UNPUBLISHED

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS
FOR THE FOURTH CIRCUIT

No. 16-6002

RONALD BENTON, JR.,

Petitioner - Appellant,

v.

DIRECTOR OF DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS,

Respondent - Appellee.

Appeal from the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, at Alexandria. Claude M. Hilton, Senior District Judge. (1:15-cv-01426-CMH-MSN)

Submitted: July 21, 2016 Decided: July 25, 2016

Before SHEDD, AGEE, and WYNN, Circuit Judges.

Dismissed by unpublished per curiam opinion.

Ronald Benton, Jr., Appellant Pro Se.

Unpublished opinions are not binding precedent in this circuit.

PER CURIAM:

Ronald Benton, Jr., 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. 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 Benton has not made the requisite showing. Accordingly, we deny 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 this court and argument would not aid the decisional process.

DISMISSED