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Industry Update

New Congressional Task Force on Federal Secrets Convenes First Hearing Focused on JFK Files

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Earlier this year, the GOP-controlled House of Representatives established the [Task Force on the Declassification of Federal Secrets](#), a newly created body under the House Committee on Oversight and Reform.

The task force, chaired by Rep. Anna Paulina Luna (R-FL) and ranking member Rep. Robert Garcia (D-CA), held its first [hearing](#) earlier this month, focusing on the assassination of President John F. Kennedy and the recently declassified documents surrounding it.

The task force includes several of Congress' most active and high-profile oversight voices from both parties, including Rep. Lauren Boebert (R-CO), Rep. Nancy Mace (R-SC), Rep. Jasmine Crockett (D-TX) and Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL), who bring a wide range of investigative experience and public attention to the new panel.

While congressional oversight of the intelligence community is not new, this task force represents a renewed and focused effort to evaluate the classification system itself — with an eye toward expanding transparency around historically significant events.

What Is the New Task Force on the Declassification of Federal Secrets?

Established in January 2025, the task force was designed to examine the federal classification system and recommend reforms to facilitate greater transparency, particularly regarding high-profile historical events. It sits within the House Oversight Committee, and its stated mandate includes the review of classified materials tied to the assassinations of President John F. Kennedy, Senator Robert F. Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Chairwoman Luna has indicated that the task force will also investigate unidentified aerial phenomena (UAPs), origins of the COVID-19 virus and the 9/11 files.

The task force's formation follows growing congressional interest in modernizing declassification procedures and builds on previous legislative branch efforts to push for the release of historical records — particularly those long shielded under claims of national security.

Chairwoman Luna has publicly emphasized that the goal of the task force is not to revisit the past for its own sake, but to ensure accountability, transparency and public trust in how the government classifies and withholds information.

Transparency and the JFK Files: A Defining Test Case

On April 1, 2025, the task force held its inaugural hearing focused on the recently declassified JFK assassination records, including more than 80,000 pages of material released in late 2023 and early 2024.

The hearing featured witnesses who have long scrutinized the official narrative, including Oliver Stone, filmmaker and director of the Academy Award-winning film *JFK*. Stone called for a comprehensive, independent reinvestigation of the assassination based on the newly released documents.

Throughout the hearing, lawmakers expressed concern over the fragmented and inconsistent application of declassification standards, particularly where records have remained partially redacted despite statutory deadlines. Witnesses raised questions about intelligence agency processes and underscored the importance of full public access to historical documents.

Next Steps: Toward Broader Declassification Reform

While the JFK case carries singular historical resonance, the task force's remit is significantly broader. Future hearings are expected to explore additional high-profile events, the standards for national security classification and the institutional barriers to timely declassification.

Several members have also signaled interest in reviewing agency compliance with existing transparency laws, the role of the intelligence community in redaction decisions and whether executive agencies have overrelied on national security exceptions.

The task force is expected to issue recommendations on legislative reforms, executive branch guidance or structural changes that could accelerate or systematize declassification processes — particularly for legacy records with high public interest.

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If you have any questions concerning these developing issues, please do not hesitate to contact any of the following Paul Hastings lawyers:

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