

# Opinion / Politics

— EDITORIAL —

## The power of weakness

This week we observed from a close range, the power of weakness and its ability to hold a person back from so many of God's blessings.

In this particular situation, a man has known in his head and heart for the better part of a decade that he's in a situation that leaves him empty—and because of the inherent personalities of those involved, is very unlikely to be fixed. He's a square peg always trying to force himself into a round hole, because he thinks if only he looks deeper, he can become ... round.

He has spoken openly for months about the change he needs to make, and how he has tried over the years to find the courage to make that change and pursue the life he's always dreamed of. Scripturally speaking, the parties involved in the situation would be perfectly justified in leaving it.

But when push comes to shove, as in this time, he goes through every possible mental gymnastic to avoid facing his weakness. This time around, he sought out an only partially correct spiritual argument to justify his lack of action and explain his internal conflict—and somehow make it all seem noble.

What better coping mechanism than convincing yourself you've done the "right" thing?

In looking back through this man's life, at each point when the grief that came with inevitable loss and change presented itself, he ran from it rather

than standing strong and letting the process complete.

It's devastating when a person's backbone is replaced only by a wishbone.

Joy is lost. People are harmed. Potential is wasted. Love is walked past. Men settle for half-lives, always living inside the regret of knowing what could have been, and pretending for the world that they aren't. Weakness assaults dignity and respect.

When it comes down to it, weakness is just the kissing cousin of fear—and as we all know, fear is a great tool of Satan, used to debilitate and freeze.

While weakness and indecision start with the individual, they also spread, becoming traits of any group or community to which he belongs.

We see it in government from top to bottom, where individuals remain silent and don't take a stand. We see it everywhere from law enforcement to companies, school boards to church leadership. We see it in couples who remain in empty marriages with no physical or mental connection, where vows have been long since broken. We see it in employees who don't have the courage to leave a miserable workplace, and linger there for years.

From our point of view, a lifelong embrace of fear and weakness is akin to choosing a waking death.

We sin. We miss the mark and sometimes have to change our once-correct paths in painful, imperfect ways. We don't believe God intends for us to martyr the joy right out of our lives in aiming for perfection. We can try to do our best, and when we fall short, there is forgiveness. Life can be beautiful—but not if you're afraid to ever really live it.

—The Baker County Press Editorial Board

— GUEST OPINION —

## Statement from the ORP on the Hammond situation

By Bill Currier

The Oregon Republican Party stands with the Hammonds, who have suffered through many years of federal bureaucratic aggression and lawless behavior by federal agencies.

When fires and invasive species threatened their grazing land they took action, as would you or I, to save that land.

And when that action resulted in the accidental burning of less than a few hundred dollars worth of federally managed land the federal agencies saw this as an opportunity to seize the Hammonds' private land, and so they brought charges of terrorism against them.

Even a casual observer understands that federal terrorism laws were never intended to apply to ranchers attempting to protect their grazing land!

Amazingly, similar land-saving actions by the federal agencies that resulted in losses on private land have never been charged or prosecuted. This is clearly a double standard on the government's part.

Unfortunately, the Hammonds are not the first ranchers in Oregon and other states to lose their land through such abusive high-handed government



Submitted Photo

Bill Currier is the Chair of the Oregon Republican Party.

tactics.

These tactics are a violation of several constitutional protections.

This is why Americans should take notice of what is happening in Oregon.

This is why the Oregon Republican Party speaks out in support of the Hammonds, and others who are in a similar situation.

The federal abuse of power must stop.

When citizens violate the law, individually or in a group, we should take notice.

When the government, who is charged with protecting all of us under the law, violates those very same laws and the principles upon which they are based, we should all be very concerned, and take active steps to put government back on track.

While we believe the group occupying the vacant federal buildings in Harney County is breaking the law in doing so, and do not condone their unlawful actions, we see the real threat as a detached out-of-control federal bureaucracy that threatens us all.

— LETTERS TO THE EDITOR —

### Thank you to Rep. Walden

To the Editor and Representative Greg Walden:

The officers of the Oregon Republican Party, Congressional District 2 wish to express our sincere and heartfelt appreciation of the speech you made on the floor of the United States House of Representatives on Tuesday, January 5, 2016 relating to the situation in Harney County. We concur with you that the action of the federal government in this case is a blatant overreach of their authority and common sense regarding public lands in Oregon and elsewhere in the West. It is a rank abuse of power.

Facts can be inconvenient for those insistent on telling their own story. Government agencies have time after time overreached their authority all over the West. In this case it is the BLM. In other cases, the EPA. In still other cases, the USFS. The agencies have no problem levying massive fines against citizens for rather inconsequential deeds and in the case of the Hammonds, forcing the family to give first right of refusal of sale to the govern-

ment for their ranch if they should be forced to sell. Thanks to your help, more facts are being uncovered like peeling an onion.

Bottom line: It is time to start to dismantle this overarching federal leviathan that is choking the economy of the West! Return the federally managed lands to the states. The states need to maximize their potential by using all of their lands to contribute to their total economy and not be saddled with an absentee landlord detrimentally managing a majority of the acreage in the West using oppressive methods to no benefit of the states. We are not Pollyanna enough in our thinking to expect this to happen instantly.

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## Walden to hold town halls

HOOD RIVER— U.S. Rep. Greg Walden (R-Hood River) will hold town hall meetings in Sherman and Gilliam counties on Friday to give an update on efforts in Congress to reduce burdensome federal regulation, as well as historic legislation recently signed into law to improve education for children and support roads, bridges, and highways. Full details are below.

Later on Friday, Walden heads to Morrow County to tour the Boardman Tree Farm. He'll then visit the

site of the new Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center in Hermiston. Afterwards, Walden will attend Pendleton's annual Chamber of Commerce dinner.

On Thursday, Walden was in Wasco County to speak to local business leaders at The Dalles Chamber of Commerce's annual banquet.

Friday, January 22, 2016  
Sherman County Town Hall. When: 9:00 a.m.  
Where: Bob's Texas T-Bone, 101 East 1st Street, Rufus.

Arlington Town Hall. 11:00 a.m. North Gilliam County Fire Hall, 1500 Railroad Avenue, Arlington  
Boardman Tree Farm Tour. 1:00 p.m. Boardman Tree Farm, 77200 Poleline Road, Boardman  
Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center Tour. 3:15 p.m. 1705 East Airport Road, Hermiston  
Pendleton Chamber Dinner. 5:30 p.m. Rivers Event Center, Wildhorse Resort & Casino, 46510 Wildhorse Boulevard, Pendleton.

## Governor releases policy agenda

Today, Governor Kate Brown announced the following 2016 policy agenda:

### A Seamless System of Education

- Establish the Education Innovation Officer charged to improve Oregon's high school graduation rate.
- Create the Governor's Council on Educator Advancement: Executive Order establishes the Governor's Council on Educator Advancement, charged with coordinating comprehensive support to deliver excellence in teaching through leadership development, mentorship and best practices

### A Thriving Statewide Economy

- Support small business:

- Legislation to expand the Office of Small Business Advocate to help small businesses navigate state and local policies and procedures.

- Governor's Small Business Advisors: Executive Order creates a diverse advisory group to develop recommendations to support Oregon small businesses, such as increasing access to capital and streamlining state agency processes.

- Legislation to increase the minimum wage.
- Legislation to continue the expansion of affordable housing issues statewide.

### Excellence in State Government

- Accountability and Transparency:
- **Healthy, Safe Oregonians**
- Establish the Gov-

ernor's Campus Safety Working Group.

- Umpqua Community College funding proposal – funds to enhance safety on the UCC campus.

- Harney County funding proposal – funds to offset expenses incurred during the occupation of the Malheur Wildlife Refuge.

### Responsible Environmental Stewardship

- Appointment of State Resilience Officer.
- Drought package funding proposal – funds to help local communities plan for and address persistent drought.
- Wildfire funding proposal – funding to cover costs incurred during the 2015 wildfire season.

— CONTACT US —

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