

life, she was a tireless advocate for research on children's mental health. In fact, it was her interest in this issue that prompted Sandy to spearhead an effort to rewrite Michigan's special education laws during the time he was serving as a state senator.

The official description of Vicki's work on an NIH scientific review committee is that she ran a committee of scientists who decided which research proposals to fund in the areas of infant and children's mental health. However, as with many of our public servants, that description simply doesn't give a full picture of what her job really was, or more importantly, what her work meant to the average person.

Since her death, volumes of letters from coast to coast have been sent to the Levin family. Some credited Vicki Levin with helping develop the emerging field of developmental psychopathology; many highlighted how she improved the lives of children by advancing research on the biological and environmental factors necessary for a healthy childhood; a number of scholars credited her with nurturing and encouraging their work at a critical point; and others told personal stories about how Vicki helped them through a personal situation.

In his column, Andy Levin noted that Vicki "was like so many others among the 21 million federal, state, and local public servants who make sure we have clean water to drink, safe roads and park lands, and who try to protect us from things such as tainted Chinese milk without setting up crippling barriers to international trade."

Vicki Levin serves as a perfect example of the kind of person that conducts government work: someone whose goal is promoting and protecting the common good. Her story is a stirring reminder of the recognition that public service professionals merit, and an inspiration for others to join her son and commit to a life of public service.

From the Detroit Free Press, Nov. 27, 2008]
BE GRATEFUL FOR PUBLIC SERVANTS, MAYBE
BECOME ONE YOURSELF
(By Andy Levin)

I come from a family of public servants, people who work for the people.

In recent years, this calling has fallen out of public favor. Approval ratings for the federal government sank to 37% this year, from a high of 73% six years earlier, according to the Pew Center. While much of this has to do with the economy and attitudes toward the Bush administration, distrust of "Washington bureaucrats" is an enduring feature of the American polity.

But two developments herald a public service comeback.

The first, of course, was the election—and the campaign—of Barack Obama. More than any other successful presidential candidate since John Kennedy in 1960, Obama placed at the center of his campaign a call for each of us to serve and to sacrifice for the common good.

The second is the financial meltdown. In the last quarter century, Democratic and Republican administrations alike participated in the mechanistic trend of "less government is better" to the point where banks and investment houses could engage in virtually any scheme to make money with no one really responsible for making sure decisions were sound. And the companies were able to pay their executives outrageous sums that bore no relationship to performance.

In this moment of political opening in reaction to economic crisis, people seem to be realizing that we need public servants, people whose goal is promoting and protecting

the common good, to build a new financial system that encourages investment, the building of real things and the provision of useful services, and that holds financial decision makers accountable for their actions—the essence of capitalism.

If you've been in Michigan for any time at all, you may recognize my last name from our family's long line of public servants. My grandpa, Saul Levin, served on the Michigan Corrections Commission. Saul's brother, Theodore, was a federal judge, and Uncle Ted's son, Charles, served on the Michigan Supreme Court. My dad, U.S. Rep. Sandy Levin, and my uncle, U.S. Sen. Carl Levin, have quietly become the longest serving brothers in the history of Congress.

But it's none of these men who set me to wondering whether we're about to see a public service renaissance. No, it was my mom, Vicki Levin, not famous and never elected to office. For almost 30 years, until she was forced to retire in the spring for health reasons, Mom worked hard as a federal employee—a classic "Washington bureaucrat."

We kids thought we knew a lot about Mom's career. She ran a committee of scientists who decided which research proposals to fund in the area of infant and children's mental health. We watched her read through mountains of papers, often bringing work home. We watched her sweat in preparation for the thrice-yearly meetings of her committee, making sure all the details were just right.

But I don't think I ever appreciated what her work meant to her and to others, not fully. Back when I lived in the Washington, D.C., area, I tried to convince Mom to retire so she could spend more time with my four kids and her other grandchildren. After all, she was in her early 70s. Why not kick back? Mom bristled at the idea, saying her work and her relationship with colleagues were central to her life.

When her battle with breast cancer forced her to retire in April, we all learned just what Mom was talking about—and just how much public service can mean. Letters of tribute poured in from colleagues, dozens and dozens of research scientists at universities from coast to coast. (You can read them at <http://eskoink.com/VL/Vickilevin.pdf>.)

Many scholars, some now department chairs, told detailed stories about how they got their research start with Mom's help, or how she co-authored a paper with one scientist that is still her most cited work, or how her committee was the intellectual salon of their field.

Some credit her with helping create the emerging field of developmental psychopathology. More than one said she has made the lives of children everywhere better by helping spawn and nourish path-breaking research on the biological and environmental factors necessary for a healthy childhood. Many of them told personal stories about how Mom had counseled them through a divorce, adoption or rocky situation at the office.

OK, this is my mom, so you can imagine how reading all this felt. But if you step back, Vicki Levin was like so many others among the 21 million federal, state and local public servants who make sure we have clean water to drink, safe roads and park lands, and who try to protect us from things such as tainted Chinese milk without setting up crippling barriers to international trade.

Thanksgiving will be hard for my family this year. Mom died Sept. 4 just a few weeks shy of my parents' 51st wedding anniversary. But as we gather together, and each work privately through our losses and gratitudes, I wonder whether our nation is ready to move on from the simplistic notion that "government is the problem."

Perhaps, with the consequences of unregulated greed staring us in the face this holiday, we are ready to give thanks for the humble public servants, who forgo the greater monetary rewards of the private sector to toil for the good of us all.

NATIONAL TRAIN DAY

SPEECH OF

HON. PHIL HARE

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 5, 2010

Mr. HARE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to join with the Chairwoman of the Railroad, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials Subcommittee, Representative CORRINE BROWN, in supporting H. Res. 1301, a resolution supporting and recognizing National Train Day.

The story of trains in our country is one that mirrors the remarkable story of our nation. Over 150 years ago, the first trains started to move people and goods across the nation. Trains helped lay the groundwork for the industrial revolution and helped spur westward expansion.

Today, trains continue to play an important role in American life. In my district, freight is safely moved by train throughout Galesburg, Decatur, and many other areas. Passenger rail plays a tremendous role in modern America. In places like Quincy, Illinois, Amtrak has helped connect smaller communities with larger ones and the resources they have to offer. In the near future, high-speed rail will cross my district in two separate areas helping bridge urban and rural America and making each accessible in a more environmentally friendly way.

I am proud to say that the future of trains in America is bright. I join Chairwoman BROWN in aggressively pursuing a network of high-speed rail corridors that will make the viability of passenger trains more attractive while continuing our work to ensure that the nation's freight rail network remains secure, active, and vibrant.

National Train Day calls attention to the many positive contributions rail makes to our national economy. Rail makes for a safe, clean, effective transport of goods and services. Trains have been, are, and will continue to be a critical part of our nation's great story.

Madam Speaker, I strongly urge my colleagues to pass H. Res. 1301, a bipartisan resolution which recognizes and supports National Train Day. I thank Representative BROWN for authoring this bill and look forward to continue working with her.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RUSS CARNAHAN

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 7, 2010

Mr. CARNAHAN. Madam Speaker, due to being unavoidably delayed, I missed the vote on the Velázquez/Gutiérrez Amendment No. 5 to H.R. 2499 (Roll No. 238). I would like the RECORD to reflect that I would have voted against this amendment, which failed overwhelmingly by a margin of 11–387, had I been present to record my vote.