

Assassination Records Review Board

The Assassination Records Review Board was established by Congress in PL 102-526 and is currently engaged in an effort of enormous scope, with a very short time to complete it. The Board's mandate is to locate and secure 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

Thousands of documents have recently been released by the Board and by federal agencies following the guidance of the Board. Reliable estimates of the number of remaining relevant documents to be reviewed are well in excess of one million pages.

Once documents are identified and secured, the Board reviews the records and makes administrative determinations 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 made following submission of supporting evidence by relevant agencies and careful consideration by the Board.

The Board, which is part-time and required by Congress to complete this process in less than three years, is supported by a high-quality professional staff. The Board's staff is nearly at its allotted ceiling of 30 full-time employees. The staff includes management and administrative personnel, analysts who review records and make recommendations to the Board, and investigators who locate non-federal records and provide investigatory support to the entire staff.

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

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

FY 1997 is the Board's third and final year, and we will issue a final report upon its termination.