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COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

B-199689

August 4, 1980

The Honorable Claiborne Pell
Chairman, Committee on Rules
and Administration
United States Senate

Dear Mr. Chairman:

We have ^{Review of} reviewed Senate Resolution 474 relating to public access to Senate records at the National Archives. We believe the resolution will make Senate records available for scholarly research in a timely fashion. We believe the resolution also affords adequate protection for records of a personal nature by restricting access for 50 years. It also allows for protecting records in accordance with applicable laws and Executive order. Finally, access to records can be restricted by vote of a Senate committee or by the Secretary of the Senate.

Passage of this resolution should clarify conditions for public access to Senate records. To date, access has been governed by each committee. Under that approach, conflicting timeframes and procedures for access to the records may result, frustrating the use of this valuable body of knowledge by researchers.

We believe this resolution should improve access to a significant source of information while adequately protecting sensitive records. If you so desire, we would be pleased to discuss this matter with you or your staff.

Sincerely yours,

Comptroller General
of the United States