

Kennedy won't see 'JFK' but urges open records

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WASHINGTON (AP) — Sen. Edward M. Kennedy said Friday he won't see the controversial Oliver Stone film "JFK," but agreed with one of its conclusions: all the secret records about the Kennedy assassination should be released.

The comments by Mr. Kennedy came as the former chairman of a House investigation into the Nov. 22, 1963 killing of President Kennedy indicated he may propose releasing hundreds of boxes of records.

Rep. Louis Stokes, D-Ohio, told a former staff member of the House Assassination Committee that he may relent and propose releasing some 848 boxes of records locked up by the committee until the year 2029. The decision to seal the records has come under sharp criticism by researchers and is noted in a printed message at the end of the "JFK" film.

"I spoke to Lou Stokes. There's been a change," said Kevin Walsh, a former assassination committee staffer and now counsel to the Association for Advancement of Historical Research, a Washington-based group lobbying for the release of records.

"He now feels that this continued reference to information being concealed is no longer acceptable. His position is that the select committee is not hiding anything," Mr. Walsh said. A majority vote of the House would be required to release the

records before 2029.

Mr. Stokes did not immediately return a call seeking comment.

Mr. Kennedy told WGNC-TV, a cable television station based in Worcester, Mass., that although he doesn't dwell on the assassination, scholars should have access to all the files.

"I think you'll find out over any period of time that the Warren Commission was clearly the most responsible result. But I respect other people's conclusions," he said.

The Warren Commission, in an investigation begun immediately after the assassination, concluded that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone in murdering the president. The House committee, based on acoustical evidence, concluded in 1978 that Kennedy was "probably" assassinated as the result of a conspiracy involving a second gunman. The panel also said there was a "likelihood" that the 1968 assassination of Rev. Martin Luther King stemmed from a conspiracy.