

ABC's *Good Morning America*

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[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Dr. Fauci to Testify About Pandemic]

ROBIN ROBERTS: Now to Dr. Anthony Fauci set to testify on Capitol Hill. He is expected to face a grilling by longtime critic Senator Rand Paul over his role in handling the COVID pandemic. Jay O'Brien is on Capitol Hill with the latest. Good morning to you, Jay.

JAY O'BRIEN: Robin, good morning to you. This will likely be a fiery hearing. Dr. Anthony Fauci, 85 years old, once the nation's top infectious disease expert who retired in 2022, has long been a target of Kentucky Senator Rand Paul, the chair of the powerful Senate Homeland Security Committee, who's accused Fauci of everything from misleading the COVID — mishandling the COVID response, to misleading the public about COVID's origins, to even lying to Congress, all of which Fauci strenuously denies. In a letter to Paul recently, Fauci's attorney accuses the senator of conducting a "years-long public crusade against the doctor, not a genuine quest for information." Ahead of this hearing, Paul releasing more than one thousand pages worth of what he says are diary excerpts that Fauci wrote in the early days of the pandemic. In one, Fauci discusses the wet market in Wuhan, China, long discussed as a possible starting point for COVID. He says it's "not the source, but the amplifier" of the virus, something the senator accuses Fauci of never saying publicly although the doctor later said that in a public interview or something similar. Paul has long said he wants to see Fauci "behind bars." But Fauci, remember, has a preemptive pardon from former President Biden over concerns, Biden said, of possible political prosecution, Robin.

ROBERTS: That's true.