



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on December 27, 2023

Heritage Foundation Sues CIA Over China Virus Docs

The Heritage Foundation has sued the CIA because it has refused to provide documents pursuant to a foundation request under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

Filed on December 22, the 66-page, five-claim lawsuit accuses the intelligence bureaucracy of violating FOIA and CIA policy by not releasing documents connected to the intelligence community's assessment of the origins of the China Virus, or SARS-CoV-2. Few serious observers doubt that the Asiatic pathogen leaked from an out-of-control lab in Wuhan, China.



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FOIA violations aside, the lawsuit's central claim reprises a whistleblower's report that the CIA paid intelligence analysts to say the virus jumped from bats to humans naturally.

The Whistleblower

Noting that the China Virus killed more than 1.14 million Americans, the lawsuit observes that two congressmen asked the CIA for documents about the whistleblower's claim. On September 12, [Brad Wenstrup](#), chairman of the House COVID Select Subcommittee, and [Mike Turner](#), chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (HPSCI), both Ohio Republicans, demanded that CIA chieftain William Burns turn over the documents:

A multi-decade, senior-level, current Agency officer has come forward to provide information to the [Select Subcommittee and HPSCI] regarding the Agency's analysis into the origins of COVID-19. According to the whistleblower, the Agency assigned seven officers to a COVID Discovery Team (Team). The Team consisted of multi-disciplinary and experienced officers with significant scientific expertise. According to the whistleblower, at the end of its review, six of the seven members of the Team believed the intelligence and science were sufficient to make a low confidence assessment that COVID-19 originated from a laboratory in Wuhan, China. The seventh member of the Team, who also happened to be the most senior, was the lone officer to believe COVID-19 originated through zoonosis. The whistleblower further contends that to come to the eventual public determination of uncertainty, the other six members were given a significant monetary incentive to change their position.

[Repeated in a letter](#) from GOP Senators Rand Paul of Kentucky, Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, Ron Johnson of Wisconsin, and Rick Scott of Florida, the allegation somewhat contradicts what an Intelligence Community (IC) assessment concluded.

For instance, "We judge the virus was not developed as a biological weapon," the National Intelligence Council reported. "Most agencies also assess with low confidence that SARS-CoV-2 probably was not



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genetically engineered; however, two agencies believe there was not sufficient evidence to make an assessment either way.”

As well:

- Four IC elements and the National Intelligence Council assess with low confidence that the initial SARS-CoV-2 infection was most likely caused by natural exposure to an animal infected with it or a close progenitor virus — a virus that probably would be more than 99 percent similar to SARS-CoV-2. These analysts give weight to China’s officials’ lack of foreknowledge, the numerous vectors for natural exposure, and other factors.
- One IC element assesses with moderate confidence that the first human infection with SARS-CoV-2 most likely was the result of a laboratory-associated incident, probably involving experimentation, animal handling, or sampling by the Wuhan Institute of Virology. These analysts give weight to the inherently risky nature of work on coronaviruses.
- Analysts at three IC elements remain unable to coalesce around either explanation without additional information, with some analysts favoring natural origin, others a laboratory origin, and some seeing the hypotheses as equally likely.

Heritage filed the FOIA request on October 25, and created a deadline of November 20 by which the CIA was required to respond.

As of the date of the lawsuit, the CIA had neither produced documents nor provided reasons for withholding them. Nor has it told Heritage it can appeal a refusal to provide the documents.

The lawsuit says the CIA has not responded, and seeks relief from the CIA on five claims:

- Denial of expedited processing;
- Failure to search for the requested records;
- Withholding non-exempt records
- Denial of fee waiver; and
- Charging fees.

The Lab Leak

The lawsuit’s claim that “the origins of the virus remain unknown” might be technically true, but a mountain of evidence [shows that](#) the microbe likely leaked from a [poorly run lab](#) at the Wuhan Institute of Virology.

The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) [illegally funded](#) dangerous research at that lab, where a lab worker became ill with SARS-CoV-2 in 2019. [He infected](#) his wife, and she died that December.

As well, [top scientists believe](#) the virus originated in and leaked from a lab, which then-NIAID chief Anthony Fauci and Francis Collins, Fauci’s boss as head of the National Institutes of Health, dismissed as a “conspiracy theory.” The leftist mainstream media dutifully repeated that lie.

In May 2020, sources told Fox News’ John Roberts that the intelligence community did indeed believe



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the virus leaked from a lab.

The virus [might also](#) have been a bioweapon.

H/T: [Daily Caller](#)



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