

UNPUBLISHED

**UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS
FOR THE FOURTH CIRCUIT**

No. 19-7116

MICHAEL A. GARDNER,

Petitioner - Appellant,

v.

HAROLD W. CLARKE,

Respondent - Appellee.

Appeal from the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, at Alexandria. Leonie M. Brinkema, District Judge. (1:18-cv-01547-LMB-IDD)

Submitted: April 30, 2020

Decided: June 8, 2020

Before WILKINSON and HARRIS, Circuit Judges, and SHEDD, Senior Circuit Judge.

Dismissed by unpublished per curiam opinion.

Jonathan P. Sheldon, SHELDON & FLOOD, PLC, Fairfax, Virginia, for Appellant.
Katherine Quinlan Adelfio, OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL OF VIRGINIA,
Richmond, Virginia, for Appellee.

Unpublished opinions are not binding precedent in this circuit.

PER CURIAM:

Michael A. Gardner seeks to appeal the district court's order denying relief on his 28 U.S.C. § 2254 (2018) 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) (2018). 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) (2018). When the district court denies relief on the merits, a prisoner satisfies this standard by demonstrating that reasonable jurists could find the district court's assessment of the constitutional claims debatable or wrong. *See Buck v. Davis*, 137 S. Ct. 759, 773-74 (2017). 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. *Gonzalez v. Thaler*, 565 U.S. 134, 140-41 (2012) (citing *Slack v. McDaniel*, 529 U.S. 473, 484 (2000)).

We have independently reviewed the record and conclude that Gardner 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