was General Abizaid. Now General Abizaid is going to retire. He not only speaks the language, he has been involved in that region of the world for years, yet his advice is no longer going to be sought. That, to me, is a mistake.

What is at stake is the entire region with the Iranian ascendancy. What is at stake is the more than 140,000 American troops who are there now and all of those who will be rotated there in the future. What is at stake in the Middle East and central Asia is a part of the world of enormous importance to the United States.

It is hard to talk about this very difficult condition the United States is facing without also saying there is another policy we clearly ought to look at in order to make some changes to lessen our dependence on that part of the world in the future, and that is energy independence. If we did not have to import 60 percent of our daily consumption of oil from places such as the Persian Gulf region or Nigeria or Venezuela, wouldn't the defense outlook for the United States and the way we would approach our foreign policy in different parts of the world be considerably different and a lot easier for the United States?

As we eagerly anticipate the President's comments and his report on his new policy, let's understand there is not a new policy. There has not been a policy in the past. The idea that this surge of troops is a new policy is not new. We tried that before a couple of years ago and it did not work. It did not work because of the longstanding violence and hatred between those two groups of Islam which goes back to the 1600s, when the two brands of Islam started separating, and what ultimately came to be the Shiites separated from the Sunnis after the death of Mohammed. A separation, with the two sides wanting revenge is how this has played out over the years. It is still going on.

We have enormous stakes. We hope we can get it right. It is with a great deal of anticipation that I look forward to the Senate receiving the President's comments.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

(The remarks of Ms. STABENOW pertaining to the death of President Gerald R. Ford are printed in today's RECORD under ''Morning Business.'')

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AUTHORIZING SALARY ADJUSTMENTS FOR JUSTICES AND JUDGES OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 197, which was introduced earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 197) to authorize salary adjustments for justices and judges of the United States for fiscal year 2007.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I thank Senator REID for expediting passage of legislation I introduced today with him and Senators SPECTER, REID, FEINSTEIN, and CORNYN to authorize cost-of-living adjustments for the salaries of United States Justices and judges for fiscal year 2007. This is a step I supported taking—and that we should have taken—in the last Congress. I am glad that a holdup on the Republican side that prevented us from passing this last week was resolved so that we could move forward in a unanimous and bipartisan way to take care of this unfinished business in the Senate. I hope that the House of Representatives will join us in making cost-of-living increase for judges an early item of business.

The legislation we pass today is a modest step towards addressing the issues raised by Chief Justice Roberts in his ''Year End Report on the Federal Judiciary.'' I have commended the Chief Justice for speaking out on behalf of the judiciary and for seeking to strengthen the independence of the judicial branch. Judicial independence is critical for preserving our system of government and protecting the rights of all Americans.

In 1975, Congress enacted the Executive Salary Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act, intended to give judges, Members of Congress and other high-ranking executive branch officials automatic COLAs as accorded other Federal employees unless rejected by Congress. In 1981, Congress enacted section 140 of Public Law 97–92, mandating specific congressional action to give COLAs to judges. With the end of the last Congress, however, the continuing resolutions providing funding failed to suspend section 140, thus ensuring that no COLA would be provided for Federal judges during the current fiscal year, unless other action is taken. Four years ago, the last time Congress missed making a scheduled cost-of-living adjustment for the judiciary, I sponsored remedial legislation that was enacted. I have done so, again, in the hope that Congress will correct this slight.

The bipartisan legislation we pass today provides for a COLA for Federal judges consistent with the law and with fairness. I have worked hard as ranking member of the Judiciary Committee over the last 4 years to ensure the independence of the judiciary.

Some of us have tried over the years to improve the compensation of judges. I have sponsored bills for general increases in judicial compensation. One such measure did pass the Senate a few years ago only to be stalled by the Republican House leadership. Senator FEINSTEIN was the lead sponsor of such a bill last Congress.

I intend to do what I can to convince Congress to fairly evaluate this issue and the Chief Justice's arguments, so that we can see what solutions may be possible. I hope Congress and the President will reconsider a broader judicial compensation measure this year to adjust their salaries. We have taken a first step now by taking up and passing this bill allowing for the annual judicial COLA that was not enacted last year.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time, passed, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table; that any statements related to this bill be printed in the RECORD. I also indicate this matter has been cleared with Senator MCCONNELL.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (S. 197) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 197

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. AUTHORIZATION OF SALARY ADJUSTMENTS FOR FEDERAL JUSTICES AND JUDGES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Pursuant to section 140 of Public Law 97–92, justices and judges of the United States are authorized during fiscal year 2007 to receive a salary adjustment in accordance with section 461 of title 28, United States Code.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This Act shall take effect as of January 1, 2007.

HONEST LEADERSHIP ACT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, tomorrow morning the Senate will begin the hard work of moving our country forward with S. 1. S. 1 is the ethics, lobbying, earmark reform legislation that will be before this body tomorrow.

After a long time, it seems, the new Senate has been sworn in. Our 10 new colleagues are here. Today we govern, and we start with S. 1. It is called the Legislative Transparency and Accountability Act. When passed, this legislation will help ensure America has a government as good and as honest as the people whom it serves. I want the record to be spread with my appreciation for Senator MCCONNELL cosponsoring this legislation. As the Chair knows and has worked so hard to promote bipartisanship, we cannot accomplish anything in this 110th Congress unless the legislative body works together on a bipartisan basis and sends legislation to the President that he will sign. Senator MCCONNELL set the right tone in agreeing to cosponsor this most important legislation. Again, I appreciate that very much. It is good for the American people to see that the first piece of legislation being brought before this body is one that is cosponsored by the Republican leader and the Democratic leader.

In the weeks leading to this new Congress, we have heard Members from both sides of the aisle talk about bipartisanship. S. 1 will have turned that talk into action. This is a bipartisan bill cosponsored by the two leaders, as well as the chairs and ranking members of the relevant committees.

The designation of the bill as S. 1 has symbolic importance. Often S. 1 is a vehicle for the majority party to make a partisan statement to its base. I have asked my staff to ascertain the last time a bill designated as S. 1 was jointly sponsored by the majority and minority leaders. It has been 32 years. In 1975, majority leader Mike Mansfield and minority leader Hugh Scott jointly sponsored a bipartisan criminal justice reform bill. I am very happy to revive the Mansfield-Scott tradition, where we have leaders working together to move this country forward.

There are many reasons ethics reform is the first legislative item the Senate will consider. Most importantly, because no issue facing this body is more fundamentally important. Honest government should not be a partisan goal. It is the key to a strong nation. All our work this year is based upon what S. 1 is to the American people. When we make leaders accountable to the people, not the special interests or lobbyists, there is no limit to what we can accomplish. We can be energy independent. We can have affordable health care. We can build a strong economy and provide real security for our country. Each of these goals can be accomplished if we ensure that the people's needs, not special interest needs, are put first.

Ethics reform is also the first order of business because it is a clear priority of the American people. In election day exit polls on November 7, voters spoke loudly and very clearly about their diminished faith in government. Forty-one percent of voters named corruption as extremely important in determining whom they would vote for. Americans want us to purge the Government of undue influence, and they want us to eliminate the conditions that led to the scandal-making headlines of last year and 2005: headlines about officials being flown to Scotland for rounds of golf; headlines about committee chairmen negotiating lucrative lobbying jobs with the industries they oversee, while working on legislation important to those industries; and, of course, headlines about ''pay to play'' schemes such as the infamous K Street Project, where jobs and campaign donations were traded for legislation and other official acts.

A number of elected officials and lobbyists have been put in jail for their activities that showed a disrespect for the Congress and the country. The American people simply have had enough. This is not the first time the Senate has considered ethics legislation. Last year, in the wake of the scandals of 2005, we debated and passed a reform bill in the Senate. Unfortunately, it fell victim to politics and never emerged from a conference committee, even though that bill passed on a bipartisan basis in the Senate. This year we are not going to let that happen. We will pass this bill, put it into law.

The House of Representatives has already acted on part of this issue, as their rules allow them to proceed faster than the Senate, and that is an understatement. I applaud Speaker PELOSI for making ethics reform a House priority. We will address many of the same issues here. But because of our rules, we will proceed at a much slower pace, not because we want to but that is how the Senate operates.

This bill will not be referred to the committees of jurisdiction. Senator MCCONNELL and I have decided to begin the debate with the same bill that passed this Chamber 90 to 8 last year. It has been through the committees previously, providing us with a strong starting point for action this year.

The reforms in S. 1 are very real, very strong. To begin, it prohibits gifts and travel paid for by lobbyists, such as Jack Abramoff's infamous trips around the world. Under provisions of this bill, no Member or staff would be able to receive any gift or take any trip paid for by a registered lobbyist. Next, this legislation will slow the revolving door that shuffles lawmakers and top staff between Federal jobs and the private sector. We all remember the case of the House chairman to manage the Medicare Part D bill on the floor of the House only to leave shortly thereafter to make $1 million a year as president of the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America. This bill will ban former Members from lobbying for 2 years, toughen lobbying bans already in place for senior staff, require public disclosure by Members negotiating private sector employment, and strip former Members who become lobbyists of their floor privileges.

Third, this bill will improve Senate procedures to make our work more transparent to the public. It will require full disclosure of earmarks. It will provide new tools to ensure that Members of Congress and members of the public have a chance to review bills before they are voted on. It will make it harder to insert new provisions in conference reports and hand out special favors in the dead of night.

Fourth, it will improve lobbying disclosures. Today lobbyists must file reports semiannually. Our legislation will require them quarterly. Not only that, we will post the reports on the Internet, and we will require lobbyists to include their campaign contributions and fundraisers. Those who don't follow the rules will be subject to stiff new penalties.

Fifth, this bill will make partisan efforts to influence private sector hiring, such as the K Street Project, a violation of Senate rules and mandate ethics training for all Members and staff.

The bill I have outlined, in a broad sense, is a starting point. If we did nothing else other than pass this bill, we would have enacted the most sweeping ethics reforms in a generation or more. But we will not stop with this bill that has been introduced. Very soon I expect to offer a substitute amendment that will strengthen this legislation even more. I hope to do that sometime tomorrow. Then we will have ample time for other Senators to improve the bill through further amendment.

Our two Democratic managers, Senators FEINSTEIN and LIEBERMAN, will oversee a strong bipartisan debate. And together we will pass the strongest Government reform bill to come out of the Senate since Watergate.

Some of the improvements I expect to be approved this week include extending the gifts and travel ban to companies and groups that hire lobbyists, not just the lobbyists themselves. I also expect we will approve earmark disclosure and that we will toughen penalties for those who set up fraudulent, corrupt lobbying schemes such as the ones Mr. Abramoff created.

We have tremendous challenges facing us this year, but our first is to restore the people's faith in their government. With the bipartisan reforms I have outlined today, we can accomplish that task.

There is no better way to start this new Congress than by showing the American people that we will answer only to them.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I believe we are in morning business; is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. What is the length of time for each Senator?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. A 10-minute time limit.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. I thank the Chair.

LOBBYING, ETHICS, AND EARMARK REFORMS

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, the majority leader has asked if, as the new chairman of the Rules Committee, I would come down and briefly say a few words about the bill we will be placing on the floor tomorrow. That bill is S. 1. This bill has passed the Senate before by a vote of 90 to 8. It offers the opportunity for the Senate to come