

# Grant County sheriff facing ethics complaint rescinds resignation

Former OSP officer filed ethics complaint against Grant County Sheriff Glenn Palmer with DPSST

By EMILY CURETON  
Oregon Public Broadcasting

JOHN DAY — A sheriff in Eastern Oregon who announced he would resign the day after being notified of an ethics complaint against him now says he will stay on the job and seek re-election for a sixth term.

Grant County Sheriff Glenn Palmer told county officials at a public meeting last week he would quit. But he wrote in a Facebook post Tuesday, "I am withdrawing my resignation."

A former Oregon State Police officer filed the latest ethics complaint with the Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training, or DPSST, a state agency that enforces minimum standards for peace officers.

The complaint alleges Palmer failed to return lost property — in this case, a fishing pole with the owner's name engraved on it. The complaint alleges Palmer kept the pole out of personal animosity toward a retired Oregon State Police officer,

Gordon Larson.

Larson filed the ethics complaint. He said the lost fishing pole "is a small piece of a much larger issue that talks about a sheriff willing to use all resources under his direction to try and damage a citizen."

In 2018, Larson ran against and lost to Palmer's younger brother Sam Palmer for a Grant County Commission seat. Larson claims the sheriff has repeatedly used his position to damage political opponents.

Sheriff Palmer's politics were a flashpoint during the 2016 occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, when he publicly sympathized with armed militia members who took over the refuge for 41 days.

"Local officials, primarily the sheriff and those acting under his control, [are] trying to damage me and my family because of my political posture against the Malheur occupation, because I opposed his brother in a political race, and more importantly because we've called him out for his tactics," Larson said.

Palmer declined to comment about the ethics complaint.

Palmer wrote on Facebook he intends to fight the allegations. "I will be staying on until the end of my



The Oregonian Photo via AP/Thomas Boyd, File  
**Oregon Gov. Kate Brown, left, hugs Grant County Sheriff Glenn Palmer in 2015 as they enter a meeting with homeowners in Canyon City. Palmer told county officials at a public meeting last week he would quit. But he wrote in a Facebook post Tuesday, "I am withdrawing my resignation."**

term," he wrote, "and as long as this behavior continues, I will continue to seek reelection. I will be asking the voters for an unprecedented 6th term as your Sheriff."

Grant County Judge Scott Myers said Palmer's resignation was never formalized.

"Until I had it in writing and the ink was dry, I never

even considered it a feasible statement," Myers said.

DPSST's policy committee plans to review the complaint at a Nov. 21 hearing.

The agency has received at least nine other complaints against Palmer in recent years. The Oregon Department of Justice concluded in 2017 the sheriff did not commit criminal

acts by destroying public records and issuing handgun licenses to out-of-state residents.

The state received another complaint against Palmer and a deputy in February 2019, alleging the sheriff's office has a policy of not enforcing restraining orders. Investigator Kristen Hibberds determined the

allegations were "outside of DPSST's jurisdiction."

Palmer is also known for appointing at least 65 special deputies — politically supportive volunteers, usually without law enforcement training — who are authorized to act in his name in Grant County.

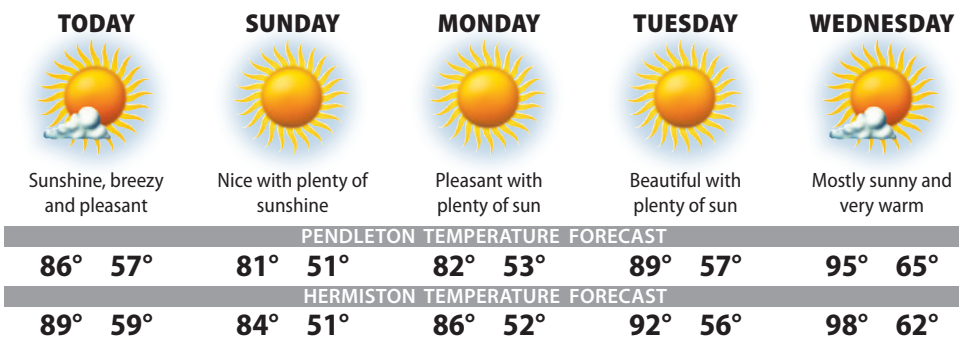
The ethics complaint made by retired OSP officer Larson names two of these special county deputies: Jim Sproul and Dave Traylor, claiming the men "have written a number of vile, patently false and inflammatory remarks about me."

Sproul and Traylor have challenged, in a separate and ongoing process, Larson's right to use water from a creek on his ranch near Canyon City.

Palmer used his Facebook page, which has a law enforcement badge as its banner image, earlier this month to encourage people with a history of domestic violence to seek legal advice before buying a gun, despite a federal ban on domestic abusers buying firearms in place for the last 23 years.

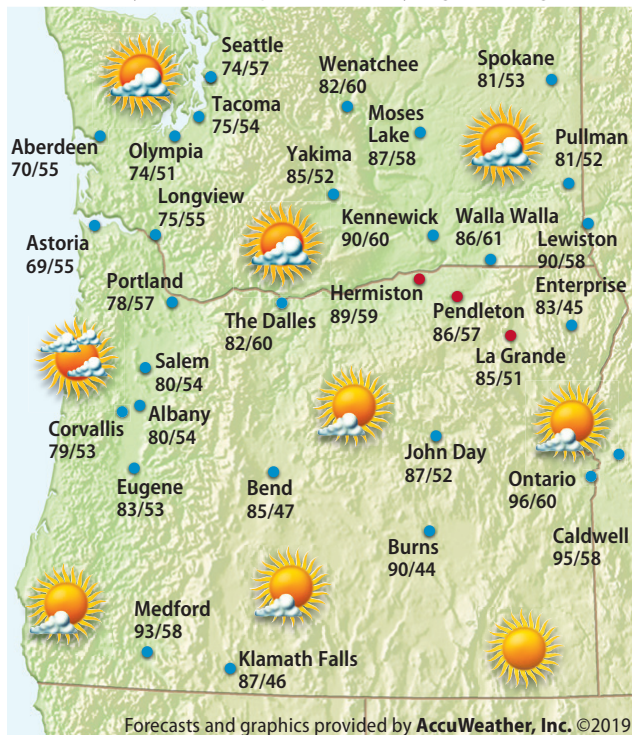
He addresses "gun enthusiasts" in the Aug. 9 post and suggests that people who have been convicted of domestic violence crimes contact a lawyer to "see if your record can be expunged or removed."

## Forecast for Pendleton Area



## OREGON FORECAST

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.



## ALMANAC

**PENDLETON** through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	84°	53°
Normals	86°	56°
Records	109° (1894)	34° (1910)

**PRECIPITATION**  
24 hours ending 3 p.m. 0.00"  
Month to date 0.12"  
Normal month to date 0.31"  
Year to date 9.73"  
Last year to date 6.49"  
Normal year to date 8.26"

**HERMISTON** through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	84°	51°
Normals	86°	56°
Records	103° (1956)	41° (1938)

**PRECIPITATION**  
24 hours ending 3 p.m. 0.00"  
Month to date 0.05"  
Normal month to date 0.15"  
Year to date 4.61"  
Last year to date 5.13"  
Normal year to date 6.07"

**WINDS** (in mph)

Today	Sun.
Boardman WSW 8-16	SW 6-12
Pendleton W 10-20	W 7-14

**SUN AND MOON**

Sunrise today	6:06 a.m.
Sunset tonight	7:48 p.m.
Moonrise today	none
Moonset today	3:16 p.m.

**MOON PHASES**

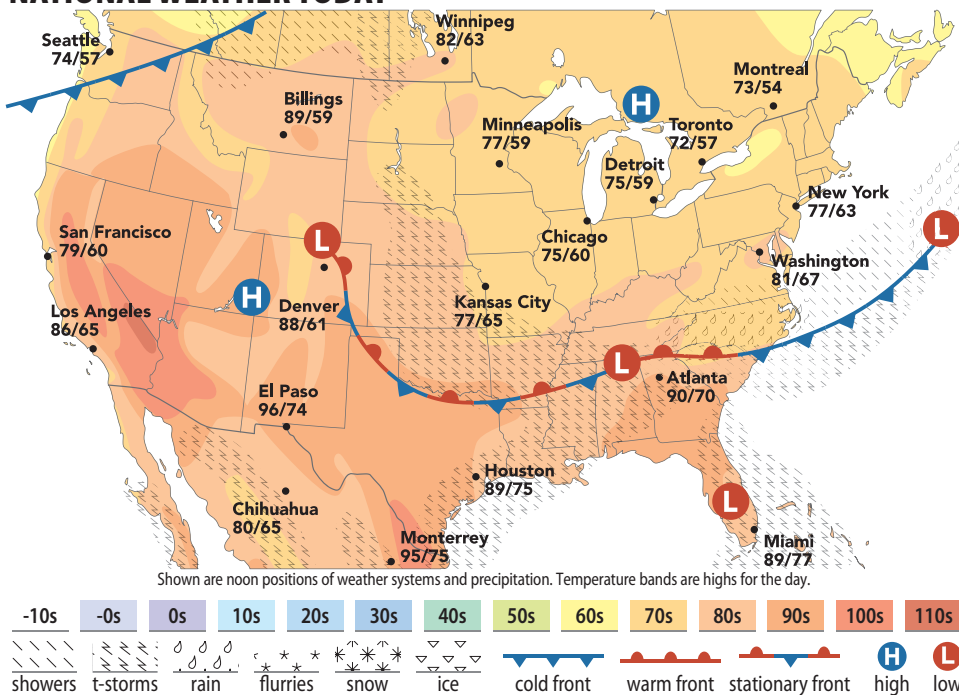
Phase	Date
New	Aug 30
First	Sep 5
Full	Sep 13
Last	Sep 21

## NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)

High 106° in Needles, Calif. Low 28° in Stanley, Idaho

## NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



## Walden says little about gun legislation after El Paso and Dayton shootings

By JEFF MAPES  
Oregon Public Broadcasting

PORTLAND — Since the mass shootings in El Paso and Dayton nearly three weeks ago, Oregon Rep. Greg Walden has said little about whether he would support new federal legislation to tighten gun laws.

That could change next week when he holds five public hearings in his sprawling district, which covers Eastern Oregon and a portion of Southern Oregon. The veteran Republican lawmaker will meet constituents in Rufus, Arlington, Heppner, Burns and Tygh Valley.

Walden declined several requests for interviews with OPB. His communications director, Molly Jenkins, responded to written questions by releasing a statement from Walden in which he said he had supported

several successful bills to improve access to mental health care.

However, Walden said nothing in his statement about whether he would back federal gun legislation. And he also didn't say why he voted against legislation passed by the House earlier this year that would expand background checks. He was silent on whether he would back "red flag" legislation that allows judges to take firearms from people at extreme risk of being a danger to themselves or others.

President Donald Trump and many Republicans in Congress opened the door to action on those bills in the wake of the El Paso and Dayton shootings on Aug. 3 and 4. In the wake of the shootings that left 32 dead and 51 injured, Trump has sent conflicting signals on whether he wants stricter background checks.

In the past, Walden indicated a willingness to look at tightening gun laws.

After the early 2018 mass shooting at a Parkland, Florida, high school, the congressman told OPB that it "makes some sense" to enact a national version of the red flag law that's already in effect in Oregon and 16 other states.

Oregon also has tighter background checks, and Walden said then that "I think you're going to see us move in that direction federally, too."

In addition to sales by federal licensed dealers, Oregon requires checks on private gun sales and by unlicensed sellers at gun shows.

A year later, Walden voted against a bill that passed the House that was similar in scope to the Oregon law. Only eight Republicans voted for the measure, which Walden opposed.

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