

UNPUBLISHED

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS
FOR THE FOURTH CIRCUIT

No. 20-7776

LEE E. STEPHENS, JR.,

Petitioner - Appellant,

v.

STEPHEN T. MOYER, Maryland Secretary of the Public Safety & Correctional Services; DAYENA CORCORAN, Maryland Commissioner of Correction; BRIAN E. FROSH, Maryland Attorney General; MIKE CARPENTER; TERRY ROYAL, Warden of the Oklahoma State Penitentiary,

Respondents - Appellees.

Appeal from the United States District Court for the District of Maryland, at Baltimore.
Richard D. Bennett, Senior District Judge. (1:18-cv-00493-RDB)

Submitted: August 5, 2022

Decided: December 16, 2022

Before HARRIS and RUSHING, Circuit Judges, and MOTZ, Senior Circuit Judge.

Dismissed by unpublished per curiam opinion.

Monte S. Frenkel, Isley Markman Gostin, Derek Allen Paterson Woodman,
WILMERHALE LLP, Washington, D.C., for Appellant.

Unpublished opinions are not binding precedent in this circuit.

PER CURIAM:

Lee E. Stephens, Jr., seeks to appeal the district court's order denying relief on his 28 U.S.C. § 2254 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). 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). 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 Stephens 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