



In this photo taken Jan. 12, 2016, Republican presidential candidate, former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush speaks during an interview in Coralville, Iowa. **Photo by Jae C. Hong/AP**

Terri Schiavo's husband calls Jeb Bush ad 'disgusting'

01/27/16 11:05AM – UPDATED 01/27/16 02:05PM

By **Adam Howard**

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GOP presidential candidate Jeb Bush can't seem to please anyone these days. His negative ratings among Republicans have risen and his position in the 2016 primary polls has dropped.

And now, he is getting slammed for a new 30-second ad that resurrects the Terri Schiavo controversy.

Schiavo, a Florida woman who lived in a medically irreversible, persistent vegetative state for 15 years, became a huge cause célèbre for social conservatives in the late-'90's and early 2000's. Although her husband insisted that his wife would not have wanted to live that way and would instead opt for euthanasia, her parents fought this course of action.

Several prominent Republicans, [including Jeb Bush](#), the then-governor of Florida, rallied to her parents' side, despite [polling](#) that showed that the overwhelming majority of Americans backed her husband and believed that politicians should stay out of the family squabble. After several attempts by the legislature and the courts to intervene, Schiavo's feeding tubes were ultimately removed. The controversy became a frequently-cited example of right wing overreach.

RELATED: [Jeb Bush to conservatives: I 'stood' with Terri Schiavo](#)

That hasn't stopped Bush from delving back into the debate in hopes of shoring up his conservative credentials. Besides highlighting high scores from the NRA and his "deep faith," the new Bush ad mentions in a voice-over that he "fought time and again for the right to life," over an image of Schiavo in her hospital bed.

Right to Rise TV ad in SC



This is not the first time Bush has name-checked Schiavo on the campaign trail. "I stood on the side of Terri Schiavo," Bush told attendees at the conservative [Faith and Freedom conference](#) last June.

“It is simply disgusting that Jeb Bush and his super PAC would exploit my wife’s tragedy for his crude political gain,” Mike Schiavo said in a statement about the ad [published by Politico](#). “Shame on Jeb Bush.”

“Using his disgraceful intervention in our family’s private trauma to advance his political career shows that he has learned nothing. He’s proud of the fact that he used the machinery of government to keep a person alive through extraordinary artificial means – contrary to the orders of the court that were based on the court’s determination, made over six years of litigation, that doing so would be against her wishes,” he added. “What the campaign video shows is that if he ever got his hands on the power of government again, he would do the same thing again, maybe next time to your family.”

According to *Politico*, Mike Schiavo also called Bush’s ad “a last-ditch effort to get the right-wing constituents.” Last year, Schiavo accused Bush of making his life a [“living hell”](#) with his frequent legal intrusions to prolong his brain-dead wife’s life.

Nevertheless, the Schiavo case may still have some resonance among religious conservatives. GOP presidential candidate Dr. Ben Carson learned that the hard way when he suggested that the fight over her life was [“much ado about nothing”](#) last November. Carson later walked back his comments after a backlash from conservatives, saying: “When I used the term ‘much ado about nothing,’ my point was that the media tried to create the impression that the pro-life community was nutty and going way overboard with the support of the patient.”

Despite superior fundraising and a highly structured campaign, Bush has struggled to win over the increasingly conservative GOP base during the 2016 campaign season. He has had to fend off blistering criticism from GOP front-runner Donald Trump and attacks from his more moderate peers like Chris Christie, as well as his former ally Sen. Marco Rubio.

The most recent [NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll](#) found that Bush was polling at just 5 percent nationally. Only 42 percent of Republican primary voters say that they can see themselves supporting him, down from 75 percent last summer.

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