

**UNPUBLISHED**

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS  
FOR THE FOURTH CIRCUIT

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**No. 16-6608**

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JOHNNY EARL MAHAFFEY,

Petitioner - Appellant,

v.

WARDEN ROBERT STEVENSON,

Respondent - Appellee.

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Appeal from the United States District Court for the District of  
South Carolina, at Orangeburg. Mary G. Lewis, District Judge.  
(5:15-cv-02727-MGL)

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Submitted: August 18, 2016

Decided: August 23, 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Dismissed by unpublished per curiam opinion.

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Johnny Earl Mahaffey, Appellant Pro Se. Melody Jane Brown,  
Assistant Attorney General, Donald John Zelenka, Senior  
Assistant Attorney General, Columbia, South Carolina, for  
Appellee.

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Unpublished opinions are not binding precedent in this circuit.

PER CURIAM:

Johnny Earl Mahaffey seeks to appeal the district court's order accepting the magistrate judge's recommendation to deny relief on Mahaffey's 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 Mahaffey has not made the requisite showing for a certificate of appealability. 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