



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on February 12, 2026

Happily Handicapped Nation: Almost 4 in 10 Stanford Students Claim “Disability”

“I’m disturbed, I’m depressed, I’m inadequate — I got it all!” So exclaimed *Seinfeld* sitcom character George Costanza, trying to woo a woman he believed had a psychologically oriented Florence Nightingale syndrome. It was a funny [scene](#) in 1993, and entirely fictional. But today, a generation-plus later, life has sort of imitated art.

For unlike with George, whose appeal fell flat, having a disability has now become a way to leverage advantage.

It’s so bad that at Stanford University nearly four in 10 undergraduates are registered as disabled. What’s more, this merely reflects a trend sweeping pseudo-elite universities in general. The issue?

While having a disability once brought stigma, it’s now akin to a résumé enhancer. Moreover, a “keeping up with the handicapped Joneses” phenomenon is operative: If you don’t game the system, you lose out to those who do.

The Daily Caller reported on the story last week, [writing](#):

“One of the most prestigious universities in the US offers perks to those who say they have ADHD, night terrors, even gluten intolerance. You’d be stupid not to game the system,” writes Elsa Johnson, an undergraduate at Stanford University, for *The Times*.

That system is Stanford’s “disability accommodation” apparatus, which doles out privileges to the on-paper [disabled](#): The “best housing on campus,” extra time on tests, extra absences from class, tardiness allowances.

To put this in perspective, realize that it’s akin to DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion). Only, it’s being applied on a wider scale — to anyone willing to claim “disabled” status. We’re training people to not be competent but confidence-man-like.

Do We Have “Disability Elevation Disorder”?

Even the *über*-liberal *Atlantic* recently warned of this phenomenon. As the magazine [wrote](#) in December:

Professors now struggle to accommodate the many students with an official disability designation, which may entitle them to extra time, a distraction-free environment, or the use of otherwise-prohibited technology. The University of Michigan has two centers where



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students with disabilities can take exams, but they frequently fill to capacity, leaving professors scrambling to find more desks and proctors. Juan Collar, a physicist at the University of Chicago, told me that so many students now take their exams in the school's low-distraction testing outposts that they have become more distracting than the main classrooms.

Accommodations in higher education were supposed to help disabled Americans enjoy the same opportunities as everyone else. ... Over the past decade and a half, however, the share of students at selective universities who qualify for accommodations — often, extra time on tests — has grown at a breathtaking pace. At the University of Chicago, the number has more than tripled over the past eight years; at UC Berkeley, it has nearly quintupled over the past 15 years.

Sweeping Society

This just reflects a wider problem, too. When I was a child, being “handicapped” really meant something in virtually every case. People thus labeled were in wheelchairs, and needed them, or were blind and perhaps negotiated terrain with “white canes.”

But then we “evolved,” and this was reflected in language. The handicapped went from being “crippled” to “handicapped” to “disabled” to “physically/mentally challenged” to “differently abled,” as the euphemisms metastasized. (And, yes, I’m missing a number. Where does “special needs” fit in, for example?)

Corresponding to this, handicaps transitioned from being liabilities to social-arena reputation enhancers (and those résumé enhancers). Claiming them has, too, become a good way to enforce your own ridiculous will on others. Just consider the service-animal phenomenon.

It used to be that almost every such case involved seeing-eye dogs, which are godsend for the blind. Now we’ve witnessed the following:

- In 2018, a woman tried [boarding an airplane](#) with an “emotional-support peacock.”
- In 2014, a woman brought a 70-pound emotional-support pig on a plane. She was only forced to leave after the swine became disruptive and [defecated in the aisle](#).
- In 2016, a passenger [was allowed](#) to take an emotional-support turkey aboard a Delta flight.
- In 2018, a woman [took multiple flights](#) with an emotional-support duck — and, no, it wasn’t Donald or Daffy.

Daffy does describe, however, what the above tells us America is becoming. After all, can we really call ourselves a serious country if we’re entertaining such lunacy?

Doesn’t Bode Well

As for this disability-metastasis phenomenon’s deeper effects, they didn’t escape the more [astute MSN commenters](#) on the Daily Caller article.

One noted that part of the problem is the extreme over-diagnosis of various purported psychological “conditions.” And a handful warned that we were training people to “cheat.” Consequently, a respondent lamented, “later in life you may think that anything is OK to get your target.”

Another opined that this diminution of meritocracy “will lead to a USA that no longer innovates [and] no



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longer creates....”

Even more significantly, it will deliver a people so morally degraded that they will be, [as philosopher Edmund Burke put it](#), those “men of intemperate minds [who] cannot be free.”

A Better Way

So what is the remedy? First, a simple rule must be accepted:

Certain things disqualify you from doing certain things.

A corollary: This even applies to the most sympathetic of people, to those limited through no fault of their own.

(Of course, this includes us all since only God is without limitation.)

Let’s illustrate this with a couple of examples.

A good accommodation: Virtually all of us would help a wheelchair-bound student attend intellect-oriented classes. A given immobile person, after all, may turn out to be a brilliant physicist (think Stephen Hawking).

A bad accommodation: If, however, someone can’t complete a *legitimate* test in the allotted time, it reflects lack of merit. Perhaps his talents lie in a different field, and *it’s a service to him to channel him toward that*.

Another bad one: If you can’t take a plane without an emotional support pig, maybe you should drive cross country.

Sometimes, too, a handicap is an advantage in certain contexts. Consider wrestler Adonis Lattimore. He won a Virginia state championship some years ago — despite *having no legs*.

And, yes, he competed under the *same* rules as everyone else (video below).

Lattimore also won his MMA debut (video below).

When a realm’s normal rules must be altered for a handicapped person, however, it’s a red flag. An example is blind wrestlers in U.S. schools. Competitors normally begin a match separated. When the rare blind wrestler competes, though, his sighted opponent must maintain contact with him at all times. This changes the sport’s dynamics notably.

Stating that this is an unjust accommodation may be unpopular. But that doesn’t make it untrue — just unemotional (as in objective). But today feelings trump all. This is why we’re acting like turkeys, are graduating them, and have them on our airplanes.



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