

***TallahasseeVoices***  
**Terri Schiavo – Leon County’s View**

Three out of four Leon County residents (73%) believe Terri Schiavo’s husband, Michael, should have the power to make medical decisions for her despite the fact that he now lives with and has children with another woman and is not legally divorced from Schiavo.<sup>1</sup> Only 17% believe Schiavo’s parents, who dispute her husband’s assertion about Terri’s medical preferences and who have been attempting to wrestle control for their child’s medical decisions from her estranged husband, should have power to make their daughter’s medical decisions. Democrats (80%) and self-described liberals (83%) are more likely to believe her husband should have power over her medical decisions, while Republicans (56%) and self-described conservatives (60%) are less likely to believe that Michael Schiavo should have power over Terri’s medical decisions. Only 2% of local residents report not following the Terri Schiavo case.

Only 1 in 6 local residents (16%) would want their own feeding tube reinserted if they were in the same medical condition as Terri Schiavo. Conservatives (25%) and Republicans (29%) are more likely to want their feeding tubes reinserted to prolong their lives. African Americans and younger residents are slightly more likely to want to remain living via a feeding tube.

Only 13% of local residents think Governor Bush should take custody of Terri Schiavo and order the feeding tube to be reinserted. Republicans (24%) and conservatives (21%) are more likely to want Governor Bush to take this action.

Four out of ten local residents (43%) claim they have living wills, and three-fourths of these individuals have provisions in their living wills that instruct their legal guardians when to discontinue medical treatment. Three in ten residents who have living wills have had them for only a year or two, and half claim the Terri Schiavo case motivated them to create a living will. Nearly four out of five residents over 65 (78%) have living wills, while only 22% of residents under 35 have one. In marriages in which one spouse has a living will, 84% of the other spouses have one as well. Seven out of ten residents who do not have a living will state the Terri Schiavo case has motivated them to seek information about living wills.

A majority of local residents (56%) do not want any branch of government (judicial, executive, or legislative) to intervene in their family’s conflict over life and death decisions like the one facing the Schiavo family. Nearly all residents who did favor governmental intervention in these disputes think the judicial branch should get involved rather than the legislative or executive branches. Most residents (77%) think the courts have been correct in not intervening to have Terri Schiavo’s feeding tube reinserted. Four out five residents are not satisfied with the way Florida’s government has handled the Schiavo case.

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<sup>1</sup>Results are from a March 2005 *Tallahassee Voices* Internet Survey Panel, a pro bono project jointly sponsored by Kerr & Downs Research and the *Tallahassee Democrat*. The panel contains over 2,500 local residents; 906 responded to the Terri Schiavo Survey. The panel under represents minorities (16%), younger residents (26%) and low-income households (18%). However in this study, most results did not vary significantly based on race/ethnic background, age, and income.

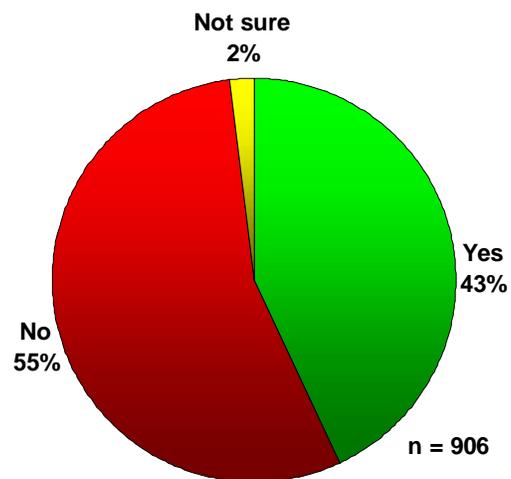
***To become a panel member, go to [www.tallahasseevoices.com](http://www.tallahasseevoices.com).***

# TallahasseeVoices\*

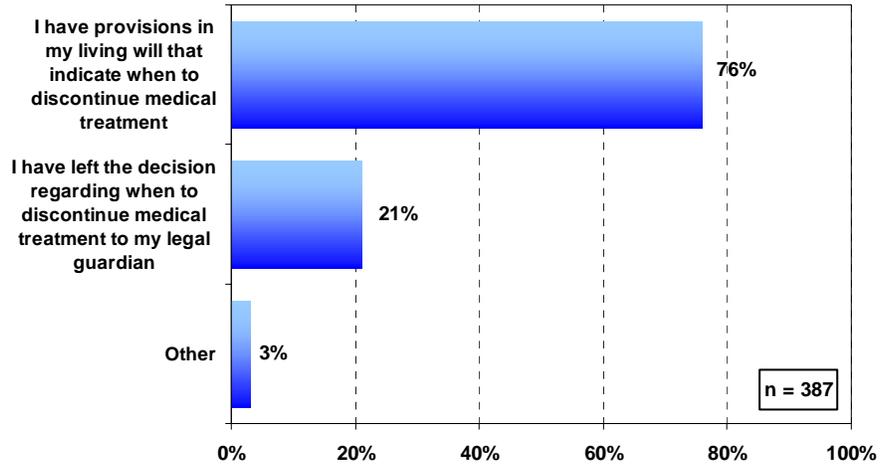
## Terri Schiavo

\*A pro bono project by Kerr & Downs Research and the *Tallahassee Democrat*

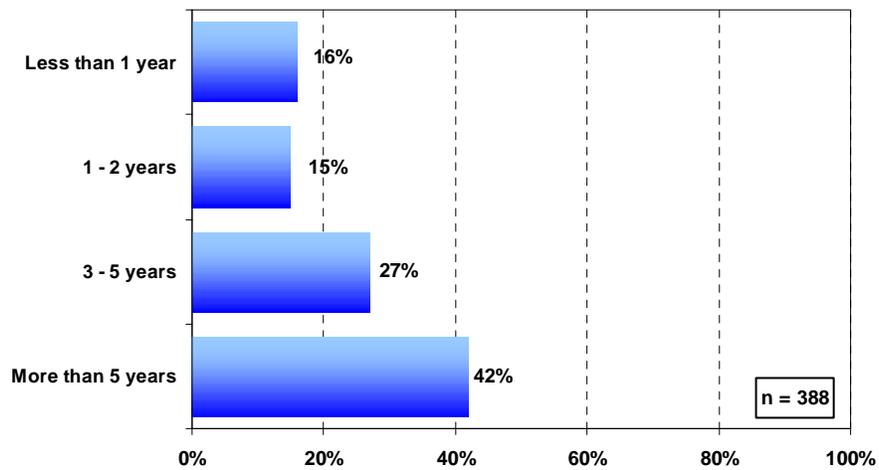
Do you have a living will?



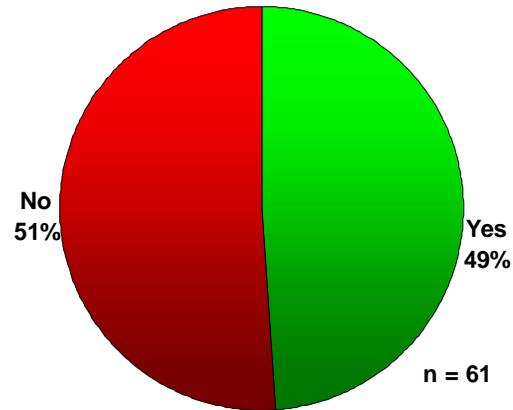
Have you put provisions in your living will that instruct your legal guardian when to discontinue medical treatment for you or does your living will rely on your legal guardian to make that decision for you?



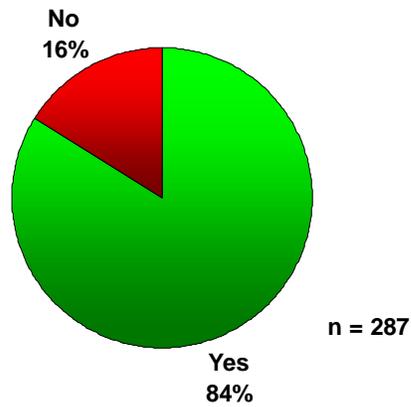
How long have you had a living will?



Was part of your motivation for creating a living will based on the Terri Schiavo case?

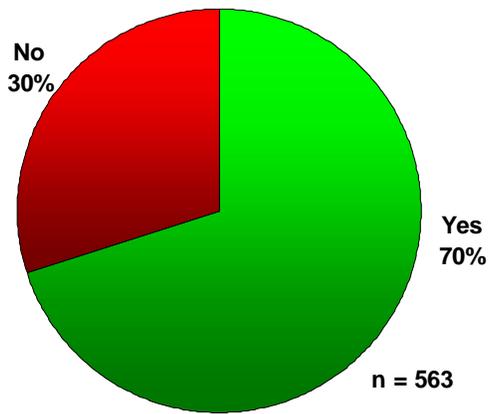


Does your spouse/significant other have a living will?



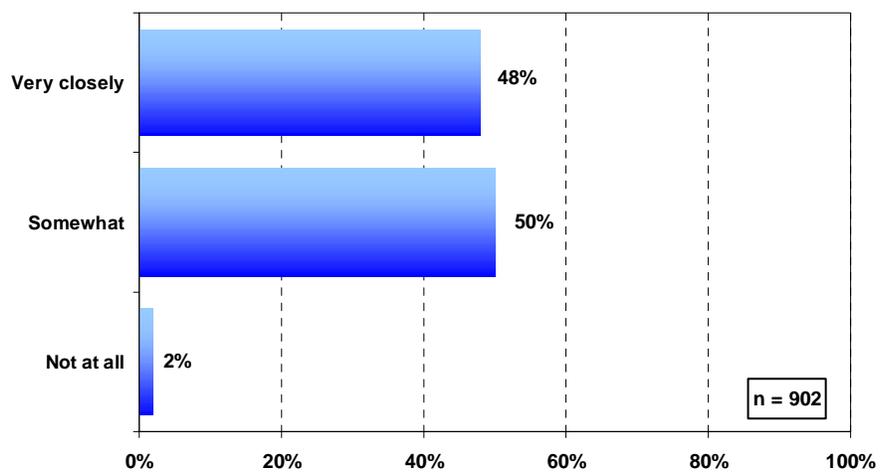
\*Asked only of married residents who had living wills.

Has the Terri Schiavo case motivated you to seek information about a living will?

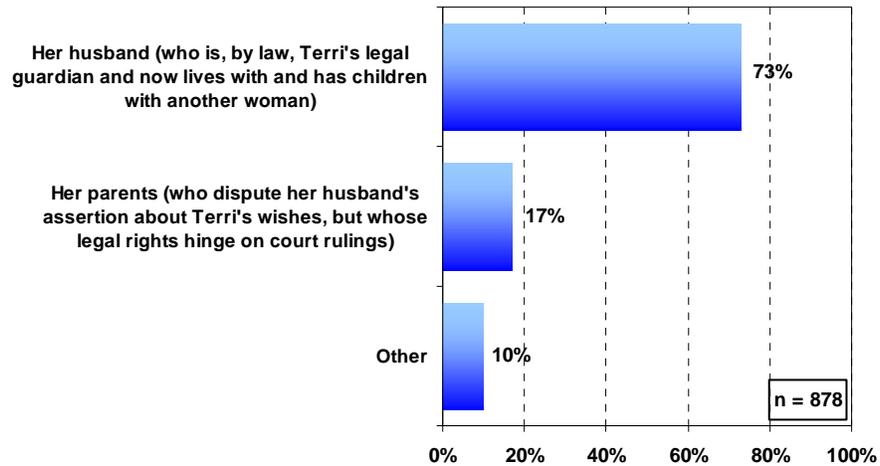


\*Asked of residents who do not have living wills

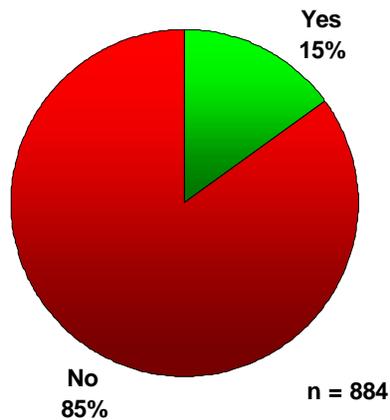
How closely have you followed the Terri Schiavo case?



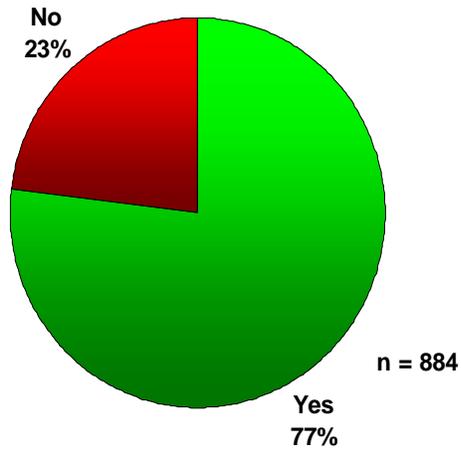
Who should have the power to make the decision to continue or discontinue medical treatment for Terri Schiavo?



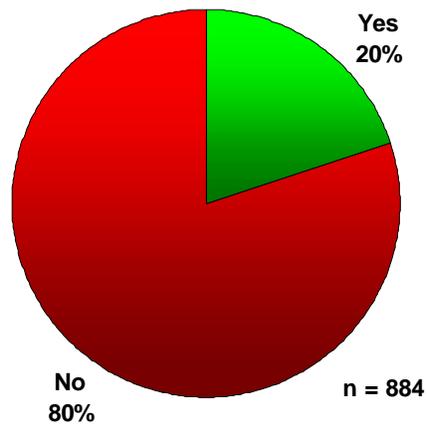
Do you believe the U.S. Congress should have re-adjoined to discuss the Terri Schiavo case?



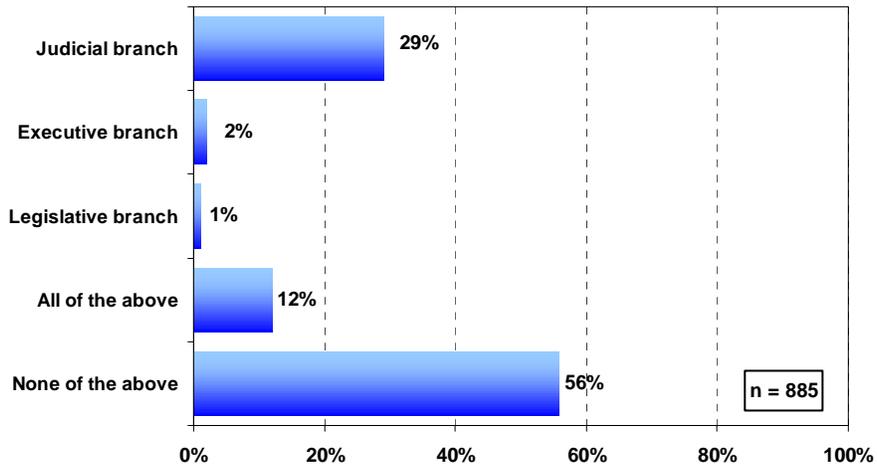
Do you think the courts have made the right decision in keeping Terri Schiavo's feeding tube removed?



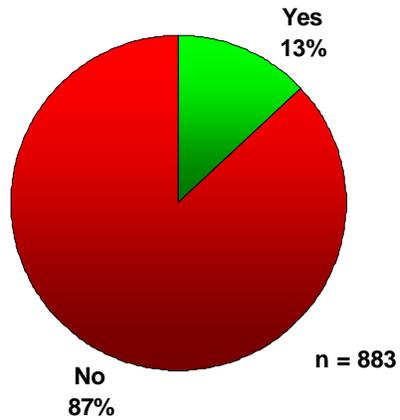
Are you satisfied with the way the Florida State government has handled the Terri Schiavo case?



If you were in Terri Schiavo's situation, how would you have wanted the government to react to your family's conflict – that is, who would you have wanted to aid in the decision process?



Should Governor Bush take custody of Terri Schiavo and order the feeding tube to be reinserted?



If you were in Terri Schiavo's position right now, what would you want done?

