

May, along with Congressman HENRY WAXMAN and Congressman LOUIS STOKES.

H.R. 1553 amends the John F. Kennedy Assassination Records Collection Act of 1992 to provide one additional year for the Assassination Records Review Board to complete its work, which is to review and publicly release documents relating to the Kennedy assassination at the earliest possible date. The American people have a right to demand accountability by the Federal Government regarding the Kennedy assassination records. By allowing the Review Board to finish its work and make the Kennedy assassination documents public, Congress will demonstrate to Americans that the Government has nothing to hide.

H.R. 1553 would extend the Review Board's September 30, 1997, termination date under current law to September 30, 1998. H.R. 1553 authorizes \$1.6 million in fiscal year 1998 for this purpose. I would note that Congressman STOKES, who is an original cosponsor of my bill, sponsored the 1992 act in the House and chaired the House Select Committee on Assassinations that was established in 1976.

The purpose of the 1992 legislation was to publicly release records relating to the Kennedy assassination at the earliest possible date. The Assassination Records Review Board was set up to review and release the voluminous amounts of information in the Government's possession. The FBI, the Secret Service, the CIA, the Warren Commission, the Rockefeller Commission, the Church Committee in the Senate, and the House Select Committee on Assassinations have all held assassination records, and related documents have also been in the possession of certain State and local authorities as well as private citizens.

When the 1992 legislation was considered, nearly 1 million pages of data compiled by official investigations of the assassination had not been made available to the public, some 30 years after the tragedy. In creating the Review Board, Congress believed that simply making all relevant information available to the public was the best way to respond to the continuing high level of interest in the Kennedy assassination, and was preferable to undertaking a new congressional investigation. The 1992 law requires the Review Board to presume that documents relating to the assassination should be made public unless there is clear and convincing evidence to the contrary.

As a result of the Review Board's efforts, more than 14,000 documents have been transferred to the National Archives and Records Administration for inclusion in the JFK collection. That collection now totals approximately 3.7 million pages and is used extensively by researchers from all over the United States. The Review Board was in the news in April of this year when it voted to make public the Abraham Zapruder film of the Kennedy assassination.

The John F. Kennedy Assassination Records Collection Act of 1992 originally provided a 3-year timetable for the Assassination Records Review Board to complete its work. Unfortunately, there were lengthy delays in the appointment of board members, and as a consequence, the Review Board was scheduled to cease operations before it began its work. Therefore, in 1994, Congress "restarted the clock" by extending the 1992 law's termination date for 1 year, to September 30, 1996. The Review Board subsequently exercised its au-

thority to continue operating for one additional year, until September 30, 1997. Because the review process proved to be more complex and time-consuming than anticipated, the President included in his fiscal year 1998 budget a request for a 1-year extension of the Review Board's authorization.

I support the Assassination Records Review Board's request for a 1-year extension of its authorization so that it can complete its mission in a professional and thorough manner. However, let me make it very clear that, as chairman of the Government Reform and Oversight Committee, I do not intend to support any additional extension of the Review Board's life beyond September 30, 1998. On June 4, 1997, the chairman of the Review Board, John Tunheim, testified before the National Security, International Affairs, and Criminal Justice Subcommittee, and in his testimony he assured the subcommittee that one additional year would be sufficient for the Review Board to finish its work.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1553.

Mr. STOKES. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas for yielding to me. I rise in support of this bill and I want to commend Chairman BURTON and ranking Member Mr. WAXMAN for bringing this bill to the floor. As an original cosponsor of this legislation, and as the former chairman of the House Select Committee on Assassinations, I have a strong interest in this issue.

In 1978, the House Select Committee on Assassinations completed a 2-year investigation of the facts and circumstances surrounding the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. The completed investigation included the publishing of 9 volumes of hearings with the testimony of 55 witnesses and 619 exhibits.

In the years following the Assassination Committee's work, old issues and new theories continued to surface about the assassination of President Kennedy. Therefore in 1992, I authored, and the Congress passed, the President John F. Kennedy Assassination Records Collect Act. This law created the Assassination Records Review Board which was given the responsibility to identify, secure, and make available, all records related to the assassination of President Kennedy. We felt that an independent board would represent the most effective and efficient vehicle to make all assassination records available to the public.

To date, the Assassination Records Review Board has acted to transfer more than 14,000 documents to the JFK collection at the National Archives. The collection currently totals 3.7 million pages. It is used extensively by researchers from all over the United States. Further, by the end of fiscal year 1997, the Review Board will have reviewed and processed assassination records that more than 30 different government offices have identified, not including files of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Central Intelligence Agency.

Because of the Review Board's diligent efforts, some very important documents have been made public. They include: thousands of CIA documents on Lee Harvey Oswald and the assassination of President Kennedy; thousands of records from the House Assassinations Committee, including a staff report of Oswald's travel to Mexico City; thousands of records from the FBI which document the agency's interest in Oswald before the Kennedy assassination; and extensive FBI files on its investigation of the assassination.

Mr. Speaker, it is our understanding that the Review Board will need more time to process the classified records that remain, primarily records from the Central Intelligence Agency, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The additional year will permit the review board to complete this work, close out the operation, and submit its final report.

It is a credit to this institution that we can provide historians and the American public with all relevant information concerning the assassination of President Kennedy. It is my belief that we should allow the Assassination Records Review Board to complete this important undertaking. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the passage of H.R. 1553.

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PETRI). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas [Mr. SESSIONS] that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1553.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

NOTICE OF ALTERATION OF ORDER OF CONSIDERATION OF AMENDMENTS DURING FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1119, NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 1998

Mr. STUMP. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to section 5 of House Resolution 169 and as the designee of the chairman of Committee on National Security, I request that during further consideration of H.R. 1119 in the Committee of Whole and following consideration of amendment No. 15, printed in part 2 of House Report 105-137, as modified by section 8(b) of House Resolution 169, the following amendments be considered in the following order:

Amendment No. 1, printed in part 2 of House Report 105-137; amendment No. 34, printed in part 2 of House Report 105-137; amendment No. 10, printed in part 1 of House Report 105-137; amendment No. 11, printed in part 1 of House Report 105-137; amendment No. 7, printed in part 1 of House Report 105-137, as modified by section 8(a) of House Resolution 169; the amendment printed in section 8(c) of House Resolution 169; amendment No. 35 printed in part 2 of House Report 105-137.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 1998

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 169 and rule XXIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 1119.

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IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House