

Opening Statement of Chairman Rand Paul
September 23, 2026

The Committee will come to order. I note the presence of a quorum.

Today we are considering a resolution authorizing Senate Legal Counsel to seek immunity for a fact witness in this Committee's investigation into the origins of COVID-19 and risky life sciences research.

The investigation did not begin with this witness. On July 29, Dr. Fauci sat in this room under subpoena, holding a full and unconditional presidential pardon covering any offense connected to his government service from 2014 through 2025.

All he had to do was tell the American people the truth. Instead, he refused to answer this Committee's questions more than a hundred times. This Committee later voted to hold Dr. Fauci in contempt and has asked the Vice President to act.

Since then, the Committee has continued its investigation and sought testimony from others with relevant firsthand knowledge including the witness we are discussing today.

The witness served as Dr. Fauci's special assistant from 2007 to the day he left NIAID in 2022. Her position placed her in the flow of communications directly relevant to our investigation.

On the evening of January 31, 2020, Dr. Fauci wrote to Jeremy Farrar about a concern Kristian Andersen had raised about the virus's spike protein.

He wrote that if other experts agreed, the concern should be reported to the authorities, naming the FBI and MI5. He wrote that he would alert his U.S. government colleagues.

He blind copied his longtime assistant. Earlier that evening, she had written to Farrar on his behalf to set up the call.

We want to know why she was on that email, what she knew, and what happened next.

We asked her to cooperate voluntarily. When that failed, we subpoenaed her. Last week she appeared, took the oath, and refused to answer every question we asked, citing her Fifth Amendment right not to incriminate herself.

She may have that right. But her silence does not end this investigation.

This resolution allows us to ask a federal court to grant her immunity. Congress created this process more than fifty years ago for exactly this situation.

We are here today to remove the obstacle she raised, so she can answer this Committee's questions.

Under an immunity order, her testimony, and anything derived from it, cannot be used against her in a criminal case.

The Fifth Amendment protects her from incriminating herself. Immunity gives her that same protection.

The only thing she cannot do is lie.

We first tried to secure that immunity through a committee poll, as our rules allow. Our Democratic colleagues declined to support it.

This is not a vote on guilt. It is not a vote on Dr. Fauci.

It is a vote on whether a fact witness, who has already claimed a privilege, should receive the legal protection that allows her to answer.

The only thing immunity changes is whether the American people hear what she knows.

Ask yourself why anyone would oppose that. Voting no does not protect her. Immunity does that.

A no vote today actually encourages the DOJ to seek to compel testimony with an indictment.

There is no principled reason to vote no. The only reason is that you do not want her to answer.

The law requires two-thirds of this Committee. Ten votes.

All eight Republicans on this Committee want to hear her story – so all we need is two Democrats to join us in seeking the truth.

I urge my colleagues to remove this obstacle and let this witness tell the American people what she knows.