

Public Law 105–246  
105th Congress

An Act

To amend section 552 of title 5, United States Code, and the National Security Act of 1947 to require disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act regarding certain persons, disclose Nazi war criminal records without impairing any investigation or prosecution conducted by the Department of Justice or certain intelligence matters, and for other purposes.

Oct. 8, 1998

[S. 1379]

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

Nazi War Crimes  
Disclosure Act.  
5 USC 522 note.

**SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

This Act may be cited as the “Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act”.

**SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF NAZI WAR CRIMINAL RECORDS INTER-AGENCY WORKING GROUP.**

5 USC 522 note.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section the term—

(1) “agency” has the meaning given such term under section 551 of title 5, United States Code;

(2) “Interagency Group” means the Nazi War Criminal Records Interagency Working Group established under subsection (b);

(3) “Nazi war criminal records” has the meaning given such term under section 3 of this Act; and

(4) “record” means a Nazi war criminal record.

(b) ESTABLISHMENT OF INTERAGENCY GROUP.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the President shall establish the Nazi War Criminal Records Interagency Working Group, which shall remain in existence for 3 years after the date the Interagency Group is established.

Deadlines.  
President.

(2) MEMBERSHIP.—The President shall appoint to the Interagency Group individuals whom the President determines will most completely and effectively carry out the functions of the Interagency Group within the time limitations provided in this section, including the Director of the Holocaust Museum, the Historian of the Department of State, the Archivist of the United States, the head of any other agency the President considers appropriate, and no more than 3 other persons. The head of an agency appointed by the President may designate an appropriate officer to serve on the Interagency Group in lieu of the head of such agency.

(3) INITIAL MEETING.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Interagency Group shall hold an initial meeting and begin the functions required under this section.

Records.

(c) **FUNCTIONS.**—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Interagency Group shall, to the greatest extent possible consistent with section 3 of this Act—

(1) locate, identify, inventory, recommend for declassification, and make available to the public at the National Archives and Records Administration, all classified Nazi war criminal records of the United States;

(2) coordinate with agencies and take such actions as necessary to expedite the release of such records to the public; and

Reports.

(3) submit a report to Congress, including the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight of the House of Representatives, describing all such records, the disposition of such records, and the activities of the Interagency Group and agencies under this section.

(d) **FUNDING.**—There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act.

5 USC 522 note.

**SEC. 3. REQUIREMENT OF DISCLOSURE OF RECORDS REGARDING PERSONS WHO COMMITTED NAZI WAR CRIMES.**

(a) **NAZI WAR CRIMINAL RECORDS.**—For purposes of this Act, the term “Nazi war criminal records” means classified records or portions of records that—

(1) pertain to any person with respect to whom the United States Government, in its sole discretion, has grounds to believe ordered, incited, assisted, or otherwise participated in the persecution of any person because of race, religion, national origin, or political opinion, during the period beginning on March 23, 1933, and ending on May 8, 1945, under the direction of, or in association with—

(A) the Nazi government of Germany;

(B) any government in any area occupied by the military forces of the Nazi government of Germany;

(C) any government established with the assistance or cooperation of the Nazi government of Germany; or

(D) any government which was an ally of the Nazi government of Germany; or

(2) pertain to any transaction as to which the United States Government, in its sole discretion, has grounds to believe—

(A) involved assets taken from persecuted persons during the period beginning on March 23, 1933, and ending on May 8, 1945, by, under the direction of, on behalf of, or under authority granted by the Nazi government of Germany or any nation then allied with that government; and

(B) such transaction was completed without the assent of the owners of those assets or their heirs or assigns or other legitimate representatives.

(b) **RELEASE OF RECORDS.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Subject to paragraphs (2), (3), and (4), the Nazi War Criminal Records Interagency Working Group shall release in their entirety Nazi war criminal records that are described in subsection (a).

(2) EXCEPTION FOR PRIVACY, ETC.—An agency head may exempt from release under paragraph (1) specific information, that would—

(A) constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy;

(B) reveal the identity of a confidential human source, or reveal information about the application of an intelligence source or method, or reveal the identity of a human intelligence source when the unauthorized disclosure of that source would clearly and demonstrably damage the national security interests of the United States;

(C) reveal information that would assist in the development or use of weapons of mass destruction;

(D) reveal information that would impair United States cryptologic systems or activities;

(E) reveal information that would impair the application of state-of-the-art technology within a United States weapon system;

(F) reveal actual United States military war plans that remain in effect;

(G) reveal information that would seriously and demonstrably impair relations between the United States and a foreign government, or seriously and demonstrably undermine ongoing diplomatic activities of the United States;

(H) reveal information that would clearly and demonstrably impair the current ability of United States Government officials to protect the President, Vice President, and other officials for whom protection services, in the interest of national security, are authorized;

(I) reveal information that would seriously and demonstrably impair current national security emergency preparedness plans; or

(J) violate a treaty or international agreement.

(3) APPLICATION OF EXEMPTIONS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—In applying the exemptions listed in subparagraphs (B) through (J) of paragraph (2), there shall be a presumption that the public interest in the release of Nazi war criminal records will be served by disclosure and release of the records. Assertion of such exemption may only be made when the agency head determines that disclosure and release would be harmful to a specific interest identified in the exemption. An agency head who makes such a determination shall promptly report it to the committees of Congress with appropriate jurisdiction, including the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight of the House of Representatives. The exemptions set forth in paragraph (2) shall constitute the only authority pursuant to which an agency head may exempt records otherwise subject to release under paragraph (1).

(B) APPLICATION OF TITLE 5.—A determination by an agency head to apply an exemption listed in subparagraphs (B) through (I) of paragraph (2) shall be subject to the same standard of review that applies in the case of records withheld under section 552(b)(1) of title 5, United States Code.

(4) LIMITATION ON APPLICATION.—This subsection shall not apply to records—

(A) related to or supporting any active or inactive investigation, inquiry, or prosecution by the Office of Special Investigations of the Department of Justice; or

(B) solely in the possession, custody, or control of that office.

(c) INAPPLICABILITY OF NATIONAL SECURITY ACT OF 1947 EXEMPTION.—Section 701(a) of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 431) shall not apply to any operational file, or any portion of any operational file, that constitutes a Nazi war criminal record under section 3 of this Act.

5 USC 522 note.

**SEC. 4. EXPEDITED PROCESSING OF FOIA REQUESTS FOR NAZI WAR CRIMINAL RECORDS.**

(a) EXPEDITED PROCESSING.—For purposes of expedited processing under section 552(a)(6)(E) of title 5, United States Code, any requester of a Nazi war criminal record shall be deemed to have a compelling need for such record.

(b) REQUESTER.—For purposes of this section, the term “requester” means any person who was persecuted in the manner described under section 3(a)(1) of this Act who requests a Nazi war criminal record.

5 USC 522 note.

**SEC. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE.**

This Act and the amendments made by this Act shall take effect on the date that is 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

Approved October 8, 1998.

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**LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—S. 1379:**

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 144 (1998):

June 19, considered and passed Senate.

Aug. 6, considered and passed House.

