“Right to Die”, Wrong Choice!
By: Abigail Kirkland

Nicholas Kristof describes in his article, “Right to Die on more radar screens,” his view that John Ashcroft and the Christian right have tried to extinguish the “right to die” from patients. He has suggested that these groups should visit the sick for themselves. In his retelling the story of an assisted suicide victim desiring to take his life, Kristof leaves out the facts.

First, John Ashcroft only wanted to remove federal funding of drugs that are used in assisted suicide. Why should taxpayers pay the bill for patients desiring to kill themselves? Especially when in Oregon, assisted suicide is paid for by tax dollars while adequate pain management, adequate living assistance for the disabled and some life-sustaining treatments are NOT covered. Oregon should be looking for ways to help out these victims, not pay for their death.

Second, Dr. Greg Hamilton of Physicians for Compassionate Care makes a very strong point: “Those promoting assisted suicide promised Oregon voters that it would be used only for extreme pain and suffering. Yet there has been no documented case of assisted suicide being used for untreatable pain. Instead, patients are being given lethal overdoses because of psychological and social concerns, especially fears that they may no longer be valued as people or may be a burden to their families.”

If we continue in the direction we are going, where will it end? The Netherlands may hold the answer to that question. Holland has practiced Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide since the early 1980’s. Since this time, according to the IAETF, the Netherlands have witnessed over 1000 patients die from involuntary euthanasia. Children with life-threatening illnesses and disfigured newborn babies have also been repeatedly killed.

The United States Supreme Court in Washington v. Glucksberg (1997) states, “Death is the extinguishing of rights, not the triumph of one right over another.” I agree. Death is the ultimate end of your individual rights and not a “right” at all.

If Oregon continues on their current path, and heaven forbid if Kristof’s suggestion of other states soon following becomes true, how will you protect yourself when the end of life draws near? Who will decide when it is just “your time”?

We should not be bashing John Ashcroft for trying to preserve the American’s right to “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness,” and at the very least not forcibly require taxpayers to contribute to this evil practice. So thanks Mr. Ashcroft, I feel safer with you fighting for my true American rights!