

H A R L A N   R I C H A R D S

June 22, 2018

A Bad Idea From HSU

Well, I guess if the folks in charge of HSU can come up with a good idea regarding TB tests, they can also come up with a bad idea elsewhere.

Some guys in prison have physical disabilities which require special accommodations. I'm one of those guys. I have a crippled leg from a motorcycle accident which occurred when I was 18 years old. I'm now 64 and have been crippled my entire adult life. I need an extra pillow to elevate my leg at night, a bottom bunk, a foot tub to soak my foot, special shoes, and soft shackles when making trips outside of the prison. I've had the same accommodations for the entire 30 plus years I've been in prison yet each year I'm required to request a renewal of those accommodations and endure another evaluation.

It is crazy. I'm never going to get better. As I age, it's only going to get worse. This week I requested renewal of my accommodations and had to go through a whole new process. There was a special form with a pile of question - most of which did not apply to me. I have asked repeatedly to have my medical accommodations made permanent and thus far only my shoes are permanent. Now after my extensive interview, I have to wait for the final pronouncement on whether my accommodations will be extended (2 years ago, my extra pillow was denied until I showed HSU staff how my foot swells up daily).

To make things even more tedious and irrational, I was told that my soft shackles would now have to be approved by security staff rather than medical staff - as if a security official would have any idea whether I had a bona fide need for soft shackles. The skin on my leg is so sensitive, it's like tissue paper. The least little rubbing or abrading tears the skin off and creates sores. Am I going to have to rub my skin raw on shackles to prove I need soft shackles?

It seems that once again spiteful DOC officials are looking for a way to make things harsher and more unpleasant for prisoners.