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Subject: Draft Letter For Historical Associations

Body: David.Here is the draft letter for the historical associations. I have attempted to hit all of the relevant points, without sounding exactly lik us. Please edit as you see fit. I will talk to you in the morning.TomP.S. Kevin Mathas from Specter's Office called me back today. Janice called me right away and I called him withing three minutes. Alas, I got his voice mail and continued to get it throughout the afternoon. I hope Jack has some success on the WH front.March 3, 1997XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXDear Chairman/Senator/Congressman:We are writing to you to offer our support for a one year extension of the Assassination Records Review Board, the independent federal board responsible for overseeing the identification and release of all records related to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Allowing the Board to complete its work is a matter of great importance to the historical community and the American public.The historical community supported passage of The President John F. Kennedy Assassination Records Collection Act of 1992 (JFK Act). The Act, which created the Assassination Records Review Board, was a significant and extraordinary law aimed at shedding light on a seminal event in United States history. The secrecy surrounding the assassination and subsequent government investigations made the creation of the Review Board a critical step in allowing the American public and historians access to relevant records to better understand this important chapter in our history. Beyond the basic need for full disclosure of records on the assassination, and perhaps more important to the historical profession, the JFK Act set a precedent for the efficient and effective declassification of other federal records in the future. For example, the Review Board has broken important new ground in dealing with intelligence agency records in a responsible manner. CIA records declassified by the Board have provided the historical community and the public with a small, but significant, glimpse at the operations of the CIA. Overall, the Review Board's efforts within the framework of the JFK Act, should serve as a model for declassification in other areas. The Review Board's mandate to oversee the release of the remaining records related to the assassination of President Kennedy has been unprecedented, as well as overwhelming. Because such a task with this volume of records (approximately three million pages in the JFK Collection by the end of 1996) had never been undertaken by the federal government, a well-meaning attempt by the Congress at setting a time frame for the completion of the Board's work was inadequate. A prolonged startup period necessitated by the need to find adequate offices for the storage of classified records and acquire security clearance for its staff, an 18 month delay in the appointment of Board members, and inherent difficulties in getting federal agencies to understand and meet their obligations under the JFK Act, have resulted in the need for the Board's tenure to be extended for one

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