



For Immediate Release
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Rep. Pitts decries Supreme Court refusal to protect Terri Schiavo

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Washington—Congressman Joe Pitts (R, PA-16) today decried the refusal of the United States Supreme Court to rule on the Terri Schiavo case.

“This is the most disturbing death sentence ever handed down,” said Congressman Pitts, “Terri is alive. She is not on a respirator. She reacts to people and did nothing wrong. This ruling heightens the concern I have for the treatment each and every disabled person receives in this nation. Contrary to what this ruling suggests, Terri’s is a life, like every innocent life, is a life worth living and worth defending.”

Fourteen years ago, Mrs. Schiavo collapsed in her home and was left disabled after oxygen was inexplicably cut off from her brain for several minutes. Since then she has been unable to talk and requires a feeding tube. Courts in Florida agreed with her husband that her feeding tube should be removed, despite the objections of her parents, her responsiveness to people, and her ability to live without a ventilator.

The Florida legislature passed Terri’s Law in October 2003 to overturn the court’s decree to remove the feeding tube. Earlier this year, the Florida Supreme Court ruled that law unconstitutional, again ordering the feeding tube removed. This week, the United States Supreme Court refused to rule on the case, exhausting the legal options of Terri’s parents.

“I would never wish the death Terri faces on my worst enemy. Death by dehydration is a painful, agonizing and arduous process that takes 10 to 14 days. If there are further avenues to explore that might save Terri’s life, I hope her parents and Florida’s leaders will pursue them,” said Congressman Pitts.

One of Terri’s attorneys, Barbara Weller, of Gibbs Law Firm in Seminole, FL, has recounted her experience visiting Terri in a posting on the web at:

<http://www.terrisfight.org/press/BJWnarrative.html>.

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