

**UNPUBLISHED**

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS  
FOR THE FOURTH CIRCUIT

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**No. 16-6034**

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KEITH JAMES SEARS,

Petitioner - Appellant,

v.

SUSAN WHITE,

Respondent - Appellee.

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Appeal from the United States District Court for the Eastern District of North Carolina, at Raleigh. James C. Dever, III, Chief District Judge. (5:14-hc-02230-D)

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Submitted: April 21, 2016

Decided: April 26, 2016

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Before WILKINSON, KING, and KEENAN, Circuit Judges.

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Dismissed by unpublished per curiam opinion.

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Keith James Sears, Appellant Pro Se.

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Unpublished opinions are not binding precedent in this circuit.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 the various postjudgment motions Sears filed in his 28 U.S.C. § 2254 (2012) proceeding. 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, although we grant Sears' motion to amend his informal brief, we deny a certificate of appealability, deny leave to proceed on appeal in forma pauperis, and dismiss the appeal. We also deny Sears'

motion for appointment of counsel. 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