

Suggested Remarks for the Honorable Louis Stokes

Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank you for inviting me to testify in support of H.R. 1553, to extend the Assassination Records Review Board for one additional year.

As I know you are aware, I am a cosponsor of this bill and as the former Chairman of the House Select Committee on Assassinations, I take particular interest in this issue.

In 1992, I worked to ensure the enactment of the President John F. Kennedy Assassination Records Collection Act. The Assassination Records Review Board, which was created by the Act to oversee the identification and release of records related to the assassination of President Kennedy, has been working diligently to complete its work. However, it is now clear that the Review Board will need additional time to fulfill its mandate.

I believe that it is important to assure the American people that its government is not keeping information secret that it is relevant to the assassination of President Kennedy. I am pleased that despite unforeseen obstacles, the Review Board has already achieved some important accomplishments. As a result of its efforts, more than 10,000 previously secret government documents are now more fully available to the American people.

When the original legislation was drafted, we believed that the Review Board's task could be completed in three years. Although that estimate was based on the best available information, it is

now clear that the Board will need more time to process the remaining classified records, primarily from the CIA and FBI.

I am proud that we are able to provide historians and the American public with all relevant information concerning the assassination of President Kennedy. We must now ensure that the Review Board completes this task.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you again for this opportunity to testify in support of H.R. 1553 and I urge the Subcommittee to favorably report this bill.