

United States Senate
COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

July 14, 2025

The Honorable Pam Bondi
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Attorney General Bondi:

I write to renew my previous requests for the Department of Justice (DOJ) to open an investigation into former Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) Anthony Fauci's testimony before the United States Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions on May 11, 2021. This most recent request stems from new allegations that call into question the validity of Dr. Fauci's purported pardon.

In response to my questioning at the May 11, 2021 hearing, Dr. Fauci testified that "the NIH has not ever and does not now fund gain-of-function research in the Wuhan Institute of Virology".¹ In a subsequent hearing, I warned Dr. Fauci of the criminal implications of lying to Congress and offered him an opportunity to recant his previous statements. In response, Dr. Fauci stated that he had "never lied before the Congress" and "[d]id not retract that statement."²

On July 13, 2023 the House Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic released an email sent by Dr. Fauci on February 1, 2020, regarding a conference call concerning the origins of COVID-19, which included Dr. Fauci, Dr. Francis Collins, and several scientific researchers. In the email, Dr. Fauci acknowledges concerns that COVID-19 may have been genetically engineered due to the fact that gain-of-function research was occurring in Wuhan prior to the pandemic. Dr. Fauci wrote, "scientists in Wuhan University are known to have been working on gain-of-function experiments to determine that molecular mechanisms associated with bat viruses adapting to human infection, and the outbreak originated in Wuhan."³

In a paper entitled "Discovery of a rich gene pool of bat SARS-related coronaviruses provides new insights into the origin of SARS coronavirus," Dr. Zheng-Li Shi describes research conducted at the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV) and funded under NIAID Award R01AI110964. In that research, the spike genes from two uncharacterized bat SARS-related coronavirus strains, Rs4231 and Rs7327, were combined with the genomic backbone of another SARS-related coronavirus to create novel chimeric SARS-related viruses that showed cytopathic effects in primate epithelial cells and replication in human epithelial cells. These experiments combined genetic information from different SARS-related coronaviruses and combined them to create novel, artificial viruses able to infect human

¹ *An Update from Federal Officials on Efforts to Combat COVID-19 Before the Senate Comm. on Health, Educ., Labor & Pensions*, 117th Cong. 39 (2021) (statement of Dr. Anthony Fauci, Dir., Nat'l Inst. of Allergy and Infectious Diseases).

² *The Path Forward: A Federal Perspective on the COVID-19 Response Before the Senate Comm. on Health, Educ., Labor & Pensions*, 117th Cong. (2021) (statement of Dr. Anthony Fauci, Dir., Nat'l Inst. of Allergy and Infectious Diseases).

³ @COVIDSelect, TWITTER (Jul. 13, 2023),
<https://twitter.com/COVIDSelect/status/1679606442414809090/photo/1>.

cells. This research, conducted at the WIV and funded under NIAID Award R01AI110964, fits the definition of gain-of-function research.

In 2023, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) determined that the WIV and Wuhan University received NIH funding.⁴ The report noted that that NIH funded the WIV's project "Understanding the Risk of Bat Coronavirus Emergence" and included "genetic experiments to combine naturally occurring bat coronaviruses with SARS and MERS viruses, resulting in hybridized coronavirus strains." GAO also found that NIH funded the Wuhan University's collaboration with WIV on viral detection in the Yunnan province.

Under 18 U.S.C. § 1001, whoever "makes any materially false, fictitious, or fraudulent statement or representation" as part of "any investigation or review, conducted pursuant to the authority of any committee, subcommittee, commission or office of the Congress, consistent with applicable rules of the House or Senate" is subject to criminal fines and imprisonment of up to five years.

On January 19, 2025, Dr. Fauci was issued a full and unconditional pardon for any offenses that he may have committed or taken part in since 2014.⁵ Dr. Fauci was included among a group of individuals granted unprecedented preemptive pardons on President Joe Biden's final day in office. However, new information has revealed that these pardons were executed via autopen, with no documented confirmation that the President personally reviewed or approved each individual grant of clemency.⁶ According to reports, White House staff authorized the use of the autopen to issue the clemency documents.⁷ This raises serious constitutional and legal concerns about the legitimacy of Dr. Fauci's pardon.

For this reason, I renew my request that the DOJ investigate whether Dr. Fauci's statements to Congress on May 11, 2021 violated 18 U.S.C. § 1001 or any other applicable law.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rand Paul". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Rand" and last name "Paul" clearly distinguishable.

Rand Paul, M.D.
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland
Security and Governmental Affairs

Cc: Kash Patel, Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation
Dan Bongino, Deputy Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation

⁴ GOV'T ACCOUNTABILITY OFF., *FEDERAL RESEARCH: NIH Could Take Additional Actions to Manage Risks Involving Foreign Subrecipients* (2023).

⁵ Executive Grant of Clemency: Dr. Anthony S. Fauci (Jan. 19, 2025), U.S. Dep't of Justice, Office of the Pardon Att'y, <https://www.justice.gov/pardon/media/1385746/dl?inline>.

⁶ Charlie Savage & Tayler Pager, *Biden Says He Made the Clemency Decisions That Were Recorded With Autopen*, THE NEW YORK TIMES (JULY 13, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/07/13/us/politics/biden-pardon-autopen-trump.html>.

⁷ *Id.*