

Assassination Records Review Board

The Assassination Records Review Board was established by Congress in PL 102-526 to oversee an effort of enormous scope within a very short time. The Board is charged with locating and securing all records which relate in any manner to the assassination of President Kennedy.

These records include those of:

- at least 15 federal agencies
- previous Congressional investigations
- the Presidential libraries
- local governmental and private repositories
- records in private hands
- records in the custody of foreign countries

Reliable estimates of the number of relevant documents are well in excess of one million pages.

Once documents are identified and secured, the Board must review the records and make an administrative determination whether to release them or to postpone their release. Congress has established a strict time line for these determinations, with appeal rights to the President or to Congress. These determinations are quasi-judicial and will be made following submission of supporting evidence by relevant agencies and careful consideration by the Board. We fully anticipate litigation concerning our determination in some cases.

The Board, which is part-time and required by Congress to complete this process in less than three years, has hired a high-quality professional staff to assist in carrying out these responsibilities. The Board's staff should be complete with 25 professional and five support positions by the beginning of FY96.

The large and vocal research community anxiously awaits release of all Kennedy assassination records. Many of these researchers, and indeed many American citizens, strongly suspect that the government was somehow involved in "covering up" evidence of the assassination. The entire purpose of PL 102-526 is to establish an independent entity to ensure the efficient, speedy, and full disclosure of these records to the American public. We have arguably the last opportunity to clear up the many lingering questions.

The pressure on Congress to establish this unique and independent review process was enormous. That pressure has now shifted to the Assassination Records Review Board, and we need the requested resources to be able to carry out a most complex and important mandate.