

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, this morning I toured an exhibit at Florida International University's Jewish Museum of Florida, located in Miami Beach, which details the discovery and recovery of artifacts depicting Jewish life in Iraq over the centuries.

I was privileged to be joined by members of the Iraqi Jewish community, including Hillel Shohet and his brother, Maurice Shohet, who played key roles in ensuring that these artifacts remain with the Jewish community.

I was also proud to lead the effort here in Congress to keep the artifacts in the U.S. I led that effort along with my colleague, the gentleman from New York, STEVE ISRAEL, and other congressional colleagues.

These treasures, Mr. Speaker, were confiscated from the Jewish community by Saddam Hussein's intelligence service and were discarded until they were discovered in a flooded basement by our American servicemembers in the year 2003. They were then brought back to our National Archives where they were painstakingly recovered and preserved.

Mr. Speaker, this exhibit is an important piece of the Jewish community's collective memory and must continue to be preserved and shared for generations to come.

#### CONGRATULATING WALNUT HILLS HIGH SCHOOL MARCHING BAND

(Mr. CHABOT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, this evening I rise to recognize the Walnut Hills High School Marching Band. They traveled to Paris last week to participate in La Grande Parade, which runs along the Champs-Élysées.

La Grande Parade is the showcase event in Paris on New Year's Day and attracts hundreds of thousands of spectators from all over the world. So it was a great opportunity to show the world just how talented our students in Cincinnati are. Only four bands from the United States—two high schools and two colleges—were selected to participate in this prestigious event.

It is fitting that Walnut Hills was one of those four bands, as the Marching Blue and Gold have been rated superior for 13 straight years by the Ohio Music Education Association.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the students, parents, teachers, and supporters of Walnut Hills High School, one of the best high schools in Cincinnati, on this well-deserved honor. I know the students in the band put in a lot of hard work for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. They have truly made our community proud.

Go Eagles.

#### E-FREE ACT

(Mr. FITZPATRICK asked and was given permission to address the House

for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to tell the story of Amanda Dykeman of Illinois, one of the tens of thousands of women permanently harmed by the sterilization device known as Essure.

After Amanda had the device implanted in 2010 at the age of 28, her hair began to fall out, she felt great fatigue, continuously fought urinary tract and kidney infections, and would suffer from severe abdominal and joint pain. She suffered with so much pain that she would contemplate suicide. Her symptoms subsided after a total hysterectomy in 2013, but, physically, she knows that the device left her permanently damaged.

I rise as a voice for the Essure Sisters, who number in the thousands, to tell this Chamber that their stories are real, their pain is real, and their fight is real.

Mr. Speaker, my bill, the E-Free Act, can halt this tragedy by removing this dangerous device from the market. I urge my colleagues to join in this fight because stories like Amanda's are too important to ignore.

#### HARNEY COUNTY, OREGON

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ABRAHAM). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, I am sure my colleagues are aware of the situation in Harney County, Oregon, where a group of armed protesters have overtaken a Federal facility in the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge.

This group is led largely by people who are not necessarily from Oregon, although they obviously have supporters from Oregon. They were originally there to protest the sentencing of Dwight and Steve Hammond.

I know the Hammonds. I have known them for probably close to 20 years. They are longtime, responsible ranchers in Harney County. They have been sentenced to prison not once, but now twice. I will get into that in a moment.

The point I want to make at the outset is for people in this Chamber to understand what drives people to do what is happening tonight in Harney County.

I have had the great honor and privilege to represent Harney County for a number of years. I have seen the impact of Federal policies from the Clinton administration to the Obama administration. I have seen what happens when overzealous bureaucrats and agencies go beyond the law and clamp down on people. I have seen what courts have done. I have seen the time for Congress to act and then it has not.

I want to put this area in perspective because I think it is really important to understand how big this region is. By size, my congressional district in

Oregon is something like the seventh or eighth biggest in the Congress. If you overlaid it over the east coast, it would start in the Atlantic and end in Ohio.

The county where this occupation is taking place—Harney County—is over 10,000 square miles. There are 7,000 souls inhabiting it. If my math is right, that is one person for every 1.4 miles. One person for every 1.4 miles.

Just this one county is 10 times the size of Rhode Island. It is larger than the State of Maryland. And 72 percent of it is under the command and control of the Federal Government.

It is the public's land. That is true. But what people don't understand is the culture, the lifestyle, of the great American West and how much these ranchers care about the environment, about the future, about their children, about America, and how much they believe in the Constitution. Now we see the extent they will go to in order to defend what they view as their constitutional rights.

Now, I am not defending armed takeovers. I do not think that is appropriate. I think the time has come for those to consider that they have made their case in the public about what is happening in the West, and perhaps it is time for them to realize they have made their case and to go home.

But I want to talk about what happened with the Hammonds. I want to put in perspective what happens almost every year in my district. That is these enormous wildfires.

□ 1930

The Miller Homestead Wildfire in 2012 burned 160,000 acres, mostly in this county, if not all; 250 square miles, a quarter of the size of the State of Rhode Island. That was just in 2012.

The Barry Point Fire that year, in Lake County, next door, burned 93,000 acres. Last summer alone, we burned 799,974 acres across Oregon; that is both forest and high desert. In 2012, 3.4 million acres burned in Oregon.

There was another fire in Malheur County. The Long Draw Fire, in 2012, burned 557,000 acres, five times the size of Rhode Island. So 93,000 acres, 557,000 acres, 160,000 acres, all burning.

The Hammonds are in prison tonight for setting a backfire that they admit to, that burned 139 acres, and they will sit in prison, time served and time going forward, 5 years, under a law that I would argue was never intended to mete out that kind of punishment, and I will get to that in a moment.

I have told you I worked with the Hammonds and many ranchers in Harney County. In the last years of the Clinton administration, despite their own agency's reviews and analysis, Bill Clinton threatened to create a giant monument on Steens Mountain.

When Secretary Babbitt, the Interior Secretary at the time, came before the House Resources Committee, of which I was a member, I said: Mr. Secretary, your own resource advisory committees in the area just reported that

there was no need for additional protection on Steens Mountain, and yet, you and the President are threatening to create this national monument. Why do you waste the time of the citizens to go through a process to determine if additional protections are needed and then ignore what they came up with?

To Bruce Babbitt's credit, he agreed when I told him: I think you would be surprised about what the local ranchers and citizens of Harney County would be willing to do if you give them a chance. To his credit, he said: All right, I will give them that chance. And he did.

We went to work on legislation. It took a full year. I worked with the Hammonds. I worked with Stacy Davies, I worked with all kinds of folks, put a staffer on it full-time, multiple staffs, and we worked with the environmental community and others. And we created the Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Act, model legislation, never been done before, because I said: We don't have to live by past laws, we write laws.

So we wrote a new law to create a cooperative spirit of management in Harney County. The Hammonds were part of that discussion. We saved a running camp, Harlan Priority Runs. We protected inholder. We tried to do all the right things and create the kind of partnership and cooperation that the Federal Government and the citizens should have.

Fast forward on that particular law. Not long after that became law, and it was heralded as this monumental law of great significance and new era in cooperation and spirit of cooperation, some of those involved on the other side and some of the agencies decided to reinterpret it. The first thing they tried to do is shut down this kids' running camp because they said: Well, too many, maybe more than 20, run down this canyon and back up, as they had for many, many years. They wanted to shut it down. So we had to fight them back and said: No, the law says historical standards.

Then the bureaucrats, because we said: You should have your historical access to your private property, if you are up on Steens Mountain, you should maintain that access like you have always had it. Do you know what the bureaucrats said? They began to solicit from the inholders in this area: How many times did you go up there last year? You see, they wanted to put a noose around the neck of those who were inside. That was a total violation of what we intended, and we had to back them off.

See, the bureaucracy wants to interpret the laws we write in ways they want, and in this case they were wrong, not once, but twice.

Then, a couple of years ago, I learned that, despite the fact we created the first cow-free wilderness in the United States under this law, and said clearly in this law that it would be the responsibility of the government to put up

fencing to keep the cows out, as part of the agreement, the Bureau of Land Management said: No, we are not going to follow that law. And they told the ranchers they had to build the fence.

I networked with my Democrat colleague from Oregon, Mr. DEFAZIO, who was part of writing this law. I said: Peter, you remember that, right? He said: Yeah, I didn't like it, but that was the case. BLM still wouldn't listen. So we continued to push it and they argued back.

Well, it turns out there had been a second rancher who brought this to my attention who they were telling had to do the same thing, build a fence, when the government was supposed to under the law I wrote. The arrogance of the agency was such that they said: We don't agree with you.

Now, there aren't many times, Mr. Speaker, in this job when you can say I know what the intent of the law was, but in this case I could because I wrote the law, I knew the intent.

Oh, that wasn't good enough. No, no, no. No, no, no. The arrogance of these agency people was such that we had to go to the archives and drag out the boxes from 2000, 1999-2000, when we wrote this law, from the hearings that had all the records for the hearings and the floor discussions to talk about the intent. And our retired Member, George Miller, actually we used some of his information where he said the government would provide the fencing. They were still reluctant to follow it. So I put language in the appropriations bill that restated the Federal law.

Do you understand how frustrated I am at this? Can you imagine how the people on the ground feel? Can you imagine? If you are not there, you can't. If you are not there, you can't.

You ridicule them. The Portland Oregonian is running a thing, what do you send? Meals for militia. Let's have fun with this.

This is not a laughing matter from any consequence. Nobody is going to win out of this thing.

This is a government that has gone too far for too long. Now, I am not condoning this takeover in any way. I want to make that clear. I don't think it is appropriate. There is a right to protest. I think they have gone too far. But I understand and hear their anger.

Right now, this administration, secretly, but not so much, is threatening, in the next county over, that looks a lot like this one, Malheur County, to force a monument of 2.5 million acres, we believe. I think this is outrageous. It flies in the face of the people and the way of life and the public access.

There is a company, Keen Shoes, that already has a big marketing campaign. This is about selling shoes, for God's sake.

I call on the President, if he wants to help reduce the tension that is out there, to walk away from this. And if he doesn't want to walk away and say, no, we are not going to do that, to help us bring down this level of frustration

and anger, then at least be honest, or his Secretary of the Interior needs to be honest with us and tell us they are going to do it.

Either they are or they aren't. But all they are is being coy. That feeds into this. It feeds into the anger that I feel. It feeds into the anger out there.

So the President should say: I am not going to do a national monument. I am not going to add more fuel on this fire in the West.

We have fought other issues. More than half of my district is under Federal management, or lack thereof. They have come out with these proposals to close roads into the forests. They have ignored public input. They often claim to have all these open meetings and listen to the public, and then, in the case of Wallowa-Whitman, the forest supervisor who was eventually relieved because of this, I believe, completely ignored all the meetings, all the input, all the work of the counties and the local people, and said: Forget it, I am going my own direction.

There were 900 people that turned out at the National Guard Armory where they had a public hearing, standing room only and beyond, furious.

You see, how do you have faith in a government that doesn't ever listen to you? How do you have faith in a government that, when elected Representatives write a law, those charged with the responsibility of implementing it choose to go the other direction and not do so? That is what is breaking faith between the American people and their government, and that is what has to change.

The other thing that has to change, the law under which the Hammonds were sentenced. Now, they probably did some things that weren't legal. I have given you the size of the acreages that burned naturally. I haven't gotten into the discussion about how these fires are often fought and how the Federal Government frequently will go on private land and set a fire without permission to backburn. That happens all the time.

In fact, in the Barry Point Fire down in Lake County, they set fire on private timber land as a backburn while the owners of the property were putting out spot fires down in the canyon. I drove down there afterwards. They are darn lucky to have come out alive.

There was nobody sentenced under the terrorism act there. Oh, heck no. It is the government. They weren't sentenced. Nobody was charged. Oh, it just happened.

Now, fires are tough to fight. I have great respect for firefighters. There are always two sides on how these fires get fought. But I can tell you, a few years back in Harney County, because I went and held a meeting out there right as the fire was being put out, that the fire crews came in, went on private ground, lit a backfire on private ground, behind a fence line, that then burned out the farmer's fence, the rancher's fence, and burned all the way over and down into

a canyon where there was a wetland, which would have been the natural break to stop the fire from the other side. You see, they never needed to burn that land.

These things happen in the course of fighting fire. It doesn't mean they are right. But rare is it that somebody ends up 5 years in prison.

Let me tell you what the senior judge said when he sentenced the Hammonds the first time, Judge Michael Hogan, senior Federal judge, highly respected in Oregon. He sentenced Dwight Hammond to 3 months and Steve to a year. There were different offenses here.

He said: "I am not going to apply the mandatory minimum because, to me, to do so, under the Eighth Amendment, would result in a sentence which is grossly disproportionate to the severity of the offenses here."

The Judge went on to say: "And with regard to the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996, this sort of conduct would not have been conduct intended under the statute.

"When you ask, you know, what if you burn sagebrush in the suburbs of Los Angeles, and there are homes up the ravines, it might apply. Out in the wilderness here, I don't think that is what the Congress intended.

"In addition, it just would not meet any idea I have of justice proportionality. It would be a sentence which would shock the conscience, to me."

Senior Judge Mike Hogan, when he did the original sentencing.

But, you see, under this 1996 law under which they were charged and convicted, it turns out he had no judicial leeway. He could not mete out a sentence that was proportionate to what the crime was.

So yesterday, Dwight and Steve went to prison again. Dwight will be 73 when he gets out. Steve will be about 50.

Meanwhile, in Harney County, on the ranch, Susie will continue to try and survive; 6,000-acre ranch, she needs grazing permits to make this happen. It would be a cruel and unjust act, by the way, if access to those grazing permits that allow that ranch to work were not extended. What possible good could come out of bankrupting a grandmother that was trying to keep a ranch together, while the husband sits in prison, her son sits in prison? What possible good?

They will serve their sentences. There is nothing, short of clemency that only the President can offer, that we can do. But we can change that law, and we should, so that nobody ever is locked in like that for a situation like this, where a senior judge, literally, on his final day on the bench, says this goes too far, it goes too far. They appealed that, by the way, and lost. But I believe that the judge was right.

We have to listen to the people. We have to understand why events like this are taking place in our communities. They are taking place in cities. We have witnessed that, and we try and get our heads around it.

There are more people from the cities, so there are more Members from the cities. There aren't many of us that represent these vast, wide-open, incredibly beautiful, harsh districts like the one I do.

The people there love the land. It was the ranchers who came up with the concept of the cooperative management. It was the ranchers who loved Steens Mountain that know that for them to survive they have to take care of the range.

□ 1945

They are good people. Their sons and daughters, by a higher proportion, fight in our wars and die, and I have been to their funerals. So to my friends across eastern Oregon, I will always fight for you. But we have to understand there is a time and a way. Hopefully the country through this understands we have a real problem in America: how we manage our lands and how we are losing them.

It is not like we haven't tried here, Mr. Speaker. Year after year we pass bipartisan legislation to provide more active management on our forests so we don't lose them all to fire, and we are losing them all to fire. We are losing firefighters' lives, homes, and watersheds—great resources of the West. Teddy Roosevelt would role over in his grave. He created this wildlife refuge in 1908.

There were some bad actors there in the 1980s, by the way. They were very aggressive running the refuge, basically threatening eminent domain and other things that took ranches. It was bad. That lasted for at least a decade or more. It has gotten better though. It is not perfect. There is a much better relationship, and the refuge and the ranchers work closer together. In fact, during this fire in 2012, the refuge actually opened itself up to the ranchers for hay and feed because theirs was burned out because of this big fire. So there was a better spirit there.

But there are still these problems: the threat of waters of the U.S. shutting down stock ponds and irrigation canals and a way of life, the threat of fire every year that seems to not be battled right and just gets away, and no one is really held accountable; the continued restriction on the lives of the men and women who, for generations, have worked hard in a tough environment. It has just gone too far. It is hurtful.

I hope people understand how serious this is felt and how heartfelt this is by those who pay their taxes and try and live by the law and do the right things and how oppressed they feel by the government that they elect and the government they certainly don't elect, and how much they will always defend the flag and the country, and their sons and daughters would go to war, some will not come back—and they have not from this area.

There is a better solution here. The President needs to back off on the

monument. The BLM needs to make sure Susie Hammond isn't pushed into bankruptcy and has her ranch taken by the government and added to those that have been. We need to be better at hearing people from all walks of life and all regions of our country and understanding this anger that is out there and what we can do to bring about correct change and peaceful resolution.

It is not too late. We can do this. It is a great country. We have the processes to do it right.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

#### CRIMINALIZATION BY REGULATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) for the remainder of the hour as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate the words of my friend from Oregon. These are difficult times, and it is even more difficult when unfairness comes from the United States Government with all its power, with all its resources, when it begins to pick on American citizens, when it uses its resources to snoop on Americans, especially when it uses resources to spy on Americans in order to help maintain power of the government over the people.

One of the problems with ObamaCare is it provides every American's medical records to the Federal Government—as if the Federal Government didn't have enough personal information. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau is in the process of gathering people's credit card and debit card information supposedly to protect individuals. What we have seen in our Judiciary Committee as we have had hearings on the abuses by Federal Government bureaucrats is there seems to be this desire among different agencies and departments: They have no business having a SWAT team, but they want one. They want military power to go out and take people down whenever they get ready.

For many years, Congress has not done an appropriate job of keeping in check criminal laws. There are far too many criminal laws, the number of which we don't know exactly, but which allow a violation of a regulation to be a crime, which allows the full power of the Federal Government to go after individuals.

We heard the horror story about the fellow from the Northwest trying the create a better battery. He gets run off the road by three black Suburbans, hauled out of his little gas-efficient car, thrown down on his chest, boot in the back, handcuffs on, and no idea what he had done. He never even had a traffic ticket. It turns out that he hadn't violated any law necessarily, but he had mailed a package to Alaska