

CHAIR

Ezra Cohen



**PUBLIC INTEREST
DECLASSIFICATION BOARD**

EXECUTIVE
SECRETARY

Mark Bradley

MEMBERS

Paul-Noel Chretien
Michael G. Lawrence
Benjamin A. Powell

MEMBERS

Trey Gowdy
Alissa M. Starzak
John F. Tierney

September 27, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden:

In 1992, Congress passed the John F. Kennedy Assassination Records Collection Act (JFK Act), which required all federal agencies and offices to identify, organize, and transfer copies of all records related to the assassination to the custody of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). On behalf of the members of the Public Interest Declassification Board (the Board), I respectfully encourage you to instruct agencies to make the maximum public release of the remaining classified records subject to the JFK Act.

Although the JFK Act broadly required the public disclosure of Kennedy assassination records under NARA's custody, it permitted an independent Assassination Records Review Board (ARRB) to review and approve temporary postponements of public disclosure following narrow and specified exemption criteria.

When temporary disclosure postponements approved by the ARRB expired on October 26, 2017, the JFK Act permitted agencies to request extended postponements. Then-President Trump approved postponements for approximately 14,000 records through October 26, 2021.

We understand that agencies are asking you to extend the postponement of public disclosure for parts of many records subject to the JFK Act.

The Board is charged under section 703(b) of the Public Interest Declassification Act of 2000, as amended, to promote the fullest possible public access to a thorough, accurate, and reliable documentary record of significant United States national security activities to respond to the interest of the public in national security matters, and to advise the President on the declassification of historically important records. Consistent with this duty and to abide by the letter and spirit of the JFK Act and bolster the American people's confidence and trust in their government, the Board unanimously recommends that you limit any further postponements of public disclosures of the

Kennedy assassination records to the absolute minimum.

The Board stands ready to assist and support you in increasing transparency and public access to this chapter in our nation's history.

Very respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ezra Cohen', written in a cursive style.

Ezra Cohen
Chair