

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.) criticized the Republican's tax plan being debated on the House floor today as irresponsible and misguided, saying it ignores the real needs of Oregonians. Blumenauer's statement on the tax plan follows:

“In Oregon the economic pain of unemployment and state budget deficits is not an abstraction. The nation's highest unemployment rate of 7.6 percent is compounded by failure of the federal government to meet its commitments for hometown security, healthcare and education.

“Oregonians are clear about their priorities: **Education** — We must fully fund IDEA and the President's own signature education bill.

Healthcare

— Oregon's budget crisis is forcing reductions, cuts and closures to critical programs for our seniors, disadvantaged, and poor. We must fund these basic services.

Spending on Crumbling Bridges

— Infrastructure investments put people to work tomorrow, improve economic efficiency and better our communities. Replacing Oregon's bridges will cost over \$4 billion and would provide 190,000 jobs and \$25 billion in economic activity.

Hometown Security

— Oregonians are concerned about security from terrorism and health threats such as SARS. We should invest in projects and programs that will make our communities safer and healthier.

Unemployment Benefits

— We need to extend the unemployment benefits due to expire.

“We should reject the Enron-style accounting used in this tax bill, which distorts the true costs and intent of the tax cut package. The Republicans' estimate of “only” \$550 billion was accomplished by putting in unrealistic “sunsets” to various tax provisions. The tax cuts they have every intention of making permanent will increase deficits by over \$1.1 trillion if in place over the next 10 years.

“Current budget realities, a wavering economy, and international conflicts have resulted in tumultuous and complicated times. However, a simple course of fiscal responsibility and domestic security can be achieved by taking common sense actions: No tax cuts before we meet our obligations; Be honest about the actual costs of tax cuts and spending; Meet federal obligations to programs that are staggering state and local budgets; Help those who need it the most NOT the least; Don't mortgage the future by playing fast and loose with the truth today and the economy tomorrow.”