**House Oversight and Reform Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis hearing entitled,**

**“The Urgent Need for a National Plan to Contain the Coronavirus.”**

**Friday, July 31, 2020**

**By** [**Ramona Lessen**](mailto:rlessen@totalspectrumsga.com?subject=Feedback:%20Hearing%20Report)**, Executive Director, Total Spectrum**

We strive to provide vital and current information on key subjects. I covered the [July 31 hearing](https://oversight.house.gov/legislation/hearings/hybrid-hearing-on-the-urgent-need-for-a-national-plan-to-contain-the) before the House Oversight and Reform Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis regarding our current pandemic situation. This is not intended to be a transcript, but rather my notes trimmed to fit available space.

**Witnesses:**

Anthony Fauci, MD

Director

National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases

National Institutes of Health

[Testimony](https://docs.house.gov/meetings/VC/VC00/20200731/110912/HHRG-116-VC00-Wstate-FauciA-20200731.pdf)

Admiral Brett P. Giroir, MD

Assistant Secretary for Health

Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

[Testimony](https://docs.house.gov/meetings/VC/VC00/20200731/110912/HHRG-116-VC00-Wstate-GiroirB-20200731.pdf)

Robert R. Redfield, MD

Director

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

[Testimony](https://docs.house.gov/meetings/VC/VC00/20200731/110912/HHRG-116-VC00-Wstate-RedfieldR-20200731.pdf)

**Attending Committee Members:**

James Clyburn, Chairman

Maxine Waters

Carolyn Maloney

Nydia Velazquez

Bill Foster

Jamie Raskin

Andy Kim

Steve Scalise, Ranking Member

Jim Jordan

Blaine Luetkemeyer

Jackie Walorski

Mark Green

**Opening Statements:**

**Rep. James Clyburn (D-SC 6), Chairman:** On our current path through the pandemic, another 150,000 Americans could die by the end of the year. Our goal today is to hear from our top health experts about how to stop unnecessary deaths. We need to correct past failures, especially those ongoing. The federal government still doesn’t have a national strategy to protect the American people. The Administration has failed on testing. States face severe shortages on testing; eleven states are currently conducting 30 percent of the tests they need to control the virus. Without rapid testing it is impossible to control the virus and open the economy. The President has downplayed the virus, sidelining government experts who disagree. When the public health experts contradicted the Administration - when CDC warned that opening schools could be difficult - the Administration forced them to change their suggestions.

It is clear that the Administration is deferring to the states and sidelining the experts. The United States is the worst of any country in the world. Where should we go from here? I am calling for the Administration to provide a comprehensive national plan that prioritizes science over politics. That should include buying and distributing enough tests and gear for anyone who needs them. We need clear guidance to help curb the spread of the virus. I look forward to hearing what common sense things we can do to accomplish this goal. Our witnesses have a long history with Democratic and Republican administrations.

**Rep. Steve Scalise (R-LA-1), Ranking Member**: This is our first meeting since the passing of Rep. John Lewis. Mr. Chairman, you personally were friends with him for 60 years. We all feel that loss. It was a great tribute yesterday. He was a key important part of the movement that has made our nation greater. I want to thank your team, Mr. Chairman. However, the hearing title today is false. Federal agencies have published how states, schools, nursing homes can open and care for their people. If five governors would have followed these plans in nursing homes, we would not have the devastation we see today. I thank the witnesses for carrying out the President’s plan as we learn about the virus and the cure. Operation Warp Speed is part of the President’s national plan; it’s revolutionary to be this close to a vaccine. I appreciate the work that everyone continues to do. You start with a plan and the plan has to change as you go along. When you look at the work that has been done, we haven’t always been in agreement. A virus that no one knew about six months ago… China lied to the U.S. and we should be having hearings on that topic. The original 15 days to stop the spread, encouraging states to pull back wasn’t an easy plan to issue, but it was necessary. Dr. Fauci and Dr. Birx were there and thought we should go 30 days. Trump Administration released guidelines for how states could open. People shouldn’t read tweets, but rather read the plans that the organizations have released. Some complain that the President didn’t have power to reopen the states. Nursing homes are regulated by the states, not the federal government. We hear about the need for testing; we see 800,000 tests conducted per day now. We are trying to limit the number of days for people to get results. We have rapid point-of-care tests for nursing homes which will save lives. Operation Warp Speed is a public-private partnership to develop, manufacture and distribute a vaccine of 300 million doses approved by the FDA by January 2021. They are mass producing right now. We are ready to go - part of the money was in the CARES Act. Dr. Fauci, I will be anxious to hear from you about the vaccine progress. We still don’t have a vaccine for HIV, but we have a therapy to extend lives. However, we don’t have a vaccine yet for HIV. I hope to get into conversations about how many lives were lost because the Chinese government refused to provide information about the virus. Now we need to get information about how to open schools. The American Academy of Pediatrics gave great guidance about opening schools. There will be so much damage if we don’t. There are funds for sanitizer, masks, etc. - everything needed to open the schools. Every day we learn more and address the new challenges. We mourn every loss, but recognize the lives that would have been lost if we didn’t have the accomplishments we have up to this point.

**Question and Answer Session:**

**Rep. Clyburn**: On Jan 31, six months ago today, the Secretary of HHS announced the Coronavirus outbreak. The Trump Administration downplayed the crisis, ignored public health experts and deferred to the states. Dr. Fauci, on March 17, you testified that it is going to get worse. You were right. It did. On Mar 11, we had 1,200 cases and 31 deaths. Today, we have 4.4 million cases and just reached 150,000 deaths. This chart compares the new cases daily in the U.S. compared to Europe, showing how much worse the U.S. situation is. Dr. Fauci, why has Europe contained the virus and U.S. has a continued rise in new cases?

**Dr. Fauci**: The answer is complex. If you look at what happened in Europe, [the countries that did shut down] really shut down up to 95 percent [of the country]. In the U.S., we functionally shut down 50 percent of the country. When we reached our peak, we plateaued. We started with a difficult baseline of transmission going on when we tried to open up the country. Now what we see in the southern states, the reasons are complex. Some states did it well and some did not. We put out the reopening guidelines about phases 1, 2, and 3. Some were followed; in those that did not, that led to the surge. Our guidelines included universal wearing of masks, avoiding crowds, and hygiene. Hopefully we can turn things around by doing the fundamental things that we are talking about.

**Rep. Scalise:** When we talk about President Trump’s team (holding up thousands of pages of guidelines), we have an array of medical experts who are helping to work on these plans. Were any of you sidelined from coming here today? Good to see you here. Dr. Fauci, let me ask you about some of the decisions. When you go back to the China ban, were you involved in deciding to ban flights from China?

**Dr. Fauci:** Yes I was involved. These decisions saved lives.

**Rep. Scalise:** First, 15 days to shutdown, and then 30 days… were you involved and were lives saved?

**Dr. Fauci:** Yes and yes.

**Rep. Scalise:** Dr. Giroir, on testing, you talked about a million testing machines brought into nursing homes across the country. Is that plan moving forward?

**Dr. Giroir:** Yes.

**Rep. Scalise:** I have heard from nursing homes that this will save lives.

**Dr. Giroir:** Yes.

**Rep. Scalise:** Five Governors did not follow the CMS guidelines.

**Dr. Giroir:** Not a positive practice to send someone infected back into a nursing home.

**Rep. Scalise:** Reopening schools: was the CDC involved in the President’s decision to reopen schools?

**Dr. Redfield**: Yes, important that it is in the public health interest for face-to-face learning.

**Rep. Scalise:** I hope the schools will follow your guidelines.

**Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-NY-12)** : Dr. Fauci was born in New York’s borough of Brooklyn. You were a New York doctor before you became America’s doctor. At a previous hearing, you said that we aren’t geared up to deal with it. You called it failing. Where are we now?

**Dr. Fauci:** Things are considerably different now than several months ago - to more prudently have screening and testing done as well as testing to determine diagnostics.

**Rep. Maloney:** Now the challenge is vaccines. You have said that you would never retire until we have a vaccine for AIDS. How realistic is it that we will have a vaccine for COVID? Please give your honest assessment on where we are.

**Dr. Fauci:** It will occur. There are many differences between HIV and COVID. The body does generate a robust response to coronavirus, as opposed to HIV. To some, it seems so fast to get a vaccine that there may be shortcuts. The rapidity is a result of different technologies. We have not had reckless rushing - we are using technology. There will be more than one vaccine; there are five or six that the federal government is involved in. The response was really quite favorable. There is never a guarantee that you will get a vaccine, but, from everything we see, I don’t think that we are dreaming. It will be a reality.

**Rep. Maloney:** China and Russia have testing around the world. Would we manufacture their vaccines? How will it be distributed? If we don’t cure the world, we don’t cure it here.

**Dr. Fauci:** I hope that China and Russia are testing before administering. Claims about ready to distribute before testing is wrong. I don’t believe there will be vaccines ahead of the U.S.’s. The program being sponsored by us right now is going at a very prudent but rapid speed. We are taking a financial risk to support the development of doses of vaccine so they will be ready when we show safety and efficacy. Vis our standard mechanisms - ACIP recommendation and National Academy of Medicine, CDC - it will be distributed.

**Rep. Jackie Walorski (R-IN 2)**: Operation Warp Speed will deliver 300 million doses by January 2021. AstraZeneca is working with the government to produce 300 million doses at no cost. Is it safe that everyone will get a vaccine once it is approved?

**Dr. Fauci:** Over a period of time, all Americans will be able to get it. Everyone will not get it immediately. That’s why we have the committees to determine who will get it first.

**Rep. Walorski:** The FDA is not compromising in order to speed up the process – correct?

**Dr. Fauci:** We are doing the vaccine studies with the companies and the FDA’s decision on approval is science-based. No one is compromising safety standards. The FDA has and will continue to base their decisions on science.

**Rep. Walorski:** There is rhetoric from the other side that there is a rush on the vaccine to improve Trump’s politics.

**Dr. Fauci:** The FDA Commissioner has confirmed that any FDA decision will be based on sound scientific data. The American public should be assured that the proper steps have been taken for a safe vaccine to be produced.

**Rep. Walorski:** I’m glad the Administration took action with two Chinese individuals regarding the vaccine. Would you commit to a hearing on China’s lack of communication on COVID?

**Rep. Maxine Waters (D-CA-43)**: Regarding data reporting, Dr. Redfield, were you aware of the transfer of data from CDC to HHS?

**Dr. Redfield:** We weren’t involved in the process. We have access to all data; no restriction of any data which we forward to the public.

**Rep. Waters:** When were you notified of this change?

**Dr. Redfield:** I don’t remember the date.

**Rep. Waters:** Were you not told? Did you agree with the decisions?

**Dr. Redfield:** We worked in cooperation. (Cutoff)

**Rep. Waters:** Did you speak with the HHS Secretary or the Vice President?

**Dr. Redfield:** No.

**Rep. Waters:** Who told you about the reasons for the change?

**Dr. Redfield:** There were advancements with rendesivir. (Cutoff by Waters)

**Rep. Waters:** You came up with the reasons?

**Dr. Redfield:** Yes, we needed to know where rendesivir needed to go.

**Rep. Waters:** Were you told about the changes and why they were done?

**Dr. Redfield:** We work with HHS and CDC (cutoff by Waters)

**Rep. Waters:** Would you agree that this is the only successful drug?

**Dr. Redfield:** The intent and consequence is that a patient would get the necessary drug.

**Rep. Blaine Luetkemeyer (R-MO-3)**: Dr. Redfield, since July 14, we are seeing far greater suicides than COVID deaths and more drug overdoses than COVID deaths. Alcohol sales have increased. We need to make sure we are looking at both sides of this pandemic, including substance abuse, domestic violence, child abuse that is resulting because of this shutdown. Is the shutdown contributing to our overall public health problems?

**Dr. Redfield:** We must be more surgical about our approach. There are consequences about vaccines for children, cancer treatments, etc. It is important to ensure that there are no unintended consequences.

**Rep. Luetkemeyer:** 65,000 people were dying because of a lack of healthcare being denied because of our total focus on COVID. Dr. Fauci, I have seen you talk about everything else, but not this topic.

**Dr. Fauci:** I have commented on it. Default position would be as best as we can to open the schools for the very reasons you mentioned because of the negative consequences on children.

**Rep. Luetkemeyer:** We see consequences of COVID. How do we manage all angles? How should we approach this problem?

**Dr. Redfield:** We need to use face masks, social distance, employ proper hand hygiene, etc. All things will get us back without these unintended consequences.

**Rep. Luetkemeyer:** I have grandkids who I want to see go back to school. The other part of this is child abuse not being reported and emergency cases in the ERs going up.

**Dr. Redfield:** As the director of CDC, it is in the public health interest that in K-12, we need to get kids back to school and learning. The isolation these adolescents see, deaths are increasing. Kids need a quality education.

**Rep. Nydia Velazquez (D-NY-7)**: It has been six months since this crisis has begun. New infections still are occurring. I am concerned about test results. In Arizona tests have a high positivity rate with long test result times. In Georgia, some companies have average response times of 5-10 days. If you do contact tracing and results take 5-10 days, it is too late. What are the consequences from these delays?

**Dr. Fauci:** You should ask Admiral Giroir. The delay on contact tracing is an issue.

**Adm. Giroir**: About half of the tests we are doing pretty rapidly. Current data shows about 59% tests are reported within three days. I have the data from every state.

**Rep. Velazquez:** CDC has comprehensive info about wait times for test results in all 50 states?

**Adm. Giroir:** Yes, confirmation of the wait times.

**Rep. Velazquez:** Do you publish the wait times?

**Adm. Giroir:** I can provide you the data.

**Rep. Velazquez:** It would be good for states to have that data.

**Adm. Giroir:** They have the data.

**Rep. Velasquez:** Turnaround times for tests need to improve. The Federal Reserve will use their full range of tools to get the virus under control. Are you using all of your tools to stop the spread? What role does testing and contact tracing do for states?

**Dr. Fauci:** It is one of the tools. I reemphasize, testing is an important factor.

**Rep. Jim Jordan (R-OH-4)**: Do protests increase the spread of the virus?

**Dr. Fauci:** Generally, crowding together if you aren’t wearing a mask can be a problem.

**Rep. Jordan:** Should the government limit the protesting?

**Dr. Fauci:** I don’t think that is relevant. I would leave that to people who have... (cutoff)

**Rep. Jordan:** Churches cannot open. Can you permit one situation over another as it relates to the Constitution?

**Dr. Fauci:** Avoid crowds wherever you are. I don’t judge one crowd over another crowd.

**Rep. Jordan:** Should we limit a protest? There has been no violence in churches. But it is happening in Portland. No limits to protests, but you can’t go to church.

**Dr. Fauci:** I cannot opine on limiting. You should stay away from crowds.

**Rep. Jordan:** The government stopped people from going to work. In New Jersey, a gym owner was arrested for opening their gym. Do you think that’s okay?

**Dr. Fauci:** As a public health official, crowds......It is not my position on who should be arrested or not.

**Rep. Jordan:** I have not seen one hair stylist going out to set something on fire.

**Dr. Fauci:** Crowds.

**Rep. Jordan:** Do the protests increase the spread of a virus?

**Dr. Fauci:** Crowds without masks contribute to increases of acquisition and transmission of the virus.

**Rep. Jordan:** You can’t go to work, school, church, but protesting is just fine.

**Rep. Clyburn:** Think about your question when it’s a fundraiser, rally, etc. would that be problematic?

**Rep. Bill Foster (D-IL 11)**: I am a scientist as you are. Proper credit needs to be given to breakthroughs contributed by federal employees and researchers. MNRA vaccines - it doesn’t start with Operation Warp Speed. The sprint began when President Trump was ridiculing the idea of the pandemic. It starts back in 2009 when President Obama didn’t like the response to the N1 virus. In 2013, a $25 million startup grant to Moderna. 2015 investment by BARDA. Without those investments of the Obama Administration, Operation Warp Speed wouldn’t have squat.

**Dr. Fauci:** It goes beyond what you were saying. We should recognize that the generosity of the Congress - both Democrats and Republicans - the support for biomedical research. We forget that when we think of the product.

**Rep. Foster:** What are the scientific investments we need to propose now? (Time is up)

**Rep. Jordan:** Oh June 5, 2020, Dr. Fauci said protests set up widespread of the virus, though he wouldn’t say that today.

**Dr. Fauci:** Any crowd, whether it is protest where you have people close together is a risk. I will stick by that statement. It is not a judgment on why you are there; it is the fact that you are in a crowd.

**Rep. Jordan:** I didn’t have a question.

**Rep. Clyburn:** I’m going to run this meeting. Any gathering - whether you are protesting or politicking - it is a problem.

(Bickering between the Members as to who is out of order)

**Rep. Mark Green (R-TN 7)**: Dr. Fauci, there was an uproar about you at the Nationals game without a mask on. You have said that you took it off to take a drink of water. We should wear masks when in close contact outside of our house. It is not a crime to take your mask off to take a drink of water. I make the point. The media has created the hype. Troubling actions this week- the Chairman of the Committee sent a letter to ten states ridiculing four states, which included Tennessee. What about the other 17 states - why wasn’t California included in the letter? Targeting only GOP governors shows that we don’t want to get answers. No scientists just research Republicans. Sixty-six percent of American deaths could have been prevented if China had spoken up one week earlier. This is the definition of partisanship. I applaud Rep. Foster who asked me to join in a bipartisan effort regarding Operation Warp Speed. In a Swedish study, T cells regulate immune response. Many people with COVID have T cell immunity. There are tons of people we aren’t testing - educate us on T cell immunity.

**Dr. Fauci:** One is the antibody - a protein developed to bind to the virus. Another limb is the T cells, which can kill the cells that are infected and making new viruses. The Swedes came out with a paper showing individuals who were infected and recovered, which means that exposure is measured by T cells.

**Rep. Clyburn:** May I address the letter? My response had to do with the four states that had refused to comply with the critical recommendations with the task forces. They have governors that do not plan to comply. We didn’t send the letter to those who would comply with the task force and three of those states had GOP governors and they didn’t get a letter from us. There was no partisanship.

**Rep. Jamie Raskin (D-MD 8)**: A stack of paper is not a plan. A plan is a strategy for victory. No one has shown us anything. Blaming other countries is not a plan. Blaming China is not a plan. China’s early coverup deepens his 37 times praising the Chinese government. We haven’t heard what the plan is. We lead the world in case count and death count. We’ve had a one-third drop in GDP. It took 98 days to get to 1 million, 44 days to reach 2 million, 23 days to reach 3 million and 15 days to reach 4 million. When will we get to 5 million?

**Dr. Redfield:** One thing I have learned about COVID is it is not predictable. Five steps are very important.

**Rep. Raskin:** You have been subjected to ridicule. Are children almost immune to the disease?

**Dr. Fauci:** Children get infected.

**Rep. Raskin:** Will it magically disappear?

**Dr. Fauci:** It is highly transmissible.

**Rep. Raskin:** Should people take hydroxychloroquine as a cure?

**Dr. Fauci:** No.

**Rep. Raskin**: Signing a waiver doesn’t give you immunity for getting infected.

**Dr. Fauci:** Of course not.

**Rep. Raskin:** Europe has the disease on the run, as does Asia. Almost everyone is doing better than the U.S. except for Brazil. Do we have the financial resources that other governments have used to bring the infection rate down?

**Dr. Fauci:** We have the tools.

**Rep. Raskin:** Why are all of the other countries defeating it and we are not?

**Dr. Fauci:** I addressed that in my opening statement. When you look at the comparison with Asia and Europe - when they shut down at 95% they were able to get their baseline down. We did it and got it down......(cutoff).

**Rep. Raskin:** Did we have a cohesive plan?

**Rep. Andy Kim (D-NJ-3)**: A constituent asked me - would you assess that the federal government is doing everything possible to respond to the virus?

**Dr. Redfield:** We have a comprehensive response. The complexity - we have underinvested in the core of public health. We are seeing the problems of that. Within the capabilities we do have, but the core investment has not been there for several decades.

**Adm. Giroir:** Agree with Redfield.

**Dr. Fauci:** The NIH absolutely is doing everything they can - all hands on deck at NIH.

**Rep. Kim:** I got a COVID test 10 days ago and I still don’t have the results. You said that 76 percent are coming back in five days. Would it be possible to have results returned within 48 hours? Can we achieve that?

**Adm. Giroir:** It is not a benchmark we can achieve today, but hope to have moving forward.

**Rep. Kim:** When I asked are you doing everything possible - how does that relate to the testing?

**Adm. Giroir:** We are investing in a number of point-of-care testing opportunities.

**Rep. Kim:** You mentioned point-of-care testing in nursing homes. The federal government is stepping up because states haven’t been able to.

**Adm. Giroir:** We didn’t have the tools to do this, but once we had the capability, we put it in play.

**Rep. Kim:** Long term care, the federal government is stepping in.

**Adm. Giroir**: We have a collaborative interaction with the states.

(Five minute break a before the second round of Q&A)

**Rep. Clyburn:** Dr. Giroir will have a hard stop at 11:45am. I will begin the second round of Q&A. President Trump has just tweeted out a statement in reference to my chart comparing cases. He says that the U.S. has far more cases than Europe. If we had no testing or bad testing, we would show very few cases. Dr. Fauci, do you agree with the President’s statement that the difference is attributable to multiple factors including that some states did not do a good job of reopening?

**Dr. Fauci:** I stand by my previous statement. In the attempt to reopen, they didn’t abide by our guidelines. I might also mention- we talk about crowds and masks. Being indoors is worse than being outdoors. Wearing a mask is the critical issue.

**Rep. Clyburn:** I will sit at restaurants and sit outdoors - not indoors. The First Amendment means a lot to me. We opened up this meeting by talking about John Lewis. We met protesting trying to eliminate our sitting at the back of the bus, trying to get into schools, trying to get into a five-and-dime store. I’m glad that government did not limit our protest. 1st The First Amendment has constraints - you can peaceably assemble. Those people who were marching out on the plaza now called BLM Plaza weren’t carrying guns - they were peaceful. When John Lewis crossed the Pettus Bridge, they didn’t have weapons, but they were met by weapons. Whether or not this disconnect that the White House is saying publicly and what they are sending out to the states privately - a leaked COVID document sent to the states - those states in the red zone that are refusing to comply. We are trying to save lives. I started my career as a public school teacher. My daughter is telling me how concerned teachers are without safety precautions. I want the children in the classroom and I want them safe and that is what this is about.

**Rep. Scalise:** Re: Safely opening school: based on the CARES Act that we sent to the states for COVID recovery issue, the CDC knows how to safely reopen school. Go to your Governors, as they have billions available for supplies. If you run out, give us a call. Let’s talk about why to safely reopen. DC has said they will not reopen. There are no deaths of individuals under 19 in DC from COVID-19. The studies I have seen - mental health, child abuse. Maybe 14,000 cases are reported in schools – now not one is reported. It happens. Can you talk about those numbers?

**Dr. Redfield:** I reemphasize what you said. It is a more disturbing consequence. Not just in schools, but the other place it is recognized is the clinical setting. Pediatric visits have also been curtailed.

**Rep. Scalise:** For teachers, students - how do they safely reopen. Fifty million children are counting on us to do this. Dr. Fauci, Operation Warp Speed - over 250,000 people have signed up for COVID vaccine trials. What President Trump has done is remove red tape. He has worked so that clinical trials can run simultaneously. How safe is Operation Warp Speed?

**Dr. Fauci:** Red tape - the speed doesn’t compromise the safety. From the vaccine to phase 1 because red tape was avoided. As we got into Phase 3, the same thing.

**Rep. Scalise:** China is trying to steal this information.

**Dr. Fauci:** I have heard about hacking - I have no proof of that.

**Rep. Waters:** I was pleased to hear the warm comments about John Lewis this morning. Between the press and everyone, we have been doing him justice. This virus is not Democrat or Republican. I will send my condolences to the family of Herman Cain. He was at the Tulsa rally without a mask - he died. He contracted the virus without a mask there. I remind the committee about the manipulation of hospitalization data. I drafted an amendment to HR 7617 which prohibits any funds requiring hospitals to record hospital data. I’m alarmed by the way the President is handling information about children and their ability to return to school. The President says that children are almost immune from this virus.

**Dr. Fauci:** Children do get infected.

**Rep. Waters:** So, this is not an expert medical conclusion.

**Dr. Fauci:** Children are not immune. When children get infected, they do much, much better. There is a much, much lower level of hospitalizations for children. They do not get serious diseases.

**Rep. Waters:** I’m talking about the President’s latest comment where he says they are almost immune. I don’t know where the billions of dollars for schools is. It is more than the supplies - it is about space, how you keep children from gathering, how do you feed them?

**Rep. Scalise:** That is part of the CDC guidelines - they lay all of that out (cutoff)

**Rep. Waters:** All of the professionals are saying that this is a decision made by parents and the educators. You cannot hand down an answer from the federal government that will absolutely protect the children.

**Rep. Jordan:** Protest is important to talk about public policy issues, but I think all of the First Amendment is important. Freedoms we have in the First Amendment - what is important to me is the right to practice your faith. Government is putting limits on that now. Mayors and governors have been sued about the right to freedom of religion. I want consistency. I think it is important for Americans to get an education. Everyone can protest. In Portland, the teachers’ union doesn’t want to go back to school, but teachers are encouraged to protest. All kinds of Americans aren’t permitted to go to work. I wish the Democrats would look at all rights. Law enforcement has to go to work. Are you tracking what is happening at these protests? The exposure to the virus for law enforcement? Is it a concern?

**Dr. Fauci**: I’m concerned about any crowds without masks - more concerned about indoor crowds.

**Dr. Redfield:** We continue to look at first responders in our surveys looking at antibodies. We have it for some cities, but not in the west coast. We have looked at New York, Detroit, Rhode Island.

**Rep. Jordan:** That information would be helpful to this committee. The silence on what is happening at these protests is something that is unfortunate.

**Rep. Clyburn:** I would like you to tell me the difference between a first responder and an essential worker.

**Rep. Maloney:** What is the task force doing in relation to safeguarding elections? We will vote in November. We have guidelines for social distancing; could it be changed to three feet because it is a hurried participation? Would the task force give clear guidelines for board of elections across the country?

**Dr. Fauci:** I will get back to you - we can discuss at a task force meeting.

**Dr. Redfield:** CDC has guidelines for polling facilities and we will look at those if they need to be updated. This is an area that we are working on.

**Rep. Maloney:** As a former teacher, I’m concerned about the contradiction of messaging. The task force will give relevant information, but then it is countered by other leaders - they have to wait so long - a private test (10-16 days). They can’t trace because it is too late. Comment that my city is working hard on everything you are recommending, but they are having a terrible time about tracing and isolation due to slow turnaround time on tests.

**Dr. Fauci:** Adm. Giroir addressed that. There is no doubt that if you have to wait multiple days for a result that it obviates the purpose of doing it. One way to prevent this is if a person has a test - assume it is positive and isolate themselves until they get their result. There is such a surge - they are testing for surveillance. It is an issue if you can’t get it within a 24-48 hour period.

**Rep. Luekemeyer:** Perspective - trying to keep the disease, solutions in perspective. Another situation as we open up schools, I did research on football injuries. We have young men injured in playing football, and no one is concerned about that. Perverse incentive for medical people to claim someone died of COVID - you get more money as the attending physician. He said that states are doing this. Dr. Redfield, can you comment on this perverse incentive?

**Dr. Redfield:** You are correct. We have seen this with HIV. Reimbursement plays a role. When it comes to death reporting, it is how the death certificate is reported. It is less operable, though there may be some cases. Hospital reimbursement - there is some play in this situation.

**Rep. Luekemeyer:** Hydroxychloroquine - that it significantly reduces the death of COVID patients. Data is clear; there was a benefit for using the drug. In talking with older doctors, they say that the initial studies didn’t use zinc with it - that zinc is an enabler and helps reduce deaths in patients.

**Dr. Fauci:** The Henry Ford Hospital study that was published was noncontrolled and confounded. That is a flawed study. It is not a randomized placebo-controlled trial. Point that is important, in any and all of the randomized placebo-controlled trials, none have shown efficacy of hydroxychloroquine. If that randomized controlled trial that shows efficacy, I would change my mind. I have to go with the data. I have no horse in the game. I just look at the data.

**Rep. Kim:** Is our federal government doing everything possible to respond? When we talk about a national strategy about testing, it is about where the responsibility is. When I speak with people in our district, they want to talk about capabilities. They don’t want blame game within parts of our government. If we are not, the American people need to know why. Dr. Fauci, would you say that our response at the federal level is this the gold standard of a response? Is there nothing else that we could or should be doing?

**Dr. Fauci:** I have to repeat - we are doing everything we can. Clearly what I am responsible for, we are absolutely doing everything possible.

**Rep. Kim:** Are you confident in how we are using the Defense Production Act?

**Dr. Fauci:** Out of my realm.

**Rep. Kim:** We had federally backed test sites that we had set up around the country. Is that the right decision?

**Dr. Fauci:** That is out of my purview.

**Dr. Redfield**: These were appropriate moves. Don’t miss this opportunity in the core capabilities in the future - we were handicapped when the outbreak started. I don’t underestimate who is the most important in beating this.

**Rep. Kim:** Frustrating narrative. That feels like the responsibility is pushed to the American people - $25 billion for testing and tracing. I’m still hearing that a lot of that has not been used and whether the OMB is holding up access.

**Dr. Redfield:** Of that $25 billion, $10.25 billion came to CDC. We got that to the states within 2-4 weeks — all distributed.

**Rep. Kim:** Rapid antigen testing that would create more care response?

**Dr. Fauci:** Yes - that would be desirable.

**Rep. Walorski:** Was China responsible for this - covered up the origin of the crisis?

**Dr. Fauci:** From what we know, we were led to believe that this was jumping from an animal to a human and didn’t spread well from human to human. There were weeks that we didn’t know there was human to human transmission.

**Rep. Walorski:** Is China a threat to vaccine research?

**Dr. Fauci:** If they want to hack into a computer about results - they are going to hear about it anyway.

**Rep. Walorski:** China has obstructed throughout this process, even with PPE. When we talk about safe vaccines, I don’t know how we can stand here and say that China is not involved with the vaccine. I want to re-ask my question on cybersecurity. Why can’t we have a hearing in this committee on the role of China regarding the vaccines? That would be appropriate. Can I get a commitment from you, sitting in for the Chairman?

**Rep. Waters:**  It is chaired by Rep. Clyburn. You may address him when he returns.

**Rep. Walorski:** We are owed an answer as to why we can’t look into this issue.

**Rep. Foster:** I second my colleague Mark Green to GAO. My time in science, we had oversight by GAO. They are non-partisan. There is a strong immune response to this virus. Vaccines will more likely work. Antibody therapeutics are more likely to work. Yes, there is a miracle cure, but we do not have the manufacturing to meet the demand. It will be fraught when we have to figure out the disbursement of the vaccine. I would like GAO to look into the project management - contracts with all of these companies where the defense production act will be taken into consideration before we need it. We need GAO oversight and their questions make the projects better. These are serious questions by professionals. Dr. Green and I will use that about what is really happening. What other things can we be doing?

**Dr. Fauci:** We are very transparent on what is going on.

**Rep. Foster:** Some scientists don’t know what is behind Operation Warp Speed.

**Dr. Fauci:** Monoclonal antibodies - this will be an important tool on how we treat COVID patients. Scrutiny of GAO - I have had GAO look into things I have done.

**Rep. Velasquez:** Delays in testing. University of Pennsylvania’s testing sites serving people of color had longer lines, ran out of tests, etc. Nothing is more important for community growth than public health. The most vulnerable are being impacted. Do you attribute this inability to control the virus to testing and contact tracing?

**Dr. Fauci:** This is a multi-faceted process. The most important thing is about masks, crowds, outdoor/indoor, distance. Testing is a part of the process. Controlling infection - when you talk about contact tracing, you need results in a short period of time. Testing is a PART of the comprehensive approach, but not the only thing.

**Rep. Velasquez:** South Korea has rapid testing and results. Did it help their countries get the virus under control?

**Dr. Fauci:** They shut down almost completely. They had the capability to get a very low baseline. Right now they are trying to reopen. We will see how successful they will be.

**Rep. Velasquez:** Does testing results see more COVID cases? Are we seeing more COVID cases because of the testing results?

**Dr. Fauci:** If you do more testing you will see more cases.

**Rep. Velasquez:** Why can professional sports leagues get rapid testing?

**Dr. Fauci:** Some of the sports clubs are using the rapid test.

**Rep. Velasquez**: Latinos, Black, Native Americans - disproportionate testing with these groups?

**Dr. Redfield:** I wouldn’t agree with that statement.

**Rep. Velasquez:** You haven’t seen the long lines.

**Dr. Redfield:** I have seen the lines on TV. Was it disproportionate? I’m not comfortable saying that is true.

**Rep. Raskin:** There was no religious discrimination. Protests - if a jurisdiction has a six-foot rule, it applies equally to everybody. BLM protests - people are abiding by the rule. If you are concerned about the protests, then you have to look at the tear gas and pepper spray. Are you aware of the role Jared Kushner plays in diagnostic testing?

**Dr. Fauci:** Not involved.

**Rep. Raskin:** Vanity Fair announced that Jared Kushner set up a separate group and came up with a detailed national testing plan. The White House dropped the plan on the political logic that the outbreak would be limited to Democratic states. They thought it would be better to pit states against each other and then blame the Governors.

**Closing Remarks**

**Rep. Scalise:** You are on the frontlines working to implement President Trump’s plan to combat the virus. Part of the plan includes stopping flights to China which saved lives. He was criticized for that. That plan worked when you look at where we are with Operation Warp Speed, working to find an actual vaccine for the disease. A quarter of a million Americans have signed up to be tested for the virus. While we work, China is working to steal the vaccine. We should have a hearing on this topic. If those five Governors had followed the guidelines, thousands of deaths would not have occurred. Those Governors have the data that they are hiding regarding opening schools, saving lives. Fifty million-plus children are counting on reopening schools. American Academy of Pediatrics put out guidelines that everyone should read. Money is still available, so do not use that as an excuse. Some of the teachers’ unions are against opening school, but they want to take the money. Don’t deny parents to have the same choice that are in low income communities. We ought to have a hearing to hold China accountable.

**Rep. Clyburn:** We did have a hearing for essential workers, law enforcement officers were included.

**Rep. Scalise:** New attacks on them since that hearing.

**Rep. Clyburn:** Coronavirus Task Force says there are 21 states in the red zone. The report says that they were communicated with privately and I am troubled that the Administration would hide this from us. I will ask Dr. Redfield to respond in writing on this. I would like to know whether or not we can depend on, going forward, these reports to made public rather than to be issued to these states privately. While the White House is maintaining a public statement, they are sending things to states privately. I would hope that this would come to an end. Regarding reopening schools, we all want to see that. I want to mention the American Federation of Teachers and NEA joined together with a statement on July 10 that public health agencies must make recommendations based on evidence, not politics. Health experts should tell us when it is the best time and how we do it. It is different in rural America than in urban America. There is not a one size fits all. We should rely on superintendents and principals on when it is best to open schools. This notion just telling people to go back to school is one thing. Give the states the resources and guidance they need and work with rural communities that cannot do online learning. You have to have space. You have to have masks. We can’t put the burden on them. Resources need to get to the school districts. I hear every day about teachers using their own money. I thank Dr. Fauci, Dr. Redfield and Admi. Giroir for being here. We appreciate your expertise. Every day effective action is not taken, lives are lost. The plan must prioritize public health, not political expediency. Give Americans clear public health advice even if is something the Administration doesn’t want to hear. Masks are inconvenient, but the plan must include guidance and support. I come from a part of the country where education would not have been available if it had not been for the churches. We need to bring communities together, churches, temples, synagogues. We have got to protect our students and teachers - cannot rush. This virus has inflicted upon minority communities who already have health and wealth disparities. Rep. Velasquez was getting to this with her questions. Martin Luther King, Jr. from the Birmingham, AL city jail, said in a letter, “Injustice anywhere is to a threat to justice everywhere. Time itself is neutral. It can either be used destructively or constructively.” More and more I feel that the people of ill will have used time more effectively than people of good will. This destructive virus has used the past six months to spread to more than four million of our citizens. You people today I respect most in our government, must use their time more constructively to combat the virus. People of good will must correct past mistakes, embrace the science. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, “The time is always right to do right.”

Hearing adjourned at 12:48pm