As a first step, Senate Democrats need to honor their pledge to return to regular order. Legislation that passes through this Chamber should be written with input from both parties. It should get a fair public vetting in committee, and Senators should get a chance to offer amendments. Just yesterday, the President's own Treasury nominee called for a return to regular order.

So it is time for the President and Senate Democrats to put the games and gimmicks aside. It is time they stopped waiting until the last minute to get things done around here. People are tired of it. I know my constituents in Kentucky are certainly tired of it. They have had enough of the political theater. It is time to put the stunts aside and actually work on real solutions. That is what we were sent here to do, and we should do it.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF CHARLES TIMOTHY HAGEL TO BE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Department of Defense. Nomination of Charles Timothy Hagel, of Nebraska, to be Secretary.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, it has been suggested that the Senate should not move forward with Senator Hagel's nomination, alleging he has not complied with requests that he produce speeches. In fact, the standard committee questionnaire requires nominees to provide a copy of ''any formal speeches you have delivered during the last 5 years of which you have copies.'' Senator Hagel complied with this requirement before his hearing 2 weeks ago.

Before the hearing, a number of requests were received from Republican Members that Senator Hagel seek and obtain and provide to the committee some transcripts of additional speeches. In fact, hundreds of pages of transcripts were, in fact, supplied to the committee before the hearing, in addition to those he had submitted in response to the committee questionnaire.

Since then, we have received two additional requests for specific speeches, and in each case we forwarded to Senator Hagel the requests. He sought and provided transcripts of speeches for which he had no prepared remarks and of which he had no copies. So he has responded to those requests, and where he was able to obtain a transcript or a video of the speech from the organization he addressed, he provided a copy. Where no such materials existed, he told us that was the case.

Senator Hagel was informed that a video of his remarks existed in one of those cases but that the organization had been unable to find it. The organization has now located the video, and it will be provided to the majority and minority staffs of the committee today.

In the last few days there has been some finding of transcripts or videos that have surfaced on the Internet—a handful of 2008 and 2009 speeches that Senator Hagel did not recollect. So I ask unanimous consent that a list of links to the Web transcripts or Web videos and a list of Senator Hagel's potentially relevant Senate speeches that are a part of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD from 2008 be printed in the RECORD immediately following my remarks.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(See exhibit 1.)

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, Senator Hagel stated in his financial disclosure that he received $200,000 from Corsair Capital, which is a private equity firm, and he was a member of its advisory board. It has been alleged that Senator Hagel failed to provide complete financial disclosure, despite the admitted lack of evidence of any kind, and a highly negative innuendo was dropped by one of our colleagues which said that, and I quote, ''it is, at a minimum, relevant to know if that $200,000''—referring to those fees from Corsair Capital—''that [Senator Hagel] deposited in his bank account came directly from Saudi Arabia, [or] . . . from North Korea. . . .'' Without any evidence of any kind, that kind of innuendo has been dropped here. It is inappropriate, unfair, untrue.

Senator Hagel has provided the same financial disclosure and met the same conflict of interest standards that the committee requires of all previous nominees. As I explained in a February 8, 2013, letter to my ranking member, Senator INHOFE:

Our committee has a well-defined set of financial disclosure and ethics requirements which apply to all nominees for civilian positions in the Department of Defense. . . . We have applied these disclosure requirements and followed this process for all nominees of both parties throughout the 16 years that I have served as Chairman or Ranking Minority Member of the [Armed Services] committee. I understand that the same financial disclosure requirements and processes were followed for at least the previous 10 years, during which Senator Sam Nunn served as Chairman or Ranking Minority Member.

And I added:

During this period, the committee has confirmed eight Secretaries of Defense (Secretaries Carlucci, Cheney, Aspin, Perry, Cohen, Rumsfeld, Gates, and Panetta), as well as hundreds of nominees for other senior civilian positions in the Department. . . . The committee cannot have two different sets of financial disclosure standards for nominees—one for Senator Hagel and one for other nominees.

As required by the Senate Armed Services Committee and by the Ethics in Government Act, Senator Hagel has disclosed all compensation over $5,000 that he has received in the last 2 years. As required by the Armed Services Committee, he has received letters from the Director of the Office of Government Ethics and the Acting Department of Defense General Counsel certifying that he has met all applicable financial disclosure and conflict of interest requirements.

As required by the Armed Services Committee, he has answered a series of questions about possible foreign affiliations. Among other questions, the committee asks whether during the last 10 years the nominee or his spouse has ''received any compensation from, or been involved in any financial or business transactions with, a foreign government or an entity controlled by a foreign government.'' And Senator Hagel's answer was ''No.''

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, will the distinguished chairman of the Armed Services Committee yield for a question?

Mr. LEVIN. I will be happy to.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I have listened to the recitation. Basically what the Senator is saying is that all the rules that were in place for nominees to the Department of Defense under Republican Presidents are being followed for Senator Hagel. But there are some who want to go beyond those and create new rules beyond those for Vice President Cheney when he was Secretary or Donald Rumsfeld or Gates or any of the other Secretaries of Defense. The Senator is saying some now want to do something different for this nominee of President Obama's than the practices they found totally acceptable for the nominees of President Bush?

Mr. LEVIN. The Senator is correct. A number of our colleagues have made that demand, and it is simply not something on which we are going to set a precedent. It is not the way to proceed in this body.

Mr. LEAHY. I stand with the Senator from Michigan. In the Judiciary Committee, we follow the same procedure for our judicial nominees regardless of the party of the President who nominates them. If we begin switching the rules depending upon who is President—well, if we think the American public holds Congress in low esteem right now, it is going to get even