

**UNPUBLISHED**

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS  
FOR THE FOURTH CIRCUIT

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**No. 16-6493**

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WILLIE PENNIX,

Petitioner - Appellant,

v.

JUDGE JOHN A. HOWARD, JR.; WARDEN KATHLEEN GREEN,

Respondents - Appellees.

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Appeal from the United States District Court for the District of Maryland, at Baltimore. Richard D. Bennett, District Judge. (1:16-cv-00462-RDB)

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Submitted: October 18, 2016

Decided: October 20, 2016

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Before WILKINSON, KING, and FLOYD, Circuit Judges.

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Dismissed by unpublished per curiam opinion.

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Willie Pennix, Appellant Pro Se.

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Unpublished opinions are not binding precedent in this circuit.

PER CURIAM:

Willie Pennix seeks to appeal the district court's order dismissing without prejudice his 28 U.S.C. § 2254 (2012) petition for failure to exhaust his state remedies. 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 Pennix 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