

- Assoc. Dir. _____
- Dep. AD Adm. _____
- Dep. AD Inv. _____
- Asst. Dir.:
- Adm. Serv. _____
- Ext. Affairs _____
- Fin. & Pers. _____
- Gen. Inv.
- Ident. _____
- Inspection _____
- Intell. _____
- Laboratory _____
- Legal Coun. _____
- Plan. & Eval. _____
- Rec. Mgmt. _____
- Spec. Inv. _____
- Training _____
- Telephone Rm. _____
- Director Sec'y _____

Continuing Assassinations Probe Backed

By Ron Sarro
Washington Star Staff Writer

The House Committee on Assassinations today won a major victory in its drive for survival by getting the strong, unqualified endorsement of House Democratic leaders.

Three members of the committee, which must prove its worth by March 31 or die, met this morning with Speaker Thomas P. O'Neill Jr., Democratic Leader Jim Wright of Texas and others to brief them on the investigative outlook.

"I TOLD THEM they would have my wholehearted support," O'Neill told reporters after meeting with the committee members in his private congressional office.

The speaker said that the committee, which had appalled some House members earlier by asking for a \$6 million budget for this year, was tutting back its request to about \$2.5

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- The Washington Post _____
- Washington Star-News A-1
- Daily News (New York) _____
- The New York Times _____
- The Wall Street Journal _____
- The National Observer _____
- The Los Angeles Times _____

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PROBE

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million to cover the rest of 1977 and that he was supporting the new figure.

The committee was represented by its new chairman, Rep. Louis Stokes of Ohio; Del. Walter Fauntroy of the District, chairman of its subcommittee on the murder of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., and Rep. Richardson Preyer of North Carolina, who heads the subcommittee on the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

The committee representatives were to meet later today with members of the House Rules Committee, which must approve any resolution to authorize the continued investigation past March 31.

THE COMMITTEE'S PURPOSE
— to reopen the King and Kennedy

murder cases to try to dispel lingering doubts about them — had become lost in a dispute between its former chairman, Rep. Henry Gonzalez, D-Tex., and its staff director, former Philadelphia prosecutor Richard Sprague, over who was in charge.

Sprague's proposals, since dropped, suggesting use of sophisticated electronic investigative equipment and his \$6 million budget request outraged a number of House members, leading to the confrontation between Gonzalez and Sprague. Gonzalez quit when other committee members refused to support his firing of Sprague.

For the past two weeks Stokes and other members of the committee have been on a major public relations campaign to prove that serious questions remain about the Kennedy and King assassinations, and that a congressional inquiry could answer them. They seem to have raised more questions about the King kill-

ing, but O'Neill emphasized today that he supports the committee desire to "keep both cases alive."

NEITHER O'NEILL nor Wright would go into much detail about what fertile investigative fields the members of the committee discussed during this morning's meeting, but O'Neill did say that the briefing indicated that Stokes had been "working tirelessly" since he had assumed the chairmanship to get the panel on the right track.

Among moves taken by the committee since the chairmanship changed hands:

- All the physical evidence against James Earl Ray in the King murder was subpoenaed from Shelby County, Tenn., officials, and publicly received by the committee.

- Arrangements were made to interview Ray in Tennessee later this week. He pleaded guilty to killing King eight years ago and is serving a 99-year term.