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Subject: Letter to Kevin Binger

David. From my earlier e-mail and in view of a suggestion, I have drafted a letter (you will recognize much of it from earlier letters) to Kevin Binger, Burton's Committee Staff Director. I think we do need to get him something soon to cover ourselves. Even if he does not respond, we will, at a minimum, be able to say we tried, and we still have the option of calling him again. I put a lot of information in there, so we could say later that we laid it all out in a letter, provided a copy of the report to the Chairman and called repeatedly. Please let me know if you want to discuss it or if I can do anything else on it.

Tom March 17, 1997

Mr. Kevin Binger
Majority Staff Director
House Government Reform and Oversight Committee
United States House of Representatives
2157 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Binger: I would like to take this opportunity to discuss the future of the Assassination Records Review Board, the independent federal agency responsible for the review and public release of records related to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. The Review Board has accomplished much in its first two years, but still has a great deal of important work to do. The Board, which is scheduled to cease operations at the end of fiscal year 1997, is recommending that it be extended for one additional year to complete its work. The members of the Board hope that Chairman Burton will be supportive of this recommendation. A copy of our FY 1996 Annual Report sets out the basis for the recommendation and was recently sent to the Chairman. I have also enclosed a two page summary of the Boards work to date and what it would accomplish with an additional year. The Board has been engaged in the review and release of records related to the assassination of President F. Kennedy since June 1995. To date, the Board has acted to transfer nearly 10,000 documents to the National Archives and Records Administration for inclusion in the JFK Collection. At the end of 1996, the collection totaled approximately 3.3. million pages and was used extensively by researchers from all over the United States. By the end of this year, the Board anticipates the completion of the review and processing of nearly all of the assassination records that have been identified by federal agencies, with the important exception of the remaining records of the FBI and the CIA. The overwhelming majority of previously redacted information has been made public. Unfortunately, it is impossible for the Board to complete its work within the original three-year timetable set by Congress. Although well-intentioned, the time frame was unrealistic for an unprecedented project of this magnitude. First, there was an 18-month delay in the appointment of Board, a delay that caused agencies to fall far behind the pace envisioned by the law. Second, there was a protracted start-up caused by the independence restriction, including security clearances and a ban on hiring federal employees, imposed by the Congress. Third, a significant amount of time and resources had to be devoted to Record

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