

**From:** auchinclossh@niaid.nih.gov  
**Sent:** Tue, 11 May 2021 17:55:24 -0400  
**To:** Mimi McCain  
**Subject:** Fwd: Wpost: Rand Paul and the GOP effort to blame Fauci for the coronavirus  
<https://wapo.st/3o9g6YN>

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "Folkers, Greg (NIH/NIAID) [E]" <GFOLKERS@niaid.nih.gov>  
**Date:** May 11, 2021 at 5:15:09 PM EDT  
**Subject:** Wpost: Rand Paul and the GOP effort to blame Fauci for the coronavirus  
<https://wapo.st/3o9g6YN>

## Rand Paul and the GOP effort to blame Fauci for the coronavirus

Rand Paul: Fauci is 'fooling with Mother Nature'



In a May 11 hearing, Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) asked top infectious-disease expert Anthony S. Fauci about NIH funding of research in China. (The Washington Post)



By

[Aaron Blake](#)

Senior reporter

May 11, 2021 at 3:32 p.m. EDT

For much of the past year, Republicans have decried lead government coronavirus expert Anthony S. Fauci's prescriptions for mitigating the pandemic — including masks, social distancing and keeping society shut down.

But increasingly in the past week, the effort has taken on a new flavor — with suggestions that Fauci might be personally to blame for the advent of the virus itself.

There remain major questions about just how the virus emerged, including the idea that it somehow escaped a lab in the city of Wuhan, China, where the virus originated. The theory, which was once highly speculative and which was downplayed by top medical experts such as Fauci, is suddenly being treated more seriously, though there is no conclusive evidence either way.

But while some Republicans have criticized the initial dismissal of that theory as evidence of a lack of curiosity from the media and health officials about the origins of the virus — or even some kind of pro-China or anti-Trump bias — the theories about Fauci's complicity take things to another level.

With Fauci set to testify before the Senate on Tuesday, Fox News host Tucker Carlson teed things up the night before. In a commentary leading off his show, he played up the idea of a lab leak, pointing (rightly) to shifting beliefs in the medical community about its plausibility and treating it as an open question.

But then he pivoted to treating this as something amounting to fact.

While talking about National Institutes of Health funding for the Wuhan Institute of Virology, Carlson referred to “the deadly experiments that were going on there” — which is valid, given that's the kind of thing virologists do.

But he then referred to them, as if the lab-leak theory were proved, as “the experiments that clearly went so wrong.”

Again, there is no firm evidence that the spread of the coronavirus was the result of experiments that “clearly” went “so wrong” in the Wuhan lab. Carlson has a knack for suggesting things without saying them directly, but this veered in a much more conspiratorial and unproven direction than usual.

“This wouldn't have happened if Tony Fauci didn't allow it to happen — that is clear,” Carlson continued, referring to the funding. “It's an amazing story. It is a shocking story. In a functional country, there would be a criminal investigation into Tony Fauci's role in the covid pandemic that has killed millions and halted our country, changing it forever. So why isn't there a criminal investigation into Tony Fauci's role in this pandemic?”

The easy answer is that it's speculative and that criminal investigations generally involve some kind of genuine evidence of wrongdoing or violations of specific laws. It has been known for a long time that U.S. health agencies funded the Wuhan Institute of Virology, and it's valid to ask whether that funding was a good idea. But there is no evidence that such funding ran afoul of U.S. law or that it contributed to the pandemic.

GOP senators picked up that ball and ran with it Tuesday, pressing Fauci on the idea that funding the Wuhan lab put him at fault.

Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.), who has clashed repeatedly with Fauci, pressed him on funding for the Wuhan lab. Paul suggested that the funding ran afoul of a prohibition on “gain-of-function” research — i.e., altering genomes to give viruses new properties, such as the ability to infect a new host species or to transmit more easily. The idea behind such research is that it might provide insight into how a virus spreads and improve efforts to counteract it, though it also carries obvious risks, which is why funding for such research is limited.

Paul claimed that the U.S. government was downplaying the link between gain-of-function research and the coronavirus because it was “self-interested” in continuing such research, or even covering up its role in the pandemic. He went on to press Fauci on the funding for the Wuhan lab, at which point Fauci said repeatedly that such funding was not intended to fund gain-of-function research (which fact-checkers have validated).

“With all due respect, you are entirely and completely incorrect that — the NIH has not ever and does not now fund gain-of-function research in the Wuhan Institute,” Fauci said.

Paul then reverted to pointing to alleged gain-of-function research that is taking place in the United States, rather than the Wuhan lab, to which Fauci offered a rather lawyerly response about what gain-of-function research is. Paul then pressed him on sending broader funding to the Wuhan lab.

Fauci did at one point say about the lab-leak theory: “I do not have any accounting of what the Chinese may have done, and I am fully in favor of any further investigation of what went on in China.”

Paul later got some backup from Sen. Roger Marshall (R-Kan.).

Marshall, who like Paul is a doctor, repeatedly pressed Fauci on the idea that such viral research could have led to the novel coronavirus. He asked whether Fauci could definitively say that NIH funding didn’t, in some way, play a part in a theoretical eventual lab leak, citing research on mice.

“Could some of the funding [have] indirectly ended up to the contribution of covid-19?” Marshall asked.

Fauci, testily, responded that the question was excessively broad, because many types of research could conceivably meet the definition as having one day contributed to the spread of the virus.

“I’m not sure exactly where that question is going,” Fauci said. “I mean, you could do research on something as benign as looking at something that has nothing to do with it, and it could, indirectly, some day, somehow be involved. So if you want to trap me into saying yes or no, I’m not going to play that game.”

There are valid questions about the lab-leak theory and whether funding the Wuhan lab was a good idea, in light of all we know. And Fauci acknowledges it’s worth figuring out whether the lab and China more broadly played a role. But as always in politics, it’s worth being skeptical of a conveniently erected boogeyman.

The idea that Fauci is somehow using all of this to keep people in masks or locked down for his own edification has been a fixture in some corners of conservative media, and in their telling he’s gradually emerged as perhaps the epitome of overzealous government scientists. But this new line of attack is painting him as something else entirely.

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**From:** Auchincloss, Hugh (NIH/NIAID) [E]  
**Sent:** Fri, 7 May 2021 13:59:06 +0000  
**To:** Embry, Alan (NIH/NIAID) [E]  
**Subject:** FW: URGENT FOX NEWS INQUIRY - request for comment/reaction to Gallagher letter  
**Attachments:** f12ba1c6-08ef-4277-b96f-ac40f526729f\_.pdf

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**From:** Conrad, Patricia (NIH/NIAID) [E] <conradpa@niaid.nih.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 7, 2021 9:18 AM  
**To:** Haskins, Melinda (NIH/NIAID) [E] <haskinsm@mail.nih.gov>; Billet, Courtney (NIH/NIAID) [E] <billetc@niaid.nih.gov>  
**Cc:** Harper, Jill (NIH/NIAID) [E] <jharper@niaid.nih.gov>; Folkers, Greg (NIH/NIAID) [E] <gfolkers@niaid.nih.gov>; Auchincloss, Hugh (NIH/NIAID) [E] <auchinclossh@niaid.nih.gov>  
**Subject:** FW: URGENT FOX NEWS INQUIRY - request for comment/reaction to Gallagher letter

fyi

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**From:** Jenkins, Griff <Griff.Jenkins@FOX.COM>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 7, 2021 9:04 AM  
**To:** Fauci, Anthony (NIH/NIAID) [E] <afauci@niaid.nih.gov>  
**Cc:** Levinson, James <James.Levinson@FOX.COM>; Tomlinson, Lucas <Lucas.Tomlinson@FOX.COM>  
**Subject:** URGENT FOX NEWS INQUIRY - request for comment/reaction to Gallagher letter

Dr. Fauci –

We are reporting today starting at 10a on the letter that Rep. Mike Gallagher sent to your office (see attached) regarding an investigation into the origins of the pandemic – and seeking a response from you or your office.

Can you please provide a statement or comment that we can incorporate in our reporting?

Many thanks,  
Griff

Griff Jenkins  
National Correspondent  
FOX News Channel

(b)(6) cell

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Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
SUBCOMMITTEES:  
SEAFORCE AND PROJECTION FORCES  
INTELLIGENCE AND EMERGING THREATS  
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION  
AND INFRASTRUCTURE  
SUBCOMMITTEES:  
HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT  
AVIATION  
COAST GUARD AND MARITIME TRANSPORTATION

May 5, 2021

Dr. Anthony S. Fauci  
Director  
National Institute of Allergy & Infectious Diseases  
5601 Fishers Lane, MSC 9806  
Bethesda, Maryland 20892-9806

Dear Dr. Fauci,

Over the past year, nearly 600,000 Americans and more than 3 million people worldwide have died from COVID-19. Across the globe, there have been more than 150 million confirmed cases of this disease, costing trillions in economic damage. Daily life has been upended and countless businesses destroyed. Understanding the cause of this pandemic—and ensuring that something like it never happens again—is the most important question facing the world today.

Given the stakes, we cannot afford to settle for a limited, blinkered, or politicized understanding of the origin of this terrible disease. While many in the scientific community were quick to dismiss the possibility that the COVID-19 outbreak originated with a laboratory leak in Wuhan, China, information initially released by the Trump State Department and later confirmed by the Biden administration suggests much closer examination is needed.<sup>1</sup> The State Department has detailed several concerning revelations, including that the U.S. government has reason to believe several researchers at the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV) became sick in autumn 2019 with symptoms consistent with COVID-19, before the first public cases emerged in that community. Viruses have frequently leaked from labs over the years in China and elsewhere, including from accidentally infected researchers.

In fact, after World Health Organization (WHO) investigators were stymied as part of their joint report alongside Chinese officials, WHO Chief Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus called for further investigation of the lab leak theory, stating that it “requires further investigation,

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<sup>1</sup> “Fact Sheet: Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology,” Office of the Spokesperson, Department of State, last modified January 15, 2021, <https://2017-2021.state.gov/fact-sheet-activity-at-the-wuhan-institute-of-virology/index.html>;

Rogin, Josh, “The Biden administration confirms some but not all of Trump’s Wuhan lab claims.” *Washington Post*, March 9, 2021, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/03/09/biden-administration-confirms-some-trump-wuhan-lab-claims/>.

potentially with additional missions involving specialist experts” and, “as far as WHO is concerned all hypotheses remain on the table.”<sup>2</sup>

Through National Institutes of Health grants to the New York-based organization EcoHealth Alliance, the U.S. government helped fund research at the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV).<sup>3</sup> While this funding was no doubt well-intentioned, taxpayers deserve a detailed understanding of whether federal resources supported dangerous “gain-of-function” research, and whether this might have played a role in the outbreak of the pandemic. As the world seeks to recover from this pandemic, Americans deserve to understand not only how this catastrophe came about, but that their government is learning and internalizing lessons to ensure it does not happen again.

With that in mind, I respectfully ask for answers to the following questions:

1. Do you agree with Dr. Tedros that that the lab leak possibility "requires further investigation, potentially with additional missions involving specialist experts?" Should any further investigations include the case of the sick researchers inside the WIV in autumn 2019? Why or why not?
2. Have you scrutinized all that the U.S. government knows about the sick researchers at the WIV, including the facts released by the State Department in January and any additional underlying intelligence or other information? If so, how so? If not, why not?
3. How much U.S. government funding has gone to the WIV over time, and how much of that supported gain-of-function research? Did U.S. government funding go to the WIV even during the 2014-2017 U.S. moratorium on funding gain-of-function research?
4. In light of the Chinese Communist Party’s extensive coverup and lack of transparency, surrounding the origins of the pandemic, even to this day, how should the U.S. government modify or reconsider scientific exchanges with Chinese entities?
5. You have argued over the years that gain-of-function research is a risk worth taking, given the potential benefits for the creation of vaccines and therapeutics.<sup>4</sup> Does the COVID-19 pandemic and the possibility of a leak from the WIV raise questions about the future prudence of gain-of-function research? How can we quantify the risks associated with this type of research in the future, particularly when it comes to non-transparent countries like China, and at what point does this research simply become too risky?

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<sup>2</sup> “WHO Director-General’s remarks at the Member State Briefing on the report of the international team studying the origins of SARS-CoV-2,” Director-General Speeches, World Health Organization, last modified March 30, 2021, <https://www.who.int/director-general/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-remarks-at-the-member-state-briefing-on-the-report-of-the-international-team-studying-the-origins-of-sars-cov-2>.

<sup>3</sup> Aizenman, Nurith, “Why The U.S. Government Stopped Funding A Research Project On Bats And Coronaviruses,” *National Public Radio*, April 29, 2020, <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/04/29/847948272/why-the-u-s-government-stopped-funding-a-research-project-on-bats-and-coronaviru>.

<sup>4</sup> Fauci, Anthony, Nabel, Gary and Collins, Francis, “A flu virus risk worth taking,” *Washington Post*, December 30, 2011, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/a-flu-virus-risk-worth-taking/2011/12/30/gIQAM9sNRP\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/a-flu-virus-risk-worth-taking/2011/12/30/gIQAM9sNRP_story.html).

Thank you for your consideration in this important matter. I look forward to your response and to working with you to help ensure the health and safety of the American public, now and in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "MG", followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

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Mike Gallagher  
Member of Congress



**From:** Auchincloss, Hugh (NIH/NIAID) [E]  
**Sent:** Wed, 24 Feb 2021 14:57:02 +0000  
**To:** Erbeling, Emily (NIH/NIAID) [E];Cassetti, Cristina (NIH/NIAID) [E]  
**Subject:** FW: House members' letter to OIG  
**Attachments:** 111.pdf

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**From:** Folkers, Greg (NIH/NIAID) [E] <gfolkers@niaid.nih.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 23, 2021 4:14 PM  
**To:** NIAID OD AM <NIAIDODAM@niaid.nih.gov>  
**Subject:** House members' letter to OIG

We request a prompt and thorough investigation into the NIH's response to biosafety concerns raised about WIV, including, but not limited to:

1. When was the NIH first aware that coronavirus experiments were being conducted at WIV with taxpayer funds (via EcoHealth Alliance or otherwise)?
2. Did NIH officials review WIV's coronavirus experiments to assess compliance with Potential Pandemic Pathogen Care and Oversight (P3CO) guidelines?
3. When was the NIH first aware of biosafety or other concerns at WIV?
4. Was the NIH briefed on the concerns raised by the State Department in 2018 about the potential pandemic risk of WIV's research?
5. Did Dr. Collins or other NIH officials communicate with EcoHealth Alliance and/or WIV to coordinate responses to lab leak allegations?
6. When does WIV's current eligibility to receive NIH funding expire?
7. Is WIV currently receiving any NIH support directly or indirectly?
8. How much NIH funding - directly or indirectly - has WIV received from the NIH including grants, sub-grants, and other funding sources.

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**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

February 23, 2021

Ms. Christi Grimm  
Principal Deputy Inspector General  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
330 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Principal Deputy Inspector General Grimm:

We write to request a prompt and thorough investigation into the National Institutes of Health's (NIH) response to biosafety concerns raised about taxpayer-funded coronavirus research at the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV) in Wuhan, China.

Recently, the *Washington Post*, which had regularly dismissed the theory that the COVID-19 pandemic resulted from a lab leak at WIV, finally published an editorial board column embracing the lab leak hypothesis and calling for investigation into the research lab that was funded in part with U.S. tax dollars from the NIH.<sup>1,2</sup> The *Post's* about-face follows growing belief among experts, including the U.S. State Department, that the pandemic that has killed over 500,000 people in the U.S. and 2 million people worldwide may have been caused by dangerous coronavirus research gone awry at the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)-run bioagent laboratory.<sup>3,4,5,6</sup>

The NIH, unfortunately, has played a major role in supporting WIV and this treacherous research and the promotion of spurious claims dismissing the NIH-funded lab's potential role in the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2017, NIH Director Francis Collins personally supported and celebrated the resumption of dangerous taxpayer-funded "gain-of-function" research designed to make viruses more transmissible and fatal.<sup>7</sup> Subsequently, Dr. Collins' NIH allowed U.S. Taxpayer dollars to be secretly funneled to WIV's reckless coronavirus experiments through grants awarded to the U.S.-based EcoHealth Alliance, Inc.<sup>8,9</sup> The Pentagon also apparently funded WIV via a grant to EcoHealth.<sup>10</sup>

In March 2020, as questions arose about the safety of WIV's NIH-funded coronavirus research, Dr. Collins wrote a blog that is still published, which states, "Some folks are even making outrageous

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/02/05/coronavirus-origins-mystery-china/?arc404=true>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.foxnews.com/media/washington-post-editorial-board-calls-for-answers-from-china-on-pandemic>

<sup>3</sup> <https://nymag.com/intelligencer/article/coronavirus-lab-escape-theory.html>

<sup>4</sup> <https://video.foxnews.com/v/6227902415001>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/policy/pompeo-us-wuhan-lab-staff-caught-covid-19-before-pandemic>

<sup>6</sup> <https://2017-2021.state.gov/fact-sheet-activity-at-the-wuhan-institute-of-virology//index.html>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.nih.gov/about-nih/who-we-are/nih-director/statements/nih-lifts-funding-pause-gain-function-research>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.newsweek.com/dr-fauci-backed-controversial-wuhan-lab-millions-us-dollars-risky-coronavirus-research-1500741>

<sup>9</sup> <https://reschenthaler.house.gov/media/press-releases/reschenthaler-introduces-bill-defund-ecohealth-alliance>

<sup>10</sup> <https://americanpriority.com/news/congressman-probes-into-pentagon-wmd-grant-to-firm-that-funded-wuhan-lab/>

claims that the new coronavirus causing the pandemic was engineered in a lab.”<sup>11</sup> He even tweeted a link to his article, writing, “New genomic study debunks claims that the novel #coronavirus causing #COVID-19 was created in a lab.”<sup>12</sup> Yet, experts now claim that WIV’s gain-of-function research could very well have engineered the novel coronavirus that caused the pandemic from a virus collected from bats in caves in China.

EcoHealth’s President has also sided with the CCP and openly criticized the U.S. government for investigating the theory that SARS-CoV-2 originated in the WIV lab to which he directed NIH funds and has closely collaborated with for decades.<sup>13,14</sup>

**In light of all this, we are gravely concerned about the NIH’s relationship with both EcoHealth and WIV, and the Agency’s handling of allegations that the COVID-19 pandemic was potentially caused by an NIH-funded laboratory at WIV. We also are alarmed that WIV is eligible to receive additional funding from the NIH through 2024.**<sup>15</sup>

We request a prompt and thorough investigation into the NIH’s response to biosafety concerns raised about WIV, including, but not limited to:

1. When was the NIH first aware that coronavirus experiments were being conducted at WIV with taxpayer funds (via EcoHealth Alliance or otherwise)?
2. Did NIH officials review WIV’s coronavirus experiments to assess compliance with Potential Pandemic Pathogen Care and Oversight (P3CO) guidelines?
3. When was the NIH first aware of biosafety or other concerns at WIV?
4. Was the NIH briefed on the concerns raised by the State Department in 2018 about the potential pandemic risk of WIV’s research?
5. Did Dr. Collins or other NIH officials communicate with EcoHealth Alliance and/or WIV to coordinate responses to lab leak allegations?
6. When does WIV’s current eligibility to receive NIH funding expire?
7. Is WIV currently receiving any NIH support directly or indirectly?
8. How much NIH funding - directly or indirectly - has WIV received from the NIH including grants, sub-grants, and other funding sources.

Thank you for your cooperation in our effort to protect public health and national security. We look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,



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SCOTT PERRY  
Member of Congress



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NANCY MACE  
Member of Congress

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<sup>11</sup> <https://directorsblog.nih.gov/2020/03/26/genomic-research-points-to-natural-origin-of-covid-19/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://twitter.com/nihdirector/status/1243172927933222912?lang=en>

<sup>13</sup> <https://nymag.com/intelligencer/article/coronavirus-lab-escape-theory.html>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.wsj.com/articles/who-are-the-covid-investigators-11613401955>

<sup>15</sup> <https://dailycaller.com/2021/02/16/wuhan-lab-eligible-taxpayer-funding/>



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BILL POSEY  
Member of Congress



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RICK CRAWFORD  
Member of Congress



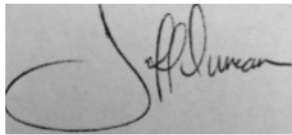
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W. GREGORY STEUBE  
Member of Congress



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JODY HICE  
Member of Congress



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JEFF DUNCAN  
Member of Congress



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MATT GAETZ  
Member of Congress



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TOM TIFFANY  
Member of Congress



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RONNY L. JACKSON  
Member of Congress



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TROY BALDERSON  
Member of Congress



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PETE SESSIONS  
Member of Congress



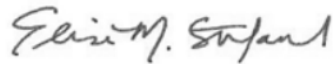
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ANDY BIGGS  
Member of Congress



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DIANA HARSHBARGER  
Member of Congress



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ELISE STEFANIK  
Member of Congress



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CHIP ROY  
Member of Congress



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JEFF VAN DREW  
Member of Congress




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DANIEL WEBSTER  
Member of Congress



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DOUG LAMBORN  
Member of Congress



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BOB GIBBS  
Member of Congress



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TED BUDD  
Member of Congress



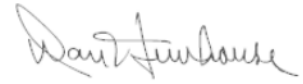
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AUSTIN SCOTT  
Member of Congress



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RALPH NORMAN  
Member of Congress



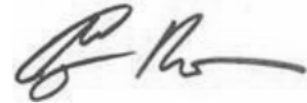
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DAN NEWHOUSE  
Member of Congress



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DAN CRENSHAW  
Member of Congress



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GUY RESCHENTHALER  
Member of Congress



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LOUIE GOHMERT  
Member of Congress



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KEN BUCK  
Member of Congress