

STANFORD UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

STANFORD MEDICAL CENTER
PALO ALTO, CALIFORNIA 94304

DEPARTMENT OF GENETICS

Area Code 415
321-1200

Professor Harold P. Green
Professor of Law
George Washington University
Washington, D. C.

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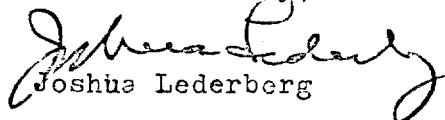
Dear Professor Green--

I was happy to note your letter to the editor in the Jan. 18 issue of the Washington Post. I say this without irony, for it certainly was not my intention to provoke any personal polemics. If the press reports were such a distortion, it is a service to public understanding (even more than to your own reputation) that their unreliability be underscored. You will note that I did emphasize the source of the quotations, and elsewhere in the column attempted to distinguish the possible (but too prevalent) misunderstanding of remarks like "stretchout of technology" from your own, certainly less simplistic views.

My immediate reaction, however, is that we are still poles apart on one issue of social philosophy. Your reaction to technological disharmony is to speak for a stretchout (though you regard it as ~~xxx~~ unrealistic). Mine is to demand that our social and political thinking be brought into the present century. A technological stretchout is not going to alleviate global malnutrition; more intensive studies of human (and agricultural) biology may be able to help. Perhaps more important, the main embarrassment that science often imposes on our social (and may I say legal) institutions is by exposing evils once cloaked in ignorance or excused by impotence.

However, I am again committing the sin of which you complain, ~~making~~ reacting to your statements in the press, possibly out of context. Would you favor me with a complete copy of your talk at Dallas?

Yours sincerely,


Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics

P.S. Realistic or not, pleas for stretchout are often echoed in Congress and must have some influence on precarious budgets for basic science.