

RDS Editorial

Cheater Pants

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I have a "Friend," who shall remain nameless, who is forever on the Hawaii State List of Persons Who Have Previously Attempted to Cheat the System. A few years ago this Friend was applying for a renewed Disabled Persons Placard (hereafter referred to as DPP in the spirit of true academic devotion) at a Satellite City Hall (SCH). Several months before, Friend had diligently responded to the notice requiring that all persons possessing a current DPP must re-apply and include a new physician's Verification of Eligibility Form (now known as VEF). This was being done to ensure that all valid DPPs were truly valid and not just fake-valid. Friend went to her physician and her insurance company (don't tell them) paid Dr. Doctor to sign his name next to a statement that yes, indeed, Friend was still as permanently disabled as she had been on the day she was born. Friend then shoved the VEF for the DPP in a drawer somewhere and forgot about it.

Until the day that Friend realized her placard was about to expire and she would be hoofing it along with the rest of mortal mankind down endless blocks of city street unless she renewed her DPP. So she hunted down the VEF, now quite battered, and went on down to Satellite City Hall (SCH).

Now, I am assuming that in most States City Hall is populated by people who make their profession out of following the rules. But let me assure you that in Hawaii we have civil servants like no other. Following the rules is like taking your lunch break, it will happen no matter what. After standing in the wrong line at the SCH clutching her VEF for a DPP for 15 minutes and being directed to a new line that she had been standing in for 25 minutes, Friend was idly looking over her VEF for the DPP when she noticed, to her horror, that in very small print at the bottom it read, "VEF only valid for 3 months after signature." Friend looked at the date beside the signature of Dr. Doctor. It was 5 months old. Friend paled. She imagined actually *extracting* herself from the line at the SCH, actually *leaving* the SCH and walking back to the car. Calling to make *another* appointment with Dr. Doctor, likely in two weeks when her DPP would have expired, getting to the SCH and standing all over again in the wrong line for 15 minutes before she stood in the right line (presumably, who knew?) for another half an hour. Friend imagined all of this and she did what any self respecting person who did not actually grow up in Hawaii would do. She took a pen from her purse, and very subtly, or so she thought, Friend changed the date beside the signature.

You can imagine what happened when Friend reached the friendly Servant of SCH. It took about half a second for the Servant to raise her eyebrows, glower at Friend and say briskly, "Did you change this date?" "No, oh no," stammered Friend, "I wouldn't do something like that." "Well, let's see," smirked Servant, lifting up the receiver of the phone by her side and dialing the number of Dr. Doctor printed on the VEF.

Friend (told me later that she) felt like she was in a horror movie that was in slow motion. Servant spoke smugly to a receptionist on the other end of the line, who, being a former SCH Servant herself most

likely, confirmed what Friend's SCH Servant had expected. The document had been signed five...months...previously.

Servant hung up the phone. She typed something into her computer. Actually, we know what she typed into her computer. She typed, "This person is a Cheater Pants. In future regard this person with the ultimate amount of distain and suspicion. In summary, this person DOES NOT FOLLOW THE RULES." We know this because a month later when Friend made it back to a SCH (on the other side of the island), the Servant there made a similar phone call to verify the accuracy of the information presented on the VEF for the DPP. When she handed Friend the new DPP, it was with obvious regret. She knew Cheater Pants was at it again, but she just couldn't prove it.

I hope you have enjoyed this little vignette of how the State of Hawaii foiled yet another attempt by Persons with Disabilities (PWD) to Cheat the System. You can be sure that my "Friend" will never try such a stunt again. But one has to ask, since when does your disability become less permanent over a period of 2 months? How many PWD are actually trying to get away with renewing their DPP with forged VEF at SCH? Why does the University of Hawaii have mirrors on the ceiling of the testing cubicles where SWD (students with disabilities) take their proctored exams? Well, that's another story, and a more titillating one, I'm sure.