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AGING

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

June 12, 1985

WASHINGTON OFFICE
1030 LONGWORTH BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515
(202) 225-5931
DISTRICT OFFICES
437 CHERRY STREET
WEST NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02165
(617) 332-3920
(617) 223-1648
10 PURCHASE STREET
FALL RIVER, MASSACHUSETTS 02722
(617) 674-3551
8 NORTH MAIN STREET
ATTLEBORO, MASSACHUSETTS 02703
(617) 226-4723

Mr. James K. Hall
Chief
Federal Bur. Of Investigation
FOIA Sec.
Records Management Div.
Washington,, D.C. 20535

Dear Mr. Hall:

I am writing in support of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request made by Mr. Gregory Stone and Dr. Philip H. Melanson, pertaining to the files and documents maintained by the FBI, Los Angeles Field Division and FBI Headquarters in Washington, D.C. on the investigation of the assassination of Senator Robert F. Kennedy.

The FOIA request was made by their attorneys, Mr. Lawrence Teeter and Mr. James H. Lesar on December 22, 1984. Since the initial request, they have received three responses acknowledging their request and stating that the request for a waiver of duplication fees is being processed. The last response from the FBI's Washington office on Jan. 30, 1985 stated that the fee waiver would be held in abeyance until the LAFO file is reviewed. The response also stated that due to the willingness to pay \$150.00 in duplicating fees, 1500 pages of the LAFO file would be released. To date, the FBI has released no information despite the statement that this information would be forthcoming.

I urge the FBI to process the FOIA request and fee waiver in a timely manner, as I think the delay is unreasonable. I am supportive of this request because this is an appropriate case for fee waiver under the Act. Both Mr. Stone and Dr. Melanson are legitimate scholars, conducting research in the public interest. Mr. Stone has been involved in research on the RFK assassination since 1974, when he drafted a manuscript on the topic for the late congressman and ambassador, Allard Lowenstein. Dr. Melanson is the author of Politics of Protection-U.S. Secret Service in a Terrorist Age, and he has informed me that all documents and items released by the FBI in this matter will be deposited in the Robert F. Kennedy Archive at Southeastern Massachusetts University (SMU). Visiting scholars and the public will have access to the papers in the archive, and the papers released under FOIA by the FBI to Robert Kaiser used in his book, Special Unit Senator, have been donated to the archive. In effect, SMU's RFK archive, with the addition of information released in this request, will have the most complete public collection of information, relating to the investigation of the RFK assassination for scholarly research.

Because the public interest is served by release of this information, I endorse this request. The federal courts have issued an opinion

that the John F. Kennedy assassination is not a private matter but a public concern and that FOIA requests for this information are in the public interest, Allen v. FBI, 551 F.Supp. 694, (D.D.C.1982).

Similarly, information on the tragic events surrounding the assassination of RFK is of great importance to the public and should be made available without fees. I also urge the FBI to limit the exercise of exemptions to the FOIA request, so that the public will have the benefit of this information. Obviously, there may be a need to exempt some records for security reasons, but I request that the maximum disclosure of nonexempt records be made.

This matter deserves the prompt attention of the FBI and I urge you to make it a priority.



BARNEY FRANK

BF/bc