

1. *History*

a. *Need for Legislation*

President John F. Kennedy was assassinated on November 22, 1963, while traveling in a motorcade in Dallas, Texas. His death and the subsequent murder of Lee Harvey Oswald, the President's alleged assassin, have been the subjects of thirty years of mystery and suspicion. Since 1963, at least five Federal investigatory bodies have examined the facts surrounding the assassination since, namely the Warren Commission, the House Select Committee on Assassinations, the Rockefeller Commission, the Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with respect to Intelligence Activities (the Church Committee), and the House Select Committee on Intelligence (the Pike Committee). However, even after these official investigations, the assassination is still the subject of conspiracy theories, many of which allege government knowledge about or complicity in the assassination.

b. *Legislation Enactment*

In response to widespread public belief that all of the facts surrounding the assassination of President Kennedy have not come to light, Congress passed the President John F. Kennedy Assassination Records Collection Act of 1992, 44 U.S.C. § 2701 (1992) (JFK Act). The JFK Act establishes the Assassination Records Review Board and grants the Review Board the authority to oversee the identification and public release of all Government records concerning the assassination of President Kennedy.

c. *Board put into place/Sworn in (who they are)*

Congress created the Review Board as an independent Federal agency. *Id.* at § 2701.7(a). The Board consists of five citizen members who were appointed by the President of the United States, confirmed by the United States Senate, and sworn in on April 11, 1994.

2. *Description*

a. *Board*

The five distinguished citizens who comprise the Review Board represent the legal, historical, and archival professions. They serve in a part-time capacity.

b. *Staff*

The Review Board is currently supported by a senior staff consisting of the Executive Director, the Acting General Counsel, the Associate Director for Research and Analysis, an Associate Director for Administration, and an Associate Director for Communication. In addition to the senior staff, the Review Board currently employs one investigator, fourteen analysts, three administrative support personnel, and a part-time computer specialist.

b. *Offices - where*

Activities of the Review Board are carried out through the operation of a central office located in Washington, D.C. The Review Board's address is 600 E Street, N.W., 2nd Floor, Washington, D.C. 20530.

3. *Functions*

Congress created the Review Board “to ensure and facilitate the review, transmission to the Archivist, and public disclosure of Government records related to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.” Sec. 7(b)(1).

a. *Oversight*

- i. *The JFK Act requires other agencies to search and comply*
- ii. *We ensure that they do*

The Review Board oversees a larger process of agency record review and release established by the JFK Act. The Act requires all Federal agencies to identify records in their possession that may relate to the assassination and to determine whether these records may be disclosed immediately or whether disclosure should be postponed. The JFK Act defines five categories of information for which disclosure may be postponed provided there is “clear and convincing evidence” of some harm which outweighs the public interest in release of the information.

b. *Review*

- i. *Other agencies decide what they want to postpone*
- ii. *We review their decisions*

The Review Board evaluates all agency decisions to postpone the release of records.

c. *Transfer*

- i. *We will work with NARA to get stuff available to public*

Once the Review Board completes its review of agency recommendation for postponement, all records, including those that have postponed release dates, will be transferred to the National Archives to be housed in the John F. Kennedy

*Assassination Record Collection. The Act requires that all assassination records must be released by 2017, with the exception of records certified for continued postponement by the President.*

*In addition, the Review Board has the responsibility and broad powers to identify and secure any additional assassination records held by Federal, state, and local governments.*

*4. Sunset Provision*

- a. operate under the continuing oversight of appropriate house and senate committees*
- b. issue our final report to congress*
- c. wind up*

The Review Board has until October 1, 1996, to fulfill its mandate, plus an additional year at the Board's discretion to complete its responsibilities.