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STANFORD UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE  
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Memo from  
JOSHUA LEDERBERG

To:  
Sen. Kennedy

February 19, 1971

Hon. Edward Kennedy  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Senator Kennedy:

In reference to your bill on the National Cancer Authority, S. 34, may I transmit the attached comments?

They were motivated, in part, by some of the criticisms on which you remarked in your letter to Mr. Benno Schmidt. I believe most of them are readily answered, but to do so requires a less simplistic analysis of the problem than the slogan "CURE CANCER".

Some of my scientific colleagues have been critical about singling cancer out for special treatment in a separate executive agency. They fear that this may result in a degradation of scientific standards in the selection of projects, or too narrow an approach to the cancer problem in a way that may be self-defeating. These fears might be minimized if the proposed Board had a more firmly established responsibility, closer to that of the existing National Advisory Health Councils, but with clearer authority to delegate. For example, in accord with the legislation governing the NIH, the Board should have the responsibility of approving every grant or contract. But to make this responsibility an effective one, the act should also provide that the Board may authorize appropriate procedures by which such grants might be consummated without requiring individual approval.

Some of these points are amplified in the article.

Yours sincerely,

LT. JOSEPH P. KENNEDY, JR. LABORATORIES FOR MOLECULAR MEDICINE  
dedicated to the study of mental retardation

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