

Exhibit A

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF GEORGIA
MACON DIVISION**

RICARDO HARRIS, *et al.*,
Plaintiffs, v.
**GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF
CORRECTIONS, *et al.*,**
Defendants.

Civil Action No. 5:18-cv-365-TES

Declaration of Carlos Herrera

I have personal knowledge of all of the facts in this declaration. I promise that everything written here is true or correct. I know that I might be called as a witness in this case to explain the facts in this declaration. If I am called as a witness, I will testify to the facts written here.

1. My name is Carlos Herrera. I am in Wilcox State Prison. I have been in GDC since about 2021.

2. I am Deaf. My language is American Sign Language. I can't read or write English except a few very short, very simple words. I can't read lips.

3. Everyone in the prison knows I'm Deaf. I make sure to tell people. Another prisoner wrote the words "ASL DEAF" on a piece of paper and I taped it to my ID card. I try to wear it all the time, and I show this card to prison staff all the time. But the officers don't look at it or seem to care. Sometimes I try to write down a word for an officer to explain something but they look away on purpose. It's very hard to not have any way to communicate.

Announcements and Notifications

4. I miss announcements and notifications because I can't hear them and no one tells me about them.

5. There are about 40 people in my dorm. It's an open dorm with rows of bunks.

When it's chow time, an officer opens the door to the dorm and shouts. I can't hear it. If I see other people move to the door, then I know it's time to go for a meal. But I don't always notice or see when everyone leaves. If I'm asleep, or not looking in the right direction, then I miss the chance to go to chow. Last week I missed lunch several times. And I miss breakfast a lot because I don't hear the call and I don't know that everyone else is getting up to go.

6. I try to make sure I don't miss meals, but it's very hard. Breakfast can be anytime from 4:45am to 8am. I try to wake myself up at 4:45am every day so I can make sure to be watching the door whenever they call for breakfast. I don't have a watch that has a vibrating alarm, so I can't just set a clock for 4:45am. I drink a lot of water at night so that I'll wake up to go to the bathroom early in the morning. Then I try to just stay awake from then on, so that I see when it's breakfast time. I have to be awake and looking at the door when they call for breakfast, or else I'll miss it. The hearing guys can just sleep until the officers come in and shout for chow in the morning. Sometimes because I wake up so early to make sure I don't miss breakfast, I end up falling asleep during the day and missing lunch. It's very frustrating and unfair.

7. There was one officer who sometimes went out of his way to find me and make sure I knew when it was chow time. But that officer left. Another prisoner also sometimes helped me, but he got transferred out too. I have asked the officers to flick the lights on and off so I know when it's time to go to meals, but they won't do it. I'm on my own now.
8. I miss meals very often. I have lost a lot of weight since I've been here because I miss meals so much. I think I weighed 253 pounds when I came into GDC. Now I weigh 164 pounds. I'm always hungry. I feel dizzy and lightheaded a lot because I can't eat regularly.

Effective Communication in Medical Encounters

9. I need dentures. A lot of my teeth have fallen out while I have been in GDC. I

can't eat very well because I have almost no teeth. It's very hard for me to chew. But I have been waiting for a long time for dentures. Last week I went to the dentist. But the dentist didn't use any kind of interpreter. They were trying to communicate with me by writing down a few words and pointing and gesturing. They were pointing to some of my teeth. I think the words were about how I need dentures and something about a few of my remaining teeth, that there is some kind of problem with them. One of them is broken. But I don't know what they were saying or what they are going to do or when it will happen. They wrote a few words down on a piece of paper. I couldn't understand all of the words.

10. I had to make a lot of guesses about what's happening. I don't know if they are planning to take out my teeth. I don't know what they are going to do about my broken tooth. I don't know how much it will cost me. I have no information about what they are planning to do. It's incredibly frustrating. If I finally get dentures, I don't know if I can bring them to a different prison if I get transferred to a different prison. I worry about this because I used to have a special pillow to sit on for my back, but they took it when I transferred prisons. I don't know why that happened, and I'm worried that it will happen with my dentures too. I can't communicate with anyone to ask them.

11. I have also been to many medical appointments without interpreters. I try to ask for interpreters. I show them paperwork that says I need an interpreter. But it seems like they don't know how to get interpreters. Every time I go to medical, the only way to communicate is by writing and gesturing and pointing. It doesn't work.

12. I last went to medical about a month ago. There was no interpreter. The medical appointment was frustrating. They kept trying to gesture with me. But they've known me for a long time. The person there was friendly, but it was really frustrating because I wasn't getting

any information. I couldn't ask questions or get information. Everyone else can get information and ask questions. I'm always last, and then I can't get any information.

13. At this medical appointment, someone took my blood. They took my temperature. They checked my blood pressure. They didn't communicate with me at all at the appointment. I don't know if the numbers were good or bad. I don't know why I had the appointment. I don't know why they were taking my blood. I just got a call out. I wasn't able to ask any questions. I don't know the result of the blood test.

14. I have high blood pressure. I take a pill every day for blood pressure. I can take those regularly because I get a 30-day supply that I can keep with me. But I don't know if the medication is working. I don't know if my blood pressure is still high. I don't know if there are other things I am supposed to do to treat my high blood pressure. I don't know what is happening with my blood pressure because I can't communicate at all when I go to medical. I don't know what my blood pressure was at my last medical appointment.

15. When my lawyers came to visit me in person, they brought interpreters. The lawyers, with interpreters, helped me fill out papers explaining that I need a vibrating watch, that I need dentures, and that I need a soft food diet while I wait for dentures. The papers explain that I am Deaf and need interpreters and that I miss a lot of meals because I don't hear announcements. But no one will accept these papers. Someone from the prison is supposed to tear off the bottom of the paper and sign it so I have proof that they received the papers. For the medical request, they are supposed to give me the carbon copy of the form. But everyone just waves me away when I try to hand the papers to them. It has been more than a month and no one has accepted my grievances or requests for help.

16. There are a lot of other problems in the prison too. There isn't a videophone I can

use. There is a lot of violence. It's a scary, dangerous place to be, and it's worse because I'm Deaf. I don't think that's fair. If there is an emergency in the prison, I don't know what I would do. I don't think anyone would know to get my attention. That could be very dangerous. I am always on high alert because I have to take care of myself.

I promise that everything in this paper is true and correct. I know that this is a serious paper. I know that I am signing this paper "under penalty of perjury." This means that if I lie, I could get a new criminal charge against me for lying. I promise that I am telling the truth.

Dated: October 5, 2026

/s/ Carlos Herrera