Carl Levin

Interviewed by
Lynn Jondahl

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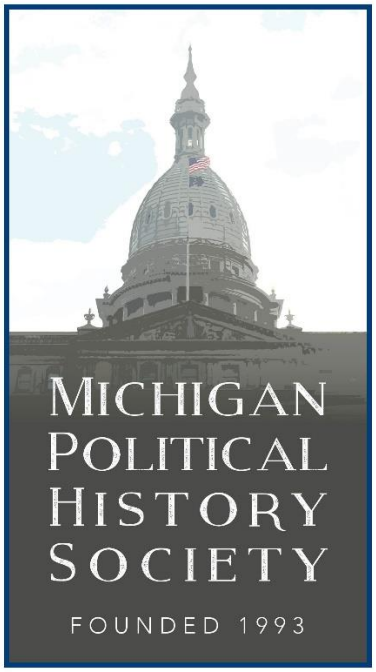

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Lynn Jondahl: We're talking today with Michigan State Senator and United States Senator, Carl Levin. He has served in the US Senate since January of 1979. Senator, you were born in 1934. If we lived in Detroit in the '30s, '40s, '50s and knew you, would we be surprised that today you're the longest serving senator in Michigan's history?

Carl Levin: Well, my mother probably wouldn't be surprised.

Lynn Jondahl: She would be surprised?

Carl Levin: She would not be surprised.

Lynn Jondahl: She would not be?

Carl Levin: Probably not, because she would be probably supportive and think that her kids could do anything they set their mind to. And my friends probably would not be surprised because I was somewhat active in student government in high school, that kind of thing. So as kids, they wouldn't be surprised because at my dinner table, my father and mother were always talking politics. They were strong new dealers, supporters of FDR, so I would say probably they would, my friends, small circle family probably would not be surprised that I ended up doing something in public service or government. I would have been surprised. I never really planned on running for office. I was active in my brother's campaigns, which he won for the state Senate in the '60s, and I was of course active in his campaigns, which he lost for governor in the '70s. But by the '70s, I was also on local government in Detroit city council myself. I always assumed my brother would be the one who would run for office. I would do something perhaps in government. I was an assistant attorney general in the '60s, general counsel for the Michigan Civil Rights Commission.

Lynn Jondahl: That's when the Michigan Civil Rights Commission was founded, following the '63 constitution. You became what, the first general counsel?

Carl Levin: It's first general council in '64, and then I did that for three years, argued some of its early cases. As a matter of fact.

Lynn Jondahl: What were those? Were they key cases?

Carl Levin: They were.

Lynn Jondahl: Do you remember?

Carl Levin: They were. We had, I'd say three key cases that I argued. The first was against the mayor of Dearborn, Orval Hubbard, a very famous mayor. He was a racist

and made no bones about keeping the African Americans out of Dearborn. He had a bulletin board, which humiliated any African American who might've walked into the city hall where his bulletin board was, right in the lobby, showing an African Americans in any negative light he could find them. If there was an African American who had committed a crime and there was a picture of them in the paper, that would be on the bulletin board. It was anything negative.

Lynn Jondahl: This was in city hall?

Carl Levin: In city hall in Dearborn. So we took him on, the Michigan Civil Rights Commission took him on first. It was our first cause. And the problem is that it was unclear as to whether we had jurisdiction. So we had to prove our jurisdiction, and we did it first with the commission after a very public hearing issuing an order, which was the easy part because the commission knew it was going to order him to take that bulletin board down. But then we had to go to court and try to enforce that order, and we ended up with a settlement actually, where his lawyer who ended up being a federal judge advised him he should take down the bulletin board, acknowledge the jurisdiction of the Civil Rights Commission over local government because of the equal protection clause in the Michigan Constitution.

Carl Levin: It was a terrific victory. His lawyer was a wonderful guy. His name was Guy, as a matter of fact-

Lynn Jondahl: Guy.

Carl Levin: Ralph Guy. And I think he became a federal judge.

Lynn Jondahl: Federal judge.

Carl Levin: And I think he understood that from Dearborn's perspective, that they really needed to change their image, and of course they did. It's a very different city. But then we took on the much more complicated issue of housing jurisdiction for the Civil Rights Commission, and that one was ... that went to the Michigan Supreme Court because there, it was a really not a closed legal question, although it was a divided opinion, but it was a very contested legal question as to whether or not the Michigan Civil Rights Commission had jurisdiction over housing discrimination in private sales by real estate people.

Lynn Jondahl: So not just public housing.

Carl Levin: It wasn't public housing.

Lynn Jondahl: Private.

Carl Levin: It was a major builder, Pulte who's one of the biggest builders in the country who actually claimed they had the right to discriminate because the Michigan Constitution was not explicit. It's simply, in the Michigan Constitution, said that the Civil Rights Commission had the authority to enforce civil rights guaranteed by law. The question is, was there a law protecting against discrimination in housing? There was no statute, so we had to prove a law other than statutory law. There's a public accommodations law for instance, and this was a real estate office. That was the grounds that I wanted to fight on because I thought there was at least a statute that we could argue.

Carl Levin: But the co chairs of the commission, Judge Keith and Judge Feikens and the other members of the commission wanted to argue a broader issue, that there is inherent in law, in civil rights law from various sources, a right to non discrimination in housing and it had been mentioned in that it's not in a statute. It wasn't in a statute, but it had been mentioned in some of the proceedings at the convention that civil rights had, The Michigan Constitutional Convention.

Carl Levin: The Constitutional Convention in 1963, I believe. So it had been mentioned, and it was not in the text of the constitution, but in the description of the text in the constitution. So we argued the broad one and we want to actually on the broad one. Even though I was the lawyer, I thought it'd be safer to argue the narrower one, the public accommodations statute. We won on the broad one and the narrow one, actually, both in the Michigan Supreme Court.

Lynn Jondahl: So you were in the some interesting stuff at that point. I want to come back to that period and go on into Detroit, but let me jump backwards a minute. You said your mother wouldn't have been surprised at your political interest and activity. Is that to that suggest your father might've been or it was not?

Carl Levin: No, no. My father would have probably urged us to do it because he was very much involved in government, both as a lawyer, but also he was on the Michigan Corrections Commission.

Lynn Jondahl: Which is okay.

Carl Levin: Which is the citizens' commission, which oversees our prisons. That's a volunteer job, and he was very, very interested in prisoners. And he was also interested in migrant workers. As a matter of fact, he wanted to try to improve the conditions for migrant workers. He spoke Spanish and represented Honduras, believe it or not, in Michigan. He was the honorary counsel. That means the unpaid counsel for the country of Honduras in Michigan.

Lynn Jondahl: The Levin family is a well known name in Michigan politics. It has a rich political history in Michigan. Your brother, cousins, uncles all have held office of one kind or another or been involved in the political process.

Carl Levin: My dad, my uncle, who was a federal judge, really believed in public service. They really believed that we could improve lives of average people. And as lawyers even, they helped bring a lot of immigrants to this country. They never charged for immigration work. As matter of fact, they made their livelihood as lawyers after they were able to bring someone to the country, then if that person went in the business, usually that person would hire them as their lawyers. But bringing the immigration cases themselves, the litigation or whatever it was, they never charged people for of course, their parents were immigrants.

Lynn Jondahl: When did your family immigrate?

Carl Levin: Both my parents were born in the United States. My grandparents were born in Europe in ... they came here probably around the 1890's. I'd say all four of the grandparents would have come around the 1890's with their parents or I don't know if they were with their parents in some case, with their parents or maybe not. But the grandparents would have come here probably as young kids in the I'd say 1890s or 1880s.

Lynn Jondahl: So you were hearing this from childhood in your home, the focus on civil rights, human rights. What about conversation about politics and involvement in the political process?

Carl Levin: My brother and my sister who's now gone and I at the dinner table every night, because we always waited for our dad for dinner. That was a given. We all ate together. Politics was a major subject of discussion. And my parents loved Roosevelt and loved the new deal. And also they made us feel like they wanted to hear from us as kids, and it's very important that parents do that, that they let their kids know that their ideas and their views are relevant and important. And our parents made us feel as though our ideas and our thoughts counted. I don't know whether they were gibberish or whether they were rational or not, but they made us feel as though they wanted to hear our points of view.

Carl Levin: To finish one thought, before when I said that my mother would have thought we could do anything because that was the kind of mother she was, she also didn't particularly push us into politics at all. She was a private person. My dad was a public person who would've pressed us to go into public life and government. But my mother, although she would think we could do anything we wanted to do actually, when she was asked by a reporter after Sandy and I were in the congress how proud she must be. I think the reporter said, "You must be bursting your buttons with pride to have your two sons in the US congress," and her answer was, "If that's what they want, it's okay with me."

Lynn Jondahl: You went through Detroit public schools, then you went east to Swarthmore and Harvard Law School and you came back. Did you know or think, "When I finish high school, I'm going to go on and get my law degree. I'm going to get involved in the public sector"? What was your transition?

Carl Levin: I always assumed I'd be a lawyer. I always thought I would do something. In fact when I started to practice law, I was in private practice for a couple of years and I was happy. So I never aimed at being in government in some way or in public life. But when Feikens and Keith, the two judges came and said that they'd like me to be their general counsel at the Michigan Civil Rights Commission and when Attorney General Kelley put me on his staff so I could do that, that struck a positive bill with me. The civil Rights Movement was just really beginning. It was an important movement, and I wanted to be a part of it and that's the way I was a part of it.

Carl Levin: But in terms of running for office, that is something I never thought particularly I would do. As I mentioned, my brother ran in the '60's, and it wasn't really until the riot came in '67 that I was persuaded by people in Detroit to run for city council. The city was really hurting, divided. I had been not just only the civil rights commission attorney, but then for a couple of years I helped open the defender's office in Detroit. So we represented indigents in Detroit, and that came about a year before the riots.

Lynn Jondahl: That was the city office?

Carl Levin: No, that was a new office the Bar Association created. Actually, it was called the Defender's Office. So I started the Michigan Civil Rights Commission from '64 roughly, to '67, I believe, early. And then before the riot, I became attorney and I created the Defender's Office in Detroit, and I headed the appellate section of the Defender's Office, so I represented indigence on appeal who did not have lawyers. We were appointed by the court.

Lynn Jondahl: That's what we know today as the State Appellate Defendants Office?

Carl Levin: It is. Exactly right.

Lynn Jondahl: But it then was a bar creation.

Carl Levin: It was called The Legal Aid and Defenders Office of Detroit. That's what it was called. But it was started by the Bar Association, but that led to the State Appellate Defender's Office, which is a successor of the appellate division there. Anyway, the riot came then, and people thought that the city needed healers, people who could unify the city, bring together the city, and that because of my activity, particularly on the Civil Rights Commission, I would get the believed strong support in the both White and African American communities so I could be somebody who might be able to help bring together the city.

Lynn Jondahl: You had been involved with the Civil Rights Commission on civil rights issues and so on, but now people were encouraging you to become active in the political process at that time?

Carl Levin: It was in '67 when the riot took place, but it wasn't until maybe late '68 or '69 early that people came to me and said, "Hey, you ought to run for city council." So that was something I would have decided to do maybe just a few months prior, before I actually ran in '69, which would have been November of '69, and then elected. And then of course I left the Defender's Office. I left the Defender's Office, and then immediately went on the city council.

Lynn Jondahl: You said there were particular cases that were key setting precedent with the Civil Rights Commission. Then as we look at Detroit at that time, the racial unrest was very clear.

Carl Levin: It was racial division. It really wasn't so much unrest as it was division. Unrest was an earlier riot in the late '40s, which was really a race riot. This was not really a race riot in '67, this was a riot that took place around the country actually, after the killings of, let's see, in 1967, I think it was King then who was killed in '67, I believe, and that set off some riots. It's an important difference, but it's hard to describe without sounding the way I don't want to sound. I remember our neighborhood was a very integrated neighborhood. We lived in northwest Detroit, we raised our kids there, and there was no fear.

Carl Levin: There was no racial fear in our neighborhoods. They were all just about integrated by then in Detroit. Either that or they were exclusively African American, but where the White community for the most part lived were in integrated neighborhoods in Detroit. And there was no fear, I would say, at that time at all between the racist inside of our integrated neighborhoods. I remember we were watching the looting on Livernois Avenue with the African American neighbors, White neighbors just standing on the other side of Livernois just looking and watching together, but there were not Whites and blacks going after each other the way they was 20 years earlier.

Lynn Jondahl: The makeup of city government at that time, there never had been an African American serve as mayor of Detroit. Was Nick Hood the the only African American on the council?

Carl Levin: No, no. Tyndall. Bob Tyndall was there. And it was a White mayor, Roman Gribbs, my first term when I was on the council, not yet president of the council.

Lynn Jondahl: That's right. That first four years, Gribbs was mayor during your first term, right?

Carl Levin: Gribbs, yeah. Right. Ray Gribbs was the mayor, and then my second term when I came in first in the city, so I became president of the city council. That was Coleman Young's first term. He was elected mayor, and I think he beat the police chief, Nichols.

Lynn Jondahl: Nichols.

Carl Levin: I believe. That was in '73. And the city was becoming more and more African American during this entire period. Probably was, I'm guessing 60 or 70% African American probably in '73.

Lynn Jondahl: But you, a White guy, got the most votes.

Carl Levin: And Nick Hood, an African American who was also, by the way, on the city council, as you mentioned before that, he came in second. He was the president pro tem as we said, just a terrific human being and a great friend and supporter. It had to be a bit of a disappointment that he was second the first time I ran, and then I jumped ahead of him the second time I ran. But he never let on if he was disappointed. He never let that on. He just was a terrific supporter. And there were still many White members of the city council as well. Wierzbicki, Van Antwerp, Eberhart, a number of other White members.

Lynn Jondahl: So you, because you got the most votes in the city council race, became president of the council. The council had a history of being at war with the mayor.

Carl Levin: The history was that like all good legislative bodies do, we have our differences with the executive branch and we had our differences with mayor Young. Personally, we were on fine terms. There wasn't a problem with that. But in terms of powers, he wanted more and more power for the executive branch for the mayor, and we fought that in a totally bipartisan integrated basis. We are legislators.

Lynn Jondahl: Matter of principles.

Carl Levin: And so as a matter of the separation of powers and it's a great American tradition, which is stronger than any racial or economic or political differences. It should be because there should be tension between the executive and legislative branches. You want them to work together obviously, but you don't want the executive branch to have too much powder. And the legislative branch is really responsible for protecting the power of the legislative branch, and we did and we had a couple of referendum, or a couple of ballot issues in Detroit and we won them, we being the city council against the mayor in terms of powers. Where does this power lie? Where does that power lie? We wanted those powers to stay in the legislative branch, he wanted those powers to be shifted to the executive branch, and we fought them and won. So again, that was a matter of principle.

Lynn Jondahl: Coleman Young was the first African American to be elected mayor. What difference did that make to the city and the way in which politics was done and carried out?

Carl Levin: He was very, very proud to be the first African American. He was very conscious of the discrimination and segregation which had occurred in his lifetime. I'd say

it was a significant factor in politics in Detroit. Some of his rhetoric I think, was not helpful in terms of keeping the city integrated. But he had very deep pride, which was understandable. He'd overcome huge obstacles to get to where he was. He had fought in World War II in the Segregated Union.

Lynn Jondahl: Part of Tuskegee Airmen.

Carl Levin: Part of Tuskegee Airmen. And he was smart and he was funny. But he had, I would say, a very strong view about the shift of power, how important it was, African-Americans being in the majority, that there be a black mayor and black representatives. On the other end I think it was understandable, kind of natural in terms of our history and his history, but it I don't think contributed to the city remaining an integrated city.

Lynn Jondahl: In the early '60s Detroit was described as a model urban center in northern United States. How did the reality of race challenge that, or was that a major challenge to that understanding of Detroit and the way in which it functioned? Was race the primary issue then that became the debilitating issue, challenging issue?

Carl Levin: I think white flight was a huge problem. It began long before Coleman Young became mayor, whatever its causes were, and that maybe is not for me to try to figure them out, but white flight became a huge issue and caused obviously a loss of population, mainly white population but later on African-American population. It became not just white flight but middle income African-American flight too, years later, that wanted a place which would be safer, which would have better schools, and when Detroit's neighborhoods and our schools went down in general and our neighborhoods became less safe, it was not just whites who left the city but African-Americans. Interesting now as we speak the percentage of whites in the city is now increasing.

Lynn Jondahl: Significantly?

Carl Levin: It actually was. It's still a small percentage, but the increase was kind of significant, like I don't know, 4%, 8% or something like that. I just happened to see that in the paper the other day. It's kind of an interesting thing.

Carl Levin: Now, the cause of that may be that African-Americans are leaving the city faster than whites so that the percentage may be increased, but I don't think that's all it. I think there's a lot of young white people, particularly moving back into the city now or moving to the city, particularly singles and particularly downtown. We have huge amounts of vacant land, but there are some parts of the city which are really extremely solid and attractive. I live downtown in a wonderful area called Lafayette Park.

Lynn Jondahl: You got into the race for city council being encouraged by people who were saying we've got such conflict and such major problems of division. How do you evaluate your length of service in terms of addressing that agenda?

Carl Levin: We spent our time trying to make the city work. We worked together, by the way. The city council really worked well together. We had some lively debates. Jack Kelly was a wonderful friend of mine, a real firebrand. Lively. But we really worked together as a team to try to make the city work. I guess that's the best way I can phrase it. When we had differences with the mayor, they were never personal or personalized. Sometimes the media would try to create a clash where there was differences.

Carl Levin: But it was trying to keep the city, which was clearly losing population. We had a huge problem with HUD, the federal agency which owned like 10,000 or 15,000 houses in Detroit. That vacant house problem began during that period and we took on HUD, because HUD said we could not remove those vacant houses even though they were open to trespass and they were dangerous, because they became dope dens and so forth. We said, "Yes we can remove that federal property if you don't keep them boarded up and not open to trespass." That became a major battle between us and the federal government, and as a matter of fact one of the reasons I ran for the Senate in what? 1978.

Lynn Jondahl: It would have been '78 that was the race.

Carl Levin: Yeah. It was '78. One of the reasons I ran was to take on the federal government's programs which were not working in my hometown. They were hurting my hometown and I felt that those programs were supposed to be providing housing for people. Instead, they were providing some devastation in our neighborhood, so we knocked down a federal house even though we were threatened with prosecution if we touched that house.

Lynn Jondahl: You physically-

Carl Levin: Well, they're directing a bulldozer one Saturday afternoon pointing to that house, and I was told by the federal government that "You touched our house," and "You touched federal property and we're gonna indict you," and I said, "Go ahead. The jury's gonna convict you. They're not gonna convict me," 'cause of what was going on in our neighborhood. That problem with those vacant houses was a huge issue in the late 1960's.

Lynn Jondahl: I remember you took on in a major way another housing issue, and that was the problem of red-lining, availability of mortgage funds and insurance for urban residents.

Carl Levin: Yeah. It was one of the big issues.

Lynn Jondahl: In 1978, you then became a candidate for the US Senate. How did you make your Detroit experience and those issues a basis for projecting yourself into a Senate leadership role?

Carl Levin: I would say that my platform actually was bringing, first of all an experience of local government regardless of where it is to Washington. Number two was basically arguing that Washington had to understand that there were differences between local governments and that one size could not fit all.

Carl Levin: I tried to make the argument out that even though I was from a particular location, that what made sense for the city of Detroit doesn't necessarily make sense for a suburb outside of Detroit or for a town in the middle of Michigan or for a town in the upper peninsula; that the federal government was treating us as though it was one kind of common situation where in fact there's huge different needs in different communities and that I could bring that understanding of the differences between local communities to the federal government. Maybe the HUD program was working in some city in the middle of Michigan. Maybe it was working. It sure wasn't working in Detroit.

Carl Levin: So local government experience I turned it into a plus, and I also was very critical of the federal government in a number of ways, including HUD, and I wanted federal officials to be responsible to us and not tell us to go to a federal agency. I wanted federal elected officials to be accountable and not to just palm us off to a federal agency or whatever the agency was. My wife and I laugh a lot about this, but I actually ran on a platform that said that the Congress should have the power to veto regulations of federal agencies, which is called legislative veto. My wife and I we still laugh about this because what kind of a platform is that? It's called "legislative veto". It's too theoretical, too procedural.

Lynn Jondahl: Pretty exciting, right?

Carl Levin: Right. But where I came from it was exciting. I tried to make it exciting so that federal officials would understand that we should be able to look to them. I carried that fight to Washington. We passed legislative veto. The law was called Levin-Boren or Boren-Levin, but my buddy Dave Boren from Oklahoma. It became law and was then thrown out by the US Supreme Court. We passed a law. The Supreme Court said "You can't do it" the way we wanted to do it. You have to allow the President to veto the Congress' veto of a regulation." You can't just let Congress veto a regulation without passing a law to do it which would in turn go to the President, who then could veto it. There's a very famous case called Chadha where the Supreme Court literally overturned my effort there.

Lynn Jondahl: Did those issues resonate with voters? Were they key in the outcome of the race?

Carl Levin: I'm not sure. I was a lot younger than Bob Griffin, who I think you pointed out earlier said originally he wasn't gonna run and then after he decided not to run, he did not show up to vote as often as he should have, and then he changed his mind but by then his voting attendance record had gone way down so that it was very, very bad. He said he was tired and he wasn't gonna run again, so my campaign was, "Hey, I'm not tired. I'll bring energy to Washington," and he said he was tired. I think that that helped me and hurt him.

Lynn Jondahl: In the same election, William Milliken, a Republican, was elected governor by a substantial margin, so you were really fighting a pretty strong Republican ticket as well.

Carl Levin: I was.

Lynn Jondahl: In Democratic politics were you the Establishment candidate? Were you an outsider?

Carl Levin: No, I was neither. My brother had run, obviously. I was an active Democrat in his campaigns for governor and before that for the State Senate. He won those earlier campaigns and as a matter of fact became the Democratic leader in the State Senate in his second term. But no, I was neither the outsider nor the Establishment candidate. We had a very lively primary, and one of the reasons I won the final election I believe is because the people who I defeated in my Democratic primary all rallied behind me. It was a real outpouring of support, and I've always been appreciative of my opponents in the Democratic primary for doing what they did, which was to come to my side and actively support me.

Lynn Jondahl: How do you come from your background and experience and interests in local government, in civil rights issues and so on, to become now the Chair of the Armed Services Committee of the United States Senate? How does that fit?

Carl Levin: Well, when I was elected I was asked what committees I wanted to join, and I had never served in the military. I felt I wanted to know a lot more about defense policy than I did. For me it was a gap in my background, in my knowledge, and I wanted to fill it. I think it was important that people who come from my background understand defense policy and not just be on the outside either carping about it or doing whatever, but being deeply involved in it. I was appointed to three committees at that time and I'm still on those same three committees. I've never changed my committee.

Carl Levin: I'm in a small business committee and also Governmental Affairs Committee, which has allowed me to become the chairman of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations. That subcommittee, which is a major subcommittee, is what got me involved in the investigations of Enron, or Wall Street, of offshore tax havens, of credit card abuses.

Carl Levin: Some of the major legislation in those areas have been assisted and promoted by our investigations. Even though I didn't write the bills, I became actively involved in working with the authors of those bills because those bills go to different committees than I was on. The Wall Street Reform bill, I had a big chunk of that bill based on our yearlong investigation of Wall Street. On the Enron investigation and the abuses which took place there, we got deeply involved in some of the reforms that followed out of the Enron investigation. Credit card reforms, a major bill on credit card reforms. The background for that, the material that that legislation was based on came out of our investigation. That Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, which by the way was the McCarthy subcommittee, Joe McCarthy's subcommittee, where he abused the power of that committee. 'Cause it's got real power of subpoena and breadth of investigation. I'm now the Chairman of that subcommittee, and that's what gave us the power through the subpoena to go after Wall Street and Enron and the credit cards. These folks didn't show up because they wanted to show up. These folks showed up because we subpoenaed them to do that. I always was interested in that piece of making government work. We talked about that.

Lynn Jondahl: The Oversight and Accountability.

Carl Levin: The Oversight and Accountability Committee. It was right back to the HUD issue, and as soon as I got there I was given small subcommittee to chair. It was not the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations. We had two or three staffers. It was a small subcommittee. But we got involved for instance in abuses by the Attorney General of the United States, who was doing some stuff that was improper in terms of being given some stock options, things like that, which made him rich, that he never should have been given. We went into that right off the bat.

Lynn Jondahl: When you look at these years, are there key issues that make you eager to get out of bed in the morning?

Carl Levin: Well, the most critical issues are war and peace issues. As Chairman of the Armed Services Committee, their issues of Iraq and Afghanistan for instance and Bosnia and what do we do with Al-Qaeda, those are the most critical. Those are life and death issues for a lot of people and perhaps for our country, and I spent probably most of my time on those issues.

Carl Levin: Now is trying to make sure that the President keeps his decision that we're gonna begin to reduce forces in Afghanistan in July of 2011. I spend a lot of time on that. I go to Afghanistan many times, a couple times a year usually. I give speeches on the subject because I think it's critically important that the responsibility for Afghanistan security be shifted to the Afghans. I didn't like the increase in combat troops that the President ordered and I said so at the time, but what I also said at the time was the decision of the President to begin to reduce our troop presence in July of 2011, about a year and a half after he made the decision to increase our presence, but setting the date to begin to decrease,

is the most important thing that's right now in front of us, and it's my goal to keep that date in place.

Carl Levin: There's a lot of pressure on the President to wobble on that one. Waffle on it and to say, "Well, maybe we won't decrease troops," but the only way we're gonna force the Afghans to take responsibility for their own security is if they know that we're gonna begin to leave, not withdrawal all of our troops all at once, but begin to leave.

Carl Levin: That is an action-forcing mechanism on the Afghans. That's a big part of my life, but the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, which had a major impact in support of Wall Street Reform, is something which gets my juices flowing as well. I gotta tell you, when I looked at what not just Wall Street but the number of other components of that economic disaster which we are barely coming out of, when I look at what Wall Street and those others did in terms of destroying the hopes and many of the retirement of average Americans with the incredible greed and conflicts of interest, that gets my juices going, and when I can get those Wall Street guys in front of me, which we did, and put them under oath, which we did, and when I get those Enron guys in front of us, which we did, and put them under oath, which we did, and just go at 'em successfully and lead the reforms, that is something which comes right back to the city council days when either HUD was abusing our town by imposing regulations on us which had no relevance to our city and never should have been implemented the way they were, or when we had agencies come in front of the city council and give us BS and try to evade questions. That was good training for what I have been going through in Washington for many decades.

Lynn Jondahl: Are there members of the Senate over the years that you have most enjoyed working with?

Carl Levin: One of them at least is John Warner, who is my buddy. Came together in '78 or '79 January. He was Chairman of the Armed Services Committee.

Lynn Jondahl: Oh, you bounced back and forth the Chairmanship.

Carl Levin: Exactly right. We're very close. We really like each other, trust each other, even where we differ with each other. We can even arrange to have votes on our differences in ways which are civil and where there's a debate, and not just throwing rhetoric back and forth. He's one of the people I've really enjoyed a lot.

Lynn Jondahl: Well, we appreciate your taking this time with us. It's been an interesting conversation and I wish we could do more of this.

Carl Levin: Well, I'm glad you're doing what you're doing. I think it's important. I don't know who will watch these tapes or films or whatever they are called these days down the road, but hopefully if there's something useful that comes out oughta

be because you're so well prepared when you ask those questions, Lynn. I gotta tell ya.

Lynn Jondahl: Senator Carl Levin, it has been good to talk with you today. Thank you very much.