1998 Legislative Activities

Expanding Opportunities for Good Paying Jobs

Making Michigan First in Educational Technology. Based on reports that Michigan ranks among the bottom of the states in training teachers to use technology in the classroom and in computer-to-student ratios, Levin embarked on an intensive effort to improve technology in Michigan schools so our students are prepared for increasingly technical jobs in the 21st century.

- In February, Levin brought together nearly 400 educators, business leaders and government officials for a summit which focused on increasing training for Michigan teachers in the area of education technology.
- Led a statewide effort to encourage schools and libraries to apply for the "E-Rate," a federal initiative aimed at expanding technology in classrooms by providing a discount on telecommunications services.
- Won Senate passage of legislation which authorized $300 million for partnership grants which would prepare teachers to better use computers in their classrooms.
- Authored legislation to expand the Lifetime Learning Credit to make technology training more affordable for teachers.
- Cosponsored legislation which would have authorized funding to promote the training of education students in the effective use and integration of technology in the classroom and would have provided $2.25 billion for E-Rate discounts for schools and libraries.
- Created a partnership involving more than 20 Michigan colleges and universities which have agreed to look for ways to improve technology training for pre-service teachers.
- Helped secure private funding for an innovative on-line in-service technology training program that will expand the availability of quality technology training for Michigan teachers.

Fighting for Fair Trade Practices. Led a bipartisan group of Members of Congress in urging the Administration to permanently reinstate the Super 301 trade law, which allows the U.S. Trade Representative to identify and take action against foreign trade barriers that impose the greatest burden on U.S. products and businesses. In a visit to Tokyo, demonstrated a vast price disparity between identical auto parts purchased in Japan and in the United States in an effort to change the restrictive Japanese import policies which disadvantage American automobile and auto parts manufacturers (as well as gouge Japanese consumers).

International Monetary Fund. Secured Senate passage of legislation imposing tougher guidelines for countries seeking IMF loans. Levin's amendment requires the Secretary of Treasury to consider the trade practices of prospective borrowing countries which discriminate against American-made goods and services before approving loans to those countries from the IMF.

Auto Parts Advisory Committee (APAC). Won Senate approval of legislation to reauthorize APAC, an industry advisory group which consults with the Secretary of Commerce on issues concerning the auto

consults with the Secretary of Commerce on issues concerning the auto parts industry and works to open markets in Japan and other countries whose market practices discriminate against American autos and auto parts.

Minimum Wage. Cosponsored legislation to raise the minimum wage to $6.15 in two 50 cent increments.

Promoting Small Business. Won Senate passage of the Small Business Innovative Research (SBIR) Program, which enables small businesses to take advantage of procurement outreach programs which currently are in use by other federal agencies.

Focus Hope. Helped obtain a $500,000 grant for a welfare-to-work demonstration project at the Machinist Training Institute at Focus:HOPE in Detroit. The project will move at least 400 current welfare recipients through a training program and into the marketplace.

Fighting for Michigan's Roads and Transport

Highway Funding. Tenaciously fought to improve the return which Michigan receives on the gas taxes it pays into the Highway Trust Fund. Michigan will receive an average of $310 million more over the next five years than it did in the last year of the last highway bill. This is a large percentage increase but total transportation funding increased by an even larger percentage. Authored amendments to make Michigan eligible to compete for new "high density" state transportation program money and to provide more money for "donor states" (those states that send more gas tax money to Washington than they get back in highway program dollars). Levin's amendments guaranteed that Michigan would receive at least an additional $11 million, and up to $21 million, more than the Senate bill originally provided.

Relieving Congestion at Our Borders. Worked to repeal, or at least delay, a provision of the 1996 Immigration Reform Bill which would require the completion of paperwork before anyone can cross the U.S./ Canada border. Levin and other opponents of the provision argue that such regulation would lead to extreme traffic back-ups and delays.

Michigan Highway Projects. Secured Senate approval of $6 million for redevelopment of the Detroit Waterfront; expansion of Corridor 18 to Canada through border crossings in Detroit and Port Huron; permission for the State to spend bridge tolls from the Upper Peninsula's International Bridge on bridge-related projects; an amendment making approaches to the Ambassador Bridge eligible for Federal funding; funds to expedite high-speed rail corridor development between Chicago and Detroit; monies to repave H-58 in Pictured Rocks; and the extension of the NAFTA high priority trade corridor designation along I-94 and I- 69.

Surface Transportation Facility in Detroit. Worked to secure a $600,000 grant for the Michigan Department of Transportation for a new transportation facility in Detroit. The facility will serve international travel

services; intercity, regional and local busing; taxi services; and non-motorized transportation. Helped secure $23 million for bus systems in Michigan over the next two years.

Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE). Supported continuing a moratorium on increases in the Corporate Average Fuel Economy.

Automobile National Heritage Area. Introduced a bill to create the Automobile National Heritage Area in Southeast Michigan. Rep. John Dingell introduced companion legislation in the House.

Keeping Our Families Safe & Healthy

Tobacco Legislation. Joined a bipartisan group of Senators in cosponsoring legislation which would have provided authority to the FDA to regulate tobacco products; established requirements for the advertising and labeling of tobacco products; established benchmarks for reduction in youth usage of cigarettes and spit tobacco; established a National Tobacco Settlement Trust Fund and mandates tax-deductible industry payment into the Trust Fund for 25 years; established regulations for a Smoke Free Environment Policy in public buildings; and established a cap on the tobacco industry's total liability for all civil damages and penalties for all past and future wrongs.

Patients' Bill of Rights. Worked for passage of a comprehensive HMO reform bill which proposed to ensure that treatment decisions are made by doctors, not insurance companies; hold health insurance plans legally accountable when patients are injured by decisions to withhold or limit care; require insurance companies to pay for emergency services when a situation can reasonably be considered an emergency; prevent health care providers from being financially rewarded for limiting care; ensure that patients undergoing treatment can continue to see the same health care provider if their provider leaves the plan or their employer changes plans; and allow patients to see an outside specialist at no additional cost whenever the specialists in their plan can't meet their needs.

Ending Inequity in Home Health Care. Cosponsored bipartisan legislation to create a fairer, more efficient home health care system. The bill establishes a new formula for determining per-beneficiary costs by using regional average cost figures, therefore eliminating agency-specific data from the formula. The current system, which bases reimbursements on an agency's per-patient costs, which penalizes low-cost health care providers who have made prudent, efficient use of Medicare resources.

Protecting Social Security. Serving on the Democratic Senate Social Security Task Force, a group of Senators looking at ways to ensure the solvency of Social Security in the future.

Heating Assistance for Low-Income Families. Worked with a group of Senators to maintain funding for the low-income home energy assistance program (LIHEAP).

Mutual Voluntary Adoption Registry. Authored legislation which

Mutual, Voluntary Adoption Registry. Authored legislation, which passed the Senate, to facilitate voluntary, mutually desired contact between birth parents and adult adoptees. Levin testified before the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Resources in support of the legislation.

Making Government Work Better

Campaign Finance Reform. Joined with Senators McCain and Feingold to press for passage of comprehensive campaign finance reform, getting a majority to support the bill (defeated by a Republican-led filibuster).

Reports Elimination Act. Led Senate passage of legislation requiring the termination of over 200 reporting requirements imposed by Congress on Executive Branch agencies.

Federal Elections Commission. Secured Senate passage of legislation to protect the integrity and independence of the FEC. Levin successfully blocked a provision which would hurt the enforcement powers of the FEC by making the General Counsel of the FEC subject to a term with renewal dependent upon a vote of four Commissioners.

Lobbying Disclosure. For many years, Levin has fought for the registration of lobbyists and for the registration of foreign businesses who lobby in the U.S. In 1995, Levin led Senate passage of the Lobbying Disclosure Act which laid out new requirements for the registration of paid, professional lobbyists. In reports issued this year, the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) reported that Levin's efforts have led to a 62% increase in the registration of foreign lobbyists, and the number of lobbyists registered under the new tougher law has increased over 200%.

Line Item Veto. Joined Senators Moynihan and Byrd in an amicus brief arguing against the constitutionality of the Line Item Veto Act in both District Court and Supreme Court proceedings. In June, the Supreme Court ruled with Levin and overturned the Act.

Regulatory Reform. Authored, with Sen. Fred Thompson (R-Tenn.), legislation to amend the regulatory process to create smarter, more effective and more efficient regulations by improving the way agencies make decisions. The Senate Governmental Affairs Committee approved the Levin-Thompson Regulatory Improvement Act (S.981) in a bipartisan vote, and the Clinton Administration endorsed the legislation.

Ensuring Consumer Protections

Telephone Slamming. Won unanimous Senate approval of legislation aimed at prohibiting "slamming," the practice of changing consumers' long distance carrier without their express consent. Levin authored provisions which require "switchless long distance resellers" to post a bond with the FCC before they can begin selling long distance services and to require full disclosure of the exact names of long distance providers on a consumer's phone bill. Slamming is the No. 1 consumer

complaint received by the Michigan Public Service Commission and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

Food Safety. Teamed with Rep. Debbie Stabenow (D-Lansing) to win approval of legislation in the House and Senate which requires the Department of Agriculture to form a crisis management team to handle food poisoning outbreaks.

Improving Imported Food Inspections. Cosponsored the Safety of Imported Food Act of 1998 which would give the Food and Drug Administration the authority to require foreign countries and foreign food producers to use production, packaging, and processing systems which maintain U.S. food safety standards.

Nutrition Regulations. Won passage of a provision requiring the National Academy of Sciences to do an independent review of the USDA's study on the WIC food package nutritional guidelines, with special emphasis on dried fruit and the sugar limit in cereals. Current guidelines result in irrational restriction, for instance, of Kellogg's Raisin Bran.

Halting Deceptive Sweepstakes Mailings. Introduced legislation to prohibit misleading statements in sweepstakes and games of chance; impose $10,000 civil penalties for each deceptive mailing; and give the Postal Service authority to go after senders of deceptive sweepstakes mailings.

Auto Salvage Bill. Won passage of a provision which empowers states to implement stricter standards than the national minimum requirement to protect buyers from vehicles which are severely damaged in accidents. Under Levin's legislation, states like Michigan are able to retain provisions of their vehicle titling code to provide greater consumer protection than the national standard.

Credit Union Membership. Supported legislation which authorizes credit unions to seek members from more than one employer or organization and protects the safety and soundness of credit unions and the National Credit Union Share Insurance Fund

Halting Unlawful CB Radio Interference. Won unanimous Senate approval of legislation which gives localities the ability to prevent unlawful use of citizen band (CB) radios. Several West Michigan communities experienced problems with certain CB radios interfering with telephones, televisions and other home electronic equipment.

Judicial Appointments

Confirmation of New Judges. Three judges, all of whom Levin recommended to President Clinton, were confirmed by the Senate. Victoria Roberts, George Steeh and Arthur Tarnow were confirmed to serve as a United States District Judges for the Eastern District of Michigan.

Putting the Federal Government to Work for Michigan

Work for Michigan

Relief for Storm Victims. Secured funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Small Business Administration and the Farm Service Agency for residents who suffered severe damage to their homes and businesses as a result of storms which ravaged Michigan communities.

Aid for Fruit Growers. Led Senate passage of an amendment which enables fruit growers to apply for financial assistance through the Tree Assistance Program for tree damage that occurs after natural disasters.

Improving Michigan Airports. Helped secure $16 million for construction of a new runway and for rehabilitation of airfield lighting at Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport; $2 million to construct an airport de-icing facility, for rehabilitation of taxiways and to upgrade a security access system at Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International Airport; $270,000 for remodeling the airport terminal, installing a computerized aircraft lift for passengers and rehabilitating the airport entrance road at Cherry Capital Airport in Traverse City; over $159,000 for acquisition of land for runway expansion, for improvements to the runway approaches and for removal of obstructions in the landing area at Escanaba Airport; $674,000 for runway rehabilitation at Pellston Airport; and $1.5 million for installation of a landing system at Manistee Blacker Airport. Won Congressional passage of a provision which amends the Military Airport Program to increase the number of airports participating in the program. The change renders Oscoda-Wurtsmith Airport in Oscoda eligible to compete for funding under the program. Levin also persuaded the FAA to maintain a contract for UNICOM communication services at the Auxiliary Flight Service Station at Marquette County Airport.

Redeveloping K. I. Sawyer. Helped secure funding from the Economic Development Administration for the redevelopment of the former K. I. Sawyer Air Force Base. With Rep. Bart Stupak (D-Menominee), obtained $2.1 million for the development and implementation of a marketing program to enable businesses to lease or to buy the available properties at the former base, and a $2.15 million federal grant which will be combined with state and county funds for a total of $3.6 million for the construction of a passenger terminal and parking lot for the new civilian airport.

Security Improvements at Our Courthouses. Won Senate approval for $500,000 for security improvements at the Detroit Federal Courthouse and $250,000 for security improvements at the Grand Rapids Federal Courthouse.

Petoskey Water Supply System. Successfully secured $1.2 million for a water supply system in Petoskey from the EPA. Since 1991, Levin has worked with local officials and residents to secure funding for a new water supply system to comply with Michigan public health regulations.

Protecting the Great Lakes and Michigan's Environment

Removing Contaminated Sediments. Won Senate approval for legislation which would encourage the use of Superfund money to expedite clean-up of contaminated sediment sites across the nation pursuant to an EPA report which identifies 96 areas of probable concern. Introduced legislation which would coordinate efforts among Federal agencies who share responsibility for cleaning up contaminated sediments. In the past, numerous Federal agencies efforts have been uncoordinated and underfunded.

Great Lakes Programs. Helped maintain funding for a variety of important Great Lakes programs, including lamprey control efforts, non-indigenous species control and research programs, the National Sea Grant program, Coastal Zone Management grants to states and contaminated sediment research and cleanup technology development. Helped obtain reauthorization and expansion of the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act to help recover and promote sustainable wildlife populations in the region.

Protecting Michigan Waterfronts. Obtained funding to direct an Army Corps study of the Detroit shoreline that will help develop a Greenway Corridor Masterplan as part of the revitalization of the Detroit waterfront; an Army Corps study to determine the feasibility of flood control and shoreline protection projects in St. Clair Shores, Bay City and Flint; an economic re- evaluation of Grand Marais Harbor erosion control by the Corps; and $875,000 for the Army Corps to start a shoreline erosion control project at Belle Isle and along the Detroit waterfront.

Keweenaw National Historic Park. Won a $400,000 increase in funding for the Keweenaw National Historic Park.

Fighting Water Pollution. Facilitated an agreement between the U.S. Army, the Macomb County Health Department and Oakland University which outlines development of a system to quickly and accurately detect water pollution in southeastern Michigan using blue gill fish.

John Glenn Great Lakes Basin Program. Won Senate passage of funding for the John Glenn Great Lakes Basin Program, which requires a strategic plan to coordinate Army Corps Great Lakes region activities; requires Federal agencies to improve hydrolic and ecosystem information on Great Lakes water consumption and diversion and to respond to the International Joint Commission recommendations on the topic; directs the Corps to study economic benefits of recreational boating; clarifies that the Corps can help build sea lamprey control barriers; and requires a study of the Lake Erie watershed.

Preserving the Great Lakes. Helped lead Senate passage of a bill which reversed legislation adding Vermont's Lake Champlain to the list of Great Lakes in the National Sea Grant Act. The compromise legislation, sponsored by Levin, removes Lake Champlain from the list of Great Lakes but permits the University of Vermont to compete for funding through the National Sea Grant College program for problems with Lake Champlain shares with the other Great Lakes, such as zebra mussels, contaminated sediments and sea lamprey.

Great Lakes Task Force. Named co-chair of the Great Lakes Task Force, affiliated with the Northeast-Midwest Senate Coalition. The Task Force works on legislation developing, protecting and promoting the Great Lakes region.

Detroit River Named American Heritage River. Succeeded in urging the Administration to name the Detroit River one of ten American Heritage Rivers nationwide. The initiative is designed to use Federal resources more effectively to help communities revitalize their rivers and waterfronts to help celebrate their history and heritage.

Environmental justice. Argued that the EPA's guidance on environmental justice could lead to unintended consequences which could harm disadvantaged communities.

Protecting Great Lakes Water. Urged the Administration to act swiftly and forcefully in its efforts to prevent a Canadian company from diverting Great Lakes water for sale to Asia. Levin argued that such diversion violates the spirit, if not the letter, of the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909 between the United States and Canada. Further, Levin encouraged the State Department to adopt recommendations made in a 1985 International Joint Commission report which urged the U.S. and Canada to undertake an effort to identify and monitor all diversions from the Great Lakes system.

Working to Ensure Our National Security

NATO Enlargement. Helped lead the effort to gain Senate ratification of the enlargement of NATO to include Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic.

Arms Control. Led a successful effort to fund the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program to continue efforts to combat the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Helped defeat efforts to require a premature decision to deploy a national missile defense system without regard to whether the system would work, how much it would cost, or what impact it would have on nuclear arms reduction agreements.

Defense Management Reform. Continued his efforts through additional laws that require the Department of Defense to encourage the use of more efficient commercial practices to eliminate unneeded inventory and to address management problems that have led the Department to spend too much for aircraft spare and repair parts.

Funding for Military Operations. Helped fund ongoing military operations in Bosnia in a manner that will not undermine military readiness; authored a provision urging the President to work with NATO allies toward the withdrawal of U.S. ground forces from Bosnia and a European-led follow-on force supported by the United States.

Pay Raise for Troops. Helped increase the annual pay raise for our men and women in uniform an important step toward reducing the pay gap between the military and the private sector.

Satellite Launches. Helped defeat or modify a series of House

Satellite Launches. Helped defeat or modify a series of House proposals that would have penalized U.S. businesses by barring any exports of satellite or related technology to China without any concomitant increase in U.S. security.

Future Tritium Production. Helped defeat a House proposal what would have prohibited consideration of the less costly of the two options for renewed tritium production; developed a compromise provision to ensure a rational decision-making process for the production of this key component of our nuclear deterrent.

Gender-Integrated Training. Led the Senate effort to defeat a House proposal that would have prohibited gender-integrated training in all three services, preserving the ability of the uniformed military to conduct basic training for new recruits in the manner that they believe to be the most appropriate.

Important Michigan Defense Projects. Helped ensure or designate funding for M1 Tank Upgrades; the Heavy Assault Bridge; the Family of Heavy Tactical Vehicles; the Advanced Amphibious Assault Vehicle; the Crusader Advanced Field Artillery System; Navy sonobuoys for anti-submarine warfare; and the National Automotive Center in Warren, MI, including completion of research into aluminum metal matrix composites for armored vehicles. Helped ensure legislative authorization for the construction of a sanitary sewage line and a fire station at Alpena Air National Guard Base; upgraded base infrastructure and construction of a new control tower and radar control center at Selfridge Air National Guard Base; and a new organizational readiness maintenance shop at the Walker Army Reserve Center.