



# HONORING MICHIGAN'S LONGEST-SERVING SENATOR

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## REMEMBERING CARL LEVIN

Over six decades Carl Levin fought to extend and ensure the American promise to all while holding democratic institutions accountable to everyone. Rising from a student activist to Detroit City Council member to U.S. Senator, he never lost his humility or uniquely human touch.

After retiring as Michigan's longest-serving U.S. Senator in January 2015 after 36 years, his legacy extends to every corner of Michigan, including the preservation of the Sleeping Bear

Dunes and the Upper Peninsula's mining and maritime history; cleaner Great Lakes and Michigan streams; a beautiful Detroit Riverwalk; and an American auto industry that is stronger for his tireless support.

He will be remembered for his relentless intellect and work ethic, his humility, his humor, and his strength of character. Following his passing on July 29, national and regional leaders shared memories and reflections on his work and service to this country.



**SANDY K. BARUAH**

“Carl Levin was a champion of civility, a giant on the national political stage, and a steadfast supporter of his native Detroit. As Chair of the Armed Forces Committee, he made our nation stronger and more accountable and put Michigan in a central role in the defense sector. As important was his generous and humble spirit, his love for Barbara, and his service to Michiganders of all political stripes.”

**DEBBIE STABENOW**

“Senator Carl Levin was a champion for truth and justice and a tireless advocate for the people of Michigan. He always believed that our government could be a force for good, and he spent his career showing all of us how it’s done. Senator Levin was also my friend, and it was truly an honor to represent Michigan alongside him for 14 of the 36 years that he served in the Senate. Michigan was so fortunate to have him fighting for us.”

**FRED UPTON**

“Woke up to the sad news about Carl Levin. He was much more than a legislator; he was a wonderful listener who helped forge bipartisan consensus on many issues impacting Michigan. Carl was a respected straight-shooter and when he spoke, everybody listened.”

“Brilliant, humble, and principled, Carl earned the trust of his constituents and colleagues by doing the work. He studied the issues in detail. He forged consensus across the aisle. He built coalitions across his beloved Michigan. With his head tilted down, his eyes peering over his glasses – Carl always looked people straight into their own eyes, listened with an open mind, and responded the way he saw it with respect.”

**JOE BIDEN**

PRESIDENT, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**GRETCHEN WHITMER**

“His 36-year tenure in the United States Senate was marked by a tireless commitment to our auto industry, Great Lakes, and men and women in uniform. Carl would often wear his glasses on the tip of his nose, but he saw the best in us. He saw what we were capable of when we came to the table as Michiganders, as Americans, to get things done.”

**DEBBIE DINGELL**

“Carl Levin was one of the most decent human beings to walk the face of the earth. He was John Dingell’s best friend and partner in Congress. He was a steadfast leader who always stood up for what was right and knew every ounce about every issue. His contributions in Congress and in his Michigan community live on to this day and have impacted so many hardworking American families.”

**SUSAN COLLINS**

“Sen. Carl Levin was one of the Senate’s giants, a leader of extraordinary intellect, impeccable ethics, exceptional energy, and obvious decency. I learned from him first as a Senate staffer, and then worked closely with him as an admiring Senate colleague. I will miss Carl greatly.”



# A LESSON IN CIVILITY

SEN. CARL LEVIN AT THE  
2018 DETROIT POLICY  
CONFERENCE

With former Senator Carl Levin as the honorary chairperson, the 2018 Detroit Policy Conference focused on how to create a culture of civility. In a 32-minute conversation with WDIV-TV anchor Devin Scillian, Levin shared his observations on national politics and how the Senate can force compromise to advance policy that moves the country forward.

Included here are a few excerpts, edited for length and clarity.

*Detroit*  
POLICY CONFERENCE

**VIEW ONLINE**

To watch the session, visit the Detroit Regional Chamber's YouTube page, or google "Carl Levin + Detroit Policy Conference."

## THE "STENNIS RULE"

"(Sen. John Stennis) taught me to always give the other fellow some ground to stand on, even if you have the votes and don't need to give him the ground – do it any way. He'll be there to respect you one day. And it's a better way to live, it's a better way to work, and it's a better way to get things done."

## CIVILITY HELPS GET THINGS DONE

"If you are going to be in public office and hope to get things done that can get done and must get done, like (passing) a budget, you have to figure out a way to work together ... Civility contributes to working together."

## IGNORING INCIVILITY AND ATTACKS

"One of the real ways to produce incivility is to attack people's motives, to assume the other person has bad motives, instead of assuming they have good motives. You may disagree totally with them, and if they personally attack you, civility requires you to ignore it and not engage in any kind of personal attacks."

## GOVERNING THROUGH COMPROMISE

"If you're not there (in Washington) to compromise, you're not there to govern."

## BIPARTISAN FACT-FINDING

"If you treat people in a civil way and mean it – and don't attribute bad motives to other folks that you're working with or have differences with – civility can lead to and probably is essential to leading a bipartisan approach to a factual investigation. If there's a lack of civility, then it is less likely you are going to be able to do some things together which are critically important."



# CARRYING ON THE LEVIN LEGACY

## THE LEVIN CENTER PROMOTES BIPARTISAN, FACT-BASED GOVERNING

By James Martinez

Senator Carl Levin's brand of public service focused on integrity, candor and bipartisanship, and he placed a premium on Congress' responsibility to provide public and private sector oversight that put people first.

"I do believe that a politician has an obligation to identify injustice and try to eliminate or at least minimize it. And I do believe that politicians can write laws that will improve the lives of the people they seek to serve. And that is what I tried to do," wrote the senator in his recent memoir.

Throughout his 36-year career in Washington, Senator Levin held key leadership positions on committees that led dozens of major investigations ranging from Enron to unethical practices in the finance industry to the 2008 financial crisis. He did not shy away from the difficult conversations and remained determined to bring accountability and thoughtful policy solutions to government.

That legacy is carried on today by the Levin Center at Wayne Law School, which focuses on promoting fact-based, bipartisan oversight by Congress and the 50 state legislatures. It also encourages civil dialogue on major public policy issues.

"We all have a responsibility to maintaining a fact-based public square without which our democracy can't function and we can't tackle major problems such as vaccines, climate change, and infrastructure," said Jim Townsend, director of the Levin Center and a former state representative. "So, our focus on bipartisan, fact-based oversight is about raising the quality of legislative fact-finding and pushing to make lawmakers accountable for upholding basic norms of truthfulness and integrity."



The Center, where the late Senator taught and shared his insights and experiences with students, offers academic coursework, training programs, symposia, and research. Its programming is designed to encourage future and current leaders to embrace their role in promoting honest and open government, maintaining the public trust, and holding public and private institutions accountable to high ethical and transparency standards.

"Bipartisan fact-finding, bipartisan investigations tend to be more thorough and in-depth," said Townsend. "We have found that lawmakers and staff raise their game in an investigation when both parties have a significant role and bring their own perspectives to the work, rather than having a single-party echo chamber that begins the inquiry with a foregone conclusion."

Upon Levin's retirement in January 2015, Wayne State University and the Wayne Law School along with supporters, friends, and former staff established the Center, which includes bipartisan advisory board and staff. In his memoir, the Senator credited Elise Bean, Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson, Eugene Driker, and Linda Gustitus with leading efforts to create the center. •

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