

Americans United asks for Schiavo apologies: No apologies forthcoming

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A religious liberty watchdog group is asking Christian conservatives to apologize for their role in the Terri Schiavo case, but in the immediate aftermath of her autopsy, there weren't any takers.

"These religious right zealots owe the entire country an apology," Barry W. Lynn, executive director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, said in a statement. "They intervened in a personal family matter, gave this poor woman's parents false hope, libeled her husband with unfounded accusations and turned a tragic situation into a political football. Have they no shame?"

Schiavo suffered extensive, irreversible brain damage, according to an autopsy report released June 15. Schiavo died March 31 after her feeding tube was disconnected, ending months of prayer and protests by religious conservatives to save her life.

Even after the autopsy, religious organizations describing themselves as pro-life maintained that Schiavo was cruelly treated. "The fact that Terri Schiavo was brain damaged and her condition was irreversible did not make her any less of a human being," said Jim Sedlak, vice president of American Life League, in an interview.

Concerned Women for America, a Washington-based group, took a similar position. "Terri Schiavo died because the court ordered the removal of the instrument that provided her water," said Wendy Wright, senior policy director for Concerned Women for America. "Only a calloused society in moral freefall would deny a disabled person her most basic need—water." *-Religion News Service*