1995 Legislative Activities

Government Reform

Lobbying Disclosure Act. Levin led a successful effort to reform and strengthen lobbying disclosure laws. Levin's bill, passed by both Houses of Congress, was signed into law on December 19. It will bring special interest lobbying in Washington into the open through the toughest disclosure requirements in history. It will enhance public confidence in government by ensuring that the public is aware of efforts made by paid lobbyists to influence public policy.

The landmark law requires people who are paid to lobby Congress or the executive branch to register and disclose whom they represent and how much they are being paid. They must also disclose the issues on which they lobby and which house of Congress and executive branch agencies they are lobbying. The law attempts to limit paperwork burdens on the private sector. Persons who spends less than 20 percent of their time on paid lobbying activities are exempt. Citizens who are not professional lobbyists, but merely contact the federal government to express their own views, are also exempt.

Senate Gift Reform. Levin championed the fight for new Senate rules to curb gifts of vacations, tickets and meals to members of the U.S. Senate paid for by special interests. No member of the Senate or their employees can knowingly accept a gift that they reasonably believe has a value of more than $50 under these new rules, and they are prohibited from accepting more than $100 in gifts from any single source over one year's time. All gifts over $10 in value counts toward the annual limit.

Under these reforms, lobbyists also will be prohibited from contributing any items of value to legal expense funds, congressional retreats or conferences or charities controlled by a Senator or their staff.

Reports Elimination Act. This bill, authored by Levin, passed the Senate as an amendment to the Paperwork Reduction Act this spring and recently cleared the House of Representatives. Over 200 unnecessary and unneeded reports from federal agencies across the government which are now required by law will be eliminated when Levin's bill is signed into law. The measure also includes a provision which would sunset most of the remaining congressionally mandated reports after four years unless they are reauthorized by Congress. The CBO has estimated enactment of this bill will reduce the costs of federal agency reports by as much as $10 million per year.

Administrative Dispute Resolution Act. Levin won Senate committee approval of S. 1224, a bill co-authored by Levin and Sen. Charles Grassley, R-Iowa, to reauthorize and make permanent the Administrative Dispute Resolution Act which encourages federal agencies to use less costly, faster alternatives to civil litigation, such as arbitration and mediation. This sets the stage for this proven money-saver to become law in the near future. The Administrative Dispute Resolution Act, which lapsed in October, has saved taxpayers

millions of dollars in reduced legal costs. One such program at the Resolution Trust Corporation catalogued savings of nearly $115 million over four years.

Levin Weighs in Against Hate Rhetoric

Spoke Out Against NRA Fundraising Letter. Levin was among the first on Capitol Hill to speak out against an NRA fundraising letter written by NRA Executive Vice President Wayne LaPierre as "highly inflammatory and totally inappropriate." In an April 28 letter he urged the NRA to retract the LaPierre letter, asking the late NRA President Tom Washington, "Can you honestly justify your organization's characterization of law enforcement officials...describing them as on a mission sanctioned by the government to murder law-abiding citizens'?" In a speech on the Senate floor May 9, Levin urged rank and file members of the NRA to condemn the letter and the next day he praised former President George Bush for resigning his membership over the language in the letter.

Regulatory Reform

Led fight to stop Moratorium on all Regulations. Such a moratorium would have prevented new regulations for one year that would protect public health, safety and the environment. At risk, for instance, were uniform mammogram standards, important meat safety inspection rules to prevent e.coli bacteria from infecting hamburgers and rules to protect children from unsafe toys. A moratorium bill was passed by the House, sent to the Senate and referred to the Governmental Affairs Committee. As a leader of the opposition, Levin was able to help defeat the proposal on the Senate floor. In its place, he helped develop legislation to establish a congressional review process of 60 days for every major rule, with expedited procedures for consideration of resolutions to disapprove inappropriate or unnecessary regulations, which passed the committee unanimously.

Regulatory Reform. Led the fight to stop extreme regulatory reform and pass reasonable regulatory reform. As a key leader in opposition to the Dole-Johnston bill, S. 343, which could have gutted important environmental and worker health and safety laws, Levin helped defeat three separate attempts to limit debate, which effectively stopped the measure from passage. Levin had helped develop an alternative bipartisan regulatory reform bill working with Senators Glenn, D-Ohio, and Roth, R-Del., which was narrowly defeated 50-48.

Great Lakes

Saved Coast Guard Stations from Closure. Levin led the Senate fight to reverse a recommendation by the Coast Guard that 23 Coast Guard stations across the country be closed, including four in Michigan: Manistee, Marquette, Harbor Beach and Muskegon. He had expressed concern that proposed changes would delay emergency response and limit services to these areas, making the lakes more dangerous for Michigan swimmers, boaters and others who rely on essential services

Michigan swimmers, boaters and others who rely on essential services provided by the Coast Guard. The Coast Guard report which recommended closure of these stations was riddled with inaccuracies in vital search and rescue data, according to Levin, and did not ensure that safety would not be jeopardized. Cost reductions from closing these stations were also overestimated.

In late October, the Senate approved the Transportation Appropriations Conference Report, 87 -10, which included language overturning the closure recommendations. Michigan has nearly 900,000 registered boaters -- the largest number in the country.

Great Lakes Initiative. Levin helped protect the Great Lakes Initiative (GLI) from efforts to delay and weaken it. The GLI is a 6-year, bipartisan effort to standardize state water quality controls protecting the Great Lakes. It benefits Michigan more than any other Great Lakes state, because Michigan has the most Great Lakes coastline and among the toughest water quality controls in the region. Federal guidelines were issued in March which would help increase Great Lakes protections and level the regulatory playing field, and states began a two-year implementation period. Levin teamed with Representatives Vern Ehlers, R-Grand Rapids, and John Dingell, D-Trenton, and others to stop efforts to make the GLI a voluntary rather than mandatory program, to delay state implementation and to weaken state compliance requirements.

Jobs and Economic Development

U.S./ Japan Trade. Successfully urged U.S. Trade Representative Mickey Kantor to name Japanese auto parts trade practices as an unfair trade barrier to U.S. auto parts under Section 301 of the U.S. trade law. This pressured Japan to reach a comprehensive trade opening agreement with the United States in autos and auto parts trade.

In September, monitoring and enforcement provisions for the US/Japan trade agreement proposed by Levin were adopted by the Clinton Administration. At a meeting held with Kantor and auto industry leaders in Michigan in July, Levin had suggested an enforcement and implementation office be created to monitor how U.S. automotive trade with Japan changes under the agreement. The office would also provide U.S. companies with a single contact point to lodge complaints. The new program Levin asked for represents an unprecedented partnership between the private sector and government to help verify a trade agreement.

Helped Stop Dismantlement of Commerce Department. Although the bill to dismantle the Commerce Department is expected to resurface early next year, Levin helped stop its advance in 1995. This saved a number of trade, industry, manufacturing and environmental programs important to Michigan. Next year Export Assistance Centers of the Department of Commerce in Detroit, Grand Rapids, Pontiac and Ann Arbor will not be closed but will instead continue to help support 500,000 Michigan jobs and $35 billion in Michigan exports. Also remaining open: Ann Arbor's Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center, which helps about 1,000 small and mid size manufacturers to

Center, which helps about 1,000 small and mid-size manufacturers to modernize each year. The Economic Development Administration, which provided $17 million to Michigan in 1994, including $9.7 million for Iosco County due to the closure of Wurtsmith Air Force Base, will not be terminated, but will operate with reduced funding.

Infrastructure Needs. Levin worked to assure that Michigan got its fair share of transportation dollars in the Transportation spending bill. Spending for vital local projects has been assured, including $15.5 million to allow a major airport improvement project at Detroit Metropolitan Airport to go forward and a $3 million boost for the Lansing's Intermodal Transportation Center. Michigan will also receive the lion's share of funding under the intelligent vehicle highway systems (IVHS) account. An innovative Oakland County project called FAST-TRAC, which increases safety at intersections using video imaging technology and aims to reduce congestion, is expected to get about $15 million in IVHS funds.

Flint Job Corps Center Saved. Levin was actively involved in working for the removal of a $36 million cut in job corps construction funds from the FY95 Recissions bill. By winning this fight, the Flint Job Corps site was saved. In July of 1994, Flint was selected as one of the eight cities designated for a new job corps site scheduled to open between 1996 and 1997. Created in 1964, Job Corps is the country's most comprehensive residential training program for at-risk youth aged 16-24. The Flint center has a capacity for 330 participants at any one time and is expected to serve 450 students each year, creating about 100 jobs in the community.

Community/Human Services

Welfare Reform. Levin gained Senate approval for strong work requirements in the welfare reform bill that passed the Senate in September. Co-sponsored with Majority Leader Robert Dole, R-Kan., the Levin measure required able-bodied welfare recipients to be in job training, in school or working in private sector jobs or community service jobs within three months of receipt of benefits. This requirement would be phased in over two years to allow states to chance to adjust and states could opt out. However, this welfare reform effort was dropped by the conference committee.

Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program Saved. Although the House Appropriations Committee voted to eliminate this valuable program, which provides states with money to implement a Ombudsman program to monitor the condition of nursing homes, the Senate restored funding. This vital program operates through Title VII of the Older Americans Act, supporting the efforts of paid staff and thousands of volunteers to monitor the quality of life at nursing homes and investigate elder abuse. Levin worked to restore this money, expressing concern that the network of services for Michigan's seniors was already squeezed and they could ill afford the estimated loss of $115,000 that would occur if the House cuts remained in effect.

Levin Scores Land Transfer for Soccer Field. Following appeals from

Levin, the Senate approved his amendment to the Coast Guard Authorization bill to transfer 27.1 acres of unused land currently owned by the U.S. Coast Guard to the Traverse City public school system so it can be transformed into a soccer field. The provision was added to the House version of the bill by Rep. Bart Stupak, D-Menominee, and because this non-controversial item is now in both bills, it is expected to become law. The Traverse City school system currently does not have a soccer field of its own.

Agriculture/Environment

Marketing Order for Tart Cherries. In an effort to stabilize prices, Levin has been an advocate on behalf of a federal marketing order for tart cherries with both USDA Secretary Dan Glickman and his predecessor, Mike Espy, repeatedly urging officials to issue an order. In late September, USDA announced they would recommend an order, which could be implemented in time for the 1996 crop year. Michigan is the nation's largest producer of tart cherries. Cherry growers have been struggling because a high yield and larger-than-usual carryover from last year threaten to make prices to the farmers as low as three or four cents per pound. That's far below the 25 cents per pound it takes to break even. The order should help stabilize prices and income.

West Michigan Ozone. Levin joined with Sen. Spencer Abraham, R-Mich., to introduce a bill to amend the Clean Air Act to improve the chances that West Michigan residents would get relief from unnecessary vehicle inspection requirements. The measure would correct the unfair treatment of victims of pollution which originates in other areas. Action is necessary because the law lacks common sense: it makes little or no provision for determining whether locally measured ozone in urban areas came from local sources or from hundreds of miles away. The bill allows an ozone nonattainment area that does not significantly contribute to its own or any other area's problems to be treated as a "marginal" area. This means car owners would not have to submit to stringent mandatory vehicle testing and the area would not have to meet some other regulatory requirements.

In early 1995, the Environmental Protection Agency declared West Michigan in compliance with ozone standards in the Clean Air Act following a review of data finished ahead of schedule at Levin's request.

Waste Flow Control. Levin co-sponsored the Interstate Transportation of Solid Waste Act which passed the Senate by a vote of 94 to 6 in May. The Act allows local governments to protect taxpayer investments in solid waste management and recycling programs by maintaining control over the amount of solid waste coming into and going out of their jurisdictions. Levin also offered an amendment to make it clear that foreign solid waste would be treated the same as "out-of-state" waste, giving Michigan the tools it needs to keep garbage from whatever outside source out of Michigan landfills if it becomes law. This legislation was necessary because U.S. Supreme Court decisions have designated garbage as a type of commerce, and under the U.S. Constitution, only Congress has the power to regulate interstate

Constitution, only Congress has the power to regulate interstate commerce.

Levin Criticizes Extremism

Led Fight on Proposal to Gag Non-Profits. Levin helped lead the battle to stop an extreme proposal to prevent non-profit organizations from participating in public policy debates, delivering a key floor speech on October 24 which was widely circulated. Levin helped block passage in the Senate of the Istook amendment, which would have prohibited any federal grant recipient from spending any of its private, non-federal, money on any public advocacy. This was targeted primarily at non-profit organizations and would have forced organizations like the Red Cross to choose between receiving federal grants for operating its disaster assistance programs and working with local governments to develop emergency response plans.

Military Affairs

Bosnia. Supported effort to lift the arms embargo on Bosnia so Bosnia could defend itself. He also supported U.S. participation with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in the former Yugoslavia to implement the Dayton Peace Agreement.

Base Closure. Led Successful effort by Michigan delegation to convince the Base Realignment and Closure Commission to reject Secretary of Defense's recommendation to close certain portions of the Selfridge Air National Guard Base in Warren, Michigan.

Starbase. Fought to preserve youth outreach program operated by National Guard Bureau created at Selfridge Air National Guard Base in Mt. Clemens, funded by a Levin initiative.

Arms Control/Meeting New Threats

Led efforts to prevent Congress from **unilaterally violating ABM Treaty**. Levin led efforts to prevent Congress from authorizing U.S. strategic defense activities that unilaterally violate the ABM Treaty, and that could jeapordize U.S.-Russian relations and doom Russian ratification of the START II Treaty's deep cuts in nuclear weapons. Levin helped draft the substitute amendment to clarify that the U.S. is not deciding now to deploy systems that violate the ABM Treaty, which passed the Senate 85 13, but was later deleted in conference with House.

Led efforts to obtain prompt Senate **ratification of START II Treaty** and Chemical Weapons Convention. With Sen. Paul Simon, D-Ill., Levin led 35 Senators in signing a letter to Majority Leader Robert Dole, R-Kan., urging him to exert leadership and secure Senate action on START II and the CWC before Congress adjourns this year. Dole later committed to the Senate consideration of START II before adjourning this year. He also agreed that the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will complete action on CWC and report it to the full Senate no later than April 30, 1996.

Although the two treaties enjoy wide bipartisan support and would enhance the nation's security, they languished in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for two years. If approved and implemented the treaties would make it harder for rogue states or terrorists to acquire these weapons of mass destruction, their materials or the means of their production.

Led Congressional Support for **ending nuclear testing** and preventing proliferation of nuclear weapons, in circulating letters on Capitol Hill which were sent to the President.

Conventional Force Improvements

Bradley Fighting Vehicles. Supported effort to fund protective armor tiles for Army.

Heavy Trucks. Levin led a successful effort to permit the Army to get $125 million in additional funds for the purchase of heavy trucks, and $110 million for medium trucks. The Army had identified these programs as being broke and a high priority for recapitalization.

Tanks. Led effort to secure multi-year procurement of Army's MIA2 tank with upgrades, performed by General Dynamics Land Systems Division, with headquarters in Sterling Heights.

Cargo Vehicles. Levin led a successful effort to permit the Army to lease commercial cargo vehicles on a pilot basis. Base on normal business practices, this program offers considerable savings to the Army in operation and maintenance costs for older vehicles.

Protecting Force Readiness and Cutting Edge Research

Training and Readiness. Levin pushed Congress to pay on-time the known costs for ongoing operations of U.S. military forces deployed around the world, to protect against "borrowing" funds from critical training and readiness accounts.

Modernized Pilot Training at the Phelps-Collins Air National Guard Base in Alpena. Following Levin's appeals, a $12.2 million Air Combat Measurement Instrumentation System may now be provided to Alpena by Air Force. This system creates a highly effective and realistic training environment by allowing for real time monitoring of a mock air battle. Its acquisition would put Alpena's training center on par with the three other Combat Readiness Training Centers in the U.S.

FOCUS:HOPE. Levin has once again obtained funds to develop the Center for Advanced Technologies at FOCUS:Hope in Detroit, a cutting edge training and manufacturing center using the most sophisticated agile manufacturing equipment for military and commercial work. Among many endeavors, the Center works with the navy to produce critical replacement parts rapidly in a paperless process, the only commercial facility in the U.S. with this capability, and is helping the

Army design and build the next generation engine for the "Humvee", with major improvements expected in performance, fuel economy and emissions reductions. Although about $12 million in funding requested by the Clinton Administration was initially denied by congressional committees, the full amount was restored as a result of efforts by Levin and Sen. Spencer Abraham, R-Mich., and other members of the Michigan congressional delegation.

Cutting Pentagon Waste and Fraud/Buying Smart

Opposed GOP efforts to abolish the statutory requirement for an independent Director of Operational Test and Evaluation, established by legislation he co-sponsored. This office is primarily responsible for making sure that weapon systems will work when they get to the field.

Led effort to Prevent Earmarking of National Guard and Reserve Equipment although this victory reversed in party-line vote. He offered an amendment in the Armed Services Committee markup of the DOD Authorization bill to continue providing generic categories of equipment to meet Guard and Reserve priority requirements.

Worked to help defeat effort by House of Representatives to undermine Competition in Contracting Act. Levin helped write and win enactment of this landmark legislation in 1984, which changed the entire culture of DOD and other government procurement by requiring that contracts be awarded on the basis of full and open competition, with limited exceptions. As a result of the law, competitive purchases increased from 40 percent of federal purchases in 1983 to 70 percent today. House provisions in the DOD bill that would have undermined the law and potentially cost taxpayers billions of dollars in lost competition were almost completely removed in conference committee.

Led efforts to prevent procurement of surplus aircraft not required or requested by the Pentagon, including B-2 bombers, F-15s, F-16s.

Defense Reutilization and Marketing Service. Defeated attempt to privatize this Battle Creek facility, which helps federal and state agencies reuse surplus equipment and products and sells off products which cannot be reused to the public. Levin prevailed upon DOD Authorization conferees to reject a House provision which would have required the Secretary of Defense to solicit proposals for private operation of DRMS functions by March 15, 1996. Levin insisted that an effective agency should not be dismantled just to cater to the aggressive lobbying of one interested corporation.

Acquisition Reform. Levin was again a key architect of acquisition reform provisions in the FY 1996 Defense Authorization bill. The Levin/Cohen Information Technology Management Reform Act, which was included in the bill, would substantially streamline the management and procurement of computer and communications systems by the federal government. The Levin Multiple Award Schedule Bill, also included, would reduce the paperwork in the acquisition of off-the-shelf products by providing government-wide, on-line computer access to GSA's "multiple award schedules".