

Wisconsin Public Radio & St. Norbert College Survey Center

THE WISCONSIN SURVEY *The End of Life and Living Wills* Spring 2005

Survey Information:

Number of Adult Wisconsin Resident Respondents: 400

Interview Period: April 25 – May 4, 2005

Margin of Error: +/- 5% at the 95% confidence level.

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- 57% Think Terry Schaivo's Feeding Tube **Should** Have Been Removed
- 80% Think Congress and the President Should **Not** Have Intervened
- 85% Have Had Discussions With Family About Their End of Life Wishes
- 51% Have Living Wills

The Terry Schaivo Case

“Terri Schaivo, a Florida woman who was in what has been called a “persistent vegetative state” since 1990, had her feeding tube removed on March 18th this year and died about 2 weeks later. Based on what you have heard or read about her case, do you think that the feeding tube should or should not have been removed?”

<i>Should have been removed</i>	57%
<i>Should Not have been removed</i>	35%
<i>Not Familiar with the case (vol.)</i>	1%
<i>Not Sure</i>	6%
<i>Refused</i>	3%

Ninety percent (90%) of those who felt the tube should have been removed felt congressional action was wrong and 92% felt presidential intervention was wrong.

For those who felt it should *not* have been removed, 62% said it was wrong for Congress to intervene and 57% said it was wrong for the president to intervene.

Ninety percent (90%) of those who said it should have been removed said they had had discussions with family members about their wishes in a similar situation, while 77% of those who felt it should not have been removed had had these discussions.

Democrats were more likely than Independents and Republicans to say the tube should have been removed. See table below.

Percent Saying the Tube Should Have Been Removed

Democrats	64%
Independents	57%
Republicans	49%

Those with no religious affiliation were the most likely to feel the tube should have been removed, followed by Lutherans. Those with non-Christian religious beliefs were the least likely to think the feeding tube should have been removed. See table below.

Percentage of Each Religious Affiliation Saying the Tube Should Have Been Removed

Lutheran	Other Protestant	Catholic	Other	None
65%	53%	52%	45%	78%

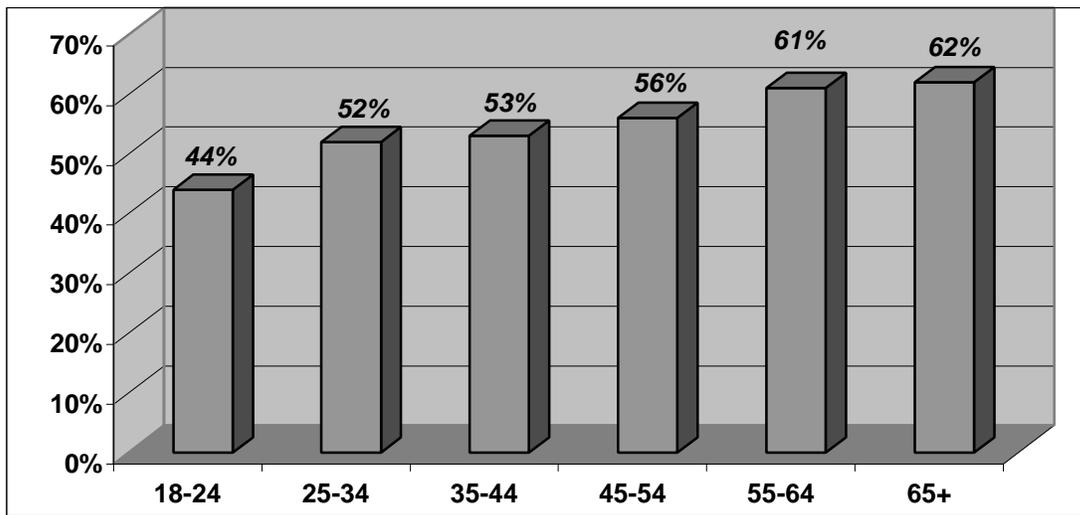
Church attendance was also relevant. Those who attend more than weekly were the least likely to say it should have been removed, while those who attend monthly were the most likely. See table below.

More than Weekly	Weekly	Monthly	A Few Times Per year	Never
45%	52%	74%	55%	64%

The table below should be read across. For example, 89% of Lutherans who attend church more than weekly said they felt Schaivo's tube should have been removed.

	Schavio's Tube Should Have Been Removed
Lutheran	
More than Weekly	89%
Weekly	58%
Monthly	65%
A Few Times Per Year	72%
Never	75%
Other Protestant	
More than Weekly	33%
Weekly	46%
Monthly	100%
A Few Times Per Year	50%
Never	60%
Catholic	
More than Weekly	43%
Weekly	53%
Monthly	76%
A Few Times Per Year	43%
Never	25%
Other	
More than Weekly	0%
Weekly	39%
Monthly	57%
A Few Times Per Year	53%
Never	67%
None	
More than Weekly	NA
Weekly	NA
Monthly	NA
A Few Times Per Year	100%
Never	76%

Older people were more likely to say the tube should have been removed than younger people. See chart below.



Those with graduate degrees were much more likely to say the tube should have been removed than those with less education. For those with a college degree or less, percentages of respondents saying the tube should have been removed varied between 52% and 56%, whereas 74% of those with graduate degrees felt the tube should have been removed.

Men were more likely than women to say it should be removed, 62% of men said it should have been removed compared to 53% of women.

Congressional & Presidential Intervention in the Schaivo Case

“Congress and the President passed legislation to move the Schaivo case from the state courts, which had repeatedly ruled to remove the feeding tube, to the federal court system. Regardless of your opinion on the Schaivo case, do you think it was right for Congress to intervene or not?”

<i>Right</i>	17%
<i>Not Right</i>	80%
<i>Not Sure</i>	2%
<i>Refused</i>	1%

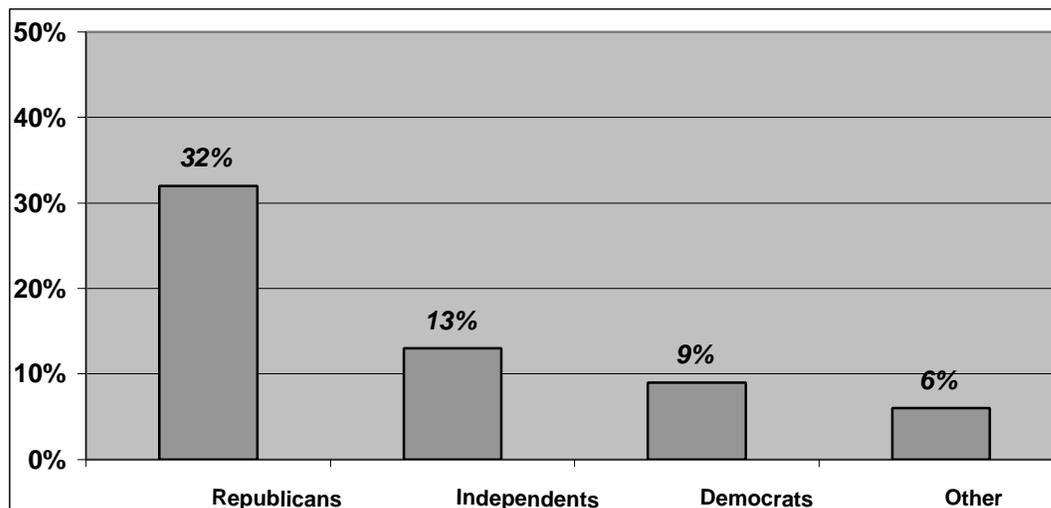
“How about President Bush, was it right for him to intervene or not?”

<i>Right</i>	18%
<i>Not Right</i>	80%
<i>Not Sure</i>	2%
<i>Refused</i>	1%

Note: since the percentages were roughly the same for Congress and the President there was little difference between demographic relationships between the two different questions, therefore just the relationships with the President’s intervention are discussed here.

Republicans were much more likely than other party identifiers to see the president’s and Congress’ actions as right. See chart below.

Percentage of Within Political Party Who Felt the President Did the Right Thing by Intervening in the Schaivo Case



Church attendance was also related. Those who attend more than weekly were much more likely to say congressional and presidential intervention was the right thing to do, such that 36% of those who go more than weekly said it was right for them to intervene compared to 19% or less for those who attend less frequently, including 12% of those who never attend. Religious affiliation was not significantly related to approval of congressional and presidential intervention in the Schaivo case.

Other related demographics were age and education. Younger people were more likely to say they should have intervened than older people and those with graduate degrees were significantly less likely to agree their intervention was the right thing to do than other education levels. See table below.

*Percentage in Category Saying
Congressional and Presidential Intervention
was the Right Thing*

Age	
18-24	28%
25-34	30%
35-44	21%
45-54	15%
55-64	11%
65+	14%
Education	
< High School	17%
High School	15%
Some College / Technical Degree	19%
College Graduate	25%
Graduate or Professional Degree	9%

Family Discussions About End of Life Wishes

“Have you yourself had discussions with your family members about what you would want if you were in Terri Schaivo’s situation?”

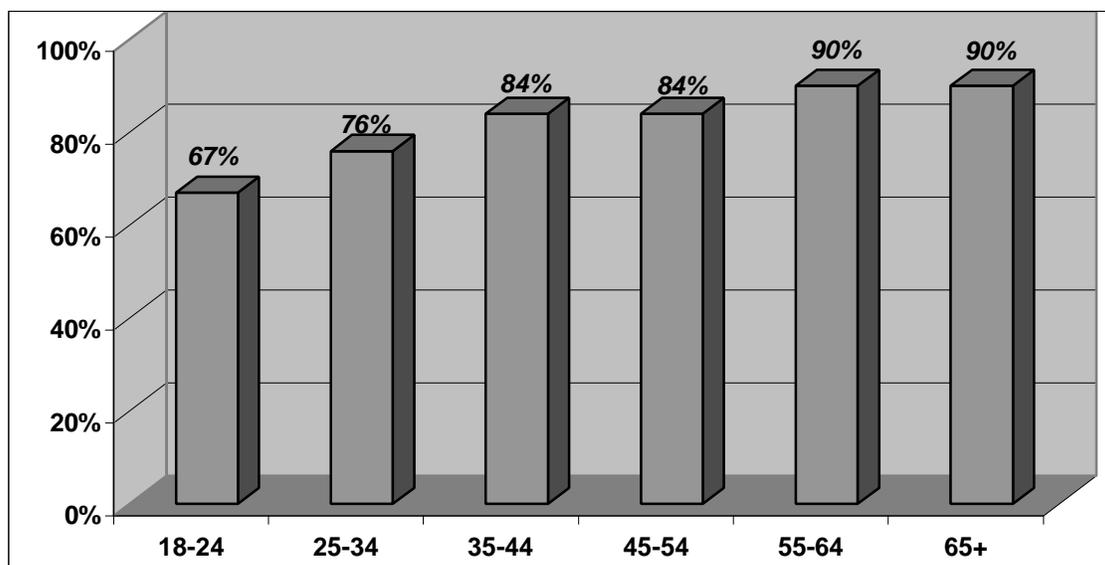
<i>Yes</i>	85%
<i>No</i>	15%
<i>Not Sure</i>	0%
<i>Refused</i>	0%

Over half (56%) of those who had discussed with family members their end of life wishes said they had living wills compared to only 5% who had not discussed their wishes with their family members.

Seventy-five percent (75%) of those with *no* living will had discussed these issues with family members (and 95% of those *with* living wills had discussed it with family members).

The only significant differences in demographic groups and whether the respondent had talked about their end of life wishes were gender and age. Income, religious identification, church attendance, education, and party identification were not significant, e.g., there were no differences between people of different education levels and whether they had discussed their wishes or not.

Women were more likely to have discussed their wishes with family members than men; 90% of women said they had discussed this compared to 76% of men. Older people were more likely to have discussed their wishes than younger people, though even among the youngest group, a large majority had discussed this issue. See chart below.



Living Will

“Do you have a living will?”

<i>Yes</i>	<i>51%</i>
<i>No</i>	<i>49%</i>
<i>Not Sure</i>	<i>1%</i>
<i>Refused</i>	<i>0%</i>

The most significant demographic differences in answering this question was not surprisingly, age. Older people were much more likely to have a living will than younger people. Gender was also significant in that women were more likely than men to have a living will. There was also a positive linear relationship between education and having a living will, those with higher levels of education were more likely to have living wills. Also, those who attend church more regularly are more likely to have living wills, though there was no significant difference between different religions adhered to and incidence of living wills. There were no differences between people of different income levels or party identification and whether or not they had living wills.

	Percentage Having a Living Will
Age	
18-24	0%
25-34	28%
35-44	40%
45-54	41%
55-64	67%
65+	80%
Gender	
Women	56%
Men	41%
Education	
< High School	39%
High School	43%
Some College / Technical Degree	48%
College Graduate	53%
Graduate or Professional Degree	66%
Church Attendance	
More than Weekly	58%
Weekly	59%
Monthly	52%
A Few Times a Year	40%
Never	35%