

LETTER FROM CONGRESS

Walden: Making progress together for our region and state

By Rep. GREG WALDEN
 The biggest disagreements and loudest voices got most of the attention during this last session of Congress, from filibusters to failed websites, immigration to ISIL. However, while the pundits blared, many of us worked hard to achieve important legislative wins for Oregon and America in 2014—like boosting American energy and jobs and rooting out waste to save taxpayer dollars.
 Make no mistake, we still have work to do, but we have a strong foundation to build on next year with the new Republican majority in the Senate on efforts to grow and strengthen Oregon's rural communities.
 All in all, I'm proud that three bills I wrote this session—protecting rural satellite television service, providing more water and power for Central Oregon, and boosting agriculture research in Hermiston—are now the law of the land. And

several other of my initiatives passed the House with bipartisan support, including the plan to reform federal forest policy to grow jobs in the woods, improve forest health, and provide needed revenue for schools, roads, and law enforcement. Although I am disappointed the Senate did not hold a vote on this plan or any forestry bill to assist our region, this gives us a strong base to build on next year with the new majority in the Senate. I've already begun conversations with members of the House and Senate from both parties on efforts to reform federal forest policy and better manage our lands. All of these initiatives were developed transparently with community support, so they will have good momentum going into 2015.
 One of my top priorities is making federal agencies like the IRS, the VA, and the EPA more transparent and accountable to taxpayers. I sought and secured a federal investigation into the enor-

mous, costly, failure of Cover Oregon to stop the waste, demand the truth, and get accountability. That investigation is ongoing, and we hope to get the results in the near future.
 And when the FDA proposed rules that would have made it harder to grow onions and brew local beer, I pushed back hard on behalf of producers and brewers, inviting the FDA to visit with Oregon growers to witness the rules' impact firsthand. Our voices were heard as the agency reworked these to make them better for Oregon producers. I doubt most people realize how much time a member of Congress and his/her staff spend helping cut through red tape at agencies like the Social Security Administration or the VA. For me and my team, we helped more 2,811 Oregonians over the past two years, including nearly one thousand veterans cases.
 The Energy and Commerce Committee I serve on had 51 bills signed into law

this session, including legislation to increase hydropower and boost research for pediatric diseases. We launched a major initiative called 21st Century Cures to aggressively help find cures for the nearly 6,500 known diseases that lack them. This is an exciting initiative that will dramatically improve the lives of people all over the world.
 The Committee also conducted thorough oversight of federal agencies under our jurisdiction. When the Federal Communications Commission proposed a "study" that sought to poke their noses into America's newsrooms, the Communications and Technology panel that I chair objected strongly, leading to the agency dropping this threat to the First Amendment.
 And Congress successfully passed legislation to help clean up the mess at the VA and allow more veterans to go outside the VA to access care in the communities where they live. This will re-

ally help veterans, especially in our rural communities. We also passed plans to streamline and improve job-training programs and provide needed resources to farmers to tackle drought, fire, and new diseases and pests in their crops.
 Getting deficit spending under control also remains a huge priority of mine. The House passed a budget that balances over the next 10 years and eventually pays off America's debt. I supported efforts to reform programs, eliminate waste and duplication and as a result we cut discretionary spending to a level below when President Obama took office.
 This work doesn't always grab the headlines or dominate the chatter on Twitter, but these quiet gains improve the lives of people and help get our region and country on a better track. I could not have been as successful working on these issues without hearing from and listening to you—the people of Oregon's Second District.

Just this year, I traveled more than 9,000 miles through our enormous district to hold town halls (49 in the past two years) and other community meetings. That's in addition to the thousands of telephone town hall questions, emails, letters, phone calls, Facebook messages, and tweets I've received from you and answered (more than 41,000 just this year).
 As the New Year dawns, I pledge to continue to work as hard as I can to solve our problems, here at home and across the nation. I want to continue to hear from you about your ideas and priorities. This is how I develop my "to do" list to take back to Washington, D.C. each week. Please visit www.walden.house.gov to send me an email to let me know what you think should be on my plate for 2015.
 Greg Walden of Hood River represents Oregon's Second Congressional District, which covers 20 counties in southern, central, and eastern Oregon.

ROUND TABLE

24: Remembering Charlie, and the connection to those yellow stars

By KIRBY NEUMANN-REA
 News editor
 The cowardly massacre at the Charlie Hebdo offices in Paris put me in an uncomfortably reflective mood last week.
 There is little that one such as I can say about the terrible grief and pain felt by people close to those who died. Their tragedy is a personal one but also a global one, because of the threat the killings pose to freedom of expression everywhere. I would amend the rallying cry "Je Suis Charlie" to "Nous Sommes Charlie": we are all Charlie.
 The Charlie Hebdo attack made me realize that my past visits to Israel and to Europe have put me on the outskirts of terrorism. A brief personal history is in order: In 1978-79, I spent my junior year of college at Tel Aviv University, in an English-language program. While not Jewish, my time there gave me a strong connection to Jewish people of Israel and other countries. In 1980, I was blessed with another travel opportunity, to work for three months at a Michelin one-star restaurant in Normandy, about an hour by train from Paris.
 My wife, Lorre, and I visited England in March 1991, just at the start of the ground war in the first Gulf War; I vividly remember the "report unattended objects" warnings, and seeing Victoria Station shopkeepers react with alarm when a shopping bag was left not far from their doors. It turned out to be an innocent act of forgetfulness by someone, but it was a bracing beginning to our vacation. We would later encounter border barbed wire and armed British patrols and security gates in Belfast (this was before the 1998 Good Friday agreement).

country, in Zurich we Tel Aviv-bound passengers were shuttled to a remote metal building away from the terminal, for a separate security clearance and boarding process. That was my first exposure to the realities of years of war and terror involving Israel and the region, and people who travel there.
 In my student year in Israel I saw soldiers with their weapons everywhere I went — standard procedure then, as now, for security's sake as well as the simple reality of life in a country with a citizen reserve army. I saw Arabs told to get off buses, a painful experience I saw Israelis protest, and we were schooled in the unattended packages ethos. That year I heard both Abba Eban, Israel's then-UN delegate, speak of Jews arming themselves against what he said was the inevitable war on Jews; that meeting was held in a basement, in virtual secret, as Kahane was at the time persona non grata with the Israeli government.
 However, nothing overt happened in my year there, other than one non-fatal bomb in Jerusalem. It was the year of peace accords starting with Egypt — a magical time that seems unreal now. I went to Bethlehem and had the ironic experience of being frisked by soldiers be-

fore I could enter Manger Square on Christmas Eve.
 In 1979, on a student trip to the Golan Heights (held by Israel, but all-but-empty due to its proximity to enemy Syria), we took a hike on a remote plateau and were warned not to touch any object we saw, for fear it could be booby trapped. (On that same trip, we rode the single ski lift in Israel up to the top of Mt. Hermon, a ride that looks down upon the rusted remains of Syrian tanks from

terrorism. (Pardon my stilted syntax, but I am trying to phrase this just right.)
 I had stayed twice in Hotel de Nice, a cheap walk-up hotel in the heart of the city. It was a good base for taking in the museums and parks. I ate cheap food and walked — a lot. Both times I had room 26 at Hotel de Nice, the key hanging from a hard brass keychain, in those days before swipe cards.
 My third Paris visit, in October 1980, was days after a

out and took off walking around Paris, planning to catch an early train back to Normandy. Shortly before I was to do so, I put my hand in my coat pocket and realized I still had the hotel key — room 24 — but not enough time to take it back. That would have to wait until the next visit.
 Meanwhile, in my wandering, I realized I was lost. Well, not so much lost as needing to look; maps of Paris are exact (and this was before GPS) and after a few minutes I was able to suss out my location. I charted a course for catching the train from Gare St. Lazare, and started walking in that general direction. After a few blocks I looked up and realized I was at the corner of Rue de Copernic — just a block from the blown-up synagogue. Curiosity got

like the Star of David, the Jewish symbol. The lower point of the star points to where the synagogue is.
 On Oct. 6, 1980, LeMonde newspaper evoked the Nazi's branding of Jews in its response to the synagogue attack: "Every Frenchman should feel like he is wearing the yellow star."
 In January 2015, this newspaper and thousands of others said, "Je Suis Charlie."
 Statements of unity, even fraternite et liberte.
 Last week in Paris, the murderers attacked a newspaper office and then a kosher grocery store miles from their first crime. They sought out Jewish people to kill.
 There is no practical connection between the synagogue bombing of 1980 — carried out by French rightists — and the Parisian tragedies of 2015 — done by Islamic jihadists — other than a set of victims in both cases who happened to be Jewish. And Paris is hardly unique in being wracked by terror. I think people everywhere share a mutual sense of foreboding as the smoke clears on Charlie Hebdo.
 So I stumbled on a piece of plastic in a Golan field, and saw soldiers walking around with guns, or happened into a bombed-out synagogue in Paris; in none of these experiences was I ever in danger, and I cannot claim to understand what true fear feels like. But it keeps me mindful of the ingrained history of hate that seems at times to define the human experience.
 Current events, and my own snippets of history, have my attention. Statements of unity are a good thing. Even on the outskirts of something you can still feel close to it. But how close, and for how long?



the 1967 War.)
 On that hike, walking through the scrub, my boot touched something and amazingly I reached down to pick it up — an unidentifiable plastic part of some kind. Friends saw me and laughed and shook their heads. Whatever it was, I dropped it — and thought of nothing else for the rest of the hike.
 In 1980 in Paris, a grim coincidence occurred that gave me a sense of awareness of, if not direct experience with,

the better of me and I walked down Copernic to have a look. The police tape was up and guards were there, but things looked nearly normal. I bought a roll at a bakery across the street.
 And here is the coincidence: As I was standing on Copernic I pulled the Hotel de Nice key from my pocket and looked at the address of the synagogue: 24 Rue Copernic, the same as my room number.
 And the key chain? I kept it; it's in the photo above: made of brass and shaped

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Hood River Weather Forecast

Date	Forecast	Daytime / Overnight High / Low (°F)
Today Jan 14	Partly Cloudy	41° / 35°
Thurs. Jan 15	Rain	43° / 43°
Fri. Jan 16	Rain	45° / 43°
Sat. Jan 17	Rain	47° / 41°
Sun. Jan 18	Light Rain	47° / 38°
Mon. Jan 19	Rain	47° / 39°
Tues. Jan 20	Partly Cloudy	47° / 37°

Oregon Weather Map

Today's Forecast
 Patchy fog. Patchy freezing fog before 1 p.m. Otherwise, mostly cloudy, with a high near 38. East wind 8 to 10 mph.

Humidity NA
Wind Speed NA
Barometer NA
Dewpoint N/A
Visibility NA

Last Update on 12 Jan 8:00 am PST

Actual High / Low	
Jan 5	- 56/44
Jan 6	- 49/36
Jan 7	- 46/31
Jan 8	- 40/38
Jan 9	- 42/37
Jan 10	- 41/37
Jan 11	- 40/36

Updated Monday, Jan 12 at 9:00 a.m. PST
 Data from www.weather.com

WINTER CHECKLIST

- TRACTION TIRES
- TIRE STUDS
- SNOW WHEELS
- CHAINS
- BATTERIES
- SIPING

HOOD RIVER
 3140 W. CASCADE • 541-386-1123