

Biden signs bill on COVID origins declassification

March 21 2023



President Joe Biden speaks during a Nowruz celebration in the East Room of the White House, Monday, March 20, 2023, in Washington. Biden signed a bipartisan bill on Monday, March 20, 2023, that directs the federal government to declassify as much intelligence as possible about the origins of COVID-19 more than three years after the start of the global pandemic. Credit: AP Photo/Evan Vucci

President Joe Biden signed a bipartisan bill Monday that directs the federal government to declassify as much intelligence as possible about the origins of COVID-19 more than three years after the start of the pandemic.

The [legislation](#), which passed both the House and Senate without dissent, directs the Office of the Director of National Intelligence to declassify intelligence related to China's Wuhan Institute of Virology. It cites "potential links" between the research that was done there and the outbreak of COVID-19, which the World Health Organization declared a pandemic on March 11, 2020. The law allows for redactions to protect sensitive sources and methods.

U.S. intelligence agencies are divided over whether a lab leak or a spillover from animals is the likely source of the deadly virus. Experts say the true origin of the coronavirus pandemic, which has killed more than 1.1 million in the U.S. and millions more around the globe, may not be known for many years—if ever.

Biden, in a statement, said he was pleased to sign the legislation.

"My Administration will continue to review all [classified information](#) relating to COVID-19's origins, including potential links to the Wuhan Institute of Virology," he said. "In implementing this legislation, my Administration will declassify and share as much of that information as possible, consistent with my constitutional authority to protect against the disclosure of information that would harm national security."



This 2020 electron microscope image made available by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows SARS-CoV-2 virus particles, which cause COVID-19. President Joe Biden signed a bipartisan bill on Monday, March 20, 2023, that directs the federal government to declassify as much intelligence as possible about the origins of COVID-19 more than three years after the start of the global pandemic. Credit: Hannah A. Bullock, Azaibi Tamin/CDC via AP, File



Security personnel gather near the entrance of the Wuhan Institute of Virology during a visit by the World Health Organization team in Wuhan, China, Feb. 3, 2021. President Joe Biden signed a bipartisan bill on Monday, March 20, 2023, that directs the Office of the Director of National Intelligence to declassify intelligence related to China’s Wuhan Institute of Virology, citing “potential links” between the research that was done there and the outbreak of COVID-19, which the World Health Organization declared a pandemic on March 11, 2020. Credit: AP Photo/Ng Han Guan, File



A view of the P4 lab inside the Wuhan Institute of Virology is seen after a visit by the World Health Organization team in Wuhan in China's Hubei province on Feb. 3, 2021. President Joe Biden signed a bipartisan bill on Monday, March 20, 2023, that directs the Office of the Director of National Intelligence to declassify intelligence related to China's Wuhan Institute of Virology, citing "potential links" between the research that was done there and the outbreak of COVID-19, which the World Health Organization declared a pandemic on March 11, 2020. Credit: AP Photo/Ng Han Guan, File

© 2023 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed without permission.

Citation: Biden signs bill on COVID origins declassification (2023, March 21) retrieved 25 April

2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-03-biden-bill-covid-declassification.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.