

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
EASTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI  
EASTERN DIVISION**

JOHN SCOTT THOMAS, III, )  
Petitioner, )  
v. ) No. 4:17-cv-775-CDP  
TROY STEELE, )  
Respondent. )

**MEMORANDUM AND ORDER**

This matter is before the Court upon petitioner John Scott Thomas, III's Response to Order to Show Cause (Docket No. 6) and Motion to Appoint Counsel (Docket No. 7). Petitioner's averments in his response are well-taken, and the Court determines that the petition survives preliminary review. Petitioner's motion for the appointment of counsel will be denied without prejudice.

“A *pro se* litigant has no statutory or constitutional right to have counsel appointed in a civil case.” *Stevens v. Redwing*, 146 F.3d 538, 546 (8th Cir. 1998). When determining whether to appoint counsel for a *pro se* litigant, the Court considers factors such as the complexity of the case, the ability of the *pro se* litigant to investigate the facts, the existence of conflicting testimony, and the ability of the *pro se* litigant to present his claims to the Court. *Id.*

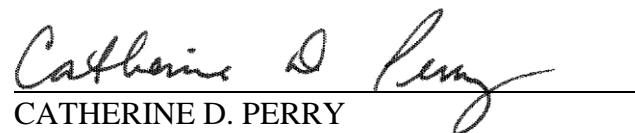
The facts of the present case appear relatively straight-forward, and appear to primarily involve questions of law. Further, in both the petition and in the response presently before the Court, petitioner has demonstrated himself to be well able to investigate relevant facts and clearly and logically present his claims. Whether, and to what extent, conflicting testimony exists with respect to the substance of petitioner's claims will be more evident upon further

proceedings. At this stage, the factors do not weigh in favor of appointment of counsel. The Court will therefore deny the motion for the appointment of counsel, without prejudice. If appropriate at a later stage of this case, petitioner may file a motion to appoint counsel that addresses the foregoing factors.

Accordingly,

**IT IS HEREBY ORDERED** that petitioner's motion for appointment of counsel (Docket No. 7) is **DENIED** without prejudice.

Dated this 28th day of March, 2017.

  
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CATHERINE D. PERRY  
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE