YOUR ADDRESS

Hon. [ ]

[United States Senate

Dirksen Senate Office Building

Washington, DC, 20510]

or

[House of Representatives

Rayburn House Office Building

Washington, D.C. 20515]

Dear [Senator or Representative]

Re: Request for Oversight Hearing

On October 22nd, President Biden postponed the release of the remaining JFK Assassination Records for another 14 months. The President stated he was postponing the disclosure of these records because certain agencies claimed that release of 58 year old records would somehow pose a risk to national security. President Biden’s memo followed a six-month postponement by President Trump in October 2017 and a 3.5 year postponement in April 2018.

Under the John F. Kennedy Assassination Records Act of 1992 (the “JFK Act”), all records identified as JFK assassination records were supposed to be disclosed by October 26, 2017 unless the release of a particular record would pose an “identifiable harm” to national security that was of such gravity that it outweighed the strong public interest in the record. Congress said that only in the “*rarest cases is there any legitimate need for continued protection of such records.”* If that was true in 1992, it is certainly even more so now.

For any record proposed to be postponed, the JFK Act provides that the American people are to be provided with an unclassified explanation of the “identifiable harm” posed by the record and how that harm outweighs the public interest in the document. Neither the Biden memo nor President Trump’s two memos complied with this statutory mandate.

Since it is now abundantly clear that the Executive Branch is either unable or unwilling to comply with the JFK Act, I ask that you contact the [Carolyn Maloney, chair of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee] [Senators Gary Peters and Rob Portman, co-chairs of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs] and request that the committee hold an oversight hearing where the Executive Branch agencies would be forced to explain to the American people why they have refused to comply with the JFK Act.

The failure to fully comply with the JFK Act is emblematic of the national crisis of declassification. Releasing the remaining JFK assassination records would be a big step towards restoring the trust of the American people in the candor of the country’s institutions.