

Washington, DC – Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore) today voted against a one-year extension of three provisions in the Patriot Act, which are set to expire on February 28, 2010.

“This is a missed opportunity to improve legislation that can and should work better,” said Blumenauer. “We need appropriate tools to pursue terrorists, and we can do this without trampling on civil liberties. Committees in the House and Senate have offered drafts to improve the Patriot Act, and I would urge that we move forward immediately to amend this law.”

This bill, H.R. 3961, reauthorizes the following three provisions without making changes to protect Americans' privacy, despite documentation of past abuses of Patriot Act authorities:

1. Section 215 authorizes the government to obtain "any tangible item," including business and library records.
2. Section 206, or the “roving John Doe wiretap,” allows law enforcement officials to pursue terrorists who use multiple devices or change cell phone numbers, without identifying either the person or the facility being tapped.
3. Section 6001, or the “Lone Wolf” provision, permits secret intelligence surveillance of non-US persons who are not affiliated with a foreign organization

Congressman Blumenauer voted against the original USA PATRIOT Act in 2001 (HR 3162).