

WASHINGTON, DC-- Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.), issued the following statement today regarding the amicus brief he and other members of the Oregon Congressional delegation filed with the United States Supreme Court regarding *Gonzales v. Oregon*, which is scheduled to be heard by the court in October. A decision by the Supreme Court in *Gonzales v. Oregon* could affect Oregon's Death with Dignity law if the court finds that the 1971 Controlled Substances Act provides the Justice Department authority to preempt Oregon's law.

"As a member of the Oregon delegation, I am proud to support the decision of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals on *Gonzales v. Oregon*. The amicus brief I have filed with other members of the delegation supports the Court's decision to uphold Oregon's Death with Dignity law.

"In 1994, Oregon overwhelmingly approved physician-assisted suicide in a statewide vote. Despite a 1997 Supreme Court ruling that the decision to allow physician assisted suicide should be controlled at the state level, the Bush administration has been in a four year battle to overturn our program which ensures that terminally ill patients remain in control of their dying process. Former US Attorney General Ashcroft repeatedly attempted to undermine the Oregon law using various methods. Each time the judge ruled in favor of the Oregon law.

"I am pleased that Attorney General Gonzalez' attempt to overturn the will of the people has been no more successful than his predecessor's. While physician assisted suicide is a contentious issue, it is an issue handled at the state level and the Attorney General should not be permitted to deprive the citizens of Oregon and the nation the opportunity to make end of life decisions. Oregon has made its decision. Other states should be allowed to make their choice without federal government interference.

"For the few who opt to use Oregon's Death with Dignity law, it is undoubtedly the most difficult and personal healthcare decision one can make. I am hopeful that the administration will end its fruitless efforts to overturn the law, which only make the decision making process more difficult for terminally ill patients."