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December 19, 1977

The Honorable Gaylord Nelson  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Sir:

During the Vietnam War I could always cling to the intelligent position taken by my Senator Nelson. You might imagine, therefore, my shock when reading the release from your office dated December 9. The childish litany of Santa Claus, Tooth Fairy, Candy Man, etc., was sheer political diatribe. As a constituent of yours and, perhaps more importantly to you, one who has voted for you consistently, I was and am appalled.

You and most other politicians who won't take the time to study and understand technological development continue to confuse the making of a discovery and the process of bringing that discovery to the benefit of the public. If you were consistent, you would argue that the student who had received federal help in completing his education should forever after be bound in slavery serving the federal government and should not have the privilege of using his education to support his family or any other private activity. The facts are abundantly available which support the conclusions that a federally-owned patent does not result in public benefit in any high proportion of cases.

In your news release you apparently plan to substitute government development, government manufacture, and government sale of any inventions discovered with federal funds. This sounds strangely familiar to what I understand to be the experiment tried in the USSR. I believe I have heard even you comment favorably on the American "free enterprise" system. Why should we abandon it in favor of the inferior arrangement of the USSR.

It seems obvious to me that your news release and the activities of your staff were intended to oppose the consideration being given the Thornton Bill (HR-8596). After the shock of the news release, I was not further surprised to learn that the "hearings" are open only to those whose persuasions match the simplistic views expressed in your release.

Very truly yours,

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