

**UNPUBLISHED**

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS  
FOR THE FOURTH CIRCUIT

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**No. 16-7117**

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RALPH TAYLOR, JR.,

Petitioner - Appellant,

v.

HAROLD CLARKE, Director of the Virginia Department of  
Corrections,

Respondent - Appellee.

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Appeal from the United States District Court for the Eastern  
District of Virginia, at Norfolk. Mark S. Davis, District  
Judge. (2:15-cv-00246-MSD-DEM)

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Submitted: December 20, 2016

Decided: December 22, 2016

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Before GREGORY, Chief Judge, and WYNN and FLOYD, Circuit Judges.

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Dismissed by unpublished per curiam opinion.

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Ralph Taylor, Jr., Appellant Pro Se. Benjamin Hyman Katz,  
Assistant Attorney General, Richmond, Virginia, for Appellee.

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Unpublished opinions are not binding precedent in this circuit.

PER CURIAM:

Ralph Taylor, Jr., seeks to appeal the district court's order accepting the recommendation of the magistrate judge and denying relief on his 28 U.S.C. § 2254 (2012) petition and denying his Fed. R. Civ. P. 59(e) motion. The orders are 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 Taylor 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