

# The Right to Die



Source: [www.tbihome.org](http://www.tbihome.org) (accessed May 6, 2009)

## Reading

Events in the case of Terri Schiavo took another 180-degree turn earlier today. Despite the intervention of the US president earlier in the week, a US federal judge in Florida refused an emergency request to put back the feeding tube that would keep brain-damaged Mrs Schiavo alive.

Terri Schiavo collapsed in 1990 when her heart stopped beating, cutting the oxygen supply to her brain. She can breathe unaided, but needs the feeding tube to keep her alive. She could survive one to two weeks without the tube. Her husband wants his wife to die naturally and with dignity as she has no hope of recovery. He first asked doctors to remove the feeding tube in 1998. He is convinced his wife would not want to be kept alive in this way; being in a constant vegetative state. Her parents are desperate to keep Terri alive, saying she has a right to live and that she responds to them.

Source: [www.breakingnewsenglish.com](http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com)

## Vocabulary

180-degree turn  
intervention  
federal judge  
feeding tube  
collapsed  
unaided  
vegetative state  
desperate

## Agree/Disagree

**Instruction:** Read each statement and state whether you agree or disagree with it.

1. Mrs. Schiavo has a right to die.
2. The parents should make the final decision as they brought Terri into this world.
3. Mr. Schiavo is Terri's legal guardian and only he can decide.
4. Terri should be kept alive. She may recover if medical technology improves.
5. It isn't right for someone to be kept alive by machines. They should be left to die naturally.

## Let's Talk!

1. Should Mrs Schiavo be allowed to die naturally?
2. Does a family member or a doctor have the right to turn off a life support machine?
3. Should Mr. Schiavo wait for better technology to come along and keep his wife alive?
4. Whose wishes are most important? Terri's husband's, parents', the president's?
5. Should people be kept alive by machines?
6. How long should doctors keep someone alive who is brain dead?
7. What would you do if you were one of her parents?
8. What would you do if it were your husband / wife in the vegetative state?
9. What is the law in your country in cases similar to this?
10. What is the legal status of euthanasia in your country? Is it a crime?
11. Do you agree with euthanasia?
12. The Ancient Greek for euthanasia is 'good death'. What do you think of this meaning?
13. Do people really have a right to die?
14. Is living a choice or an obligation?
15. What if your family member asks you to commit euthanasia?