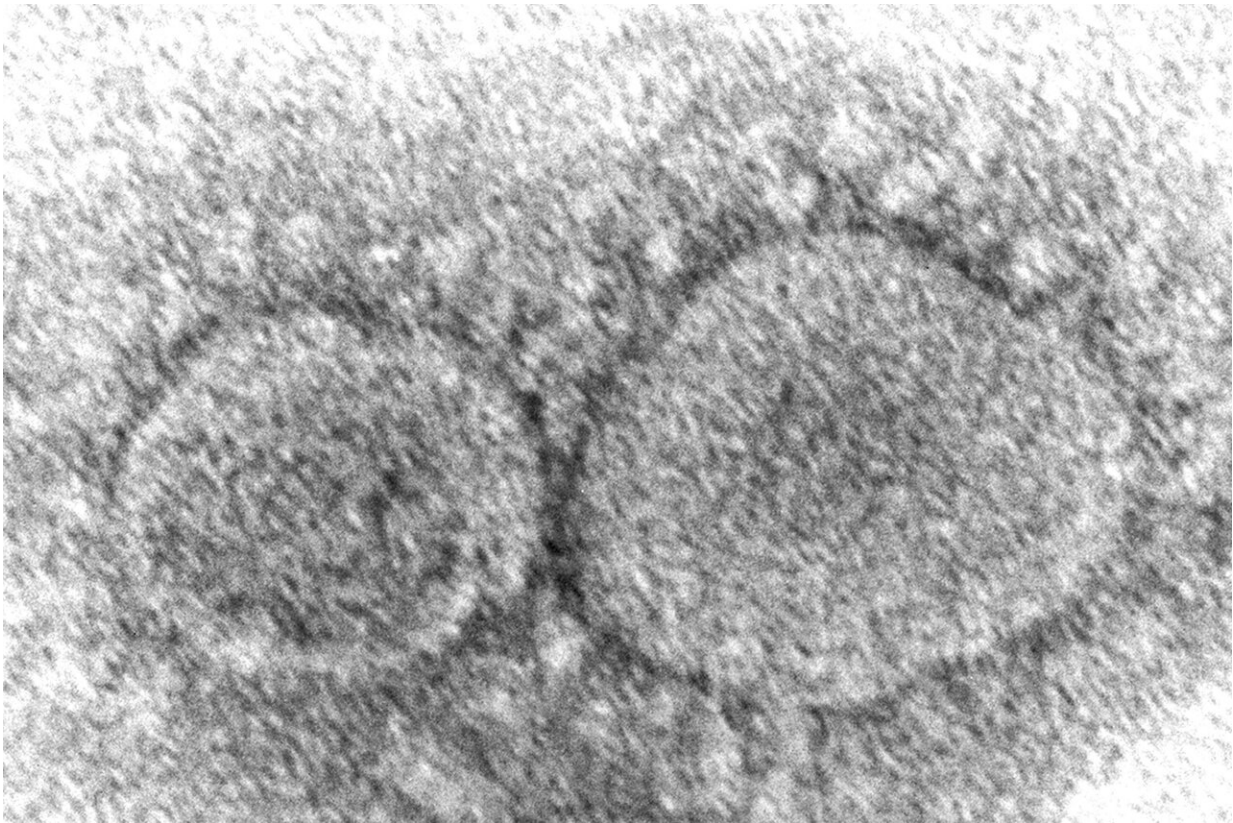


# House votes to declassify info about origins of COVID-19

March 10 2023, by Lisa Mascaro

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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. The House voted unanimously Friday, March 10, 2023, to declassify U.S. intelligence information about the origins of COVID-19, a sweeping show of bipartisan support near the third anniversary of the start of the deadly pandemic. Credit: Hannah A. Bullock, Azaibi Tamin/CDC via AP, File

The House voted unanimously on Friday to declassify U.S. intelligence information about the origins of COVID-19, a sweeping show of bipartisan support near [the third anniversary](#) of the start of the deadly pandemic.

The 419-0 vote was final approval of the bill, sending it to President Joe Biden's desk to be signed into law.

Debate was brief and to the point: Americans have questions about how the deadly virus started and what can be done to prevent future outbreaks.

"The American public deserves answers to every aspect of the COVID-19 pandemic," said Rep. Michael Turner, R-Ohio, the chairman of the House Intelligence Committee.

That includes, he said, "how this virus was created and, specifically, whether it was a natural occurrence or was the result of a lab-related event."

The order to declassify focused on 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.

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 million Americans, may not be known for many years—if ever.



A person is taken on a stretcher into the United Memorial Medical Center after going through testing for COVID-19 Thursday, March 19, 2020, in Houston. On the third anniversary of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2023, the virus is still spreading and the death toll is nearing 7 million worldwide. Yet most people have resumed their normal lives, thanks to a wall of immunity built from infections and vaccines. Credit: AP Photo/David J. Phillip, File

"Transparency is a cornerstone of our democracy," said Rep. Jim Himes, of Connecticut, the top Democrat on the Intelligence Committee, during the debate.

Led by Republicans, the focus on the virus origins comes as the House launched a select committee with a hearing earlier in the week delving

into theories about how the pandemic started.

It offers a rare moment of bipartisanship despite the often heated rhetoric about the origins of the coronavirus and the questions about the response to the virus by U.S. health officials, including former top health adviser Anthony Fauci.

The legislation from Sen. Josh Hawley, R-Mo., was already approved by the Senate.

If signed into law, the measure would require within 90 days the declassification of "any and all information relating to potential links between the Wuhan Institute of Virology and the origin of the Coronavirus Disease."

That includes information about research and other activities at the lab and whether any researchers grew ill.

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