



H.R.8065 - Preventing Illegal Laboratories and Protecting Public Health Act of 2024

In 2023, a local official discovered an illegal biological facility in Reedley, CA, located in California's 21st Congressional District. The facility was an unregulated "biolab" with transgenic mice and infectious disease samples on site. Local, state, and federal agencies were mobilized to manage the concerning materials at the biolab and ensure the health and public safety in Reedley were protected.

Following the discovery of the lab, the House Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) coordinated a bipartisan Congressional report on the biolab. The report outlines gaps in federal law that allow bad actors to take advantage of the system, especially when it comes to laboratory oversight.

Building off the Select China Committee's report, the Prevent Illegal Laboratories and Protecting Public Health Act fills the gap in the regulation of highly infectious agents and high-containment laboratories.

The Problem: The United States has a patchwork of regulations surrounding highly infectious agents and high-containment laboratories. The case in Reedley showed how individuals can take advantage of these gaps for their own gain.

The Solution: The Prevent Illegal Laboratories and Protecting Public Health Act will:

- Require sellers of highly infectious agents to keep a logbook of all sales and maintain those records for at least five years, including identification of the purchaser(s).
 - This fix would help prevent highly infectious agents from ending up in the wrong hands, which could have halted the biolab before it started. The bipartisan Select Committee report found that the biolab's owner was able to purchase infectious agents from U.S.-based laboratories.
- Require regular evaluations of high-containment laboratories in the United States after designating a single Federal official to lead the overview. The review will analyze the capacity of current labs and any possible risks associated with them, as well as issuing national standards for the construction and maintenance of these labs.
 - This fix will address the concern highlighted in the bipartisan report that there is little monitoring of high-containment labs in the U.S., which results in limited regulations over labs outside of requirements put on those receiving federal funds.
 - Requires a "Public Health and Biosecurity Team" to be a single point of contact for State and local agencies regarding laboratory biosafety and biosecurity questions.
 - This fix will streamline communications between the Federal government and State and locals when it comes to lab biosecurity, coordinating with the myriad of federal agencies that handle biosecurity issues.
 - Requires a feasibility study on establishing a database of biolabs that is accessible to State and local officials.