

# Statement of U.S. Representative Steve Rothman on House Action Regarding Terri Schiavo

For Immediate Release

Contact: Brice Peyre

Phone: 201-646-0808

## STATEMENT OF U.S. REP. STEVEN ROTHMAN ON HOUSE ACTION REGARDING TERRI SCHIAVO

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Rep. Steven R. Rothman (D-NJ-9) released the following statement earlier today after casting his vote in opposition to S. 686. The legislation, which passed on a 203-58 vote taken shortly before 1:00 a.m. this morning, allows Congress to overturn seven years of Florida State court decisions by ordering a federal court to conduct a new trial in the case of Terri Schiavo.

"This vote is about the right of an American citizen to have her wishes fulfilled regarding her own medical care. All of us, like Terri Schiavo, must be allowed to determine for ourselves when heroic measures to prolong our lives should be undertaken.

"In the absence of a living will or any other concrete evidence to the contrary, carrying out the afflicted person's wishes has always been the responsibility of the next of kin, of whom the surviving spouse has always been accorded preeminence. However, the surviving spouse's decisions regarding medical treatment are properly subject to judicial review, exactly the process that has occurred in Terri's case.

"After seven years of intensive fact-finding, every single Florida State court ruling on Terri Schiavo's case determined that she would not have wished to have feeding tubes inserted into her body in order to prolong her persistent vegetative state. Each court judgment held that she be allowed to die in peace, as her husband and friends have testified was her wish. Federal courts, including the Supreme Court of the United States, have repeatedly declined to overturn those decisions.

"To overrule Terri Schiavo, her husband, and every single state and federal court ruling in this matter constitutes a cruel, unwarranted and unjustifiable intrusion by Congress into the most intimate and personal decisions of an individual or a married couple."