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Subject: Comment on ARRB Final Report

TO: ARRB Board and Staff FROM: JOHN JUDGE (NOT REPRESENTING ANY OF COPA) RE: ISSUES IN EVALUATION AND recommendations for ARRB Final Report Eileen, Please pass these comments along to the appropriate people at ARRB. I raised these issues with our board members recently and asked them to send individual comments to you, and to develop a joint COPA statement. The latter was never accomplished, so no formal consensus exists. However, I know these are issues that our members have raised with me at different times. Three major concerns that I and other researchers have are: 1. The Final Report should be honest about not only what was accomplished but what was not, especially in areas of remaining records never secured or agencies that never complied. If the Final Report claims a finality to the records collected, then it will be much more difficult to seek any remaining pockets of records not located or secured in the future. Please be thorough and honest. 2. The ARRB was never given an investigative purpose beyond locating the records themselves, thus the Final Report and the public statements, joint or individual, of the Board members should not reflect any conclusiveness concerning the assassination history itself. We know full well that the press spin will be that all the files have been released now and nothing is there, and that nothing new has been learned concerning a "conspiracy" in the case. But the ARRB cannot make a definitive statement on this matter, nor should it. No one has had the time and resources to exhaust this historical record anyway. Leave the conclusions to the public, who were the ultimate repository intended by the Act. 3. A mechanism should be in place that insures release of JFK records located after September 30, 1998. It needs to be independent of the politics of the FOIA and the National Archives. The Final Report should recommend such a mechanism or combinations of them that will continue its work as much as possible. The model established by the ARRB should be recommended for future release of all classified records. We went from 1964-1994 using FOIA and got several hundred pages out. From 1994-1998 the ARRB effected the release of 4 million pages. Enough said. You deserve thanks and praise for your hard work over these last few years. While areas remain unresolved concerning certain records, at least in our view, and while we have disagreed about public release on certain documents at times, the ARRB is to be commended for doing a professional job. I hope you are making arrangements to return all photographic records taken from researcher Bob Groden, who is a member of our board. We are all concerned that there will be no further delay in the release of the medical records depositions. I also want to send my appreciation for your willingness to be part of our national conferences each year, and look forward to seeing Judge Tunheim in Dallas, and Jeremy Gunn if he can attend as well. A special thanks from me to Tom Samoluk and Eileen Sullivan who were constantly friendly and helpful

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