

# Opinion

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## GUEST EDITORIAL

# Senators snub Rep. Walden

### Editorial from The (Bend) Bulletin:

Oregon Sens. Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley — Democrats — are celebrating a bipartisan package of bills on public lands that passed the Senate. There's probably something in the package that almost anyone would find worth celebrating, especially people in Crooked River Ranch.

But in all the excitement about the "bipartisan" package, Wyden and Merkley seem to have forgotten someone: Rep. Greg Walden, R-Hood River.

The joint news release ticks down a long list of Oregon-related changes. For instance, if the bill becomes law, there will be a new Devil's Staircase Wilderness of 30,000 acres between the Umpqua and Smith rivers.

Wyden and Merkley get mentioned throughout these Oregon accomplishments, of course. But the announcement also singles out the work of Rep. Peter DeFazio, a fellow Democrat from Springfield. They make a point of giving him credit for his work to develop a steelhead sanctuary north of the North Umpqua River.

Then comes a discussion of an effort to improve wildfire protection for Crooked River Ranch. Acres near the ranch would be removed from the nearby wilderness study area. That gives the Bureau of Land Management more freedom to treat the removed area to reduce wildfire risk.

It's a big deal. Homes in Crooked River Ranch back right up to the wilderness study area boundary, and then, there's a canyon, a short distance away. If there's anything fire likes to do, it is race uphill. Reducing the risk of a wildfire reaching homes is critical.

The release highlights Wyden's role in making that happen. He secured an amendment to ensure the removed lands are managed for forest health and wildfire resiliency.

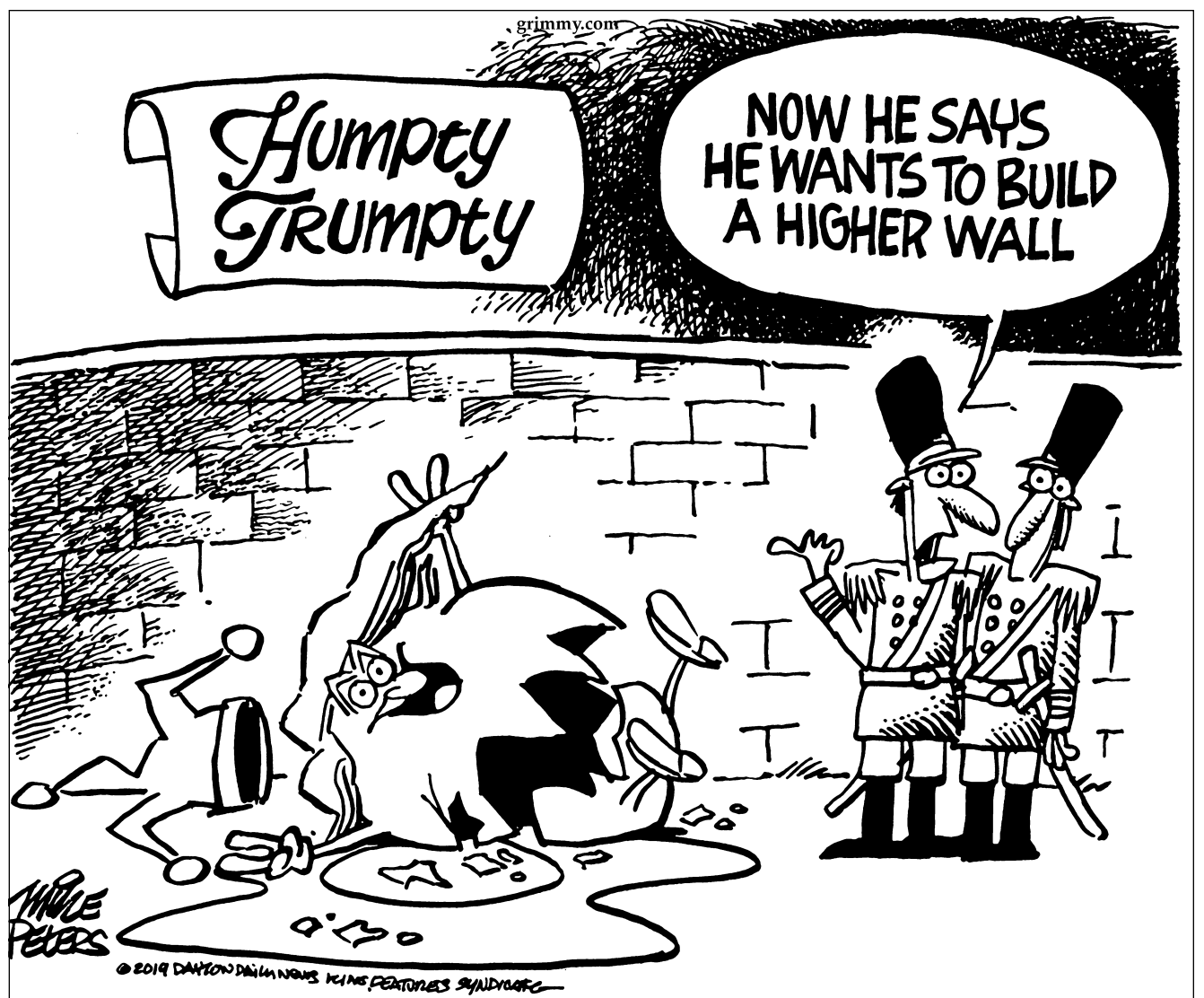
But whose bill was it that proposed this important change for Crooked River Ranch? Walden, a Republican, in whose district Crooked River Ranch lies.

He doesn't get mentioned at all. Gee, we wonder why.

## Letters to the editor

- We welcome letters on any issue of public interest. Customer complaints about specific businesses will not be printed.
- The Baker City Herald will not knowingly print false or misleading claims. However, we cannot verify the accuracy of all statements in letters to the editor.
- Letters are limited to 350 words; longer letters will be edited for length. Writers are limited to one letter every 15 days.
- The writer must sign the letter and include an address and phone number (for verification only). Letters that do not include this information cannot be published.
- Letters will be edited for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons.

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## Your views

### Glad city is trying to clean up nuisance properties

While reading the paper today I was encouraged to hear that city council is doing something about nuisance properties. They serve only to reduce the value of the homes around them, cause sanitation and rodent infestation and bring with them a plethora of other critters like lice, roaches and criminals. I served for four years on a problem property abatement team and can tell

you firsthand the crime and filth they attract.

If you doubt this, read "Broken Windows" and get a real taste of what "slum lords" can do to local real estate values and the cost to city coffers for services rendered by these folks.

We had one property that had hundreds of police services calls with as many arrests. We eventually were able to secure a cease-and-desist order and the tenants were relocated and the prop-

erty razed. The folks we relocated were very thankful as their quality of living improved dramatically and the property owner paid the bill for their relocation.

Fines, taxes and levies work on these lazy people and compliance is only done via the wallet. Let's work together to improve the quality of life here in our beautiful town!

In my very humble opinion.

**Thomas Wilcoxson**  
Baker City

# Democrats: Demagogues rule

Many of the 2020 Democratic presidential candidates and would-be contenders have taken thoughtful and admirable positions on various issues over the years, eschewing blind partisanship and ideological dogmatism. Now they're paying for it.

Senator Cory Booker of New Jersey was for a long time an advocate of school choice as a means of liberating kids from failing schools, especially when he was mayor of Newark. In the Democratic presidential primaries, though, Booker's support for charter schools will be a liability.

Even worse for him, he sometimes worked with Betsy DeVos, who as Education secretary has become a hate figure for a lot of progressives. It may not be enough that Booker voted against her confirmation when President Donald Trump nominated her.

Former Representative Beto O'Rourke of Texas has also gotten criticized for crossing the partisan aisle. The Guardian slammed him for voting for an immigration bill even though "Democrats adamantly objected" to it.

The legislation let the Customs and Border Patrol address a shortage of manpower by waiving the requirement of a polygraph test for former members of the military and law enforcement. That was a reasonable enough position that 51 Democrats, about a quarter of all House Democrats at the time, voted along with all Republicans for the bill.

O'Rourke has also come under fire for refusing to endorse a Democratic

## RAMESH PONNURU

candidate over his friend, moderate Republican Representative Will Hurd of Texas. He did say that the Democrat would be a good member of Congress if elected.

Senator Kirsten Gillibrand of New York helped usher her former colleague Al Franken out of office after several women accused him of groping them. It was the right move, especially since Franken refused to give a straightforward answer to the charges.

Because of her stance, however, progressive megadonor George Soros said she was the only potential Democratic presidential candidate he did not want to succeed. He isn't the only one who feels that way. Politico reported that "major donors across the country" were angry at her many months afterward.

Remember when Democrats shut down the government last year in a harebrained effort to make Trump agree to give legal status to illegal immigrants who came here as minors? Senator Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota is probably hoping that primary voters don't, because she helped bring that episode to an end.

Some activists accused her of betrayal, and MinnPost reported at the time that her role "could come back to haunt her." Some on the left remain determined that it will.

Representative Tulsi Gabbard of Hawaii is considered a longshot for the nomination for a lot of reasons. But she added to the list when she called out some of her Democratic colleagues for making an issue out of a judicial nominee's membership in the Knights of Columbus, a Catholic charitable organization. She opposed the nominee herself, she wrote, but warned against the "religious bigotry" inherent in holding his membership in religious organizations as a mark against confirmation.

Prominent Democrats were outraged. She drew a primary challenger for her House seat soon afterward.

Encouraging education reforms, occasionally siding with Republicans, keeping the government open, maintaining ethical standards, standing for religious tolerance: All of these seem to be black marks in the Democratic presidential primaries.

What seems to be helping Democratic candidates with the primary electorate, on the other hand, is endorsing left-wing fantasies like the "Green New Deal" and indulging in demagoguery about tax refunds. The theme of the Democratic primaries so far is that no good deed goes unpunished.

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**Oregon Legislature:** Legislative documents and information are available online at [www.leg.state.or.us](http://www.leg.state.or.us).  
**State Sen. Cliff Bentz** (R-Ontario): Salem office: 900 Court St. N.E., S-301, Salem, OR 97301; 503-986-1730. District office: P.O. Box 1027, Ontario, OR 97914; 541-889-8866.  
**State Rep. Lynn Findley** (R-Vale): Salem office: 900 Court St. N.E., H-475, Salem, OR 97301; 503-986-1460. Email: Rep. LynnFindley@oregonlegislature.gov  
**Baker City Hall:** 1655 First Street, P.O. Box 650, Baker City, OR 97814; 541-523-6541; fax 541-524-2049. City Council meets the second and fourth Tuesdays at 7 p.m. in Council Chambers. Mike Downing, Loran Joseph, Randy Schiewe, Lynette Perry, Arvid Andersen, Ken Gross and Doni Bruland.

**Baker City administration:** 541-523-6541. Fred Warner Jr., city manager; Dustin Newman, police chief; John Clark, fire chief; Michelle Owen, public works director.  
**Baker County Commission:** Baker County Courthouse 1995 3rd St., Baker City, OR 97814; 541-523-8200. Meets the first and third Wednesdays at 9 a.m.; Bill Harvey (chair), Mark Bennett, Bruce Nichols.  
**Baker County departments:** 541-523-8200. Travis Ash, sheriff; Jeff Smith, roadmaster; Matt Shirtcliff, district attorney; Alice Durflinger, county treasurer; Cindy Carpenter, county clerk; Kerry Savage, county assessor.  
**Baker School District:** 2090 4th Street, Baker City, OR 97814; 541-524-2260; fax 541-524-2564. Superintendent: Mark Witty. Board meets the third Tuesday of the month at 6 p.m. Council Chambers, Baker City Hall, 1655 First St.; Andrew Bryan, Kevin Cassidy, Chris Hawkins, Katie Lamb and Julie Huntington.