


Transcript: U of I President Tim Killeen's Responses to Illinois Rep. Deanne Mazzochi re: SHIELD

March 3, 2022

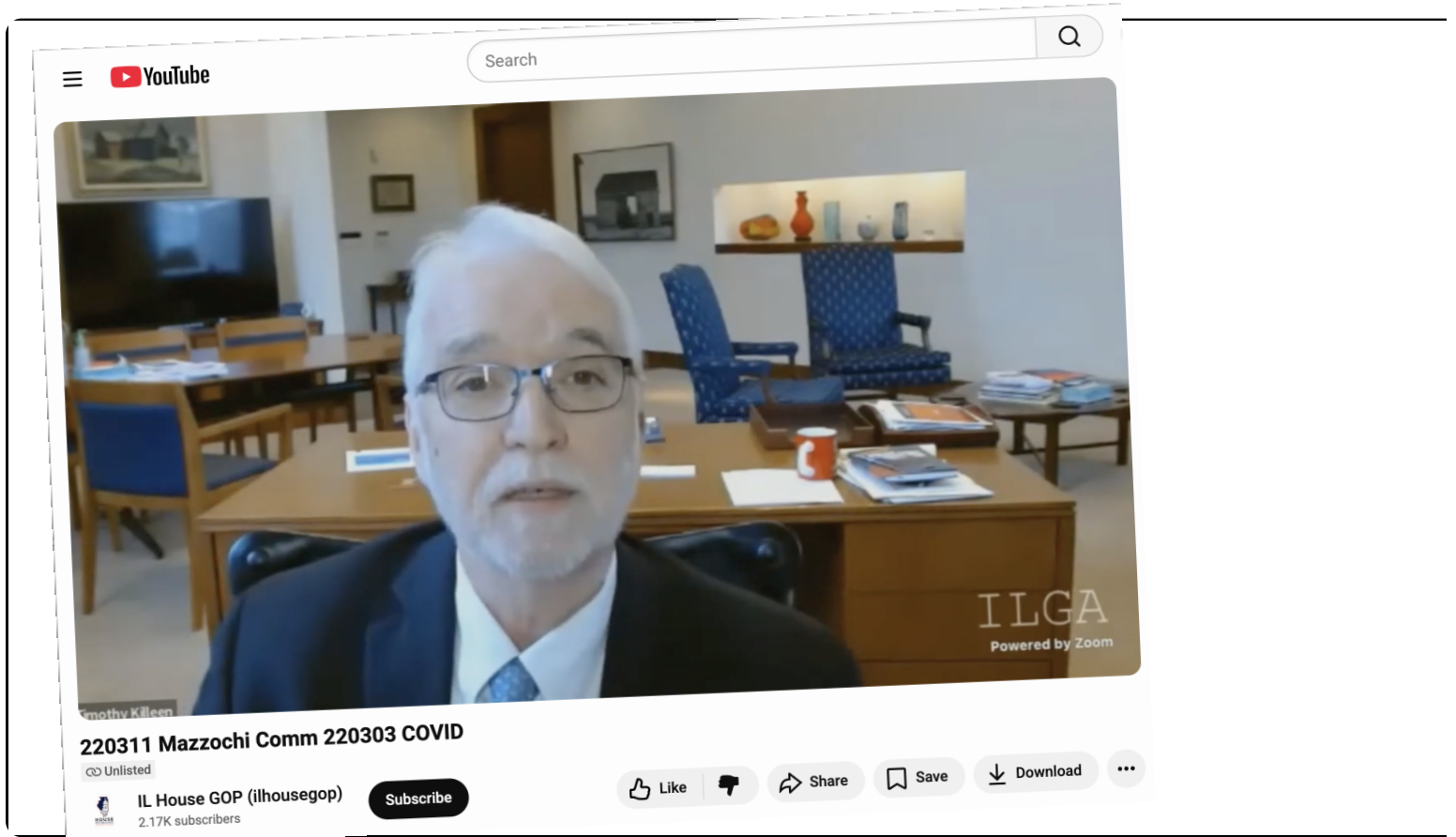
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This is the transcript of University of Illinois President Tim Killeen answering questions from Deanne Mazzochi, member of the Illinois House Appropriations - Higher Education [Committee](#), on March 3, 2022.

Posted for general access, public comment, and future reference.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Qq1zktTJUo>



Rep. Deanne Mazzochi: So, one question that I have. You keep on not disclosing information that I've asked you in connection with SHIELD, Discovery Partners, how that's funded, where the funding is going. You know, you guys have gotten a whole host of funds from the federal government in connection with this. So, how, when, and where are we going to finally get some transparency as to where the money is coming in? Who are actually the members of the [Discovery Partners](#), what have they contributed, what are the ownership rights, and all that sort of thing? Who's going to finally come clean on the financial structures for that?

President Killeen: We're delighted. I'd be happy to meet with you personally, and with the DPI team, and try to answer any questions you might have. The DPI, as you know, is a public-private research institute in downtown Chicago. There's been \$500 million of capital appropriated and reappropriated not just for DPI, but for the IIN network that we talked about today. DPI and IIN together have raised about \$230 million in corporate and philanthropic support to map into that effort, including partnership with industries like Deerfield Management, Foxconn Interconnect Technology, Jump

ARCHES – all announced in the last year. It's a fast-moving effort. It's a very exciting effort. We have hundreds of students coming through last summer to get access, many from underrepresented communities. Access to the kind of skills and competencies in a digital world right that are working with Apple, Google –

Mazzochi: Yeah, I just want to cut to the chase. I want every member of this committee to be aware of Discovery Partners - how much money have they taken in, not just from Illinois sources, but from all sources: private sources, federal sources, etc. Can you give me that number so far, in terms of the funds they've taken in to date?

Killeen: Well, I just gave you the \$230 million, but we'll detail it for you, Representative. We'll get an excel spreadsheet for you.

Mazzochi: Who is on the actual board that's governing DPI?

Killeen: DPI is managed out of the University of Illinois system, so our Board of Trustees is the ultimate governing body. We have an executive director who reports to me, and I report to the board of trustees. We have many partnerships, including international universities that have signed up. We have seed programs. I think rather than try to be exhaustive here and now, what I'd like to offer is a briefing for you and any other members of the committee that would like to get –

Mazzochi: Yeah, I don't want a briefing. I want it in writing so that I can actually see what the ownership structures are - what the partnership structures are. You know, who's getting paid what. So all of these funds that have come in from SHIELD. Who's actually profiting off of this? Where are the funds going? Are they all 100% going back to the university? Are they all going back to – are some of them being shared with private entities that have invested in SHIELD? In terms of some of these partnerships that you have, who else is profiting? There's a whole host of other – I mean, you're basically running what I would call a for-profit business within the auspices of the University of Illinois system, and there's been no transparency on that. And there has

to be transparency on that, because without it, I feel very uncomfortable about what is actually going on and who's profiting and who's benefiting. Relatedly, with regard to a of the data that you've collected on students and individuals in association with SHIELD, who owns that data?

Killeen: Right, well, DPI was one thing. I was trying to answer the DPI function. Now we're talking about SHIELD, which –

Mazzochi: I know, but I've gotten runarounds on DPI and on SHIELD for over a year–

Killeen: Let me respond to SHIELD. There are two entities: one is SHIELD Illinois, that is, a not-for-profit entity that is constrained to our state and, that is, where the partnership with IPDH primarily has supported the SHIELD technology to be in all these K through 12 school settings, 1,700 community colleges across the state. We're the only state that has this amazing rapid turnaround. That's SHIELD Illinois. That reports up through me. It's a University of Illinois system oversight, so it reports up to the board of trustees. Then, outside of Illinois, the second entity, called SHIELD T3, which is a for-profit entity which is reported –

Mazzochi: Say that again. What's the name of it?

Killeen: SHIELD T3. And SHIELD T3 has a board of managers that – we follow the Open Meetings Act. So all of the board meetings are open, and you can participate, see what's going on with the board of managers that meets to oversee the for-profit. It's possible that it will be spun out to, you know, sold off. But it's been very successful, and it's in more than 50 universities around the world, literally. And yes, any resources that are generated that above and beyond the cost of the capacity comes back to the University of Illinois system and are reinvested in student experience and so forth. The first \$7 million dollars of what you might say is resources over and above the cost of maintaining this thing are going back into the University of Illinois system. So it's a wholly-owned subsidiary, if you like, of the University of Illinois. It may not stay that way for long, but its board meetings are open to the public.

Mazzochi: Right, but one of the things, my understanding is that one of the things that you're planning on doing with the SHIELD platform - and I'm assuming it's going to go through SHIELD T3 - is you're trying to expand it into other diseases and that sort of thing, right?

Killeen: Yeah, Representative Mazzochi - I hope I pronounce your name right, forgive me if don't - but it's very exciting, because we have pioneered a new technology. It's saliva PCR, genomics essentially. And we've managed to create a system where individuals, including very young people, are prepared to give saliva samples, to be looked at for their signatures, of viral signatures. We've done that at 8 million cases. We have that data and that data is going to be publicly available and we can make all kinds of assessments about viral load, speed of recovery, age groups. It's going to have to be anonymized, of course, for patient records.

Mazzochi: Whoa, whoa, whoa. Let me stop right there. Wait, wait, wait...

Killeen: Let me finish my comment, because you've touched on something that's very exciting for us. This is a new technology that we've come up with at the University of Illinois system that has already saved lives in the state of Illinois and is performing extremely well outside of the state of Illinois. I could list prestigious universities, Toyota factories, [Rivian factories that are using it](#). It has these other applications.

Mazzochi: I know the spiel on SHIELD. I get it. but I'm getting at a more fundamental issue is who owns - so you've collected all of these salt saliva samples, which include DNA samples. It includes the viral load samples and all the rest of it. Who owns all of that data? Are you saying the University of Illinois owns the data?

Killeen: Yes, it's not a public, it's not a private, you know, it's wholly-owned, if you like that term. You're getting a university-related organization that reports into the board of trustees, whose managers are appointed by the Board of Trustees. So it's, yes it belongs to us which means you too, the public.

Mazzochi: Does it belong to U of I directly, or does it belong to U of I through the SHIELD T3, or does it belong to you through SHIELD Illinois and a not-for-profit?

Killeen: Well, we have two entities. Again, they're separate entities. One has a board of managers - SHIELD T3 - appointed by the Board of Trustees, and it reports to Board of Trustees

Mazzochi: Which legal entity owns the student data that you have collected?

Killeen: Illinois system Board of Trustees is the one entity.

Mazzochi: Okay. So the unit, so SHIELD T3 has no access to the data that's been collected by the University of Illinois in connection with the SHIELD program? I'm operating under the assumption that SHIELD T3 owns some of the data because they're the ones who've actually been collecting the samples and doing the testing. Whether SHIELD T3, in turn, is owned by the University of Illinois, I'm trying to understand which of these entities initially has the ownership rights to all of the data that you've been collecting.

Killeen: The legal entity is the Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois System.

Mazzochi: So then you're representing that SHIELD T3 does not own any of the data, and doesn't have rights to any of the data that you've collected on students and other individuals from the saliva?

Killeen: It's an LLC that reports into the university because it's a single membership corporation, if you like. We may well end up selling it off, as you know other spin-offs have been done at universities. But right now, what I said is absolutely correct. So the data rights are held by the trustees and have to be used in appropriate ways, obviously. HIPAA regulations, federal regulations, FDA rules all apply and we're very careful about all of that, all of the above. I appreciate your interest in all of this, Representative.

Mazzochi: One of the reasons why I'm very interested in it, because I'm very concerned about it in the sense that once you take this data, and now that you've said you're going to leverage it into other platforms. Presumably, you're going to be using the underlying data that you've already gotten to perform additional research, data mine it, etc. And haven't seen any restrictions on this. A lot of these samples have been collected in a manner that I would consider to not be exactly like full free and open knowing consent, because you know students had to do these samples as a condition of attending school, as a condition of attending the University of Illinois. So to the extent this data is not going to – if you're not basically destroying this data and it's going to continue to stay alive and be used for other research purposes, I have real concerns with that – not only from an ethical perspective, but also in terms of FIPAA and the very stringent laws that we've put on personally identifying information here within the state of Illinois. And again, I'm still not clear on exactly – do you know how much in federal funds the University of Illinois has taken in, in connection with SHIELD or the SHIELD programs or your efforts to try to monetize the data and the covid work you've done?

Killeen: There are no federal dollars going to monetize SHIELD. We did receive from the federal coffers – and maybe I can ask Avijit [Ghosh] to give you more of a detail on that, the HEERF I and the HEERF II, the federal relief dollars that came in to the University of Illinois, into our hospital have all been used appropriately to support the costs that we've incurred in managing covid. About half of those dollars – and we're talking about \$330 million of federal resources that have come in. They're not as big as all of the costs that we've incurred for the last two years. We're out about, I think – Avijit correct me if I'm wrong – over \$100 million has not been recompensed by the federal dollars. But those dollars have gone to students. Half of the dollars automatically have gone to student emergency relief, and we supplemented that as well. We have detailed accounting of the federal dollars that none have gone to monetize SHIELD. Avijit, would you like to comment as well?

Avijit Ghosh: I can just reinforce that the federal dollars did not go into the SHIELD

program. The HEERF dollars were used for what it was intended for, which was not was for the SHIELD program.

Mazzochi: All right, so I want to be really clear on the record. It's your position that the University of Illinois has not sought any federal dollars or payments in connection with operating or running SHIELD, or using the SHIELD methodology to collect data and samples.

Killeen: Yes, that is correct

Mazzochi: Okay. All right. Now when it comes to –

Killeen: The campus has been part of our whole work to keep our students safe. Yes, we were testing students frequently, and everything is anonymized so there's no release of personal data.

Mazzochi: No data is truly anonymous. It's certainly not when you're talking about collecting saliva samples, which are going to have genetic information in it.

Killeen: I hear and appreciate your concern on this regard, and we'll work with you to alleviate your concerns.

Read the letter that Mazzochi and five other legislators sent to President Killeen after this meeting: <https://web.archive.org/web/20231202112947/https://woodhouse76.com/p/letter-deanne-mazzochi-and-five-illinois>

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