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Dear Colleague:

Gov. Jeb Bush seems to be Terri Schiavo’s last hope. Take a step toward preventing what happened to her from happening to you by signing, not a living will, but a will to live.

Steven W. Mosher
President

Contact Jeb Bush—And Then Get a ‘Will to Live’ Form

Unless Gov. Jeb Bush intervenes, it seems likely that Terri Schiavo will be murdered by her husband Michael and the state of Florida in time for the Easter season. (Note: There are no coincidences.) See the end of this article for a way to contact the governor’s office and urge him to save Terri’s life, an act legally within his power. Read on now for a way to prevent what is happening to Terri from happening to you or a family member. As demographic pressures on child-poor Western nations increase with the average age of their populations, the elderly and infirm will face ever-mounting encouragement to die with dignity—that is, hurry up and get out of the way. If you are unable to protest, you will surely be eliminated unless you have clearly expressed your wish otherwise in a legally valid fashion.

There is no way to guarantee that you will not be executed in a medical institution since
America’s pop culture and health care establishment have become so pro-death, but signing a will to live (a specifically pro-life living will) is a good step toward protecting your life. Many Americans have already taken the hint from Terri’s case. Terri Schiavo didn’t have a living will. But because of her, thousands of other Americans won’t make that same mistake, reported the Associated Press this week.

Attorneys and organizations that promote the importance of living wills and advance directives say the bitter legal battle over the severely brain damaged woman has led many people to put their end-of-life wishes in writing. . . . Most American adults-estimates are as high as 75%-do not have written directives for their families to follow.

Living wills are typically designed to allow doctors to kill you as easily and quickly as possible. You do not even have to be terminally ill or brain dead. After all, Terri Schiavo is neither. Respected doctors who have examined her say the brain-damaged woman has a reasonable chance of a partial recovery if she undergoes rehabilitation. But her worse half and the judges won’t allow an attempt. More information about her cognitive state could be ascertained by an MRI—but she’s never been given one. They even won’t let Terri’s parents give her a cup of water as she lies dying without food or fluids.

Webster’s Dictionary defines ‘terminal’ as ‘of or in the final stages of a fatal disease,’ the National Right to Life Committee points out. *And this is what the ordinary person thinks: that somebody who is ‘terminally ill’ is someone who will inevitably die, whose death cannot be prevented by medical treatment. But in many states, that is not what it means.

Instead, for the purposes of the living will you are legally in a ‘terminal condition’ even if your life could be saved—so as to live indefinitely-by medical treatment, so long as you would still have a permanent disability of some kind.*

This is just one example of the tricks played by the culture of death’s devotees in state governments and elsewhere. Unless you are an expert in this area of the law, you need help. The National Right to Life Committee’s website offers sample will to live forms for different states.

A will to live directs doctors to save your life rather than terminate it, and allows you to appoint people you trust as your guardians in case you are unable to speak for yourself. If Terri Schiavo had a will to live, perhaps her husband, even with the connivance of a pro-death judiciary, would have been unable to sentence her to death.

Or maybe it wouldn’t have made any difference. I don’t have one myself, says Dr. William
Toffler, an Oregon doctor who is national director for the pro-life Physicians for Compassionate Care Educational Foundation, of a living will or will to live. He said that in his experience, doctors often ignore them. The most valuable aspect of a will to live is the appointment of guardians if you are incapacitated. You need somebody advocating on your behalf, he said. Fortunately, my wife understands where I’m coming from. At the very least, though, a well-written will to live can clearly communicate in writing your wishes.

Communication is important, said Toffler. That has to take place.

If you have the stomach, read online stories of involuntarily euthanized patients.

The last hope for Terri seems to be Florida Gov. Jeb Bush. Not only does he have the obligation to protect the lives of Florida residents such as Terri, but the Florida state constitution in Article I, section 2 says:

All natural persons, female and male alike, are equal before the law and have inalienable rights, among which are the right to enjoy and defend life and liberty, to pursue happiness, to be rewarded for industry, and to acquire, possess and protect property; except that the ownership, inheritance, disposition and possession of real property by aliens ineligible for citizenship may be regulated or prohibited by law. No person shall be deprived of any right because of race, religion, national origin, or physical disability.

Terri Schiavo is being denied her right life due to a physical disability. Gov. Bush should fulfill his duty, enforce the Florida constitution, and take Terri into protective custody. In addition, the elected representatives of the people of Florida and this country have tried time and again to save Terri’s life or at least grant more legal review to her case, which has never been examined by the federal courts even though they often review the cases of death row inmates. The courts have ignored a law passed by the Florida state legislature, appeals from Gov. Bush, a law and subpoenas issued by the U.S. Congress, and the express will of President Bush. Has democracy become such a distant memory in America that now the unelected courts can kill a disabled person contrary to the wishes of elected representatives, and contrary to the rule of law? Find online information about judges’ legal errors in this case.

Terri’s case will set a precedent that we will rue for all time. We will leave you with the words of Peggy Noonan in today’s Wall Street Journal:

Our children have been reared in the age of abortion, and are coming of age in a time when
seemingly respectable people are enthusiastic for euthanasia. It cannot be good for our children, and the world they will make, that they are given this new lesson that human life is not precious, not touched by the divine, not of infinite value. *Once you ‘know’ that-human life is not so special after all-then everything is possible, and none of it is good. When a society comes to believe that human life is not inherently worth living, it is a slippery slope to the gas chamber. You wind up on a low road that twists past Columbine and leads toward Auschwitz. Today that road runs through Pinellas Park, Fla.

Please urge Gov. Jeb Bush to take Terri Schiavo into protective custody, especially if you live in Florida. Call his office at (850) 488-4441 or, if that’s busy, 850-488-5603 or e-mail. When I called and politely asked that Gov. Bush take Terri into protective custody, they hung up on me. I take that as a sign that people are getting to them.

*Joseph A. D’Agostino is Vice President for Communications at PRI.*