

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

SELECT SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

Majority (202) 225-5074  
Minority (202) 225-5051

September 15, 2023

Lawrence A. Tabak, D.D.S.  
Acting Director  
National Institutes of Health  
9000 Rockville Pike  
Bethesda, MD 20892

Dear Acting Director Tabak:

The Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic (Select Subcommittee) is investigating the origins of the coronavirus pandemic. During the investigation, the Select Subcommittee wrote to Dr. David Morens, Senior Scientific Advisor of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease (NIAID), about his use of a personal e-mail account to avoid transparency, the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), and potentially intentionally deleting federal records.<sup>1</sup>

In one e-mail Dr. Morens wrote he “always [tries] to communicate over gmail because my NIH email is FOIA’d constantly...[d]on’t worry, just send to any of my addresses and I will delete anything I don’t want to see in the New York Times.”<sup>2</sup>

The Select Subcommittee found it very concerning that a senior U.S. scientist working on the COVID-19 pandemic was using his personal e-mail to purposely avoid transparency.<sup>3</sup> As such, on June 29, 2023 we requested Dr. Morens produce a series of documents and communications, including text messages, regarding COVID-19.<sup>4</sup> Relying on the Select Subcommittee’s letter and in accordance with 36 CFR 1230.16(b), on July 10, 2023 the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) requested the National Institute of Health (NIH) investigate the allegations outlined in the Chairman’s letter.<sup>5</sup> On August 9, 2023, NIH responded

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from Hon. Brad Wenstrup, Chairman, Select Subcomm. on the Coronavirus Pandemic, H. Comm. on Oversight & Accountability, to Dr. David Morens, Senior Scientific Advisor, Nat’l Inst. of Allergy & Infectious Diseases, (June 29, 2023).

<sup>2</sup> E-Mail from David Morens, M.D., Senior Scientific Advisor, Nat’l Inst. of Allergy & Infectious Diseases, to Peter Daszak, Ph.D., et. al., President, EcoHealth Alliance, Inc. (Sept. 9, 2021).

<sup>3</sup> *Supra*, n. 1.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> Letter from Laurence Brewer, Chief Records Officer, Nat’l Archives and Records Admin., to Nat’l Inst. of Health, (July 10, 2023). This letter specifically referenced the following documents requested by the Select Subcommittee:  
1. E-Mail from David Morens, M.D., Senior Scientific Advisor, NIAID, to Peter Daszak, Ph.D., et. al., President, EcoHealth Alliance, Inc. (Sept. 9, 2021).

to NARA's request by describing its investigative process and certifying that it had "completed an investigation of allegations of unauthorized disposition and certifies findings that . . . [it found] no evidence that any federal records *within their custody* have been prematurely destroyed" (emphasis added).<sup>6</sup>

We write to you to request the details of the *specific* actions NIH summarized in its response letter to NARA.<sup>7</sup> To better understand the full scope of the NIH's investigation, the Select Subcommittee requests the following information and documents as soon as possible but no later than September 29, 2023:

1. All notes, records, or any other form of memorialization of the interview between the Executive Officer, NIAID, and Dr. Morens where he was made formally aware of the allegations cited in the Select Subcommittee's letter.
2. A copy of the *Knowledge of Agreement* letter provided to Dr. Morens on July 19, 2023 and signed on July 20, 2023.
3. All notes, documents, communications, or materials describing how Dr. Morens searched his personal e-mail accounts as of July 26, 2023.
4. A copy of all records, documents, data, and information, emails, texts, or instant messages ("communications") from Dr. Morens' government or personal email or any other associated accounts/mobile devices, whether government-furnished or personal, produced in response to the inquiry directed by NARA.
5. A copy of the Department guidance issued to all staff referenced in paragraph 3E of Mr. Gibson's letter to NARA dated August 9, 2023.

The Select Subcommittee is authorized to investigate "the origins of the Coronavirus pandemic, including but not limited to "executive branch policies, deliberations, decisions, activities, and internal and external communications related to the coronavirus pandemic" under H. Res. 5. To that end, the Select Subcommittee is tasked to learn from the U.S. response to the COVID-19 pandemic and recommend alterations where necessary to enhance our preparedness and responses in the future. To ask any follow-up or related questions please contact Committee staff at (202) 225-5074.

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2. Documents related to the origins of COVID-19 and the following documents and information from any personal e-mail accounts and any personal cell phones.

3. All documents and communications regarding the drafting, publication, or critical reception of the publications specified in the Select Subcommittee letter.

4. All documents and communications, including text messages, regarding the Wuhan Institute of Virology, EcoHealth Alliance, Inc., or the origins of COVID-19 between November 1, 2019, and present between Dr. Morens and the individuals specified in the Select Subcommittee letter.

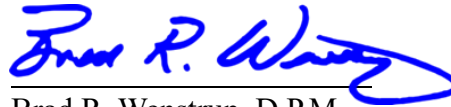
<sup>6</sup> Letter from Anthony D. Crawley Gibson, Records Officer, Nat'l Inst. of Health to Laurence Brewer, Chief Records Officer, Nat'l Archives and Records Admin. (Aug. 9, 2023).

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*

Dr. Lawrence A. Tabak  
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Thank you for your attention to this very important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brad R. Wenstrup", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Brad R. Wenstrup, D.P.M.  
Chairman

cc: The Honorable Raul Ruiz, M.D., Ranking Member  
Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic