

## *Options Paper: Policy on Original Documents and Certification*

### *1. Original v. Copies*

#### *Background*

*The JFK Records Collections Act establishes a JFK Assassination Record Group at the National Archives. This record Group will contain all assassination records as defined and determined by the Board. The Act does not address the question of whether the collection should contain originals or copies.*

#### *The Problem*

*Archival collections are traditionally determined by the principle of provenance -- records are organized in an archive in the same way that they were maintained as active records. On the other hand, PL 102-526 creates a collection that is governed by the principle of pertinence. Many of the records that will be part of this collection have a home in the collection of their original provenance. Which collection should get the original? How should a copy be handled?*

#### *Option 1: Originals Only*

*The Board can require that the JFK collection contain only originals. This option would require the Federal Agencies and the National Archives to provide only original documents and to insert copies in the collections from which assassination records were taken. The danger is that a document that is of only tangential importance (by anyone's standard) to the Kennedy Assassination, but of significant importance to another topic, would be represented by a copy in the collection where it has a more important status.*

### Option 2: Copies Only

The Board can allow agencies to provide certified copies as long as the location of the original is clearly identified.

### Option 3: A Blend

The Board can decide to accept both copies and originals, employing a balance test weighing the document's importance to the Kennedy Collection against its importance to the collection where it would normally be located.

## **II. Certification**

Should any copies be allowed in the collection, it is important to address the question of certification.

The Board should institute a certification procedure for any copy that it permits into the collection. The certification should clearly state that the certifying officer has seen the original and has compared it to the copy, and that the copy is true and accurate. The location of the original (with all necessary file location detail) will be provided on the certification form.

The Board can delegate certifying authority to the agency that has control of the original, or can require that certifying authority be limited to the ARRB and its staff.