

George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and Theodore Roosevelt. In a letter to the Foreign Operations and Government Information Subcommittee, dated March 7, 1962, he enunciated the policy as follows:

"... this Administration has gone to great lengths to achieve full cooperation with the Congress in making available to it all appropriate documents, correspondence and information. That is the basic policy of this Administration, and it will continue to be so. Executive privilege can be invoked only by the President and will not be used without specific Presidential approval."

President Lyndon B. Johnson informed the Subcommittee by letter, dated April 2, 1965, he would continue the policy enunciated by President Kennedy. He stated:

"Since assuming the Presidency, I have followed the policy laid down by President Kennedy in his letter to you of March 7, 1962, dealing with this subject. Thus, the claim of 'executive privilege' will continue to be made only by the President."

In view of the urgent need to safeguard and maintain a free flow of information to the Congress, I hope you will favorably consider a reaffirmation of the policy which provides, in essence, that the claim of "executive privilege" will be invoked only by the President.

Sincerely,

(s) JOHN E. MOSS, *Chairman.*

THE WHITE HOUSE,
Washington, April 7, 1969.

Hon. JOHN E. MOSS,
*Chairman, Foreign Operations and Government Information Subcommittee,
House of Representatives,
Washington, D.C.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Knowing of your interest, I am sending you a copy of a memorandum I have issued to the heads of executive departments and agencies spelling out the procedural steps to govern the invocation of "executive privilege" under this Administration.

As you well know, the claim of executive privilege has been the subject of much debate since George Washington first declared that a Chief Executive must "exercise a discretion."

I believe, and I have stated earlier, that the scope of executive privilege must be very narrowly construed. Under this Administration, executive privilege will not be asserted without specific Presidential approval.

I want to take this opportunity to assure you and your committee that this Administration is dedicated to insuring a free flow of information to the Congress and the news media—and, thus, to the citizens. You are, I am sure, familiar with the statement I made on this subject during the campaign. Now that I have the responsibility to implement this pledge, I wish to reaffirm my intent to do so. I want open government to be a reality in every way possible.

This Administration has already given a positive emphasis to freedom of information. I am committed to ensuring that both the letter and spirit of the Public Records Law will be implemented throughout the Executive Branch of the government.

With my best wishes.

Sincerely,

(s) RICHARD NIXON.

MARCH 24, 1969.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

(Establishing a Procedure to Govern Compliance with
Congressional Demands for Information)

The policy of this Administration is to comply to the fullest extent possible with Congressional requests for information. While the Executive branch has the responsibility of withholding certain information the disclosure of which would be incompatible with the public interest, this Administration will invoke this authority only in the most compelling circumstances and after a rigorous inquiry into the actual need for its exercise. For those reasons Executive