on their behalf pressured the CDC to allow teachers unions to dictate CDC guidance.

### III. COVID-19 Origins Cover-Up

Understanding the origins of this pandemic is the public health question of our time. Unfortunately, the Biden Administration refuses to make subject matter experts and officials with first-hand knowledge from NIAID available to answer questions related to the origins of the pandemic and management concerns associated with the EcoHealth Alliance grant. Access to these individuals is important because they have critical information that will assist our pursuit of the truth. Among a number of other issues, Dr. Fauci and Dr. Collins should come before this Committee to answer questions about:

1. NIH refusing to make NIAID staff available to answer questions at bipartisan committee staff briefings;
2. NIAID's assessment or lack-there-of regarding the risks and benefits about potential gain-of-function research funded by NIH and NIAID in China;
3. Whether Dr. Fauci will direct or request that the NIH release unredacted documents related to the February 1, 2020, meeting convened by Dr. Fauci that led scientists involved to dismiss their prior concerns that COVID-19 leaked from a lab;<sup>16</sup>
4. Why NIAID has refused to hold EcoHealth Alliance accountable for violating terms of its grants; and
5. What actions, if any, NIAID is taking to investigate the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic.

These are important issues, but unfortunately, the Biden Administration refuses to be transparent, and Democrats in Congress refuse to hold them accountable. However, as the Chairman of the committee of jurisdiction, we suspect you share our concerns and also want answers. Accordingly, we urge you to invite these public health officials to come before our committee so the American people can get answers.

Sincerely,

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<sup>16</sup> James B. Meigs, *COVID and the Authorities: It's Even Worse Than We Thought*, Commentary (Nov. 2021), available at <https://www.commentary.org/articles/james-meigs/covid-fauci-lab-leak-gain-of-function/>



Cathy McMorris Rodgers  
Republican Leader  
Committee on Energy and Commerce



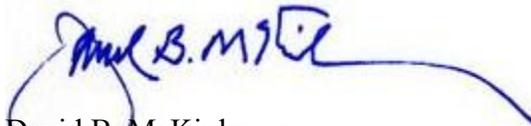
Fred Upton  
Republican Leader  
Subcommittee on Energy



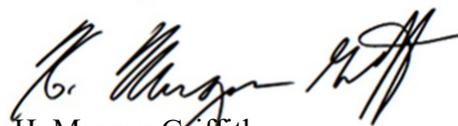
Robert E. Latta  
Republican Leader  
Subcommittee on Communications and  
Technology



Brett Guthrie  
Republican Leader  
Subcommittee on Health



David B. McKinley  
Republican Leader  
Subcommittee on Environment and  
Climate Change



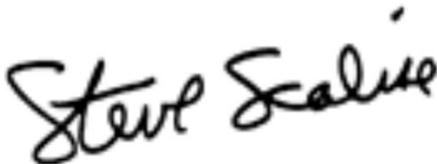
H. Morgan Griffith  
Republican Leader  
Subcommittee on Oversight and  
Investigations



Gus M. Bilirakis  
Republican Leader  
Committee on Consumer Protection and  
Commerce



Michael C. Burgess, M.D.  
Member of Congress



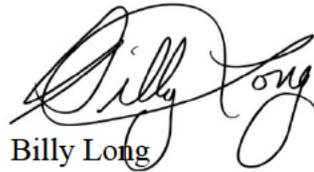
Steve Scalise  
Member of Congress



Adam Kinzinger  
Member of Congress



Bill Johnson  
Member of Congress



Billy Long  
Member of Congress



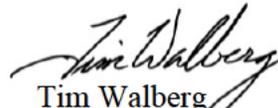
Larry Bucshon, M.D.  
Member of Congress



Markwayne Mullin  
Member of Congress



Richard Hudson  
Member of Congress



Tim Walberg  
Member of Congress



Earl L. "Buddy" Carter  
Member of Congress



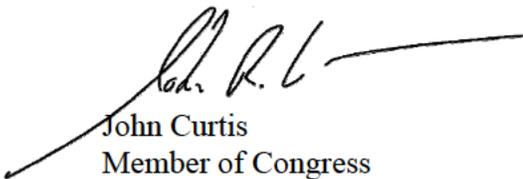
Jeff Duncan  
Member of Congress



Gary Palmer  
Member of Congress



Neal P. Dunn, M.D.  
Member of Congress



John Curtis  
Member of Congress



Debbie Lesko  
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Greg Pence". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name and last name clearly legible.

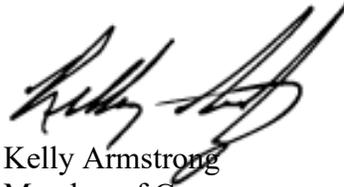
Greg Pence  
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dan Crenshaw". The signature is bold and cursive, with a prominent initial "D" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Dan Crenshaw  
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Joyce". The signature is cursive and clearly legible.

John Joyce, M.D.  
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelly Armstrong". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized, with a large initial "K".

Kelly Armstrong  
Member of Congress