



# Press Release

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## **Schindler Family Response to United States Senator Mel Martinez** ***Family of Terri Schiavo and volunteers of their Foundation urge Senator Martinez to uphold federal protections for the disabled***

**St. Petersburg, FL** – The family of Terri Schiavo today responded to Senator Mel Martinez's recent interview with television news channel, Bay News 9, in which he expressed regret for his involvement in the Senate's move to protect Schiavo's life in March of 2005.

On an episode of *Political Connections* - aired Sunday, February 12, 2005 - Martinez stated that Schiavo's case was "better left to the state courts to deal with" and he explained that he felt that the federal government's involvement was likely a mistake.

The Schindler family, along with volunteers of the Foundation, are calling for renewed effort at the federal level to ensure that protections be mandated in cases where a vulnerable person has no advanced directive and is in danger of being denied ordinary care for the purpose of causing or hastening his or her death.

Bobby Schindler, spokesperson for the Foundation states: "I am hopeful that Senator Martinez is not reacting to mixed news reports over the public's view of Congress's actions in protecting my sister's life. Though some news outlets have reported that poll responses did not favor Congress's involvement, there are others that greatly support protections of disabled and vulnerable people like Terri."

According to an April, 2005 poll, 80% of likely voters said that a disabled person who is not terminally ill or in a coma, and not being kept alive by life support should not, in the absence of a written directive, to the contrary, be denied food and water (Source: [Zogby International](#)).

An additional Zogby poll showed that 74% of those participating believed that it is proper for the federal government to intervene when basic civil rights are being denied.

"It has always been my family's position that Terri was denied her basic rights," states Schindler, "Our family and our foundation want to encourage those in Congress to uphold the basic principles of our Constitution and ensure that people with disabilities, our aging communities and the vulnerable are not stripped of their voices or denied fair and just treatment, based on hearsay. A more sensible standard of proof should be compulsory before a life is ended in this way."

"Senator Martinez has an opportunity to stand up for the small," said Schindler, "Our Foundation hopes he will not be swayed from acting as a public servant."

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