

WASHINGTON, DC-- Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.) issued the following statement today regarding *Gonzales v. Oregon*, which is scheduled to be heard today by the United States Supreme Court. If the Court rules that 1971 Controlled Substances Act gives the Justice Department authority to pre-empt Oregon's Death with Dignity law, the Oregon law could be overturned.

"Oregon voters have overwhelmingly approved our Death with Dignity law -- not once but twice: first in 1994 and again in 1997," Blumenauer stated. "It has also been upheld by the Oregon Supreme Court.

"I have been watching the Bush administration's numerous attempts to undermine or repeal Oregon's Death with Dignity Act for more than four years. When the 9th US Circuit Court rebuffed former Attorney General Ashcroft's effort to overturn the law in 2001, he filed an appeal the day before he resigned, ensuring that incoming Attorney General Alberto Gonzales would take on the issue.

"These unfortunate tactics leave families and voters vulnerable to their fervor to tell others how to lead their lives and in this case; end their lives.

"The decision to end one's life in the face of pain or a terminal illness has to be the most difficult decision a person can make. Oregon voters have twice decided that government should support, rather than interfere with, this most personal of decisions. Yet while this administration maintains that it respects states' rights, it hypocritically seeks to negate the will of voters by imposing its own moral judgment and ideological agenda on how people should lead their lives and even end their lives.

"Oregon's Death with Dignity Act gives people the right and ability to make their own end-of-life decision. Voters in other states should be allowed the same rights without interference from the federal government."