

SELECT SUBCOMMITTEE on the CORONAVIRUS CRISIS

MORE EFFECTIVE MORE EFFICIENT MORE EQUITABLE

Overseeing an Improving & Ongoing Pandemic Response

YEAR-END STAFF REPORT

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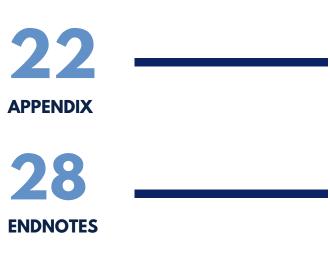


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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis was established by the U.S. House of Representatives on April 23, 2020. Modeled after the Truman Committee that saved lives and taxpayer dollars by preventing waste, fraud, and abuse during World War II, the Select Subcommittee is charged with investigating the effectiveness, efficiency, equity, and transparency of the nation's response to the public health and economic crises caused by the coronavirus pandemic.¹

This report details key findings from the Select Subcommittee's work over the course of 2021. This year, the Select Subcommittee has sent more than 100 letters, reviewed more than 430,000 pages of documents, conducted ten transcribed interviews of key officials involved in the pandemic response, published seven staff reports detailing its findings, and held 14 hearings and public briefings with senior Administration officials, experts in public health and economics, Americans personally impacted by the pandemic, and other important



witnesses. The Select Subcommittee has continued and expanded on many of the investigations that it began in 2020, while also opening multiple new investigations.

The Select Subcommittee has conducted rigorous oversight of essential public- and private-sector activities related to the pandemic response and recovery. Among other priorities, the Select Subcommittee's work this year has focused on:

- **Promoting a Robust and Equitable Vaccination Campaign** The Select Subcommittee held multiple hearings on the federal government's historic coronavirus vaccination campaign to ensure vaccines were being administered expeditiously and equitably. Senior Biden Administration officials testifying before the Select Subcommittee detailed the Administration's comprehensive strategy for rescuing the chaotic vaccine rollout under the prior Administration, accelerating vaccinations, and ensuring vaccine equity—which has resulted in more than 239 million Americans having now received at least one dose of vaccine.² The Select Subcommittee also conducted bipartisan oversight of efforts to promote vaccine confidence and uptake across the country, highlighting innovative incentive strategies and redoubling efforts to eliminate access barriers.³
- Ensuring the Coronavirus Response Is Led by Science, Not Politics Amid unprecedented levels of harassment, threats, and attacks against state and local public health officials, the Select Subcommittee convened an oversight hearing to examine the reckless politicization of the pandemic and its impact on the nation's state and local public health infrastructure. The Select Subcommittee also scrutinized a dangerous

movement pushed by Republican state officials to permanently weaken public health authorities for political purposes.⁴ In the face of widespread misinformation about the coronavirus, the Select Subcommittee exposed how bad actors are profiting from disseminating falsehoods about the pandemic, politicizing science, and exploiting Americans' fears and anxieties.⁵

• Assessing the Tremendous Impact of the American Rescue Plan – The Select Subcommittee released a report finding that the American Rescue Plan (ARP) contributed to a dramatic decline in poverty while supporting a robust economic recovery.⁶ The report found, for example, that the ARP's Direct Relief Payments contributed to a significant decline in housing instability in the weeks following the bill's passage.⁷ The Select Subcommittee also heard expert testimony in a hearing examining the impact of the ARP that confirmed the ARP and other pandemic relief legislation had delivered badly needed relief and had significantly reduced the economic hardships faced by millions of Americans.⁸

The Select Subcommittee's work throughout the year has prompted important actions and reforms to protect frontline workers, ensure equitable access to pandemic relief, keep people in their homes, and safeguard taxpayer dollars:

- Protecting Workers Major meatpacking company Smithfield Foods agreed to make nationwide changes to its health procedures and policies relating to infectious diseases in a settlement with the Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration shortly after a Select Subcommittee report and hearing on the failures of major meatpacking companies to protect workers from the pandemic.⁹ The Select Subcommittee's report and hearing also prompted the *Washington Post*'s Editorial Board to call on the industry to act to prevent such harms from occurring again.¹⁰
- Ensuring Equitable Relief Following a Select Subcommittee report that found women- and minority-owned businesses lacked equitable access to Paycheck Protection Program loans under the Trump Administration,¹¹ the Biden Administration announced reforms to ensure equitable access to pandemic business relief.¹²
- Keeping People in Their Homes Arkansas' state pandemic rental assistance program removed a burdensome landlord application requirement¹³ following a Select Subcommittee letter urging the state to expedite its delivery of relief.¹⁴ Following the Select Subcommittee's initiation of an inquiry into corporate landlord pandemic eviction practices,¹⁵ large landlord company Pretium Partners dramatically reduced its rate of eviction filing.¹⁶
- Safeguarding Taxpayer Dollars Following the Select Subcommittee's joint investigation with the Committee on Oversight and Reform that found that Emergent BioSolutions, Inc. (Emergent) failed to promptly and fully remediate serious manufacturing problems and deficient controls at its Bayview facility—which led to the rejection or destruction of millions of desperately-needed coronavirus vaccine doses¹⁷—

the Biden Administration canceled the federal government's public-private partnership with Emergent and terminated the company's \$650 million contract.¹⁸

The Select Subcommittee's work this year has also exposed critical failures in the Trump Administration's response to the pandemic, many of which continue to hamper the nation's ability to fully recover from the crisis. Among other things, the Select Subcommittee's investigations have:

- Exposed Unprecedented Political Interference in the Work of Scientific Experts -• The Select Subcommittee has continued to uncover evidence of the Trump Administration's deliberate efforts to undermine the nation's coronavirus response for political purposes. This year, the Select Subcommittee released new evidence showing that Trump Administration officials purposefully weakened the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) testing guidance to reduce the amount of testing being conducted and obscure how rapidly the virus was spreading across the country.¹⁹ Trump Administration officials also championed a dangerous "herd immunity" strategy inside the White House—including by arranging a roundtable event between then-President Trump and a fringe group of herd immunity proponents-that would have placed millions of lives at risk.²⁰ New evidence exposed how Trump White House officials blocked CDC briefings and media appearances, and attempted to sidestep CDC in finalizing coronavirus guidance.²¹ The Select Subcommittee also uncovered evidence showing that Trump White House officials neglected the pandemic response to focus on the 2020 presidential election and promote the Big Lie that the election results were fraudulent.²²
- Identified Evidence of the Trump Administration's Failure to Heed Warnings and Acquire Critical Supplies in the Earliest Months of the Crisis Advisers to President Trump wrote on February 29, 2020, that a "first wave" of infections in the United States was imminent and that the federal government needed to "be honest about the situation and show it is undertaking major decisive actions" to combat the coronavirus.²³ A memorandum to then-President Trump dated one day later warned that the country was facing "a very serious public health emergency" and recommended "Industrial Mobilization of Supply Chains," while emphasizing that the Administration's "movement is NOT fast enough."²⁴ Senior Trump Administration officials detailed a series of other missteps that further contributed to the ineffectual early response, such as failing to scale up personal protective equipment (PPE) or secure supply chains.²⁵ Instead of implementing a comprehensive national plan, the Trump Administration pursued a haphazard and ineffective approach to procuring PPE and other desperately-needed supplies that exposed taxpayers to risks of fraud by nefarious actors who sought to profit off of the crisis.²⁶
- Demonstrated How the Trump Administration's Failure to Implement Adequate Fraud Controls in the Small Business Administration's Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program Led to Widespread Fraud – A Select Subcommittee analysis has found that nearly 97 percent of Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) fraud prosecutions have involved fraudulent applications submitted during the Trump Administration's

implementation of the program in its first five months.²⁷ Nearly fifty percent of these prosecutions have involved EIDLs and EIDL advance grants to fictitious, inactive, or inoperative businesses. The Biden Administration's implementation of improvements to the fraud controls in the EIDL program have likely made it much more difficult for fictitious and inactive businesses to obtain fraudulent EIDLs than was the case during the Trump Administration.

- Revealed Critical Failures in the Trump Administration's Farmers-to-Families Food Box Program – A Select Subcommittee report showed how the Farmers-to-Families Food Box Program (Food Box Program) delivered windfall profits to unqualified food distributors who wasted taxpayer dollars. In implementing the Food Box Program, the Trump Administration's Department of Agriculture granted multimillion-dollar contracts to unqualified distributors with limited food distribution experience that had submitted applications with serious red flags.²⁸ In some cases, contractors selected by the Trump Administration failed to provide timely deliveries, delivered food in unsafe packaging, and pressured recipients to accept more food than they could reasonably distribute or store.²⁹ Despite questionable invoices and poor performance, the Trump Administration permitted these contractors to profit richly from the taxpayer-funded program.³⁰
- Uncovered the Role of Trump White House Officials in the Department of the Treasury's Approval of a Deeply Questionable \$700 Million Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act Loan The Trump Administration's Department of the Treasury (Treasury) approved a \$700 million loan to troubled trucking company YRC Worldwide Inc., now named Yellow Corporation (Yellow) under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act loan program for businesses "critical to maintaining national security." This single loan represented 95 percent of the funds expended as part of the program.³¹ Reports have raised serious doubts that Yellow satisfied the criteria to be deemed "critical" to national security and questioned its use of funds.³² Trump White House officials were involved in the process of approving Yellow's loan, communicating with Yellow frequently and contacting Treasury on Yellow's behalf.³³

Part I of this report provides an overview of the Select Subcommittee's ongoing investigations into the federal government's response to the pandemic, which have shown that Trump Administration officials engaged in a staggering pattern of political interference in the pandemic response and failed to heed early warnings about the looming crisis. These decisions placed countless American lives at risk, undermined the nation's public health institutions, and contributed to one of the worst failures of leadership in American history. Part II details findings from the Select Subcommittee's investigations of private actors that have profited during the pandemic while endangering public health. Part III discusses the Select Subcommittee's findings from investigations into the federal government's management of pandemic relief programs. These investigations have found that the Trump Administration left those programs vulnerable to fraud and abuse while failing to deliver relief to millions of Americans effectively, efficiently, and equitably.

PART I: THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR A SERIES OF CRITICAL FAILURES THAT UNDERMINED THE NATION'S ABILITY TO RESPOND EFFECTIVELY TO THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

A. The Trump Administration's Persistent Political Interference in the Pandemic Response Contributed to One of the Worst Failures of Leadership in American History

Last year, the Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis launched an investigation into the Trump Administration's political interference in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) reports on the coronavirus amid allegations that political appointees were attempting to undermine their scientific integrity for partisan purposes.³⁴ During the 117th Congress, the Select Subcommittee expanded its investigations of the Trump Administration's political interference in the pandemic response effort.

Investigative Findings

The Select Subcommittee has uncovered extensive evidence of widespread political interference that degraded every major facet of the Trump Administration's public health response. Among other findings, the Select Subcommittee has obtained evidence showing that Trump Administration officials:

- Blocked CDC Briefings and Media Appearances Current and former Department of • Health and Human Services (HHS) and CDC officials told the Select Subcommittee that the Trump White House blocked CDC's requests to conduct public briefings for more than three months following a February 25, 2020, CDC briefing in which then-CDC National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases Director Dr. Nancy Messonnier accurately warned the public about the risks posed by the coronavirus. Dr. Messonnier confirmed that this briefing "angered" then-President Trump and informed the Select Subcommittee that she received calls after this briefing from then-CDC Director Robert Redfield and then-HHS Secretary Alex Azar that caused her to feel "upset." Another CDC official explained that the agency requested to hold a briefing in April 2020 that would have provided information on the state of the pandemic, a new CDC recommendation to wear cloth face coverings, and new evidence of pediatric cases and deaths from the coronavirus, but the Trump White House refused CDC's request. Multiple CDC officials confirmed that media requests to interview CDC officials were also denied during this period. Former CDC Principal Deputy Director Dr. Anne Schuchat told the Select Subcommittee that "many of us" in CDC felt muzzled by a Trump White House whose decisions were driven by politics rather than science.³⁵
- Sought to Sidestep CDC in Finalizing Guidance Documents released by the Select Subcommittee showed that Trump White House officials in the Office of Management and Budget sought to sidestep CDC when finalizing coronavirus guidance for faith communities, after CDC declined to accept edits to the guidance proposed by officials outside of the agency.³⁶ Dr. Jay Butler, a senior CDC official who served as Incident Manager of the agency's coronavirus response between May 1, 2020, and June 30, 2020,

confirmed in a transcribed interview that the published version of the faith communities guidance "softened some very important public health recommendations," such as removing all references to face coverings, the suggestion to suspend choirs, and language related to virtual services. Dr. Butler told the Select Subcommittee that "what had been done [by the Trump White House] was not good public health practice," and acknowledged that the concerns he had about Americans getting sick and potentially dying because they relied on this watered-down guidance "will haunt [him] for some time."³⁷

- Purposefully Weakened CDC's Testing Guidance Documents obtained by the Select Subcommittee revealed that Trump Administration officials purposefully weakened CDC's coronavirus testing guidance in August 2020 to obscure how rapidly the virus was spreading across the country.³⁸ Former White House Coronavirus Response Coordinator Dr. Deborah Birx confirmed this finding, informing the Select Subcommittee that then-Special Advisor to President Trump Dr. Scott Atlas was involved in changing CDC's testing guidance to assert—contrary to consensus science-based recommendations—that most asymptomatic people should not be tested even if they were exposed to the virus. Dr. Birx stated that these changes were made specifically to reduce the amount of testing being conducted, and that Dr. Atlas had the intention of changing the testing guidance when he arrived at the White House. CDC eventually restored the science-based testing guidance on September 18, 2020, over the objections of senior White House officials, according to Dr. Birx.³⁹
- Instructed CDC Career Scientists to Destroy Evidence of Political Interference Consistent with evidence previously obtained by the Select Subcommittee, a CDC official confirmed in a transcribed interview that she was instructed to destroy evidence of political interference by a Trump Administration political appointee. The CDC official told the Select Subcommittee that she understood this instruction—which "seemed unusual" and made her "uncomfortable"—came from then-CDC Director Redfield.⁴⁰
- Pressured the Food and Drug Administration to Authorize Ineffective Coronavirus Treatments – Documents obtained by the Select Subcommittee showed that Trump Administration political appointees attempted to exert pressure on the Food and Drug Administration to authorize ineffective coronavirus treatments, such as hydroxychloroquine and convalescent plasma, over the objections of career scientists.⁴¹
- *Championed a Dangerous Herd Immunity Strategy* The Select Subcommittee released documents showing that Trump Administration officials, including Dr. Atlas and then-HHS political appointee Dr. Paul Alexander, advocated for the federal government to adopt a dangerous herd immunity strategy without vaccines, which would have risked the loss of even more American lives unnecessarily.⁴² Dr. Birx detailed how Dr. Atlas championed this strategy inside the White House, calling for most people to "be allowed and actually encouraged to get the virus and spread the virus." To advance this approach, Dr. Atlas apparently spearheaded a roundtable event at the White House in August 2020 between President Trump and outspoken proponents of a herd immunity strategy, and

later coordinated a similar meeting in October 2020 with then-HHS Secretary Azar.⁴³ In an email obtained by the Select Subcommittee, Dr. Birx described these herd immunity proponents as "a fringe group without grounding in epidemics, public health or on the ground common sense experience," and refused to be associated with their meeting at the White House.⁴⁴ Documents obtained by the Select Subcommittee show that other top public health officials, including National Institutes of Health (NIH) Director Dr. Francis Collins, expressed deep concerns about the herd immunity strategy being advocated by "fringe epidemiologists" whom Dr. Atlas had embraced.⁴⁵ In an email to NIH colleagues, Dr. Collins called for "a quick and devastating published take down" of the herd immunity strategy known as "The Great Barrington Declaration," after which Dr. Collins spoke out against the approach in an interview with the *Washington Post*.⁴⁶ Dr. Birx told the Select Subcommittee that she was "constantly raising the alert" about the "depths and breadths of [her] concern" about Dr. Atlas to senior Trump Administration officials, and that Dr. Atlas's presence in the White House undermined the effectiveness of the overall pandemic response effort.⁴⁷

- Used Personal Email Accounts to Conduct Official Business The Select Subcommittee
 released documents revealing that multiple Trump Administration officials, such as thenWhite House Office of Trade and Manufacturing Policy Director Peter Navarro, used
 personal email accounts—including an encrypted email service—to conduct official
 business related to the pandemic, raising troubling questions about whether these
 individuals intentionally sought to shield official communications about the pandemic
 response from public view. These documents also raise concerns about whether Trump
 Administration officials potentially violated the Presidential Records Act.⁴⁸
- Neglected the Pandemic Response to Focus on the 2020 Election and the Big Lie Documents obtained by the Select Subcommittee revealed that Trump Administration officials allowed the pandemic response to take a "back-seat" in the fall of 2020 to focus instead on the presidential election and promoting former President Trump's Big Lie that the election results were fraudulent.⁴⁹ Dr. Birx also informed the Select Subcommittee that Trump White House officials "were actively campaigning" for the presidential election, and that the narrow focus on campaigning "took people's time away from and distracted them away from the pandemic."

Next Steps

To ensure the nation's public health institutions are never again compromised by decision-makers more concerned with politics than keeping Americans safe, the Select Subcommittee is determined to uncover all the ways in which the pandemic response was undermined for political purposes under the prior Administration's watch.

B. The Trump Administration's Failure to Execute an Early Response Strategy and Address Critical Supply Shortages Exacerbated the Public Health Emergency and Put Countless American Lives at Risk

Despite urgent warnings about the looming pandemic, the Trump Administration failed to implement a national strategy to combat the pandemic and alleviate critical supply shortages, putting American lives at greater risk. As the coronavirus began spreading rapidly in the United States, skyrocketing demand for personal protective equipment (PPE) and other critical supplies caused foreseeable shortages that jeopardized the health of frontline workers, patients, their families and caregivers, and the general public. Investigations conducted by the Select Subcommittee have made clear that these devastating shortages could have been mitigated had the Trump Administration planned and executed a comprehensive supply strategy.⁵⁰

Investigative Findings

The Select Subcommittee has gathered a growing body of evidence that shows the Trump Administration knew the significant risk posed by the coronavirus but failed to execute an effective supply strategy. Documents released by the Select Subcommittee show that Mr. Navarro received a memorandum from his adviser, Dr. Steven Hatfill, on February 29, 2020, warning that a "first wave" of infections in the United States was imminent and that the federal government needed to "be honest about the situation and show it is undertaking major decisive actions" to combat the coronavirus.⁵¹ One day later, Mr. Navarro wrote a memorandum to then-President Trump in which he warned that the country was facing "a very serious public health emergency" and recommended "Industrial Mobilization of Supply Chains," while emphasizing that the Administration's "movement is NOT fast enough."⁵² In the weeks that followed, then-President Trump continued to downplay the virus and refused to mobilize a coordinated response to procure supplies, even as the nation faced overrun hospitals and critical shortages.⁵³

Former senior Trump Administration officials also detailed a series of missteps that further contributed to the ineffectual early response to the coronavirus outbreak in the United States. For example, Dr. Birx revealed in a transcribed interview that no one from the federal government had contacted some of the largest diagnostic companies operating in the United States until she arrived at the White House in early March 2020—more than a month after a public health emergency had been declared in the United States in response to the coronavirus outbreak.⁵⁴ According to Dr. Schuchat, federal leadership in February 2020 was so narrowly focused on repatriating Americans abroad that "key areas, like scaling up PPE and getting our arms around the supply chain and protecting the healthcare system and so forth, it didn't get sufficient attention" during the initial response. Dr. Schuchat emphasized that "a smoother, more effective leadership and policy environment would have been helpful" during the initial months of the response.⁵⁵

Instead of heeding warnings and implementing a comprehensive response strategy, the Trump Administration pursued a haphazard and ineffective approach to procuring PPE and other desperately-needed supplies. The Select Subcommittee released documents revealing that White House officials, including Mr. Navarro and Dr. Hatfill, pushed federal agencies to issue hundreds of millions of dollars in non-competitive coronavirus response contracts, often without adequate due diligence.⁵⁶ For example, documents indicate that Mr. Navarro told an executive from

AirBoss Defense Group to "trust your government and begin to execute" on a \$96 million proposal to supply powered respirators and filters—even though Mr. Navarro lacked the authority to award federal contracts. Documents released by the Select Subcommittee also revealed that Mr. Navarro aggressively pushed for a \$812 million no-bid contract to Phlow Corporation—a first-time government contractor newly formed at the start of the pandemic. The Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Agency ultimately awarded Phlow this contract—the largest in the agency's history—after Mr. Navarro and other White House officials pressed it to do so.⁵⁷

The Select Subcommittee obtained evidence suggesting that Mr. Navarro also may have bypassed procurement processes to steer supply contracts to particular contractors.⁵⁸ At the same time, documents indicate that Dr. Hatfill may have declined leads to purchase supplies like N95 masks in the spring of 2020 solely because the products were not manufactured in the United States. For example, when Dr. Hatfill was asked by a White House volunteer adviser on March 27, 2020, whether he was "interested in talking to people who have or say they have large numbers (hundreds of thousands or millions) of N95 or KN95 mask available from abroad," Dr. Hatfill replied: "Nothing that is not US based." These refusals may have further exacerbated shortages of lifesaving PPE.⁵⁹

The Select Subcommittee's investigations also found that several large contracts for pandemic supplies were canceled by the federal government for non-performance, raising further questions about how the Trump Administration's failure to conduct adequate diligence hindered the government's ability to promptly secure vital supplies.⁶⁰ In June 2021, the Select Subcommittee released a staff memorandum detailing its investigation of multimillion-dollar PPE contracts awarded to Federal Government Experts, LLC (FGE) by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Department of Veterans Affairs, under which FGE failed to deliver the PPE promised. Although FGE did not ultimately receive any taxpayer dollars under these contracts, the Select Subcommittee identified at least a dozen federal officials who were actively engaged in negotiating with and overseeing the management of these contracts for approximately ten weeks during the height of the pandemic last year—valuable time and resources that could have been spent working with suppliers who had the ability to procure vital PPE. The Select Subcommittee's analysis concluded that the Trump Administration's failure to implement a coordinated national strategy to alleviate supply shortages forced federal agencies to enter risky contracts with unproven suppliers, such as those entered with FGE, and pay above-market prices in order to compete for limited supplies on the open market. These factors substantially increased the risk of fraud, waste, and abuse of taxpaver resources.⁶¹

Next Steps

The Trump Administration's apparent disregard of clear, urgent warnings about the looming coronavirus crisis significantly impaired the country's ability to procure needed resources, equipment, and supplies and contributed to countless American lives lost. The Select Subcommittee will continue pressing for a full accounting of why the prior Administration was unable—or unwilling—to act swiftly to ensure that Americans had what they needed to protect themselves from the coronavirus.

PART II: COMPANIES PROFITED DURING THE PANDEMIC WHILE ENDANGERING THE PUBLIC'S HEALTH

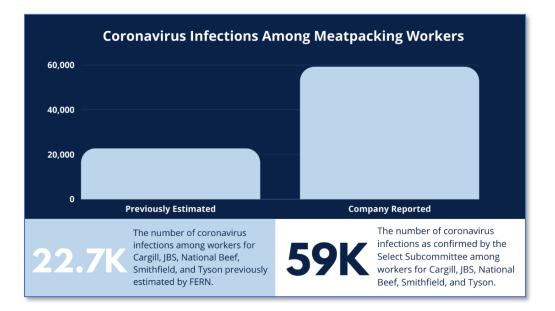
A. The Subcommittee Uncovered Evidence that Coronavirus Infections and Deaths Among Meatpacking Workers for Five of the Largest Meatpacking Companies Were Nearly Three Times Higher than Previously Estimated

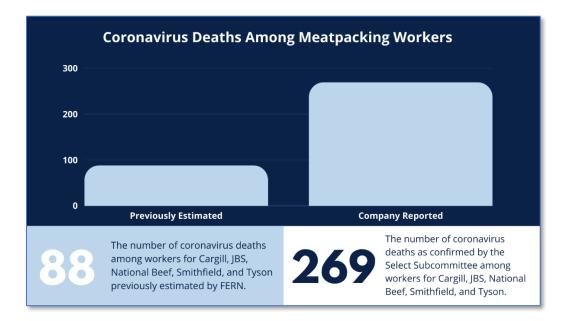
As the coronavirus spread rapidly through the United States in the spring of 2020, meatpacking facilities became hotspots for outbreaks that sickened and killed meatpacking workers and generated "rapid transmission" in their communities.⁶² In February 2021, the Select Subcommittee opened an investigation into coronavirus infections and deaths in meatpacking plants.⁶³ The Select Subcommittee requested documents and information concerning coronavirus outbreaks at the facilities of the five largest meatpacking conglomerates—JBS USA Food Company (JBS), Tyson Foods, Inc. (Tyson), Smithfield Foods (Smithfield), Cargill Meat Solutions Corporation (Cargill), and National Beef Packing Company, LLC (National Beef).⁶⁴

Investigative Findings

Documents received from these five companies revealed that the numbers of coronavirus infections and deaths among these companies' meatpacking workers were significantly higher than previously estimated.

During the first year of the pandemic, at least 59,000 meatpacking employees of these five companies were infected with the coronavirus—almost triple the nearly 22,700 infections previously estimated by the Food and Environment Reporting Network (FERN) for these five companies' respective workforces based on publicly available information.⁶⁵ The death toll was over three times higher than what was previously estimated, with at least 269 meatpacking workers employed by these companies having lost their lives to the coronavirus.⁶⁶ Multiple meatpacking plants saw infection rates of close to 50 percent of the workforce.⁶⁷





The Select Subcommittee also released documents highlighting meatpacking companies' reluctance to impose coronavirus precautions despite plant outbreaks. Internal Tyson talking points showed that on March 20, 2020, Tyson had not yet begun to conduct temperature checks, but nonetheless was telling its workers: "It is vital that you come to work as planned, despite stories about 'shelter in place."⁶⁸ A May 2, 2020, memorandum from federal and state health authorities to Tyson regarding Tyson's Amarillo, Texas plant revealed that many Tyson employees were working with masks "saturated" from sweat or other fluids, in lines where workers were not distanced and separated only by flimsy "plastic bags on frames."⁶⁹ This plant saw over 1,900 workers contract the coronavirus—49.8 percent of the plant's workforce—and five employees die of the coronavirus.⁷⁰ An internal Smithfield communication shows that on April 21, 2020, the Chief Executive Officer of Smithfield was vigorously pushing back on CDC recommendations for coronavirus precautions at Smithfield's Sioux Falls, South Dakota facility, insisting that social distancing, reducing employee density in non-work areas, and flexible attendance policies would be "problematic."⁷¹ Just five days earlier, Smithfield's CEO had exchanged emails with the CEO of National Beef stating: "Employees are afraid to come to work."⁷²

Meanwhile, despite rising infections and deaths across meatpacking plants and an "inundating" wave of meatpacking worker complaints of unsafe conditions,⁷³ the Department of Labor's Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) leadership under former President Trump made a "political decision" not to issue regulations for meatpacking companies to take steps to protect workers from the coronavirus.⁷⁴ OSHA staff were left able only to enforce OSHA's General Duty Clause authority, which carries a statutory maximum fine of approximately \$13,000 for serious and other-than-serious violations⁷⁵ and which OSHA has admitted "can be more difficult to show, than the elements of proof required for violation of a hazard-specific standard."⁷⁶ Over the course of 2020, OSHA issued just nine citations to three

meatpacking companies with severe coronavirus outbreaks⁷⁷ despite receiving over 100 complaints related to meatpacking facilities.⁷⁸

Next Steps

The Select Subcommittee is continuing its investigation into the impact of the coronavirus at meatpacking facilities across the country to determine the extent to which meatpacking companies failed to take actions that could have mitigated high infection rates and potentially avoided loss of life, and how decisions made by the Trump Administration protected meatpacking companies at the expense of the health and safety of their workers and communities.

B. Emergent BioSolutions, Inc. Wasted Hundreds of Millions of Taxpayer Dollars and Ruined Tens of Millions of Coronavirus Vaccine Doses

In April 2021, the Select Subcommittee launched an investigation jointly with the Committee on Oversight and Reform into Emergent BioSolutions, Inc.'s (Emergent) receipt of multimillion-dollar contracts from the Trump Administration to manufacture coronavirus vaccines and therapeutics after Emergent was forced to destroy millions of AstraZeneca and Johnson & Johnson vaccine doses following repeated production errors and instances of contamination.⁷⁹ The Trump Administration had awarded Emergent a \$628 million contract in May 2020 to expand the manufacturing capabilities at Emergent's Maryland facilities, despite a long, documented history of quality control issues.⁸⁰

Investigative Findings

The Committees released preliminary findings in May 2021 revealing that Emergent was warned multiple times that serious manufacturing problems and deficient controls at its Bayview facility in Baltimore, Maryland could lead to the contamination of coronavirus vaccines manufactured at the facility. Despite these warnings, Emergent failed to promptly and fully remediate the problems—leading to the contamination of millions of doses of desperately-needed coronavirus vaccines. Documents released by the Committees detailed how Emergent collected more than \$271 million from the federal government under the contract issued by the Trump Administration, notwithstanding flaws in the company's manufacturing operations. The investigation also revealed that, although Emergent privately admitted to serious manufacturing problems, senior executives received millions of dollars in raises and bonuses as vaccines were being destroyed.⁸¹

The Select Subcommittee held a hearing in May 2021 at which Emergent executives claimed to take responsibility for the company's failures yet continued to minimize the seriousness of vaccine contamination at the Bayview facility.⁸² Despite acknowledging prior awareness of risks and apologizing to the American people, Emergent's President and CEO, Robert Kramer, defended and refused to return large cash bonuses awarded to top executives. The Committees subsequently expanded their joint investigation in June 2021 by requesting additional documents and information from AstraZeneca and Johnson & Johnson.⁸³ On November 1, 2021, the Biden Administration canceled its public-private partnership with Emergent and terminated the company's \$650 million contract.⁸⁴

Next Steps

Emergent wasted hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars and was unable to meet the urgent needs of the country during the pandemic. The Committees will continue to investigate Emergent's troubling conduct and monitor the company's efforts to produce and distribute safe and effective coronavirus vaccines under its remaining agreement with Johnson & Johnson.

PART III: THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION'S QUESTIONABLE MANAGEMENT OF PANDEMIC RELIEF PROGRAMS LEFT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT VULNERABLE TO FRAUD AND PROFITEERING, WHILE FAILING TO EFFECTIVELY AND EQUITABLY DELIVER RELIEF

A. The Farmers-to-Families Food Box Program Wasted Taxpayer Dollars and Was Used as a Partisan Tool to Secure Political Advantages for Former President Trump

In the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, Congress authorized the Secretary of Agriculture to "purchase commodities for emergency distribution in any area of the United States during a public health emergency designation" to respond to soaring food insecurity, supply chain disruptions, and food waste.⁸⁵ Secretary Sonny Perdue exercised this authority to create the Farmers-to-Families Food Box Program (Food Box Program). The Department of Agriculture (USDA) selected distributors to purchase food, package it into family-sized boxes, and deliver those packages "to food banks and other nonprofits . . . that can receive, store and distribute food items."⁸⁶ During the Food Box Program's first round, running May 15, 2020 to June 30, 2020, multiple reports questioned the qualifications of certain distributors that had received multimillion-dollar awards.⁸⁷ In August 2020, the Select Subcommittee launched an investigation into reported mismanagement of the Program, focusing on three distributors awarded large first-round contracts that had been the subject of press reports—Yegg, Inc. (Yegg), CRE8AD8, and Ben Holtz Consulting, Inc. (Ben Holtz)—which were awarded a combined \$95.7 million in contracts by the Trump Administration.⁸⁸

Investigative Findings

The Select Subcommittee released a report documenting its findings on October 13, 2021. The Select Subcommittee's investigation found that the Trump Administration granted multimillion-dollar contracts to unqualified distributors with limited food distribution experience that had submitted applications with serious red flags.⁸⁹ For example, Yegg—awarded contracts worth \$16.5 million—was a self-described "Export Management, Trading, and Trade Finance company" that listed its most recent annual sales as \$250,000,⁹⁰ while CRE8AD8—awarded contracts worth \$39 million—specialized in wedding and event planning.⁹¹ USDA personnel admitted to Select Subcommittee staff that they did not contact the professional references bidders provided on their applications to confirm that the bidders were experienced, capable, and reputable.⁹² In the references section of Ben Holtz' bid proposal, the contractor had simply written: "I don't have any."⁹³

The investigation further found that, after awarding massive contracts to unqualified contractors, the Trump Administration failed to adequately monitor those contracts for possible fraud. In one egregious example, the Trump Administration continued payments to Yegg despite evidence that the company provided misleading documentation to USDA and may have engaged in self-dealing. The Trump Administration sanctioned \$3.8 million in payments to Yegg for purported deliveries after learning that some of the food in question had not yet left the producers⁹⁴—or had even been ordered.⁹⁵ The Trump Administration also reimbursed Yegg for over \$2.85 million for food boxes purportedly delivered to "Helping Feet," a real estate-focused nonprofit operated by Yegg's co-owner, who was also the wife of Yegg's CEO. The Trump

Administration paid Yegg another \$584,400 for a delivery that Select Subcommittee staff confirmed was not received by the reported recipient and that Select Subcommittee staff were not able to trace.⁹⁶

The Trump Administration also failed to structure or administer the Food Box Program to meet its stated goals of feeding Americans and eliminating food waste. In some cases, contractors selected by the Trump Administration in fact *contributed* to food waste by failing to provide timely deliveries, delivering food in unsafe packaging, and pressuring recipients to accept more food than they could reasonably distribute or store. One nonprofit director recalled that Yegg once delivered 2,500 more gallons of milk than planned, adding: "I had to pay for that refrigeration out of my own pocket."⁹⁷ Another recipient said of CRE8AD8: "They didn't understand that you couldn't send us bad food and expect us to take it."⁹⁸ Recipient nonprofits also told Select Subcommittee staff that contractors delivered "rotten food and wet or collapsing boxes," provided large amounts of commercially packaged meat inappropriate for family consumption, or delivered produce at temperatures that presented a "food safety issue."⁹⁹

Despite questionable invoices and poor performance, the Trump Administration permitted contractors to profit richly from the taxpayer-funded Program. CRE8AD8, which was ultimately paid \$31.5 million in taxpayer funds, acknowledged to the Select Subcommittee that it collected profits between 10 and 25 percent—a total of \$3.1 million to \$7.75 million for one month of deliveries. CRE8AD8 also confirmed that—with taxpayer dollars—they paid farmers and producers up to ten times the price those same producers would normally receive from grocery stores.¹⁰⁰ Yegg repeatedly charged taxpayers a 50 percent markup on the amount that it paid to a dairy for milk boxes, despite acting as little more than a middleman.¹⁰¹

The Select Subcommittee's investigation also confirmed reports that the Trump Administration manipulated the Food Box Program for political advantage, in part by informing vendors—six weeks before the presidential election—that they were required include in all outgoing boxes a letter signed by President Trump in which he took credit for sending out the food, despite the fact that the boxes were to be distributed through apolitical nonprofit organizations. Nonprofit organizations distributing the boxes informed Select Subcommittee staff that the letters created frustration among the people they served.¹⁰² President Trump also announced an extension of the Program at an official event in a battleground state that coincided with the opening of the Republican National Convention, without previously notifying USDA who would be responsible for administering the Program of his extension decision.¹⁰³ At that official government event, Secretary Perdue engaged in overt political activity that the Office of Special Counsel found to violate the Hatch Act, as the Secretary's "first words were not about USDA, but about the president's 2016 and 2020 campaigns."¹⁰⁴ USDA announced another extension of the program less than two weeks before the Presidential election, despite Secretary Perdue's suggestion the previous month that he instead planned to allow the Program to expire.¹⁰⁵

Conclusion

The Select Subcommittee released a final report detailing its findings of waste and potential fraud on October 13, 2021. Although the Biden Administration ended this Program on May 31, 2021, the Select Subcommittee's report made seven recommendations aimed at

eliminating waste, fraud, and abuse in future food distribution and emergency programs. Chairman Clyburn also wrote to USDA Inspector General Phyllis K. Fong requesting that her office conduct an expanded review of the Food Box Program to confirm apparent incidents of fraud, identify additional waste, and reclaim wasted taxpayer funds.

B. The Pandemic Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) Program Lacked Vital Fraud Controls During the Trump Administration

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act and other pandemic relief legislation directed the Small Business Administration (SBA) to provide EIDLs and EIDL Advance Grants to small businesses harmed by the pandemic.¹⁰⁶ As of November 2021, SBA had approved more than 3.8 million EIDL applications and a total of over \$292 billion in EIDLs for American businesses.¹⁰⁷ Although these loans were crucial to keeping millions of small businesses afloat, there are clear indications that the Trump Administration did not implement adequate fraud controls while it administered the program, leading to billions of dollars in potential fraud. The Select Subcommittee has analyzed Department of Justice (DOJ) EIDL fraud prosecutions to date, which confirm watchdog reports that found the EIDL program was particularly vulnerable to fraud during its first months of operation under the Trump Administration.

Investigative Findings

Indications of Widespread EIDL Fraud During the Trump Administration

In March 2021, the Select Subcommittee released a staff memorandum that highlighted the scale of potential fraud in the EIDL program during the Trump Administration.¹⁰⁸ The memorandum noted that the SBA Office of the Inspector General (OIG) had identified more than \$67 billion in EIDL loans and advances paid on applications despite indicators of fraud in the applications, including:

- \$67.5 billion in loans and advances paid to applicants with duplicate IP addresses, email addresses, physical addresses, or bank accounts;
- \$7.9 billion in loans and advances paid to applicants using bank accounts that differed from the accounts listed on their original loan application;
- \$3.2 billion in loans and advances linked to alleged identity theft; and
- \$557 million in loans and advances paid to potentially ineligible recipients with Employer Identification Numbers (EINs) registered after the program cutoff date.¹⁰⁹

As a further indication of the extent of potential fraud in the program, the Select Subcommittee found that SBA sent the SBA Inspector General 1.34 million referrals for suspected EIDL fraud.¹¹⁰ Following this memorandum, SBA Inspector General Hannibal "Mike" Ware testified to the Select Subcommittee that EIDL fraud risk "wasn't taken as seriously" as fraud risk in other programs by the Trump Administration's SBA, and that OIG "notified SBA up front" as the EIDL program rolled out that "we have to strengthen our controls."¹¹¹

The Biden Administration has taken a number of steps to improve EIDL program fraud controls, including requiring that fraud indicators be addressed by loan officers, validating

applications against Department of the Treasury's (Treasury's) Do Not Pay List, obtaining Internal Revenue Service tax transcripts to verify EIDL applicant information, and checking EINs.¹¹² The Biden Administration DOJ formed the COVID-19 Fraud Enforcement Taskforce to systematically investigate fraud in pandemic relief programs.

New Select Subcommittee Analysis of DOJ EIDL Fraud Prosecutions Through November 2021

The Select Subcommittee has conducted an analysis of all DOJ prosecutions of EIDL fraud thus far to shed more light on the means used in confirmed cases of fraud. To date, DOJ has pursued 95 prosecutions of 145 defendants for EIDL fraud involving at least \$40 million in fraudulently-obtained EIDL funds.¹¹³ Although DOJ's prosecutions are only a small fraction of the potential fraud identified in the program, these cases provide a detailed look at the timing, manner, and means used to commit EIDL fraud in cases that have been subject to in-depth investigation.

The Select Subcommittee's analysis shows that the overwhelming majority of these confirmed cases of EIDL fraud involved applications for EIDLs submitted between late March and late August 2020.¹¹⁴ Even as the Biden Administration has continued to approve a significant number of EIDL loans and advance grants—totaling over \$90 billion since February 1, 2021¹¹⁵—nearly 97 percent of EIDL fraud prosecutions have involved fraudulent applications submitted during the Trump Administration's implementation of the program in its first five months.¹¹⁶ This finding is consistent with the SBA OIG reports that there were serious deficiencies in fraud controls used in the early operation of the program, as well as the improvements the Biden Administration has implemented.¹¹⁷

The manner and means used to commit EIDL fraud in these cases also confirms that the indicators of potential fraud used by the SBA OIG to identify tens of billions of dollars in potential fraud were present in many cases of confirmed fraud, and the fraud controls added by the Biden Administration would likely have prevented payment in such cases:

- Nearly 50 percent of these prosecutions involved fictitious, inactive, or inoperative businesses, many of which lacked business registrations entirely, were shell companies registered after the pandemic began, or were publicly registered as "inactive."¹¹⁸ The Biden Administration's implementation of taxpayer EIN searches, requirement that fraud alerts be adequately addressed by loan reviewers, and review of tax transcripts have likely made it much more difficult for fictitious and inactive businesses to obtain fraudulent EIDLs.
- 23 percent of the prosecutions involved applicants that used stolen identities to submit fraudulent applications, and in some of these cases applicants used stolen identities in conjunction with fictitious business entities.¹¹⁹ SBA's EIDL processing system generates fraud alerts that can prevent payment in many of these cases when loan reviewers are required to address those alerts before EIDL approval, as the Biden Administration now requires.

• 12 percent of the prosecutions involved fraud rings where a central group of conspirators solicited personal information from many other individuals in order to submit dozens or hundreds of fraudulent applications.¹²⁰ These cases show that large numbers of fraudulent applications often originated from a handful of IP addresses, generating a fraud indicator that loan reviewers could address to prevent fraudulent payments.¹²¹

Next Steps

The Select Subcommittee continues to investigate the administration of the EIDL program and the adequacy of fraud controls within the program. The Select Subcommittee has requested documents and information from SBA as well as its key contractors responsible for generating fraud alerts on EIDL applications to determine the extent and causes of fraud in the EIDL program.

C. The Select Subcommittee Uncovered Evidence that Trump White House Officials Were Involved in the Approval of a Questionable \$700 Million CARES Act National Security Loan

On July 1, 2020, the Trump Administration's Treasury announced that it had approved a \$700 million loan to the trucking company YRC Worldwide Inc., now named Yellow Corporation (Yellow), under the CARES Act loan program for businesses "critical to maintaining national security." This single loan represented 95 percent of the funds expended as part of the program.¹²² In announcing the loan's approval, Treasury said that it had relied on a certification by the Secretary of Defense that Yellow was "critical" to national security and stated that Yellow provides "68% of less-than-truckload [LTL¹²³] services to the Department of Defense [DOD]."¹²⁴ Subsequent reports raised doubts that Yellow satisfied the criteria to be deemed "critical" to national security.¹²⁵ Moreover, despite the CARES Act requirement that Treasury only approve loans to ameliorate "losses incurred as a result of the coronavirus," Yellow used much of its loan for long-term capital investment—replacing its trucking fleet.¹²⁶

Investigative Findings

In June, the Select Subcommittee requested Trump Administration communications concerning Yellow and documents relied on in approving the loan from Treasury and DOD. The Select Subcommittee also requested relevant documents from Yellow and from a DOD transportation contractor that used Yellow as a subcontractor.¹²⁷ Documents the Select Subcommittee obtained in response to those requests show that Trump White House officials were involved in the process of approving Yellow's loan, communicating with Yellow frequently and contacting Treasury on Yellow's behalf.¹²⁸

One document obtained by the Select Subcommittee indicated that former Deputy Assistant to the President Tim Pataki "committed to huddle with [White House political director] Brian Jack and then he would call Treasury on [Yellow's] behalf."¹²⁹ Another document revealed that Special Assistant to the President Joseph Russo later asked Yellow to specifically identify the company's contacts at Treasury.¹³⁰ Other documents showed that Yellow had continued contact with other White House offices and officials—including the Chief of Staff to National Economic Council Director Larry Kudlow—as it sought a loan from Treasury, and that the Trump "White House remain[ed] engaged and has been calling for updates frequently."¹³¹ Trump White House involvement is particularly concerning because any interference in the consideration Yellow's loan application by White House advisor Jared Kushner could present a conflict of interest, as Mr. Kushner's family business received a \$184 million loan from Apollo Global Management—also a major Yellow creditor—earlier in his White House tenure.¹³² In light of these White House contacts, in October 2021 the Select Subcommittee requested that the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) produce Trump White House records related to the Yellow loan.¹³³

Next Steps

The Select Subcommittee's investigation is ongoing. The Select Subcommittee continues to collect relevant information—including from Yellow and from NARA—necessary to

determine whether the loan to Yellow was improperly approved and whether loan funds were improperly used.

* * *

APPENDIX

Key Select Subcommittee Actions

This appendix highlights key public actions by the Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis from January 1, 2021, through December 16, 2021, including hearings and briefings, staff reports, and investigations.

Hearings and Briefings

The Select Subcommittee held 14 hearings and public briefings during this period:

- February 19, 2021: Briefing on "Ensuring Equity in Coronavirus Vaccinations"
- <u>March 17, 2021</u>: Hearing on "From Rescue to Recovery: Building a Thriving and Inclusive Post-Pandemic Economy"
- <u>March 25, 2021</u>: Hearing on "Rooting out Fraud in Small Business Relief Programs"
- <u>April 15, 2021</u>: Hearing on "Reaching the Light at the End of the Tunnel: A Science-Driven Approach to Swiftly and Safely Ending the Pandemic"
- <u>May 19, 2021</u>: Hearing on "Examining Emergent BioSolutions' Failure to Protect Public Health and Public Funds"
- June 22, 2021: Hearing on "Lessons Learned: The Federal Reserve's Response to the Coronavirus Pandemic"
- July 1, 2021: Hearing on "Building Trust and Battling Barriers: The Urgent Need to Overcome Vaccine Hesitancy"
- <u>July 27, 2021</u>: Hearing on "Oversight of Pandemic Evictions: Assessing Abuses by Corporate Landlords and Federal Efforts to Keep Americans in Their Homes"
- <u>September 22, 2021</u>: Hearing on "Recognizing and Building on the Success of Pandemic Relief Programs"
- <u>September 29, 2021</u>: Hearing on "Upgrading Public Health Infrastructure: The Need to Protect, Rebuild, and Strengthen State and Local Public Health Departments"
- <u>October 27, 2021</u>: Hearing on "How the Meatpacking Industry Failed the Workers Who Feed America"

- <u>November 10, 2021</u>: Field Hearing on "Building Vaccine Confidence: Our Shot at Curbing the Pandemic in Chicago and Beyond"
- <u>November 17, 2021</u>: Hearing on "Combating Coronavirus Cons and the Monetization of Misinformation"
- <u>December 14, 2021</u>: Hearing on "A Global Crisis Needs a Global Solution: The Urgent Need to Accelerate Vaccinations Around the World"

The Select Subcommittee also conducted Member briefings with senior Administration officials leading the pandemic response efforts, including National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Director <u>Dr. Anthony Fauci</u>, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director <u>Dr. Rochelle Walensky</u>, and Food and Drug Administration Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research Director <u>Dr. Peter Marks</u>.

Staff Reports and Analyses

- <u>March 25, 2021</u>: Lowering the Guardrails: How the Trump Administration Failed to Prevent Billions in Pandemic Small Business Fraud (staff memorandum analyzing the scope of fraud in the Small Business Administration's Paycheck Protection Program and Economic Injury Disaster Loan program).
- <u>May 19, 2021</u>: Preliminary Findings from Investigation into Emergent BioSolutions, Inc. (staff memorandum analyzing contract Emergent BioSolutions, Inc. received under the Trump Administration, the company's failure to address manufacturing problems that led to the destruction of millions of coronavirus vaccine doses, and bonuses paid to top executives).
- June 17, 2021: Investigation into Federal Government Experts, LLC (staff memorandum examining contracts awarded to Federal Government Experts, LLC by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Federal Emergency Management Agency for N95 masks in the early months of the coronavirus pandemic).
- July 26, 2021: The Trump Administration's Pattern of Political Interference in the Nation's Coronavirus Response (staff analysis documenting at least 88 incidents of the Trump Administration's political interference in the coronavirus response).
- <u>September 22, 2021</u>: The Pandemic Recovery: The American Rescue Plan's Impact on Alleviating Hardship and Supporting Economic Recovery (staff memorandum describing the wide-ranging positive impacts of the American Rescue Plan's relief provisions on alleviating economic hardship, reducing poverty, and supporting economic recovery).
- <u>October 13, 2021</u>: Farmers to Families? An Investigation into the Trump Administration's Food Box Program (staff report summarizing investigation of the

administration of the Farmers to Families Food Box Program by the United States Department of Agriculture).

• October 27, 2021: Coronavirus Infections and Deaths Among Meatpacking Workers at Top Five Companies Were Nearly Three Times Higher than Previous Estimates (staff memorandum analyzing the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on meatpacking workers and industry practices and government policies pertaining to the spread of the virus at meatpacking plants).

Investigations

The Select Subcommittee during this period launched new investigations and expanded ongoing investigations related to the coronavirus public health crisis and the economic crisis that it has caused. For example:

Public Health Matters

- <u>Questionable Supply Contracts</u>: On March 18, 2021, the Select Subcommittee sent a letter to counsel for Robert S. Stewart, Jr., CEO of Federal Government Experts, LLC, providing Mr. Stewart a final opportunity to comply with an investigation the Select Subcommittee initiated on July 14, 2020, into a failed \$35 million contract to provide N95 masks to the Department of Veterans Affairs. On June 17, 2021, the Select Subcommittee released a staff memorandum detailing how Mr. Stewart secured contracts to supply the federal government millions of N95 masks at inflated prices and showing that federal agencies during the Trump Administration failed to perform sufficient due diligence prior to awarding contracts to Mr. Stewart's company.
- PPE and Supply Shortages: On March 30, 2021, the Select Subcommittee renewed and expanded an investigation it launched on July 14, 2020, which sought documents from federal agencies and seven private companies regarding contracts to procure PPE and medical supplies, as well as steps the Trump Administration had taken to address supply shortages. On April 9, 2021, the Select Subcommittee sent a letter to former White House Senior Medical Advisor Dr. Steven Hatfill, who helped negotiate key supply contracts on behalf of the federal government, requesting documents and a transcribed interview regarding his role in the pandemic response. On September 14, 2021, the Select Subcommittee sent requests to former Director of the White House Office of Trade and Manufacturing Policy Peter Navarro and released new evidence showing then-President Trump disregarded early calls to rapidly mobilize supply chains. The Select Subcommittee issued a subpoena to Dr. Hatfill on September 23, 2021, compelling him to produce relevant documents after he declined to comply with the investigation voluntarily. On November 18, 2021, the Select Subcommittee issued a subpoena to Mr. Navarro to produce documents and appear for a deposition, after he repeatedly ignored attempts to secure his voluntary compliance.

- <u>Political Interference in the Pandemic Response</u>: On February 8, 2021, the Select Subcommittee renewed and expanded its investigations into the Trump Administration's persistent pattern of political interference in the pandemic response. The Select Subcommittee has since sent a dozen letters to current and former officials involved in the pandemic response, requesting documents and other information regarding Trump Administration officials' efforts to undermine the coronavirus response for political purposes, and conducted ten transcribed interviews of individuals who have firsthand knowledge of key events.
- <u>Emergent BioSolutions, Inc.</u>: On <u>April 19, 2021</u>, the Select Subcommittee launched an investigation jointly with the Committee on Oversight and Reform into Emergent BioSolutions, Inc.'s profits and performance under federal vaccine contracts entered during the Trump Administration. On <u>May 19, 2021</u>, the Committees released initial findings from their investigation, which raised troubling questions about the company's failure to address manufacturing problems that led to the destruction of millions of coronavirus vaccine doses. On June 23, 2021, the Committees expanded their investigation after learning of additional manufacturing problems and deficient controls. Subsequently, the Biden Administration terminated the government's \$650 million contract with the company.
- <u>Misinformation</u>: On <u>October 29, 2021</u>, the Select Subcommittee launched an investigation into America's Frontline Doctors and SpeakWithAnMD.com—online entities that have spread misinformation and facilitated access to disproven and potentially hazardous coronavirus treatments, such as hydroxychloroquine and ivermectin. The Select Subcommittee also <u>wrote</u> to Federal Trade Commission Chair Lina Khan requesting an investigation to determine whether these entities have violated federal law.

Economic Matters

- <u>Meatpacking Plants</u>: On February 1, 2021, the Select Subcommittee launched an investigation into widespread coronavirus infections and deaths in meatpacking plants, sending letters to the Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration, and the CEOs of three of the nation's largest meatpacking companies seeking documents and information regarding efforts to protect workers from the risks of the coronavirus. On September 15, 2021, the Select Subcommittee expanded its investigation, sending letters to two additional large meatpacking companies regarding coronavirus outbreaks at meatpacking plants. The Select Subcommittee released its report on this investigation on October 29, 2020.
- <u>SBA EIDL Program</u>: On <u>February 11, 2021</u>, the Select Subcommittee and the Committee on Small Business sent letters as part of their <u>ongoing</u> investigation of a \$750 million contract the Trump Administration awarded to manage the Economic Injury Disaster Loan program. On <u>May 11, 2021</u>, the Committees furthered the investigation by

requesting documents concerning the Trump Administration's implementation of the program. On July 14, 2021, the Committees requested documents and information concerning the Small Business Administration's (SBA) security controls following court filings alleging that an SBA loan officer had been bribed to obtain approval of fraudulent loans.

- <u>Impact of Pandemic Relief Programs on Small and Mid-Sized Businesses</u>: On <u>May</u> 7, 2021, as part of its <u>ongoing oversight</u> of Federal Reserve (Fed) programs, the Select Subcommittee sent a letter to Fed Chairman Jerome Powell regarding the Fed's implementation of the Main Street Lending Program and the Municipal Liquidity Facility, two programs designed to provide relief to small and mid-sized businesses and state and local governments. The letter requested documents and information regarding whether these programs helped reduce unemployment and what additional steps the Fed is taking to improve the health of the nation's recovering economy and identify lessons learned for future relief efforts.
- **<u>FinTech Industry PPP Fraud</u>**: On <u>May 27, 2021</u>, the Select Subcommittee initiated an investigation into the role of financial technology (FinTech) entities in perpetrating waste, fraud, and abuse in the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), sending letters to the CEOs of four major FinTech lenders and their bank partners. The investigation stemmed from reports alleging that FinTech lenders and their bank partners failed to adequately screen PPP loan applications for fraud and that such a failure may have led to millions of dollars in FinTech-facilitated PPP loans being made to fraudulent, non-existent, or otherwise ineligible businesses. On <u>November 22, 2021</u>, the Select Subcommittee expanded its investigation, sending letters to two additional FinTech companies, which processed one-third of all PPP loans in 2021. The expansion followed reports that these companies may have been linked to a disproportionate number of PPP loans made to fraudulent or ineligible applicants.
- <u>National Security Loan to Yellow Corporation</u>: On June 3, 2021, the Select Subcommittee sent letters to the Treasury Secretary, Defense Secretary, and CEOs of trucking company Yellow Corporation (Yellow) and Crowley Maritime Corp. regarding the potentially improper distribution of loan funds made available by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act for businesses critical to maintaining U.S. national security. On <u>October 5, 2021</u>, the Select Subcommittee requested Trump White House records related to the loan to Yellow after uncovering evidence that Trump White House officials were involved in the process for approving the loan to Yellow.
- **<u>Pandemic Evictions</u>**: On July 19, 2021, the Select Subcommittee sent letters requesting documents and information from four corporate landlords that filed to evict tenants at high rates during the pandemic despite the existence of pandemic eviction moratoria and the availability of billions of dollars in rental assistance.

- <u>State Distribution of Pandemic Rental Assistance</u>: On <u>August 30, 2021</u>, the Select Subcommittee sent letters to the five states that had been slowest to distribute federal pandemic rental assistance funds to aid those at risk of losing their homes. The letters sought information about the states' rental assistance programs and urged the states to expedite the distribution of assistance.
- <u>Social Media Company's Role in Facilitating Relief Fraud</u>: On <u>December 1, 2021</u>, the Select Subcommittee sent a letter to social media company Telegram requesting documents and information related to the use of the company's large social media platform for disseminating information used to commit fraud against pandemic relief programs. The inquiry stems from reports that scammers have used Telegram to disseminate guides for evading pandemic relief program fraud controls to commit fraud against critical programs on a large scale.

* * *

¹ H. Res. 935, 116th Cong. (2020).

² Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis, *Hybrid Hearing on "Reaching the Light at the End of the Tunnel: A Science-Driven Approach to Swiftly and Safely Ending the Pandemic"* (Apr. 15, 2021) (online at https://coronavirus.house.gov/subcommittee-activity/hearings/hybrid-hearing-reaching-light-end-tunnel-science-driven-approach); Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *COVID-19 Vaccinations in the United States* (online at https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#vaccinations_vacc-people-onedose-pop-5yr).

³ Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis, *Hybrid Hearing on "Building Trust and Battling Barriers: The Urgent Need to Overcome Vaccine Hesitancy"* (July 1, 2021) (online at https://coronavirus.house.gov/subcommittee-activity/hearings/hybrid-hearing-building-trust-and-battling-barriersurgent-need); Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis, *Field Hearing on "Building Vaccine Confidence: Our Shot at Curbing the Pandemic in Chicago and Beyond"* (Nov. 10, 2021) (online at https://coronavirus.house.gov/subcommittee-activity/hearings/building-vaccine-confidence-our-shot-curbing-pandemic-chicago-and).

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¹⁰ They Worked So We Could Eat: What We Learned from the Pandemic's Meatpacking Calamity, Washington Post (Nov. 1, 2021) (online at www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/11/01/they-worked-so-we-could-eat-what-we-learned-pandemics-meatpacking-calamity/).

¹¹ Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis, *Underserved and Unprotected: How the Trump Administration Neglected the Neediest Small Businesses in the PPP* (Oct. 2020) (online at https://coronavirus.house.gov/sites/democrats.coronavirus.house.gov/files/PPP%20Report%20Final%20%283%29.p df).

¹² Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis, *Press Release: Clyburn Commends Biden-Harris Administration's PPP Reforms to Promote Equitable Access to Relief* (Feb. 22, 2021) (online at https://coronavirus.house.gov/news/press-releases/clyburn-commends-biden-harris-administration-s-ppp-reforms-promote-equitable).

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¹⁶ Eviction Case Data Tracked: Eviction Filings, Private Equity Stakeholder Project (online at https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/11gntfTGWT4rbylrmtYDiEWJODbrHAofNMrKaqcHXG9E/edit#gid=1702 675539) (accessed Dec. 6, 2021).

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https://coronavirus.house.gov/sites/democrats.coronavirus.house.gov/files/Redfield%20%2B%20HHS%20Letters%20TI%20Excerpts2021.pdf).

⁴⁰ Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis, *Press Release: Clyburn Demands Answers from Redfield on Trump Administration Officials' Interference with CDC's Pandemic Response* (Nov. 12, 2021) (online at https://coronavirus.house.gov/news/press-releases/clyburn-demands-answers-redfield-trump-administration-officials-interference-cdc). Dr. Michael Iademarco, CDC's then-Director of the Center for Surveillance, Epidemiology, and Laboratory Services who allegedly conveyed Director Redfield's instruction to delete the email in question, told the Select Subcommittee in a recent interview that he does not have a specific recollection of telling a CDC official to delete the email. However, Dr. Iademarco expressed that he does not recall many of the details of this incident, which took place in the summer of 2020. Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis, Transcribed Interview of Dr. Michael Iademarco (Oct. 29, 2021).

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⁹⁷ Survey call by Majority Staff, Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis, to Director, One Love Food Ministry (Apr. 13, 2021).

⁹⁸ Survey call by Majority Staff, Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis, to Chief Operations Officer, Central Texas Food Bank, and Director of Advocacy and Public Policy, Central Texas Food Bank (Oct. 6, 2020).

⁹⁹ Survey call by Majority Staff, Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis, to President/Chief Executive Officer, San Antonio Food Bank (Oct. 20, 2020); Survey call by Majority Staff, Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis, to Chief Operations Officer, Central Texas Food Bank, and Director of Advocacy and Public Policy, Central Texas Food Bank (Oct. 6, 2020).

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¹¹⁰ Memorandum from Majority Staff to Members of the Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus, *Lowering the Guardrails: How the Trump Administration Failed to Prevent Billions in Pandemic Small Business Fraud* (Mar. 25, 2021) (online at https://coronavirus.house.gov/sites/democrats.coronavirus.house.gov/files/2020-03-25%20Staff%20Memo%20-%20Small%20Business%20Fraud.pdf).

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¹¹⁴ 92 of the 95 DOJ prosecutions for EIDL fraud involved applications submitted in the first five months of the program under the Trump Administration.

¹¹⁵ As of November 4, 2021, SBA had disbursed \$292.8 billion in EIDL funds, up from \$199.2 billion as of February 1, 2021. Small Business Administration, *Disaster Assistance Update Nationwide EIDL Loans* (Feb. 1, 2021) (online at www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/2021-02/EIDL%20COVID-19%20Loan%20%20Approvals%20by%20State%2002.01.2021_FOIA-508_0.pdf); Small Business Administration, *Disaster Assistance Update Nationwide COVID EIDL, Targeted EIDL Advances, Supplemental Targeted Advances* (Nov. 4, 2021) (online at www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/2021-11/COVID-19%20EIDL%20TA%20STA_11042021_Public-508.pdf).

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¹¹⁷ Small Business Administration Office of the Inspector General, *Serious Concerns of Potential Fraud in EIDL Program Pertaining to the Response to COVID-19* (July 28, 2020) (online at www.sba.gov/document/report-20-16-serious-concerns-potential-fraud-eidl-program-pertaining-response-covid-19); Small Business Administration Office of the Inspector General, *Inspection of Small Business Administration's Initial Disaster Response to Coronavirus Pandemic* (Oct. 28, 2020) (online at www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/2020-10/SBA%20OIG%20Report%2021-02.pdf).

¹¹⁸ See, e.g., Complaint, United States v. Casutt, No. 2:20-MJ-666-BNW (D. Nev. Aug. 10, 2020), ECF No. 1; Complaint, United States v. Williams, No. 1:20-CR-00109-JRH-BKE (S.D. Ga. Nov. 19, 2020), ECF No. 1; Complaint, United States v. Jones, No. 3:20CR438 (W.D.N.C. Dec. 16, 2020), ECF No. 1; Complaint, United States v. Smith, No. 20CR922 (N.D. III. Dec. 17, 2020), ECF No. 1.

¹¹⁹ See, e.g., Complaint, United States v. Mack, No. 1:20-CR-00104-DHB-BKE (S.D. Ga. Nov. 5, 2020), ECF No. 1; Complaint, United States v. Unitan, No. 3:20-MJ-00293 (D. Ore. Dec. 21, 2020), ECF No. 1; Complaint, United States v. Zimmerman, No. 2:21-MJ-08050-JSA (D.N.J. Apr. 21, 2021), ECF No. 1; Complaint, United States v. Miller, No. 1:21-CR-10228-FDS (D. Mass. July 27, 2021), ECF No. 1.

¹²⁰ See, e.g. Complaint, United States v. Pape, et al., No. 5:21-MJ-00007-CMC (E.D. Tex. Jan. 12, 2021), ECF No. 1; Complaint, United States v. Lawson, et al., No. 3:21-CR-00006-TCB-RGV (N.D. Ga. Mar. 16, 2021), ECF No. 1; Complaint, United States v. Pounds, et al., No. 5:21-CR-00317-PAB (N.D. Ohio Apr. 29, 2021), ECF No. 1.

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¹²² Department of the Treasury, *Loans to Air Carriers, Eligible Businesses, and National Security Businesses* (online at https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/coronavirus/assistance-for-industry/loans-to-aircarriers-eligible-businesses-and-national-security-businesses) (accessed May 14, 2021); Department of the Treasury, *Press Release: Treasury to Provide Loan to YRC Worldwide* (July 1, 2020) (online at https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sm1049).

¹²³ LTL services involve the delivery of small-to-moderately sized shipments of goods that do not require a full truck and trailer. *See generally* RAND Corp., *Army Stock Positioning* (2017) (online at www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1375.html).

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¹²⁵ Congressional Oversight Commission, The Eighth Report of the Congressional Oversight Commission (Dec. 31, 2020) (online at https://coc.senate.gov/sites/default/files/2021-01/COMMISSION% 20December% 20Report% 2012-31% 20FINAL% 2C% 20appendix.pdf); Congressional Oversight Commission, The Twelfth Report of the Congressional Oversight Commission (Apr. 30, 2021) (online at https://coc.senate.gov/sites/default/files/2021-04/COC% 20April% 20Report.pdf).

¹²⁶ Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act; Pub. L. 116-136, (2020); Jim Stinson, *YRC* Orders 950 Trailers, 300 Tractors to Replace Aging Fleet, TransportDive (Nov. 2, 2020) (online at www.transportdive.com/news/trucking-YRC-federal-loan-tonnage-Q3-2020-earnings/588256/); *Yellow's Hawkins* Defends \$700 Million US Loan, Journal of Commerce (June 11, 2021) (online at www.joc.com/trucking-logistics/ltltrucking-logistics/yrc-worldwide/yellow-claims-handle-nearly-195000-us-military-shipments-year_20210611.html).

¹²⁷ Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis, *Press Release: Select Subcommittee Launches Investigation into \$700 Million Loan Issued by Trump Administration to Troubled Trucking Company* (June 3, 2021) (online at https://coronavirus.house.gov/news/letters/select-subcommittee-launches-investigation-700-million-loan-issued-trump-administration).

¹²⁸ Email from Erskine Wells, President, BGR Group, to Todd Metcalf, PwC, et al. (May 6, 2020) (online

https://coronavirus.house.gov/sites/democrats.coronavirus.house.gov/files/1.%20Email%20from%20Erskine%20We lls%2C%20BGRC%2C%20to%20Todd%20Metcalf%20and%20Rohit%20Kumar%2C%20PwC%2C%20and%20M ike%20Kelley%2C%20YRC%20Worldwide%20%28May%206%2C%202020%29.pdf); Email from Joseph Russo, Special Assistant to the President, The White House, to Mike Kelley, Chief Sustainability Officer and VP External Affairs, YRC Worldwide (May 27, 2020) (online at

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¹²⁹ Email from Erskine Wells, President, BGRC, to Todd Metcalf, PwC, et al. (May 6, 2020) (online at https://coronavirus.house.gov/sites/democrats.coronavirus.house.gov/files/1.%20Email%20from%20Erskine%20We lls%2C%20BGRC%2C%20to%20Todd%20Metcalf%20and%20Rohit%20Kumar%2C%20PwC%2C%20and%20M ike%20Kelley%2C%20YRC%20Worldwide%20%28May%206%2C%202020%29.pdf).

¹³⁰ Email from Joseph Russo, Special Assistant to the President, The White House, to Mike Kelley, YRC Worldwide (May 27, 2020) (online at https://coronavirus.house.gov/sites/democrats.coronavirus.house.gov/files/2. Email from Special Assistant to the President Joseph Russo% 2C to Mike Kelley% 2C YRC.pdf).

¹³¹ Email from Erskine Wells, BGRC, to Mike Kelley, YRC Worldwide, et al. (May 4, 2020) (online at https://coronavirus.house.gov/sites/democrats.coronavirus.house.gov/files/3-4. Wells%2C Kelley%2C Metcalf%2C Kumar%2C Bailey.pdf); Email from Mike Kelley, YRC Worldwide, to Christy Bailey, Teamsters, et al. (June 16,

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¹³² Mnuchin Questioned on Treasury Loan to Apollo-Backed Firm, Bloomberg (Dec. 10, 2020) (online at www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-12-10/mnuchin-questioned-on-favorable-loan-to-apollo-backed-firm); Watchdog Raises Possible Kushner Link to \$700 Million Rescue Loan, Associated Press (Dec. 10, 2020) (online at https://apnews.com/article/donald-trump-coronavirus-pandemic-trucking-jared-kushner-national-security-7e86f52d4bea1bdccfab30ac74767318).

¹³³ Letter from Chairman James E. Clyburn, Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis, to David S. Ferriero, Archivist of the United States, National Archives and Records Administration (Oct. 5, 2021) (online at https://coronavirus.house.gov/sites/democrats.coronavirus.house.gov/files/2021-10-05.Clyburn% 20to% 20Ferriero% 20re% 20Treasury% 20Nat% 20Sec% 20Loans.pdf).