

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Donald James Hurlbert,) C/A No.: 2:09-241-PMD-BM
)
Plaintiff,)
)
vs.)
)
State of South Carolina,)
) Report and Recommendation
Defendant.)
)

This action has been filed by the Plaintiff *pro se*. Under established local procedure in this judicial district, a careful review has been made of the *pro se* complaint pursuant to the procedural provisions of 28 U.S.C. § 1915; and in light of the following precedents: *Denton v. Hernandez*, 504 U.S. 25 (1992); *Neitzke v. Williams*, 490 U.S. 319, 324-25 (1989); *Haines v. Kerner*, 404 U.S. 519 (1972); *Nasim v. Warden, Md. House of Corr.*, 64 F.3d 951 (4th Cir. 1995) (*en banc*); *Todd v. Baskerville*, 712 F.2d 70 (4th Cir. 1983).

As the Plaintiff is a *pro se* litigant, his pleadings are accorded liberal construction. *Erickson v. Pardus*, 551 U.S. 89 (2007); *Hughes v. Rowe*, 449 U.S. 5 (1980); *Estelle v. Gamble*, 429 U.S. 97 (1976); *Haines v. Kerner*, 404 U.S. at 519; *Loe v. Armistead*, 582 F. 2d 1291 (4th Cir. 1978); *Gordon v. Leeke*, 574 F. 2d 1147 (4th 1978). Even when considered under this less stringent standard, however, the *pro se* complaint is still subject to summary dismissal. The requirement of liberal construction does not mean that the court can ignore a clear failure in the pleading to allege facts which set forth a claim currently cognizable in a federal district court. *Weller v. Dep't of Soc.*

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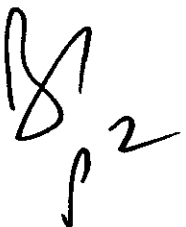
Servs., 901 F. 2d 387 (4th Cir. 1990).

Background

Plaintiff states that he was arrested on July 3, 2008, for the offense of public drunkenness in Charleston, South Carolina. Plaintiff was booked at the Charleston County Detention Center, but has now been released from detention. Plaintiff, who states his criminal charge remains pending, complains that his arrest information and criminal record are available to the public through the South Carolina State Law Enforcement Division's (SLED) web address and/or by mail. Plaintiff indicates these records can be made available to "anyone, from prospective employers and landlords to potential jurors" for a fee of twenty-five (\$25) dollars. Plaintiff states that the Defendant has violated his constitutional rights by making available to the general public Plaintiff's criminal record/arrest history, prior to Plaintiff being convicted of any offense, and seeks a declaratory judgment in his favor and an injunction against the State of South Carolina and SLED "to have ceased the dissemination of [Plaintiff's] arrest history of charges . . . to non-law enforcement entities."

Discussion

Plaintiff's complaint is construed as a civil rights action filed pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983, which "'is not itself a source of substantive rights,' but merely provides 'a method for vindicating federal rights elsewhere conferred.'" *Albright v. Oliver*, 510 U.S. 266, 271 (1994), quoting *Baker v. McCollan*, 443 U.S. 137, 144, n. 3 (1979). A legal action under § 1983 allows "a party who has been deprived of a federal right under the color of state law to seek relief." *City of Monterey v. Del Monte Dunes at Monterey, Ltd.*, 526 U.S. 687, 707 (1999). However, the State of South Carolina cannot be sued under § 1983 because it is protected by the Eleventh Amendment, which forbids a



federal court from rendering a judgment against an unconsenting state in favor of a citizen of that state. *Edelman v. Jordan*, 415 U. S. 651, 663 (1974). The Eleventh Amendment also bars this Court from granting injunctive relief against the state or its agencies. *See Alabama v. Pugh*, 438 U. S. 781 (1978); *Seminole Tribe of Florida v. Florida*, 517 U.S. 44, 58 (1996)(“the relief sought by plaintiff suing a State is irrelevant to the question whether the suit is barred by the Eleventh Amendment”); *South Carolina State Ports Authority v. Federal Maritime Com’n*, 243 F.3d 165, 169 (4th Cir. 2001). State agencies and state instrumentalities, such as SLED, share this immunity when they are the alter egos of the state. *See Regents of the University of California v. Doe*, 519 U.S. 425, 429 (1997).

While the United States Congress can override Eleventh Amendment immunity through legislation, Congress has not overridden the states' Eleventh Amendment immunity in § 1983 cases. *See Quern v. Jordan*, 440 U. S. 332, 343 (1979). In addition, while a State may consent to suit in a federal district court; *See Pennhurst State School & Hospital v. Halderman*, 465 U.S. 89, 99 & n. 9 (1984); the State of South Carolina has not consented to such actions. *See South Carolina Tort Claims Act*, § 15-78-20(e), South Carolina Code of Laws (expressly providing that the State of South Carolina does not waive Eleventh Amendment immunity, consents to suit only in a court of the State of South Carolina, and does not consent to suit in a federal court or in a court of another State). Therefore, as the State of South Carolina and its agencies, such as SLED, are protected from suit under § 1983 by Eleventh Amendment immunity, the instant action is subject to summary dismissal.

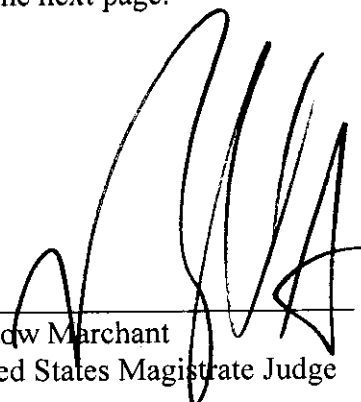
Recommendation

Accordingly, it is recommended that the Court dismiss the complaint in the above-captioned case *without prejudice* and without issuance and service of process. *See United Mine Workers v. Gibbs*, 383 U.S. 715 (1966). *See also Neitzke v. Williams*, 490 U.S. 319, 324-25 (1989); *Haines v.*

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Kerner, 404 U.S. 519 (1972).

Plaintiff's attention is directed to the important notice on the next page.



Bristow Marchant
United States Magistrate Judge

February 9, 2009
Charleston, South Carolina.

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Notice of Right to File Objections to Report and Recommendation

The parties are advised that they may file specific written objections to this Report and Recommendation with the District Court Judge. Objections must specifically identify the portions of the Report and Recommendation to which objections are made and the basis for such objections. In the absence of a timely filed objection, a district court need not conduct a de novo review, but instead must “only satisfy itself that there is no clear error on the face of the record in order to accept the recommendation.” *Diamond v. Colonial Life & Acc. Ins. Co.*, 416 F.3d 310 (4th Cir. 2005).

Specific written objections must be filed within ten (10) days of the date of service of this Report and Recommendation. 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1); Fed. R. Civ. P. 72(b). The time calculation of this ten-day period excludes weekends and holidays and provides for an additional three (3) days for filing by mail. Fed. R. Civ. P. 6(a) & (e). Filing by mail pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. 5 may be accomplished by mailing objections to:

Larry W. Propes, Clerk
United States District Court
P. O. Box 835
Charleston, South Carolina 29402

Failure to timely file specific written objections to this Report and Recommendation will result in waiver of the right to appeal from a judgment of the District Court based upon such Recommendation. 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1); *Thomas v. Arn*, 474 U.S. 140 (1985); *United States v. Schronce*, 727 F.2d 91 (4th Cir. 1984); *Wright v. Collins*, 766 F.2d 841 (4th Cir. 1985).

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