

We hope that opening up and giving journalists, historians and, most importantly, the public access to governmental files will help to resolve questions that still linger over 28 years after the assassination. Further, I believe that maximum disclosure will discredit the theory that CIA had anything to do with the murder of President Kennedy.

—Testimony of CIA Director Robert Gates, Senate Hearings regarding the proposed JFK Act

[T]he only thing more horrifying to me than the assassination itself is the insidious, perverse notion that elements of the American Government, that my own Agency, had some part in it. I am determined personally to make public or to expose to disinterested eyes every relevant scrap of paper in CIA's possession, in the hope of helping to dispel this corrosive suspicion.

—Testimony of CIA Director Robert Gates, from Senate Hearings regarding the proposed JFK Act

The public interest dictates a final review of this horrific event. Maximum disclosure, consistent with the law and the legitimate need to protect very limited amounts of sensitive information, best serves that purpose.

—Testimony of FBI Director William Sessions, Senate Hearings regarding the proposed JFK Act

[T]here exists widespread public suspicion about the Government's disposition of the Kennedy assassination records stemming from the beliefs that Federal officials (1) have not made available all Government assassination records (even to the Warren Commission, Church Committee, House Assassination Committee) and (2) have heavily redacted the records released under FOIA in order to cover up sinister conspiracies. S.J. Res. 282 effectively addresses these concerns first by creating an impartial body...with the authority to review and if necessary subpoena all relevant records and then by establishing the criterion of full disclosure except in cases where "clear and convincing justification exists for postponing" the release of specified documents.

—Prepared Statement of Athan G. Theoharis, Professor, Department of History, Marquette University, Senate Hearings regarding the proposed JFK Act

[I] perceive the value, and purpose, of the bill not as confirming or refuting conspiracy theories but as resolving public doubts that relevant government records are being purposefully withheld not to safeguard legitimate national interests but to cover-up a conspiracy, or conspiracies.
—Supplement to Professor Theoharis’s Testimony, Senate Hearings regarding the proposed JFK Act

[I]t will be possible for the Review Board and staff to acquire additional records, which might not be provided by the agencies...It will ensure that the final result of the procedures proposed under S.J. Res. 282 is an independent certification that all relevant records were located, released, or not released because of clear and convincing justification.

—Supplement to Professor Theoharis's Testimony, Senate Hearings regarding the proposed JFK Act

[T]he Department of the Treasury supports the purpose underlying this Joint Resolution and agrees with its intention of making the greatest number of government documents available to the public. Perhaps these additional disclosures, and the unfettered review by the public of the documents, will help relieve the lingering concerns and anxieties surrounding this tragedy, and restore the confidence of the American people that there are no more mysteries associated with the tragedy.

—Department of Treasury Prepared Statement, from Senate Hearings regarding the proposed JFK Act

[T]he department and the IRS have no objection to lifting the bar to public disclosure of the tax information previously provided to the Warren Commission and the House and Senate Committees.

—Department of Treasury Prepared Statement, from Senate Hearings regarding the proposed JFK Act

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) fully supports the accelerated review, declassification, and release of records related to the assassination of President Kennedy.
—National Archives Position Statement, from Senate Hearings regarding the proposed JFK Act

[I] am confident that this Resolution will enable Americans to gain access to all the facts and circumstances surrounding the death of this great President and further enable them to ascertain fact from fiction surrounding this tragic event.

—Prepared Statement of Congressman Louis Stokes, former Chair of the House Select Committee on Assassinations, House Hearings regarding the proposed JFK Act

Let those papers go.

—Prepared Statement of Jack Valenti, Special Assistant to President Johnson from November 1963 to June 1966, House Hearings regarding the proposed JFK Act

I want to assure the committee that the National Archives fully supports the accelerated review, declassification, and release of documentary materials related to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, and we stand by ready to assist in this important effort.

—Testimony of Don W. Wilson, Archivist of the United States, House Hearings regarding the proposed JFK Act

I say that you all have made probably the most outstanding progress in the CIA in disseminating these records and preparing to do so, but really, don't you think people would be more comfortable if a more or less outside panel not controlled directly by the CIA, directly by the FBI, directly by the Justice Department, directly by the President, appointed by a court might have a more creditable evaluation . . . ?

—Remarks of Chairman of the Judiciary Committee Jack Brooks, House Hearings regarding the proposed JFK Act

The travesty of continued government secrecy extends beyond the government's failure to open these files. We find it truly appalling that the Freedom of Information Act, enacted as a cornerstone of open government, cannot even compel the disclosure of information about the death of a president nearly a third of a century ago. The movie *JFK* has interested a whole new generation in the undisclosed records of the assassination and the events that may have preceded it. Those records are a tiny percentage of the secret government documents denied to requesters, including reporters, every day.

—Prepared Statement of Jane E. Kirtley, Executive Director for Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press

Are federal agencies cooperating fully, or is there resistance that fosters public distrust of the government?

—Opening Statement of Committee Chairman John Conyers, Jr., House Committee on Government Operations

With this law, the public mistrust of government that has remained the central tenet for the past 20 years may start to disappear, at least in the Kennedy assassination. And I believe from the early operation of this law that it is doing exactly what you intended on this committee.

—Opening Statement of Committee Chairman John Conyers, Jr., House Committee on Government Operations

[T]he only thing that we can all do, and especially you here on the Hill who have drafted this legislation and now have the oversight responsibility, is to ensure its most rapid and full implementation so that we can see what is available in the record and resolve these last outstanding issues as fast as possible.

—Testimony of Gerald Posner, Author of *Case Closed: Lee Harvey Oswald and the Assassination of JFK*, House Committee on Government Operations

[I] will just say that I believe we have come a long way since passage of the JFK Records Act. But a lot more, clearly, needs to be done. The fact that the agency, the CIA has allowed us to see documents that are in some cases embarrassing convinces me they are attempting to comply with this legislation in good faith.

—Testimony of John Newman, Author of *Kennedy and Vietnam*, from House Committee on Government Operations

The FBI is absolutely committed to achieving the maximum disclosure of JFK material.
—November 24, 1993 Letter from FBI Director Louis J. Freeh to Chairman John Conyers, House
Committee on Government Operations, from House Committee on Government Operations