

UNPUBLISHED

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS
FOR THE FOURTH CIRCUIT

No. 19-6879

STERLING NORRIS PITTMAN,

Petitioner - Appellant,

v.

HAROLD W. CLARKE,

Respondent - Appellee.

Appeal from the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, at
Richmond. Roderick Charles Young, Magistrate Judge. (3:18-cv-00554-RCY)

Submitted: November 21, 2019

Decided: November 26, 2019

Before KEENAN and DIAZ, Circuit Judges, and SHEDD, Senior Circuit Judge.

Dismissed by unpublished per curiam opinion.

Sterling Norris Pittman, Appellant Pro Se.

Unpublished opinions are not binding precedent in this circuit.

PER CURIAM:

Sterling Norris Pittman seeks to appeal the magistrate judge's* order denying relief on his 28 U.S.C. § 2254 (2012) petition. The order is not appealable unless a circuit justice or judge issues a certificate of appealability. 28 U.S.C. § 2253(c)(1)(A) (2012). A certificate of appealability will not issue absent "a substantial showing of the denial of a constitutional right." 28 U.S.C. § 2253(c)(2) (2012). When the district court denies relief on the merits, a prisoner satisfies this standard by demonstrating that reasonable jurists would find that the district court's assessment of the constitutional claims is debatable or wrong. *Slack v. McDaniel*, 529 U.S. 473, 484 (2000); see *Miller-El v. Cockrell*, 537 U.S. 322, 336-38 (2003). When the district court denies relief on procedural grounds, the prisoner must demonstrate both that the dispositive procedural ruling is debatable, and that the petition states a debatable claim of the denial of a constitutional right. *Slack*, 529 U.S. at 484-85.

We have independently reviewed the record and conclude that Pittman has not made the requisite showing. Accordingly, we deny a certificate of appealability and dismiss the appeal. We dispense with oral argument because the facts and legal contentions are adequately presented in the materials before this court and argument would not aid the decisional process.

DISMISSED

* Pittman consented to the exercise of civil jurisdiction by the magistrate judge, in accordance with 28 U.S.C. § 636(c) (2012) and Fed. R. Civ. P. 73.