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SEN. JACQUE APPLAUDS PRESIDENT TRUMP'S EXECUTIVE ORDER CRACKING DOWN ON DANGEROUS GAIN-OF-FUNCTION RESEARCH

NE WI Senator led state lawmakers' letter to President Trump requesting action

MADISON... State Sen. André Jacque (R-New Franken) today hailed President Trump's executive order this week, *"Improving the Safety and Security of Biological Research,"* which halts federally funded gain-of-function (GoF) research on potential pandemic pathogens and begins to implement sweeping oversight, enforcement, and transparency reforms.

The executive action comes just three months after Sen. Jacque led a coalition of Wisconsin legislators in sending a formal letter to President Trump on February 6 urging precisely such steps. The letter emphasized the national security and public health dangers of GoF research and called for an executive order to rein in GoF experimentation and expand oversight of potentially dangerous research on campus. Legislators who signed the February 6 letter include Sen. Jacque, Rep. Elijah Behnke, Sen. Steve Nass, Rep. Lindee Brill, Rep. Joy Goeben, Rep. Rob Kreibich, Rep. Dan Knodl, and Rep. Chuck Wichgers.

In 2013, a UW-Madison researcher was exposed to a virus during GoF experiments. In 2019, a researcher's respirator became disconnected while handling a lab-enhanced avian influenza virus, and false information was provided to investigators—a serious violation of safety protocols. And in 2010, the University was fined for conducting unapproved experiments involving *Brucella*, a highly regulated bacterium that can infect humans and animals, introducing genes that could compromise antibiotics used to control the disease.

Sen. Jacque praised the President's executive order as a landmark action for biosecurity and accountability:

"This is a decisive victory for public safety, national security, and scientific integrity. Gain-of-function research that makes pathogens more dangerous has always carried unacceptable risks with questionable benefits. President Trump's leadership is putting science back on a responsible path, one that safeguards Americans from the possibility of a future lab-generated pandemic."

"For too long, dangerous research has taken place with taxpayer funding and minimal accountability—both at home and in foreign labs with little oversight. This order directly addresses those failures and implements strong mechanisms to prevent them from continuing."

The order halts federal funding of GoF research in high-risk countries like China, suspends ongoing federally funded GoF projects in the U.S., and mandates the development of a national strategy to govern and track all GoF research—including projects funded privately or through other non-federal means. It also introduces enforceable contract terms and public reporting requirements to ensure compliance.

Renowned biosafety expert Dr. Richard Ebright (Professor of Chemistry and Chemical Biology at Rutgers University and Director of the Waksman Institute of Microbiology) testified previously in support of legislation authored by Sen. Jacque and Rep. Behnke and colleagues to address GoF research in Wisconsin, and offered strong support for the executive action:



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"The Executive Order is a significant step forward. Section 3 of the executive order bans federal funding for gain-of-function research on potential pandemic pathogens in countries of concern and in countries with insufficient oversight to ensure compliance with US policies. More important, Sections 4 through 8 of the executive order effectively equate to a ban on gain-of-function research on potential pandemic pathogens in the US."

Sen. Jacques concluded, "I am grateful for President Trump's bold and prompt action. The American people deserve transparency, accountability, and above all, safety from reckless research practices. This executive order is a critical milestone, but oversight must now continue at every level—from federal agencies to university labs."

Sen. André Jacques represents Northeast Wisconsin's First Senate District, consisting of Door and Kewaunee Counties and portions of Brown, Calumet, Manitowoc, and Outagamie counties.

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