

March 21, 2005

House Votes to Allow Federal
Case

Hearing on Terri Shiavo Right to Life

WASHINGTON, D.C.- The House today passed legislation allowing a federal district judge to consider a claim on the behalf of Mrs. Schiavo for alleged violations of Constitutional rights or federal laws relating to the withholding or withdrawal of food, fluids, or medical treatment necessary to sustain her life. The vote was taken after members of the House were recalled for a rare Sunday session to debate the measure, which is intended to save the life of Terri Shiavo.

The bill passed by a vote of 203 to 58 and President Bush is expected to sign it today.

Congressman Todd Akin (R-Mo), who voted in favor of the legislation, issued the following statement:

"As we stand here today, a woman is dying. She dies not as the result of an underlying disease or illness, but because a judge has decided that her life is not worth living.

"Every member of Congress has taken an oath to defend the Constitution, and the Constitution assumes that life is a basic human right.

"Terri Shiavo is not on a respirator, but is facing starvation even though she has family members wanting to care for her as a severely disabled woman. These family members were even being prevented from giving Terri water to hydrate a dying loved one.

"By passing this legislation, Congress has been clear that it believes her rights have been overlooked by the Florida Court and has acted to give her and her parents another chance at having those rights recognized by a federal court.

"As a pro-life legislator, I am very encouraged by the action taken by Congress today, and I am hopeful that Congress will work to deal more broadly with the issue of federal recourse for disabled persons in the near future."