

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RUBIO). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

BEARS EARS NATIONAL MONUMENT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, on December 28, 2016, President Obama designated the Bears Ears National Monument in Southern Utah, and I wish to commend him on protecting these important lands. This designation is an important step forward in the conservation of some of southern Utah's important national treasures.

The 1.35-million acre monument, which spans from forested mesas to redrock canyons and plateaus, will protect the region's abundant cultural resources, including well-preserved cliff dwellings, rock and art panels, artifacts, and Native American burials.

The Bears Ears National Monument, which derives its name from twin buttes that lie at the heart of the majestic Cedar Mesa, was requested by a coalition of five Native American tribes that united to protect a landscape revered in their shared histories and cultures. The Hopi Tribe, the Navajo Nation, the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, the Pueblo of Zuni, and the Ute Indian Tribe have all passed through the area at some time, leaving behind scores of fragile dwellings, pottery, petroglyphs, and pictographs. The Bears Ears region is a living natural and cultural landscape, where the people of these tribes still use the lands to collect herbs and medicines and pass their stories to the next generation.

I have fought to protect this area's resources through the America's Red Rock Wilderness Act, a bill I have introduced every Congress since 1997. My bill would safeguard 9.2 million acres of wilderness in Utah—some of the last great wild places in the lower 48 States.

Historically, national monuments have been the first step in protecting some of our most beloved public lands—the Grand Canyon, the Grand Tetons, and indeed, four of Utah's five national parks. Not only do these monuments help preserve precious habitat, landscapes, and history, they create jobs and invigorate nearby communities.

President Obama's decision to protect the Bears Ears came after significant public input in Utah, with the administration holding multiple listening sessions. Those sessions made clear that even diverse stakeholders agreed the Bears Ears is special and needs to be protected. It is the right decision for the present, and it is the right decision for the future.

Republican President Theodore Roosevelt signed the Antiquities Act into law in 1906, and a review of its history and its controversy showed that, time and again, the temporary anger over designated lands was overshadowed by the long-term benefits to our Nation. Teddy Roosevelt said it best, "Of all the questions which can come before this nation, short of the actual preservation of its existence in a great war, there is none which compares in importance with the great central task of leaving this land even a better land for our descendants than it is for us."

I urge my colleagues to join me in celebrating the Bears Ears National Monument and defending it and the Antiquities Act that made it possible.

SENATOR DIANNE FEINSTEIN BECOMING RANKING MEMBER OF THE SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, today, the Senate Judiciary Committee convenes for the first time in the 115th Congress, and we mark an historic moment in the committee's 200-year history. Last week, Senator DIANNE FEINSTEIN was named the committee's ranking member, the first time in American history that a woman has served in this capacity. It is striking that 352 Members have served on the committee, and only six of those—all Democrats—have been women. Three of those six women are proudly serving on this important committee today: Senator FEINSTEIN, Senator KLOBUCHAR, and Senator HIRONO, whom we welcome back to the committee.

Senator FEINSTEIN has long been a leading voice on this committee. I have enjoyed working with her on countless issues ranging from national security to immigration reform to Supreme Court nominations. Senator FEINSTEIN has broken down barriers throughout her career, and her new role as ranking member of the Judiciary Committee is only the latest example. As the committee grapples with some of the most pressing issues facing our country, we will all be counting on Ranking Member FEINSTEIN's leadership. We should all congratulate her on this historic moment.

REMEMBERING DR. PIERS SELLERS

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, on December 23, 2016, the world lost a true hero.

Dr. Piers Sellers was a scientist and an astronaut, having flown three times

on the space shuttle. On his first mission, he flew aboard the Space Shuttle Atlantis to the International Space Station, where he completed nearly 20 hours of space walks outfitting and assembling the orbiting outpost.

Several years later, following the tragic loss of the Space Shuttle Columbia, Piers returned to space and to the International Space Station aboard Discovery, carrying out the second of two test flights NASA needed to test critical on-orbit inspection and repair procedures resulting from the Columbia accident investigation.

On his third and final mission, he once more flew aboard Atlantis to the ISS. On this mission, he served as the robotics officer, again playing a key role in assembling and outfitting the space station.

His career as an astronaut exploring the frontier of space is by itself sufficient to justify Piers' status as a national hero; yet his service as an astronaut and explorer is a small subset of the contributions Piers made to our country and to our entire civilization.

Piers was a renowned climate scientist, specializing in using computer modeling and space-based observations to understand and predict the dynamics of our changing planet. He was also a brilliant communicator, whether testifying at a Commerce Committee field hearing in Miami about the impending dangers of sea level rise or standing in front of NASA's "hyperwall" video system narrating stunning and informative visualizations of the massive data sets that embody the "vital signs" of planet Earth. Countless policymakers, industry leaders, and even other scientists owe much of their understanding of the complex interactions of Earth's systems and of the alarming and undeniable signs that our civilization's carbon emissions are warming the planet to Piers.

Yet Piers' most heroic deed may be the decision he made shortly after being diagnosed with stage IV pancreatic cancer. He simply decided to keep going to work. To those that knew Piers, this was no surprise. A three-time shuttle astronaut and very capable manager, scientist, and engineer, Piers no doubt had many lucrative offers for employment following his final shuttle flight in 2010. Instead he chose to remain a civil servant scientist at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center because he felt that was where he could contribute most to the future of our home planet. A few years later, when Piers received the devastating news that he had not long to live, he chose to spend his remaining time continuing his work at NASA and communicating climate science to the public in the calm and charming manner that was uniquely his.

In a short video Piers recorded shortly before his death, despite his body having been ravaged by cancer and surely knowing that he had very little time left, he appeared as cheerful and hopeful as ever. In the video, he said