

# Republicans erupt after Energy Dept reportedly says COVID-19 likely came from Chinese lab: 'We need answers'

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Congressional Republicans erupted on Twitter Sunday afternoon after the U.S. Energy Department reportedly assessed that the COVID-19 pandemic likely originated from an accidental lab leak in China. The Energy Department, which was previously undecided on the origin of the pandemic, now joins the FBI's stance that the coronavirus likely spread due to a mishap at a Chinese laboratory, the Wall Street Journal reported, citing a classified intelligence report recently provided to the White House and key members of Congress.

The lab leak theory, or the theory that the virus came from a lab leak at the Wuhan Institute of Virology in Wuhan, China, was widely dismissed as a conspiracy theory and "misinformation" by Democrats, major news outlets, scientists and social media companies in the early stages of the pandemic. Now, Republicans are calling for accountability from the Chinese Communist Party as evidence mounts that it is to blame for the pandemic.

*"Re. China's lab leak, being proven right doesn't matter," Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Ark., tweeted. "What matters is holding the Chinese Communist Party accountable so this doesn't happen again."*

Both the Washington Post and the New York Times had accused Cotton of repeating a "fringe theory" when he mentioned the lab leak possibility back in February 2020. The Post issued a correction to one of its stories more than a year after calling the theory "debunked." The Times came under fire last month after a group of 43 national security experts signed a letter accusing the Times, Time magazine, Lancet and Nature Medicine of stifling debate on the origins of the virus.

- *"The elites and academics owe everyone who had legitimate questions and concerns about the origins of COVID an apology," Rep Ken Buck, R-Colo., tweeted. "The American people deserve to see all the information concerning the Chinese lab leak and the origins of COVID. This won't be forgotten."*
- *"4 [clown emojis] for Glenn," Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas tweeted, taking a shot at Washington Post fact-checker Glenn Kessler who previously said, "It is virtually impossible for this virus jump from the lab" and attacked Cruz.*
- *"So the government caught up to what Real America knew all along," tweeted Rep. Jim Jordan, R-Ohio.*
- *"Americans knew this from Day One," tweeted Rep. Andy Biggs, R-Ariz. "Unfortunately, Big Tech and Big Government silenced them."*
- *Sen. Josh Hawley, R-Mo., tweeted: "The American people deserve the full truth about #covid origins. No more whitewash. I will again introduce legislation to make the US government's intelligence reports on covid open to the people."*
- *"[Former Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Dr. Anthony] Fauci knew this immediately but dismissed it because of funding for the Wuhan lab," Sen. Eric Schmitt, R-Mo., tweeted. "We know what happened next — when Fauci spoke Big Tech censored. I exposed this collusion as AG and I'll work to ensure this type of censorship never happens again."*
- *The Twitter account for Republicans on the House Committee on Oversight and Accountability wrote: "More evidence continues to mount that COVID came from the Wuhan lab. We've uncovered emails showing Dr. Fauci was warned that the virus looked man-made & came from a lab, but he may have acted to cover it up. Why? We need answers & accountability."*
- *"Big Tech censored information indicating COVID resulted from a lab leak," Republican National Committee Chairwoman Ronna McDaniel tweeted. "Now, Biden's own Energy Department is saying that's the most likely cause. We need accountability – for both the Chinese Communist Party and Big Tech."*

The National Intelligence Council and four other agencies assess at "low confidence" that the COVID-19 pandemic originated due to natural transmission from an infected animal, while the CIA and another unnamed agency are undecided. The Energy Department's updated report, according to the Journal, maintains a consensus between all the intelligence agencies that the pandemic was not the result of a Chinese bioweapons program.

The Energy Department's view is significant, according to the Journal, because it has considerable scientific expertise and oversees a network of U.S. national laboratories, some of which conduct advanced biological research. People who read the classified report told the Journal that the Energy Department ranks its new judgment at "low confidence," while the FBI ranked its same conclusion in 2021 that the COVID-19 pandemic was the result of an accidental lab leak at "moderate confidence" and maintains that view.

In a statement to the Fox News Digital on Sunday, a spokesperson for the Energy Department said, "*The Department of Energy continues to support the thorough, careful, and objective work of our intelligence professionals in investigating the origins of COVID-19, as the President directed.*"

National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan was asked about the Journal's report during an appearance on CNN Sunday: "*There is a variety of views in the intelligence community. Some elements in the intelligence community have reached conclusions on one side, some on the other. A number of them have said they just don't have enough information to be sure,*" Sullivan said.