

Eagle Forum Report

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200 W. Third St., Ste. 502 • Alton, IL 62002 • (618) 433-8990 • Eagle@EagleForum.org • EagleForum.org

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Preventing Pandemics

TAKE OUT THE CHINESE THREAT

by U.S. Senator Ted Cruz

Americans are facing yet another month of either total lockdown or strict social distancing measures to combat the coronavirus pandemic. Over 4 million people have contracted the virus worldwide and nearly 250,000 people have lost their lives in the biggest public health crisis in a century.

How did this deadly pandemic start? Here are the facts: This pandemic started in Wuhan, China, where two separate virology labs were studying the coronavirus. As with all politically inconvenient truths in China, the Chinese Communist Party went to extreme lengths to cover up the severity of the coronavirus outbreak, lying about the origin of the virus and how it's transmitted, destroying evidence, and silencing the brave whistleblower doctors, scientists, and journalists who tried to warn the world and prevent a global pandemic.

In the past month, we have also discovered that American taxpayer dollars made their way to the Wuhan Institute of Virology to fund their coronavirus research. In other words, our tax dollars ended up funding research into the very disease that has wreaked havoc on the U.S. at the very place where the outbreak may have

started, and where American officials had warned about the lack of safety standards.

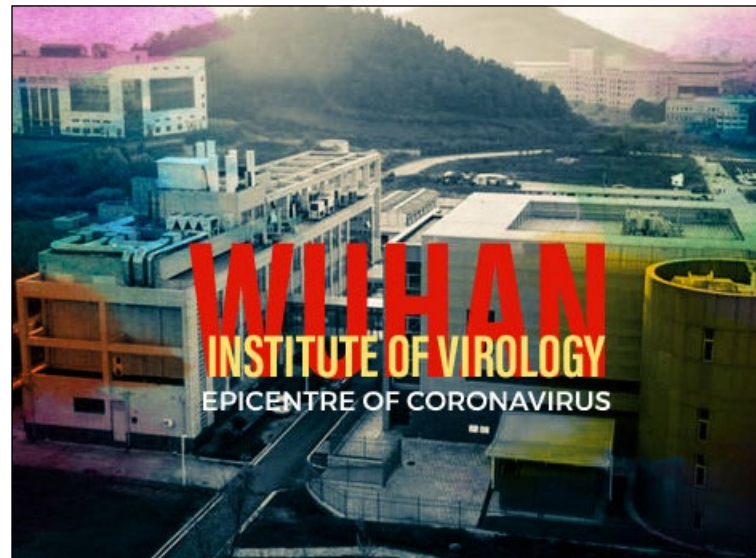
A few weeks ago, the National Institutes of Health confirmed to me that in fiscal year 2019, \$76,301 in American taxpayer dollars went to the Wuhan Institute of Virology for a project that included studying “coronavirus screening and serology of non-human samples, viral pathogenesis, serological testing, host receptor binding, spike (S) protein sequencing, and in vitro and in vivo virus characterization.”

Further, the NIH confirmed that the project “included studying viral diversity in animal parentheses, bats, reservoirs, surveying people that live in high risk communities for evidence of bat coronavirus infection, and conducting laboratory experiments to analyze and predict which newly discovered viruses pose the greatest threats to human health.”

Those American taxpayer dollars went to that Chinese lab despite the

State Department raising real concerns about the safety and security protocols at the lab where this research was being conducted.

When I first learned of this deeply troubling grant transfer, I immediately called on the administration to halt American taxpayer dollars from going to these labs and just last



week, the administration announced it would take the necessary steps.

But where do we go from here? First, the Chinese government needs to answer for their role in the spread of the coronavirus. How did this happen? When did they know about it? And what could have been done to save lives?

I'm introducing a bill that would

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impose strict sanctions on the Chinese government officials who cover up outbreaks like the one in Wuhan that led to a global pandemic. They are directly responsible for endangering millions of people, costing the global economy trillions, and the loss of hundreds of thousands of innocent lives. Outrageously, we now know U.S. intelligence has confirmed that the Chinese Communist Party was secretly stockpiling medical supplies from around the world throughout January, even as they were denying to the world that the virus was dangerous. We must hold the Chinese government accountable for their actions.

Second, the most important long-term national security and foreign policy consequence of this coronavirus pandemic is going to be a fundamental reassessment of the United States' relationship with China. China is the most significant geopolitical threat to the United States for the next century.

That's why, in addition to legislation imposing sanctions for medical censorship, I'm introducing several bills to finally begin unwinding the United States from China after years of dependency and countering their propaganda.

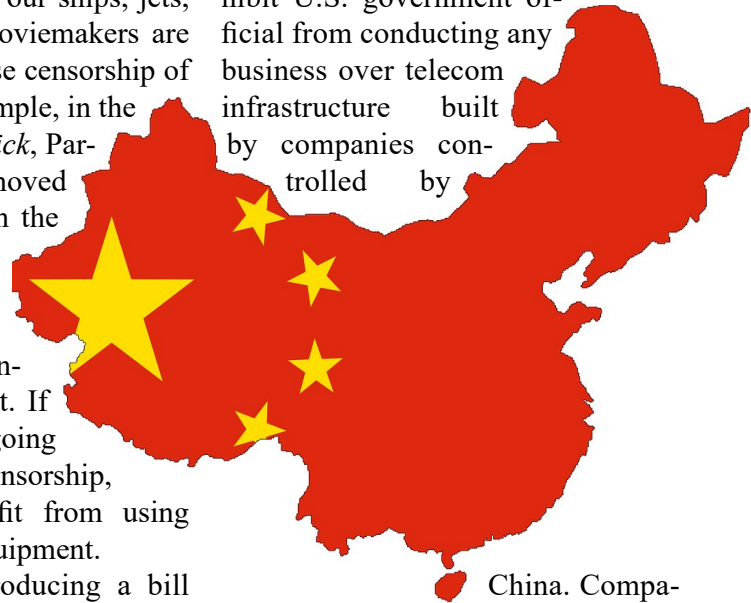
First, I'm introducing the SCRIPT "The Stopping Censorship, Restoring Integrity, Protecting Talkies" Act, legislation to combat the Chinese gov-

ernment's propaganda by prohibiting the Pentagon from letting Hollywood moviemakers film on our ships, jets, and bases if those moviemakers are going to allow Chinese censorship of their movies. For example, in the new *Top Gun: Maverick*, Paramount Pictures removed the Taiwanese flag on the back of Maverick's jacket, which would likely have prevented the film from screening in China's market. If moviemakers are going to bow to Chinese censorship, they shouldn't benefit from using American military equipment.

Second, I'm introducing a bill to close Federal Communications Commission loopholes that allow China to wage information warfare in the United States from radio stations operating across the border in Mexico. Every year, the Communist Chinese Party spends billions of dollars purchasing news outlets and spreading propaganda about its totalitarian regime. We are seeing this play out right now as news outlets across the country parrot Chinese talking points about the coronavirus pandemic — a pandemic that could have been prevented. My bill would help put an end to the spread of Chinese Communist Party propaganda via news outlets.

Third, I'm introducing the

"Countering Chinese Attempts at Snooping Act," legislation to prohibit U.S. government official from conducting any business over telecom infrastructure built by companies controlled by



China. Companies like Huawei and Tencent operate as multi-billion-dollar espionage agencies for China. We should not give China any additional, easy opportunities to conduct espionage on the United States.

And fourth, our dependence on China for life-saving medications and treatments is deeply problematic, which is why I'm pushing for enhanced partnerships between companies in the United States and Israel to develop innovative medical projects aimed at detecting, treating, and curing coronavirus. Israel is not only our friend and ally, it is also a global leader in medicine. American and Israeli companies can work together to defeat coronavirus, and in the process show the way for reducing our dangerous dependence on China.

The coronavirus pandemic has been a wake-up call on how the Chinese government's lies and censorship are a national security threat as well as a public health threat. China bears significant responsibility for the magnitude of this pandemic and must be held accountable. China is our greatest geopolitical threat; it's time we act like it. 



LIVELIHOODS ARE LIVES

by Bowen Xiao. Reprinted with permission from TheEpochTimes.com

A number of restaurants and businesses deemed by officials to be “nonessential” are openly defying lockdown measures in states across the nation as they grapple with their livelihoods being stripped away and their finances going down the drain.

While some states are slowly reopening, the rest continue under tight restrictions. Authorities have fined, arrested, or revoked the business licenses of those defying the orders. Some have decried these actions as unconstitutional, even sliding toward tyrannical, while others say it’s warranted.

Business owners who resisted the unprecedented lockdown rules told *The Epoch Times* they had no other choice as the economic fallout forced them to use their retirement money.

They grappled with a “new normal” of falling behind on rent, wrestling with the idea of letting employees go, or letting their relatives and those in their community down. Supporters and other businesses that were able to survive without breaking the orders were sympathetic, saying they could understand the pressure they were facing.

Governors have enacted stay-at-home measures and ordered schools and most businesses — aside from those deemed essential — to close in a bid to counter the spread of the CCP virus, also known as the novel coronavirus. Those defying these measures mostly agree the restrictions are effective, but say their lives can’t continue unless they start making money.

In recent weeks, businesses across the country have reopened in defiance of their states’ lockdown orders. In North Carolina, a man who opened his tattoo parlor over concerns he would lose his new home was ar-

rested for violating an executive order. A barber in Nevada received a warning from her licensing board, including a citation and a \$1,000 fine for reopening.

A salon owner in Dallas who reopened early was sentenced to a week in jail and ordered to pay \$500 for each of the seven days her business was open. Similar cases have also occurred in Florida, Oregon, Colorado, New York, California, and Maine.

However, restaurants that allowed patrons to dine inside their premises and owners of nonessential businesses who reopened their stores have seen a massive outpouring of support from their local communities. On GoFundMe, more than \$185,541 was raised for the jailed salon owner.

When talking about the positive feedback they received, some of them became emotional.

‘We’re All In This Together’

Paul Zimmerman, owner of the Red Maple Inn, a full-service restaurant and hotel in Guilford, Maine, said the sheriff warned him they would strip his license per the state attorney general if he defied lockdown restrictions.

Zimmerman told *The Epoch Times* the lockdown put immense financial strain on him as he was forced to spend all of his retirement money to stay afloat. While he initially followed the quarantine restrictions by only offering takeout, he recently started allowing patrons to sit inside to eat.

The inn, which sits on his personal one-acre property, follows state guidelines and has tables 10 feet apart. On May 3, after fully reopening, he was sold out by 4:30 p.m. He normally closes at 7 p.m. He said it was an “awesome feeling” knowing

his community was behind him, noting one of his most loyal patrons, an 85-year-old man who had supported him for more than 10 years.

The patron’s wife was in a nursing home, and due to restrictions, he hadn’t been able to see her for more than eight weeks. Prior to the pandemic, he had been relying on the restaurant for his meals.

“For eight weeks, this gentleman has thanked me every single day. I have let him eat at my house. I have fed him my own personal food to make sure he eats every day,” Zimmerman said.

“That gentleman was here all weekend long,” he said. “I’ve lost both my parents, he considers me his son. What am I supposed to tell him? No you can’t come to my property? I’m not going to do that.”

Zimmerman broke down as he described how his customer sat outside his backyard on April 4, watching his business, as he couldn’t let him directly inside his own home.

“If somebody from the state would listen, listen to some of these stories,” he said. “Not this side or that side. I don’t care whether you’re a Democrat, Republican, independent. I don’t care what color skin you are — we’re all in this together.”

Over the past weekend, state liquor inspectors and state health inspectors checked the inn’s premises. Zimmerman said he received a health inspection report on May 4 in which they ultimately decided not to take away his license.

As of May 5, there have been 1,226 cases of the CCP virus in Maine and 61 deaths. Under Democrat Gov. Jane Mills, restaurants aren’t allowed to fully reopen until June.



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"I've worked hard all my life to get where I'm at because I haven't had a silver spoon handed to me," Zimmerman said. "I've had to work for what I have. If my freedoms get taken away, then I'm done."

John Beaulieu in Androscoggin County, Maine, who took part in multiple anti-lockdown protests recently, argued his state never should have shut down due to the low number of virus cases it's had. "I'm going to find a restaurant open and give them some patronage. I think we need to rebel against this," he said.

'I Went Home and I Cried'

Roughly 450 miles from Maine, Eliot Rabin, owner of Peter Elliot Blue — a men's clothing store in Manhattan — expressed much the same sentiment.

Rabin said he initially followed New York's quarantine orders but started to open his doors again, citing the grim financial situation he was in. He was behind on rent, behind on vendors, and "we had to open, otherwise we would go bye-bye."

Rabin said the NYPD visited him on multiple occasions. The first time they warned him to take down his "Open" signs. In a later visit, they stopped customers from buying from and entering the store.

"You cannot give me an illegal order," he said. "You're going against my constitutional rights, my freedom of speech, my freedom of press, my freedom of access. If people want to shop, I'm going to let them shop."

Some customers have driven in from Pennsylvania and Long Island to support him in person, while others from around the country have supported the store with online purchases.

"It's been amazing. It humbled me to a point where I went home and I cried," Rabin said.

Americans are starting to become

wiser on the importance of reopening the economy, he said, adding that he doesn't want to make light of the disease.

There have been 326,659 cases of the virus in the state and 25,028 attributed deaths, according to data from May 6. New York authorities have hesitated to reopen over fears the virus could take hold again.

Rules and social distancing-related guidance are posted on the store's front door. The clothing boutique provides masks, gloves, and sanitation to anyone entering.

Rabin said 95 percent of the feedback and response he has received has been positive. He believes all Americans will unite if they know what life is like for everyday businesses like his.

'Makes No Sense'

Some small-business owners said they haven't received any money from the Paycheck Protection Program, described as a "loan designed to provide a direct incentive for small businesses to keep their workers on the payroll."

Chuck Roulet, a small-business owner who runs his own law firm and has a large number of small-business clients, said that it "makes no sense for some businesses to be open while others are not allowed to."

"I have not heard of a single business owner that I know or work with that has actually received any PPP money," he told *The Epoch Times* via email. "No PPP money and no income means they have to reopen."

Some of the government actions and guidelines have been confusing, Roulet said, as he questioned why grocery stores were allowed to open "without people dropping dead" while other businesses couldn't. Owners

are well aware of the virus numbers and the "moving goal posts," he said. "The 'cure' has become much worse than the disease, and we are more concerned about our financial futures than the virus," he said. "That is how



Eliot Rabin, owner of Peter Elliot Blue sits inside his clothing store in Manhattan, New York on May 4, 2020. (Chung I Ho/The Epoch Times)

I feel, and it is how my small-business owner clients feel as well."

For some businesses, their biggest problem is getting enough supplies from foreign manufacturers. Jared Ebrahimoff, founder & COO of Lavari Jewelers, told *The Epoch Times* via email that while demand for products is constant, "stocks in our warehouse are getting increasingly low, and international cargo is almost impossible with the current restrictions."

"When stocks run out, we have no choice but to cease operations for the time being with a chance of furloughing employees if our cash reserves start to hit critical levels," he said. 🦅

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President: *Eunie Smith*

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