

UNPUBLISHED

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS
FOR THE FOURTH CIRCUIT

No. 12-6681

DONALD WESTMORELAND,

Petitioner - Appellant,

v.

ENNIS T. OATES,

Respondent - Appellee.

Appeal from the United States District Court for the Middle
District of North Carolina, at Greensboro. Catherine C. Eagles,
District Judge. (1:10-cv-00705-CCE-LPA)

Submitted: June 14, 2012

Decided: June 20, 2012

Before WILKINSON, NIEMEYER, and KEENAN, Circuit Judges.

Dismissed by unpublished per curiam opinion.

Donald Westmoreland, Appellant Pro Se. Clarence Joe DelForge,
III, NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, Mary Carla Hollis,
Assistant Attorney General, Raleigh, North Carolina, for
Appellee.

Unpublished opinions are not binding precedent in this circuit.

PER CURIAM:

Donald Westmoreland seeks to appeal the district court's order accepting the recommendation of the magistrate judge and denying relief on his 28 U.S.C. § 2254 (2006) 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) (2006). 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) (2006). 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 Westmoreland has not made the requisite showing. Accordingly, we deny Westmoreland's motion for a certificate of appealability, deny leave to proceed in forma pauperis, and dismiss the appeal. We dispense with oral argument because the

facts and legal contentions are adequately presented in the materials before the court and argument would not aid the decisional process.

DISMISSED