

IN BRIEF

Law allows students to opt out of dissecting in school

SALEM — Students who object to dissecting fetal pigs and formaldehyde-soaked frogs can now opt out of the assignment.

Under a new law signed by Gov. Ted Kulongoski, Oregon joins 11 states that allow students to scrap the scalpel and learn about anatomy through models, interactive CD-ROMs or videos.

Among those who testified in favor of the bill was Paula Rea Wilson, a non-practicing physician and mother.

"There are certainly other options for how to learn this information," Wilson said. "I just think it sends a bad message that animals are there for us to do whatever we'd like with them."

Wilson, 51, said she and her husband, also a physician, discussed dissection with their 16-year-old son Sanford, who felt too many animals were being wasted in science class.

She said he was also concerned

that students with religious or ethical objections were being required to dissect animals.

Wilson questioned whether dissecting an animal is any more educational than the alternatives, and added that there's a way to dissect animals without wasting lives.

"Certainly there are lots of animals that die in our backyards all the time, which a person can turn to use if they want to learn about anatomy," Wilson said.

The new law, signed by the governor on Monday, requires school districts to notify parents and students when animal dissection is part of the class curriculum. Models, videos or interactive CDs will be available for those who opt out.

Kelly Peterson, who works with the Humane Society in Oregon, said the law protects students while allowing them to learn about anatomy and biology through other means.

Peterson said she wished the law would have been in place when she went to high school in the Portland area nearly 20 years ago.

"I remember wishing that another option would've been offered, because I was worried about my

grades and I was a good student," Peterson said.

Anti-abortion activists say posters not true threat

PORTLAND — Anti-abortion activists who were ordered by a federal jury to pay \$108.5 million in damages after creating a set of "Wanted" posters listing the names and addresses of a dozen doctors are asking a federal court to revisit the case.

The activists, who claimed the posters were protected by the First Amendment, want the court to reconsider the punitive damages awarded in the case, according to attorneys. A three-judge panel of the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Portland heard arguments on Tuesday and is expected to rule within the next several months.

In 2002, the 9th Circuit ruled that the posters and an accompanying Web site constituted an illegal threat. But the activists claim that a recent ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court significantly raised the bar on what constitutes true intimidation.

"Now you have to specifically intend to cause harm, rather than just

saying something that a reasonable person could interpret as a threat," said Edward White, a lawyer representing the abortion foes, who were first sued in 1995 by Planned Parenthood and several doctors.

Maria T. Vullo, the attorney for the doctors and Planned Parenthood, said the anti-abortion activists have been "refiling the case over and over again."

"I don't believe that the court this morning is accepting their efforts to relitigate the case," she said.

The Wild West-style poster named 13 abortion doctors, including three in Oregon, underneath the headline, "Wanted." A related Web site, titled the "Nuremberg Files," declared the doctors guilty of crimes against humanity, and listed their addresses and telephone numbers.

Four physicians, claiming they feared for their lives, sued under racketeering laws and a 1994 federal law that makes it illegal to incite violence against abortion doctors.

They pointed to Dr. Bayard Britton, who was shot and killed, along with his bodyguard, by an abortion protester outside a Pensacola, Fla., abortion clinic in July 1994 after his

name appeared on a similar poster.

The state of Florida executed anti-abortion activist Paul Hill, 49, in September 2003 for the murder of Britton and his bodyguard.

Abortion opponents argued that the posters were never intended as a threat, but rather as a form of protest. They now say that recent Supreme Court rulings have tightened the definition of a threat, and therefore the courts should throw out the old verdict.

"If you read them, there is no threat—either implicit or explicit," said Portland resident Paul DeParrie, who helped craft the "Wanted" poster at the heart of the current legal battle.

DeParrie was the editor in chief of Life Advocate magazine. The magazine's parent company, Advocates for Life Ministries, was part of the American Coalition of Life Advocates, which was one of two anti-abortion activists sued by the doctors.

Vullo countered that the 9th Circuit court had earlier ruled the posters were intended to threaten the doctors.

—The Associated Press

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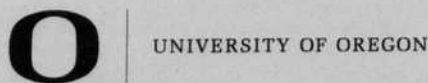
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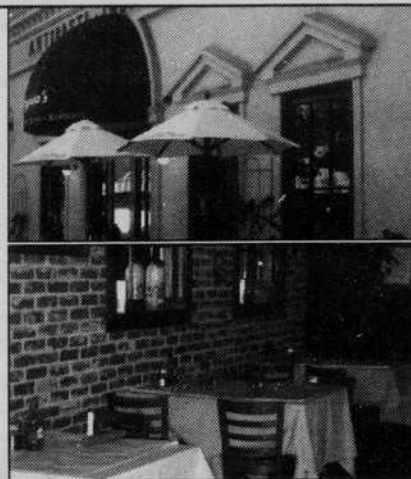


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