

# Anthony Fauci to Testify in House on Covid-19 Pandemic's Origins, U.S. Response

*Former White House medical adviser is expected to be grilled in private and public sessions*

**By Warren P. Strobel and Michael R. Gordon**  
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WASHINGTON—After months of negotiations, former chief White House medical adviser Anthony Fauci has agreed to testify in Congress on the U.S. response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the virus's origins in China.

The testimony by Fauci, who led the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases from 1984 until last year, will be his first before the Republican-controlled House.

The U.S. intelligence community remains divided over whether the [virus leaked from a laboratory](#) or arose naturally, leaving lawmakers still searching for answers on how the pandemic began and the effectiveness of the U.S. response.

The arrangements for Fauci's testimony are extensive. They will begin with two days of transcribed interviews behind closed doors in January. A public hearing, which is expected to be contentious, will be held at a later date.

Fauci, who won praise in many quarters for his high-profile role battling the pandemic and the earlier HIV/AIDS crisis, has been criticized by some GOP lawmakers who say he played down the possibility that the virus leaked from the Wuhan Institute of Virology and the [U.S. government's links to virus research](#) at the facility. During the pandemic, the longtime public-health official, who led the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases for almost four decades, became an unlikely figure of hatred and ire on the right over his support for government health mandates and other issues. He said he [received death threats](#) and his family was harassed, and in 2021, he was given an armed security detail.

In a letter to Fauci today, Rep. Brad Wenstrup (R., Ohio), chairman of the Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic, said the committee and Fauci's team had agreed Fauci would give a transcribed interview on Jan. 8 and 9 for seven hours each day.

The letter states that two government lawyers and two personal attorneys can accompany Fauci at those sessions, which won't be public. The date for the public hearing hasn't yet been set.

"As the former Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases and Chief Medical Advisor to the President of the United States, you have knowledge pertinent to both investigating and evaluating the federal government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, but also preparing for future pandemics," wrote Wenstrup.

One of Fauci's lawyers, David Schertler, in an email cited Fauci's "ongoing cooperation with the Subcommittee regarding the coronavirus," but didn't respond to additional questions about his coming testimony.

U.S. intelligence agencies are split on whether the coronavirus likely first infected humans via an animal, or via a lab-related research accident in Wuhan, China, where the pandemic began. The Energy Department earlier this year shifted its analysis to a "low confidence" assessment that it had leaked from a lab, joining the FBI, which has "moderate confidence" in that explanation.

Four other U.S. intelligence agencies assess with low confidence that the virus arose naturally, while the Central Intelligence Agency has been agnostic.

At the outset of the pandemic, Fauci said that the virus likely emerged naturally before jumping to humans. But he has also said that the origins should continue to be investigated and that it is important to keep an open mind.

Fauci, now a distinguished professor at Georgetown University, has said in interviews since he retired from government that while there is no definitive answer to the virus's origins, the preponderance of evidence points to natural transmission. He has also warned about the need to prepare for future pandemics.

Wenstrup and other House Republicans, citing email exchanges, have charged that Fauci worked with other scientists to play down the possibility of a lab leak in a seminal March 2020 scientific article, "The proximal origin of SARS-CoV-2," in the journal *Nature Medicine*.

Fauci wasn't among the article's co-authors, who have disputed Republicans' interpretation of their discussions about the virus's origin.