

CBS Mornings

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7:00:37 a.m. [TEASE]

10 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Pleading the Fifth]

VLADIMIR DUTHIERS: Dr. Anthony Fauci refuses to answer questions under oath from Republican senators about the COVID pandemic.

SENATOR JOSH HAWLEY (R-MO): You don't have any rights under the Fifth Amendment because you have been pardoned.

(....)

7:08:52 a.m.

2 minutes and 44 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Republicans Threaten to Hold Fauci in Contempt]

NATE BURLESON: Republican senators say Dr. Anthony Fauci could be held in contempt after a fiery hearing on Capitol Hill. The leader of the government response to the COVID pandemic refused to answer questions from senators yesterday. Fauci said his lawyer advised him to claim his Fifth Amendment right not to incriminate himself. Caitlin Huey-Burns was inside the hearing room. Caitlin, good morning.

CAITLIN HUEY-BURNS: Hey, good morning, Nate. Over the course of the three-hour-long hearing, Dr. Fauci invoked the fifth more than 100 times, and when his attorney tried to speak, the chairman of the committee had him kicked out of the room.

SENATOR RICK SCOTT (R-FL): You're not a hero. Unfortunately, you are a villain.

SENATOR BERNIE MORENO (R-OH): Who the [EXPLETIVE] do you think you were for doing that?

HUEY-BURNS: Republican after Republican on the Senate Homeland Security Committee unleashed on Dr. Anthony Fauci Tuesday as he declined to answer any of their questions. In his opening statement, Fauci claimed Committee Chairman Rand Paul wants to prosecute him.

DR. ANTHONY FAUCI: The sole reason he is calling me before this committee is to get me to say something, anything that could vindicate his repeated public pledges that I end up, in his words, "behind bars."

HUEY-BURNS: After that, Fauci offered what became a familiar refrain.

FAUCI: I respectfully decline to answer based on my rights under the Fifth Amendment of the Constitution.

HUEY-BURNS: Fauci had received a preemptive blanket pardon from former President Biden, but Senator Paul put Fauci on notice that he didn't think that pardon applied here.

PAUL: It's against the law to obstruct an investigation of Congress.

HUEY-BURNS: Fauci's lawyer said in a statement that he was "on solid legal ground" when asserting the Fifth Amendment, and Democrats came to Fauci's defense.

SENATOR RICHARD BLUMENTHAL (D-CT): This hearing is the culmination of a years-long crusade.

HUEY-BURNS: Senator Paul has long accused Fauci of lying to suppress the theory the virus leaked from a lab in Wuhan, China, a lab Paul says received U.S. government funding for research to make viruses more transmissible.

PAUL [on CBS News 24/7's *The Takeout*, 07/29/26]: He does bear responsibility here for perhaps the worst medical decision in our history, and that is to fund dangerous research in a less-than-safe lab in a totalitarian country, creating respiratory viruses that have increased pathogenicity and increased transmissibility.

HUEY-BURNS: Now, Senator Paul said he would move for the committee next week to vote on whether to hold Dr. Fauci in contempt of Congress, but that would have to overcome a lot of hurdles in the Senate to pass and be referred to the Justice Department, Vlad.

DUTHIERS: Thank you very much.