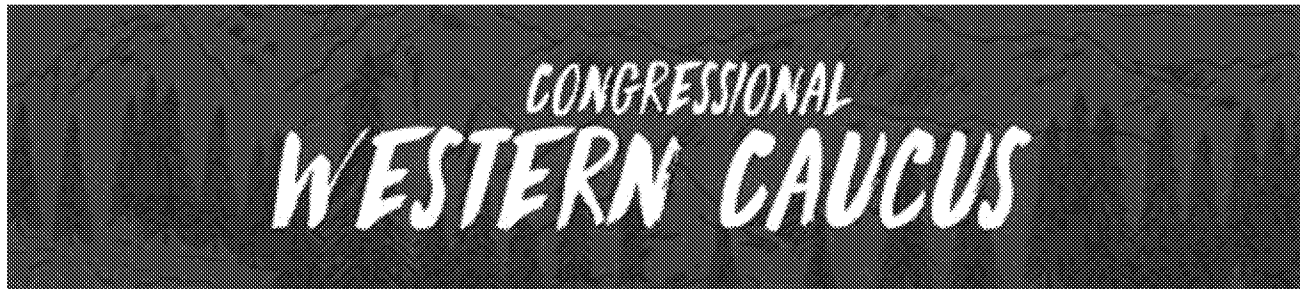


From: Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]
Sent: 7/10/2018 11:25:45 PM
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CC: Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]
Subject: President Trump Pardons Hammonds

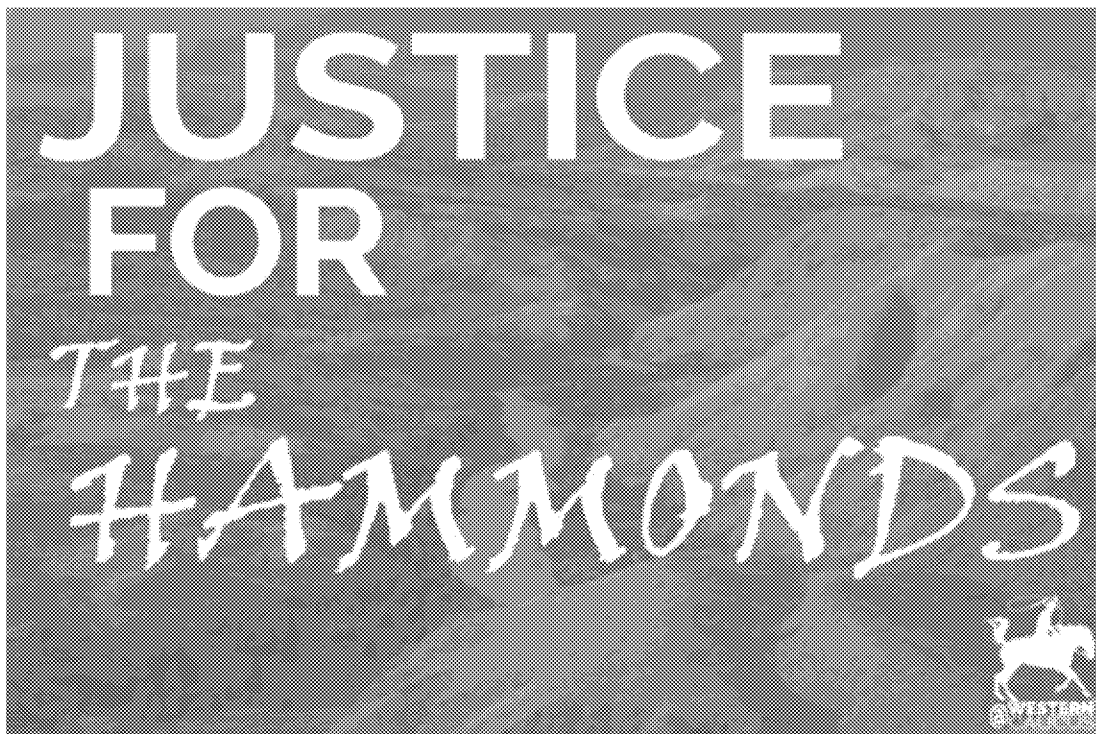


For Immediate Release
Contact: Tanner Hanson

Date: July 10, 2018
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President Trump Pardons Hammonds

His action makes right a heartless judicial excess - in keeping with the purpose of clemency



WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Members of the Congressional Western Caucus including Chairman **Paul Gosar (AZ-04)**, House Committee on Natural Resources Chairman **Rob Bishop (UT-01)**, House Committee on Energy and Commerce Chairman **Greg Walden (OR-02)**, Chief Rules Officer **Dan Newhouse (WA-04)** and Western Caucus Member **Doug LaMalfa (CA-01)** issued statements following the announcement of President Trump's decision to issue full pardons for Dwight and Steven Hammond of Oregon:

Congressman Gosar stated, “Besides being a commendable application of the principle of equal justice under the law, the President’s action today is a strong symbolic gesture of good faith and good will directed towards rural western communities. I wish the Hammonds the absolute best as they are granted this awesome chance to return to their lives and families in Oregon.”

Congressman Rob Bishop stated, “I’m glad President Trump chose to weigh in on the unjust sentencing of the Hammonds. I wish the Hammonds well in returning to their families and local communities.”

Congressman Walden said, “Today is a win for justice, and an acknowledgement of our unique way of life in the high desert, rural West. I applaud President Trump for thoroughly reviewing the facts of this case, rightly determining the Hammonds were treated unfairly, and taking action to correct this injustice. For far too long, Dwight and Steven Hammond have been serving a mandatory minimum sentence that was established for terrorists. This is something that would ‘shock the conscience,’ according to Federal Judge Michael Hogan, who presided over the case and used his discretion in sentencing which later was reversed. As ranchers across eastern Oregon frequently tell me, the Hammonds didn’t deserve a five year sentence for using fire as a management tool, something the federal government does all the time. Moving forward, I’m encouraging the House Judiciary Committee to act on my legislation to prevent this situation from happening to other ranchers. H.R. 983 would ensure farmers and ranchers are not prosecuted as terrorists for using fire for range-management purposes. For now, though, I am pleased that Dwight and Steven Hammond will return to their families and ranches in Harney County. I look forward to welcoming them back home to eastern Oregon.”

Congressman Newhouse stated, “I applaud President Trump for pardoning Dwight and Steven Hammond. There are few incidences that occur in our nation that better depict just how out of touch and unresponsive our federal government is to our citizens than the sentencing of Dwight and Steve Hammond from Eastern Oregon. After the Hammonds started a backfire to protect their cattle grazing land and assist the greater wildfire control effort, the Hammonds were prosecuted by the Department of Justice for arson under the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act. After a federal judge only sentenced the Hammonds to three months, stating anything longer would be a ‘shock to the conscience,’ aloof federal prosecutors appealed and succeeded in attaining a five year prison sentence. I support President Trump’s decision to pardon the Hammonds, whose struggles represent many rural communities’ valid frustrations with the federal government’s unresponsiveness, callousness, and poor land management tendencies.”

Congressman LaMalfa said, “Dwight and Steven Hammond were let down by our justice system. After serving one sentence – on charges that could be seen as questionable to begin with – overzealous prosecutors wrongfully and unfairly forced the Hammonds to serve additional time in jail, despite their excellent standing in their community. Their case is a prime example of the previous Administration’s overbearing regulation and enforcement on public lands, while their poor stewardship creates fire hazards and restricts access to land that cattle have grazed on for generations. I’m glad to see the President has pardoned these men, and that they will not spend another day unfairly locked away from their families and livelihoods. I join many in Northern California and Oregon in celebrating President Trump’s willingness to resolve this injustice, and I will continue to pursue policy changes to ensure that those using fire as a management tool aren’t treated the same way as terrorists.”

Background:

President Trump today made use of the Executive's power of clemency in order to grant a full pardon to members of the Hammond family of ranchers in eastern Oregon - Dwight Lincoln Hammond, Jr. and his son, Steven Hammond - on account of the unconscionably severe sentencing that was successfully sought against them by the previous administration.

A fair read of the evidence in the case indicated that the Hammonds should not have been found guilty of anything but negligence for having engaged in what amounts to the routine, controlled burn of invasive plants on their own property - fires which unfortunately got out of hand. That mandatory minimum sentencing was successfully sought for these accidental matters which harmed no human lives indicates, at a basic level of fairness and justice, that clemency is an appropriate remedy for what was a heartless and overzealous prosecution.

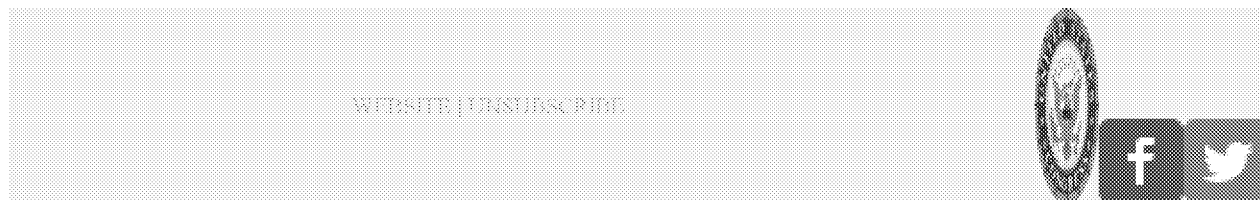
From the White House press release:

Today, President Donald J. Trump signed Executive Grants of Clemency (Full Pardons) for Dwight Lincoln Hammond, Jr., and his son, Steven Hammond. The Hammonds are multi-generation cattle ranchers in Oregon imprisoned in connection with a fire that leaked onto a small portion of neighboring public grazing land. The evidence at trial regarding the Hammonds' responsibility for the fire was conflicting, and the jury acquitted them on most of the charges.

At the Hammonds' original sentencing, the judge noted that they are respected in the community and that imposing the mandatory minimum, 5-year prison sentence would "shock the conscience" and be "grossly disproportionate to the severity" of their conduct. As a result, the judge imposed significantly lesser sentences. The previous administration, however, filed an overzealous appeal that resulted in the Hammonds being sentenced to five years in prison. This was unjust.

Dwight Hammond is now 76 years old and has served approximately three years in prison. Steven Hammond is 49 and has served approximately four years in prison. They have also paid \$400,000 to the United States to settle a related civil suit. The Hammonds are devoted family men, respected contributors to their local community, and have widespread support from their neighbors, local law enforcement, and farmers and ranchers across the West. Justice is overdue for Dwight and Steven Hammond, both of whom are entirely deserving of these Grants of Executive Clemency.

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