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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

CHRISTOPHER NATHANIEL
WASHINGTON,

1:09-cv-01384-OWW-SMS (HC)

Petitioner,

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATION
REGARDING PETITION FOR WRIT OF
HABEAS CORPUS

v.

[Doc. 1]

DERRAL G. ADAMS, Warden

Respondent.

Petitioner is a state prisoner proceeding pro se with a petition for writ of habeas corpus pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2254.

Petitioner filed the instant petition for writ of habeas on August 7, 2009. (Court Doc. 1.)
The Court has reviewed the Petition and finds that is must be dismissed.

DISCUSSION

Rule 4 of the Rules Governing § 2254 Cases requires the Court to make a preliminary review of each petition for writ of habeas corpus. The Court must dismiss a petition "[i]f it plainly appears from the face of the petition . . . that the petitioner is not entitled to relief." Rule 4 of the Rules Governing 2254 Cases; see also Hendricks v. Vasquez, 908 F.2d 490 (9th Cir.1990). A federal court may only grant a petition for writ of habeas corpus if the petitioner can show that "he is in custody in violation of the Constitution" 28 U.S.C. § 2254(a). A habeas corpus petition is the correct method for a prisoner to challenge the "legality or duration" of his confinement. Badea v. Cox, 931 F.2d 573, 574 (9th Cir. 1991), *quoting*, Preiser v. Rodriguez, 411 U.S. 475, 485 (1973); Advisory Committee Notes to Rule 1 of the

1 Rules Governing Section 2254 Cases. In contrast, a civil rights action pursuant to 42 U.S.C. §
2 1983 is the proper method for a prisoner to challenge the conditions of that confinement.
3 McCarthy v. Bronson, 500 U.S. 136, 141-42 (1991); Preiser, 411 U.S. at 499; Badea, 931 F.2d at
4 574; Advisory Committee Notes to Rule 1 of the Rules Governing Section 2254 Cases.

5 In this case, Petitioner his First Amendment right to free exercise of religion was violated
6 because prison officials denied him the ability to change his name. Petitioner is challenging the
7 conditions of his confinement, not the fact or duration of that confinement. Thus, Petitioner is
8 not entitled to habeas corpus relief, and this petition must be dismissed. Should Petitioner wish
9 to pursue his claims, Petitioner must do so by way of a civil rights complaint pursuant to 42
10 U.S.C. § 1983.

11 RECOMMENDATION

12 Accordingly, the Court RECOMMENDS that the petition for writ of habeas corpus be
13 DISMISSED because the petition does not allege grounds that would entitle Petitioner to habeas
14 corpus relief.

15 This Findings and Recommendation is submitted to the assigned United States District
16 Court Judge, pursuant to the provisions of 28 U.S.C. section 636 (b)(1)(B) and Rule 72-304 of
17 the Local Rules of Practice for the United States District Court, Eastern District of California.
18 Within thirty (30) days after being served with a copy, any party may file written objections with
19 the court and serve a copy on all parties. Such a document should be captioned “Objections to
20 Magistrate Judge’s Findings and Recommendation.” Replies to the objections shall be served
21 and filed within ten (10) court days (plus three days if served by mail) after service of the
22 objections. The Court will then review the Magistrate Judge’s ruling pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §
23 636 (b)(1)(C). The parties are advised that failure to file objections within the specified time
24 may waive the right to appeal the District Court’s order. Martinez v. Ylst, 951 F.2d 1153 (9th
25 Cir. 1991).

26 IT IS SO ORDERED.

27 **Dated:** August 20, 2009

/s/ Sandra M. Snyder
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE