



Idaho State Representatives Judy Boyle, Heather Scott, and Sage Dixon were among a group of western state legislators who traveled to Burns, Oregon last Saturday (January 8, 2016) on a fact finding mission.

“We were among a selected group of state legislators invited by an Oregon legislator because of our commitment to liberty, freedom and efforts to curb federal government overreach.” Numerous constituents in each of our Districts have expressed concerns about the situation unfolding in Burns, and similar frustrations in dealing with federal agencies. We would like to avoid any type of similar situations in our own districts; therefore we went to assess this situation for ourselves and our constituents on our own time and our own expenses.

We first met in Burns with local county officials, law enforcement officers, and the FBI to receive a briefing and make them fully aware of our intentions. We were cautioned about proceeding out to the Refuge for various reasons but were not inhibited from going. One of the county officials was visibly hostile towards our presence and used very inflammatory language about our participation, and the citizens at the refuge.

Based on information we heard during this meeting, coupled with other discussions with local residents and local ranchers, we determined the need to corroborate this information with that offered by the group at the Refuge to completely understand the situation. We made the decision as a group to hear both sides of the story which required hearing directly from Ammond Bundy and his group. Clearly, based on our brief visit to Burns, a further investigation is warranted to find a satisfactory solution not only to the standoff but to the alleged unwarranted actions of the federal agencies.

At the Refuge, we received a petition of grievances from the group, which is a right guaranteed to citizens under the First Amendment. They believed their grievances have been and still are being ignored.

It is part of our job as legislators to continually understand citizen grievances, find solutions based on facts and attempt to de-escalate volatile situations whenever possible. We believe it is very important to try to preempt any similar situation that may occur in our state.

We expect to stay abreast of the situation and provide additional support if requested.