

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court said Monday it will decide whether former President Richard M. Nixon should control records of his administration, including 888 reels of White House tape recordings.

The court agreed to hear arguments by Nixon's attorneys that Congress violated the exPresident's rights to privacy and invaded the powers of the presidency two years ago when it gave control of the massive records to the General Services Administration.

A three-judge federal court in Washington upheld the Presidential Materials and Recordings Preservation Act, discounting arguments by Nixon's lawyers. If the Justices agree with the lower court, an estimated 42 million pages of documents, including about 200,000 prepared or reviewed by Nixon, and the tapes will remain with the GSA.

If the Supreme Court rules in favor of Nixon, the material would be shipped to San Clemente, Calif., the ex-President's home since his resignation Aug. 9, 1974.

The court will hear arguments in the case next year.

After the Watergate scandals forced his resignation, Nixon asked the government to ship the documents and tapes to San Clemente. The GSA agreed to let Nixon retain title to the presidential materials in a pact that required Nixon to donate a substantial portion of them to the government at a later date.

That agreement was shietentoatt, however, when Watergate special prosecutor Leon Jaworski requested a delay in handing over the documents to Nixon.

The former President sued, and Congress then passed the legislation.

The act calls for the GSA to govern public access to the material. The Senate

has rejected one set of proposed regulations for such governing, and another proposal is pending.

The material is available to Nixon but such access is subject to GSA regulation.

In their appeal to the high court, Nixon's

attorneys said the materials reflect the former President's 'entire personal, political and official life.' They said he "never intended the records ... or his diary to be reviewed by anyone other than himself or his family."

Nixon said the materials covered by the 1974 act include notes and letters from friends and family members as well as taped conversations with his wife, daughters, physician, attorneys and friends.

The Justice Department and several groups who filed friend of the court briefs opposing Nixon's bid for control said the presidential records are government property, even if Nixon mixed personal records with those of the office he held.

Among the tapes are the 30 segments played during the Watergate cover-up trial of Nixon's top advisers.

The U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Washington last month, ruled that those tapes now can be released to the public.

Transcripts of the tapes were made available at the time of the trial. Release of the tapes, however, would let the public know what expletives were deleted from transcripts and also give the tone and inflections of voice used by Nixon, Watergate figures John D. Ehrlichman, H. R. Haldeman, John N. Mitchell, John W. Dean and others.