



STANFORD UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER

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STANFORD UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
Department of Genetics

October 21, 1971

Honorable Paul Rogers
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Rogers,

I am sorry that my views on the organization of cancer research continue to be misunderstood. May I submit the following statement for the record?

1. The chief impediments to more rapid progress are simply
 - a) need for more funds
 - b) need for an enduring commitment by the President and his budgetary advisors and
 - c) embedding medical research as a whole "deep within the bowels of HEW", which hinders the ventilation of many complex problems, including budget priorities.
2. Points 1a and 1b were, in my view, the main arguments of the Panel of Consultants, and I am gratified that these no longer are controversial.
3. The restructuring of NIH can create much turmoil and will solve no problems. My recommendations in decreasing order of preference are:
 - a) to leave NIH intact, including the NCI as a senior component in an orderly administrative structure; but to elevate health research to a major divisional element of HEW - that is, to name an assistant secretary for health research. Action- and welfare-oriented administrators, however admirable their social zeal, have demonstrated their inability to comprehend how research can be forwarded;
 - b) to leave the NIH in its present position, but improve its performance by retaining and bringing better people in the organization. This will be possible only if middle-level administrators are protected from political harassment; so they can function professionally. (The notorious black list was just the tip of an iceberg.) The scientific advisory councils must also be given a strengthened role;

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c) to make symbolic rearrangements of NIH. The merit of these proposals is measured by how little and how reversibly they disturb an organization that has been outstandingly successful in the face of external pressures. On these grounds, I had written you earlier that S.1828 had perhaps reached the point where it would do no more than a tolerable level of damage. Certainly, it was much preferable to the original S.34. By the same logic your bill is even better.

I am however, not persuaded of the merit of any of these reorganizations, except as an answer to political pressures irrelevant to scientific needs. I do not support any of them, but your compromise bill is clearly the least adverse.

If you wish to address the real problems of pursuing cancer research, please reconsider my remarks at 3a and 3b. Congress also has a part to play in opening up some authorizations for periods longer than one year, commensurate with the time scale of actual programs directed at the conquest of cancer.

Sincerely yours,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics

JL/rr