

MAY 27 1971

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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
LABOR AND PUBLIC WELFARE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

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May 25, 1971

Dr. Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics
Stanford University School of Medicine
Stanford, California 94305

Dear Dr. Lederberg:

Recent hearings conducted by the Senate Health Subcommittee demonstrated the great concern and broad based support across the country for developing a special research program aimed at conquering cancer. There is no question in our minds that the Congress and the country are prepared to give extensive support to expanding the effort to conquer this disease.

The only remaining question is, what is the best approach to accomplish this end. The National Panel of Consultants on the Conquest of Cancer recommended this effort be carried out through a separate cancer agency removed from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Senator Kennedy moved to implement the recommendations by introducing S.34, the proposed Conquest of Cancer Act.

The hearings indicated sharp disagreement over the separate cancer agency approach recommended by the Panel. As co-sponsors of S. 34, we agree wholeheartedly with the bill's objective. However, after reviewing the testimony, and having extensive conversations with interested scientists, health educators and others in the medical community, we find that a worthy compromise would be to modify the Panel's proposal by establishing the National Institutes of Health as an independent agency.

On May 21, we (along with Senator Schweiker) announced our intention to propose such an amendment (No. 109) to create a separate NIH and within it, a National Cancer Authority. The autonomous NIH would be comparable to the Atomic Energy Commission, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the National Science Foundation. We believe this proposal would accomplish all the objectives of the Panel's recommendations and also meet the serious objections of the research community to a separate cancer effort outside of NIH.

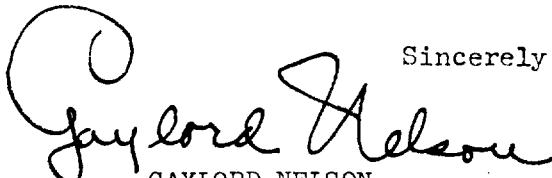
Under the proposal, only one administrative post (the Director of NIH) would separate the Cancer Authority Administrator from the President. At present, with NIH as part of HEW, there are six bureaucratic layers between the National Cancer Institute and the President.

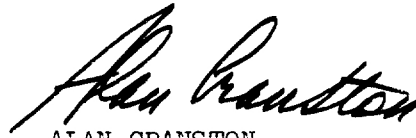
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The Health Subcommittee is conducting another hearing June 10 on the cancer proposals. It would be valuable for the Committee to have your views on the proposal we have described. Enclosed is a copy of the floor statement describing the amendment in detail and containing its text. If you have any questions, please contact Judith Robinson (Senator Nelson, 225-8658), or Jon Steinberg (Senator Cranston, 225-7651 or 52).

Sincerely yours,


GAYLORD NELSON
U. S. Senator


ALAN CRANSTON
U. S. Senator

Enclosure