



**DOES THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS
BELIEVE THAT ALL HUMAN LIFE – EXCEPT THAT OF PREGNANT WOMEN
-- HAS INCALCULABLE WORTH, NO MATTER ITS AGE OR CONDITION?
A COMPARISON OF THE USCCB’S VIEWS IN THE
TERRI SCHIAVO AND ANGELA CARDER CASES.**

USCCB Position in Terri Schiavo Case	USCCB Position in the Angela Carder Case
<p>In the Terri Schiavo case, the USCCB opposed removing a feeding tube from Ms. Schiavo. The USCCB argued that Ms. Schiavo who had been in a persistent vegetative state for 15 years with no cognitive function, had a right to life.</p> <p>An Obligation to Provide Care</p> <p>"We have an obligation to provide basic care for people, even people in a persistent vegetative state. That basic care includes providing food and water as long as it provides nourishment rather than some sort of burden to the patient."</p> <p>"This notion that there has to be a certain quality of life before you have a right to life is utterly rejected by the Catholic church. It stems from a very dangerous idea that there are some lives that aren't worth living."</p> <p>Her Condition Was Anything But Futile</p> <p>According to the USCCB, Terri Schiavo's condition was anything but futile, and, she was simply a person who had "cognitive disabilities" and who could "not feed herself without assistance." According to the USCCB in spite of her condition she retained "every ounce of her human dignity and deserves respect and care."</p>	<p>In the Angela Carder (A.C.) case, the USCCB took the position that a court’s order to perform caesarian surgery on a critically ill pregnant woman, surgery that contributed to her death, was “the correct choice.” The fetus/newborn, that was forcibly delivered at twenty-five weeks of gestation, was born alive but died within three hours of the surgery.</p> <p>She’s Going to Die Anyway</p> <p>Angela Carder "was lying very near death" and "had at most one, possibly two days, to live."</p> <p>"A.C. might have lived 24-48 hours without surgery." "With or without the cesarean operation, A.C. would most probably die within 24-48 hours of the court hearing."</p> <p>According to the USCCB, Angela’s ability to advance her own interests in health and well-being were "virtually nonexistent."</p> <p>Nothing Would Improve Her Condition</p> <p>Although Angela was told she might live for months and specifically agreed to both radiation and chemotherapy that might prolong her life, the USCCB defended the decision to force her to have cesarean surgery because the "decision to attempt to save A.C.'s unborn child properly recognized . . . the futility of improving A.C.'s situation." The USCCB asserted that Angela's legally recognized interest in her "own health and well-being" could not "have been promoted by <i>any</i> choice made by A.C."</p>

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Terry Schiavo</u></p> <p>Would Suffer a Painful Even Gruesome Death</p> <p>Extensive medical evidence indicated that Schiavo had no consciousness whatsoever, including any consciousness of pain. Yet, the USCCB argued that "death by starvation and dehydration is a painful, even gruesome death" The USCCB insisted that removing Schiavo's feeding tube constituted "horrific treatment" presumably because of what Shiavo would endure if she had the capacity to experience pain.</p> <p>An Order That Schiavo Be Made to Die</p> <p>The USCCB characterized the court order to remove the feeding tube as an order of death: "[I]t was not a right to remove medical treatment that was granted, but an order that Terri Schiavo be made to die."</p> <p>"No judge should have the power to order the death of a weak and helpless human being --- in or out of the womb."</p> <p>Eight Years of Due Process Not Enough</p> <p>After eight years of extensive, comprehensive federal and state litigation, the USCCB argued that Terri Schiavo did not have enough court review: "We strongly support legislation to provide Terri Schiavo access to the federal court so she can present her case in federal court."</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Angela Carder</u></p> <p>Nothing Would Make Her Life More Bearable</p> <p>Despite the evidence of Angela Carder's pain, suffering and the risks of surgery, the USCCB argued that refusing a c-section "could not save her life <i>or even make it more bearable.</i>"</p> <p>An Order That Did Not Unduly Burden</p> <p>The USCCB argued, "A.C.'s interests in preserving her life or protecting her own bodily integrity were not unduly burdened, if at all, by cesarean delivery."</p> <p>"The decision to provide a cesarean delivery advanced the child's rights, without undue burden on her mother's interests."</p> <p>"Assuming the court could have found that she clearly would <u>not</u> have wanted the operation, the same result. . .should have been reached: the life of a child hung in the balance. There really was no other choice."</p> <p>Less than a Day of Due Process Is Plenty</p> <p>The USCCB urged the full Court of Appeals to rule on the case citing the hurried nature of the proceedings as a reason <i>to</i> review and uphold the original order: "Given the nature of the medical conditions presented, this case typifies the situation which will demand a hurried review in a future recurrence." The USCCB hoped that a precedent would be set for the "next case" that they expected would be "just as extreme and decided in the same emergency setting."</p>
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Sources for Terri Schiavo statements: Deborah Block, *Religious Views of the Terry Schiavo Dilemma*, VOICE OF AMERICA NEWS, Mar., 31 2005, <http://www.voanews.com/english/archive/2005-03/2005-03-31-voa46.cfm?CFID=128492669&CFTOKEN=44442871>; Cardinal William H. Keeler, Cardinal Keeler Says Terri Schiavo Deserves Basic Care (Mar. 24, 2005), <http://www.nccbuscc.org/comm/archives/2005/05-071.shtml>; United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, In Op-Ed, Bishops' Official Says Terri Shiavo Deserves Nourishment and Care (Mar. 24, 2005), <http://www.usccb.org/comm/archives/2005/05-073.shtml>; Cathy Cleaver Ruse, Terri Schiavo and the Echoes of Abortion (Mar. 31, 2005), <http://www.usccb.org/prolife/publicat/lifeissues/033105.shtml>; United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Bishops' Official Commends Congressional Action on Terri Schiavo (Mar. 18, 2005), <http://www.usccb.org/comm/archives/2005/05-065.shtml>. Source for Angela Carder statements: Brief Amicus Curiae of the United States Catholic Conference in Support of Appellees, In re A.C., 573 A.2d 1235 (D.C. 1990) (87-609). See also In re A.C., 573 A.2d 1235 (D.C. 1990) (en banc).