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# Brain-dead pregnant woman to be laid to rest after being disconnected from life support

Sunday Jan 26, 2014 10:42 AM

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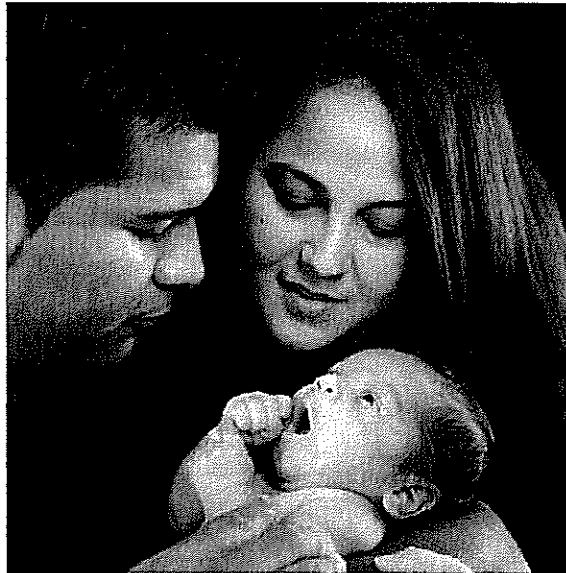
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BY HASANI GITTENS, NBC NEWS

A pregnant woman who lapsed into a brain-dead state late last year was removed from life support on Sunday after a Texas hospital complied with a judge's order to disconnect her from the machines keeping her alive.

Marlise Munoz stopped receiving life-sustaining treatment at around 11:30 a.m. local time (1:30 p.m. ET) and her body was released to her husband Erick, a statement from the family attorneys said Sunday. The fetus, which was at 23 weeks' gestation, was not delivered.



KC Studios Photography

Erick and Marlise Munoz hold their son Mateo.

Erick Munoz had sued the hospital because it would not remove life support as he said his wife would have wanted in such a situation.

The family "will now proceed with the somber task of laying Marlise Munoz's body to rest and grieving over the great loss that has been suffered," the statement added. "May Marlise Munoz finally rest in peace, and her family find the strength to complete what has been an unbearably long and arduous journey."

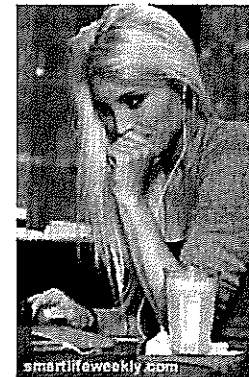
Munoz had been on life support John Peter Smith Hospital in Fort Worth, Texas, since November 26 after suffering what her husband believes was a pulmonary embolism. She was 14 weeks pregnant at the time.

Both the hospital and family agreed that she met the criteria to be considered brain-dead — which means she is dead both medically and under Texas law — and that her fetus could not be born alive.

However, Texas law that says life-sustaining treatment cannot be withdrawn or withheld from a pregnant patient, despite a "do not resuscitate" request from the patient or a request from the family and the hospital declined to remove life support.

Erick Munoz and his wife both worked as paramedics and were familiar with end-of-life issues and he insisted both were clear that they did not want to be kept alive by machines in this type of situation as he battled the hospital's decision in court.

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Lawyers for the family had argued that she was clinically dead, could no longer be considered a pregnant woman and that the fetus she was carrying was severely damaged.

On Friday, Tarrant County District Judge R.H. Wallace gave the hospital until 5 p.m. ET on Monday to disconnect Munoz, 33, from her ventilator.

In a statement issued Sunday, the hospital said they would "follow the court order," adding that their role was "not to make nor contest law but to follow it."

"The past eight weeks have been difficult for the Munoz family, the caregivers and the entire Tarrant County community, which found itself involved in a sad situation," the statement added.

Anti-abortion activists attended Friday's court hearing and spoke out in favor of trying to deliver the fetus.

The Associated Press and Reuters contributed to this report.

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 martone4u  
27, 2014

The baby was never a baby people, it was a fetus when she died back in November. There was no reason at all to keep her on life support back in November, other than a political anti-abortion stance. If the fetus had been 23 weeks and well developed, they could have potentially hooked her up to a feeding tube and then taken the viable baby at 24 weeks potentially saving it, if it was the family's wish and choice. In this case she was 14 weeks pregnant and there was no chance of the fetus ever becoming a baby, she wasn't even given nutrition people. Families not hospitals have the last choice in these circumstances, not someone on what they believe to play their own God role. I am glad she is now at peace along with the fetus, it should have happened this way many weeks

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#313

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ago. All of you that don't agree, need to go get a real life and worry about real things that you can have a positive change on, not the things that have already happened like the mother in this case already being dead.

1 REPLY SHARE

1 reply

 MONEY AT LAST!

#314

Being involved with the fire dept., I have seen this so many times. It's heartbreaking, but the best choice. May she and her baby enjoy each other on the other side.

REPLY SHARE REPORT

 Eyla C.-1909922

27, 2014

#316

I'm a Christian and majority of the time "Pro-Life."

This isn't such a case.

The mother was brain-dead (a.k.a functionally and developmentally DEAD).

The fetus NEEDS for "mother" to, umm, you know, NOT be any sort dead before it can survive.

The fetus needs ESPECIALLY for mom not to be, you know, physically dead.

How exactly can we make an argument for the "life" of the fetus, when in fact, it had no life. It was simply a mass developing terribly?

\*rolls eyes\*

On a less angry note:

R.I.P to mother and child. I'm glad the judge had the humanity in him to grant this family peace.

2 REPLY SHARE

 Patricia Martinez Herrera

27, 2014

#317

I'm so sorry for this family's loss. Not only have they lost a wife, mother, daughter, sister... they have lost a baby. I understand the circumstances and I hope I don't ever end up in a similar situation. I have requested that I not be kept alive through artificial means as well. My husband and I have made that deal. If something should happen to him before I die, I have a living will which states that I am not to be kept alive like that. The fetus was not going to have a good quality of life if brought to full term (if it had survived that long). God just needed two more angels. May they rest in peace.

0 REPLY SHARE

 tribitor-2904488

27, 2014

#319

I think the husband was right when he stated that they were using his wife as a lab experiment. Tragic

2 REPLY SHARE