

**UNPUBLISHED**

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS  
FOR THE FOURTH CIRCUIT

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**No. 13-7667**

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KEITH JAMES SEARS,

Petitioner - Appellant,

v.

SUSAN WHITE,

Respondent - Appellee,

and

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA,

Respondent.

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Appeal from the United States District Court for the Eastern  
District of North Carolina, at Raleigh. James C. Fox, Senior  
District Judge. (5:12-hc-02066-F)

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Submitted: February 27, 2014

Decided: March 4, 2014

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Before NIEMEYER, KING, and AGEE, Circuit Judges.

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Dismissed by unpublished per curiam opinion.

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Keith James Sears, Appellant Pro Se. Mary Carla Hollis,  
Assistant Attorney General, Raleigh, North Carolina, for  
Appellee.

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Unpublished opinions are not binding precedent in this circuit.

PER CURIAM:

Keith James Sears seeks to appeal the district court'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. See 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 Sears has not made the requisite showing. Accordingly, we deny Sears' motion for a certificate of appealability, deny leave to proceed in forma pauperis, and dismiss the appeal. We grant Sears' motions to file an oversized informal brief and to file an amended informal brief. 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