

# Terri Schiavo is being executed for the crime of being a disabled woman

Terri Schiavo was injured in 1990 and is severely brain injured. Her husband who is her legal guardian went to court to get her feeding tube taken out. Her feeding tube was taken out on October 15th. Terri will slowly starve and die within the next ten days if there is no intervention.

Terri has been labeled a “vegetable” by her husband and several doctors, but other doctors and Terri’s parents testify that she is aware and interacts with her environment. Her parents are fighting for her life. She is unable to speak, but she smiles, looks around, and responds non-verbally. You can see videos of Terri at [www.terrisfight.org](http://www.terrisfight.org)

Food and water are not medical care. Not Dead Yet believes that food and water are a civil right, which unless specifically refused, must be provided. Terri has been denied rehabilitation and medication, yet her will to live is strong. Terri has been denied medical services which she needs and now the denial of food and water will take her life.

Terri’s case is a warning to all people with disabilities. Our lives are not valued, and can be ended by guardians and courts who do not have our best interests at heart and by a medical system which sees our lives as not worth living. Disability should not be a death sentence. **OUR LIVES ARE WORTHY!**

Not Dead Yet is mobilizing a few activists to go to Florida, take a stand for Terri’s life and educate the world how Florida treats its disabled citizens.

You can make a donation to help defray NDY activists’ travel costs and other expenses payable to Progress CIL, and mail it to Not Dead Yet, c/o Progress CIL, 7521 Madison St., Forest Park, Illinois 60130. Please do it now!



## Save Terri Schiavo!

## Don't let disabled lives become expendable!

[www.NotDeadYet.org](http://www.NotDeadYet.org)

Dear friend of disability rights,

I'm writing to ask you to lend your support to a grassroots, disability-rights-focused response to a real crisis. The Terri Schiavo case in Florida represents a real threat to the rights of people with disabilities, especially those with cognitive impairments such as brain injury and mental retardation.

Activists are now engaged in a last-ditch effort to save Terri Schiavo, whose feeding tube was removed October 15 with the permission of a Florida court. Your support, both moral and financial, is desperately needed to assist in this effort. Not Dead Yet leader Diane Coleman flew down to Florida Thursday, to take a strong stand against the decision to kill Terri. Other activists from around the country are trying to get to Florida as well. I just sent my personal check to help cover activists' travel expenses, and I hope you will do the same. Read on to find out how you can donate to this urgent cause.

But first, some background, for those of you who don't know about this frightening case. Terri Schiavo is a cognitively disabled woman who is now being intentionally starved and dehydrated, despite the lack of any evidence (other than her husband's questionable testimony) that she would have refused such care. A few doctors have labeled her "vegetative-like" while other doctors have said she is aware, and may have the capacity to regain some abilities with appropriate therapies. Videotapes made by the family show Terri looking around, responding to her environment, and reacting happily to the presence of her mother. Terri Schiavo's parents have been fighting to keep her alive and to get her the treatment and rehabilitation she deserves. You can visit Terri's website at [www.terrisfight.org](http://www.terrisfight.org).

Terri Schiavo's death sentence should alarm all people with disabilities and our allies. The implication is that people whose brain function and communication abilities are impaired do not deserve the same legal protection as other people.

The facts of the case are quite shocking. It's not entirely clear what caused Terri Schiavo's heart attack and brain damage in 1990. A bone scan revealed compression fractures and apparent traumatic injuries, which suggests the possibility of spousal abuse. This was never investigated, however. Terri's husband, Michael Schiavo, was awarded over \$700,000 in a malpractice suit. He promised a jury that the money would be used for Terri's support, treatment, and rehabilitation. He has not done so. Michael Schiavo is now living with another woman, with whom he has fathered a child, and is expecting a second child. Yet he is still Terri's legal guardian, and is using that power to end Terri's life, despite the fact that her family loves her and wants her alive. At one point, this husband/guardian let Terri's urinary tract infection go untreated in hopes that it would become fatal. The decision to forego medical treatment is based on an alleged off-hand statement by Terri years before the incident that she would not want to be kept alive on anything artificial. This alleged statement was first brought to light by the husband/guardian in 2000, ten years after the accident.

It is a measure of the still-widespread contempt for disabled people's lives that several judges have been persuaded by Michael Schiavo that Terri's life should end. That's why disabled people are fighting this decision, still trying to save Terri's life.

There are several things you can do to help. Write letters to editors of newspapers and magazines covering the story, asking them to highlight the disability-rights angle. Call Florida Governor Jeb Bush at 850-488-4441 asking him to intervene in the case. And PLEASE help cover the travel expenses of Diane Coleman and other Not Dead Yet activists going to Florida to protest the killing of Terri Schiavo.

You can make your donation payable to Progress CIL, and mail it to Not Dead Yet, c/o Progress CIL, 7521 Madison St., Forest Park, Illinois 60130. Please do it now!

Thank you for taking a stand on this urgent issue.