

**UNPUBLISHED**

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS  
FOR THE FOURTH CIRCUIT

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**No. 15-6903**

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KEITH JAMES SEARS,

Petitioner - Appellant,

v.

SUSAN WHITE,

Respondent - Appellee.

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Appeal from the United States District Court for the Eastern District of North Carolina, at Raleigh. James C. Dever, III, Chief District Judge. (5:14-hc-02230-D)

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Submitted: October 20, 2015

Decided: October 23, 2015

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Before MOTZ, KEENAN, and THACKER, Circuit Judges.

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Dismissed by unpublished per curiam opinion.

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Keith James Sears, Appellant Pro Se.

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Unpublished opinions are not binding precedent in this circuit.

PER CURIAM:

Keith James Sears seeks to appeal the district court's order dismissing his 28 U.S.C. § 2254 (2012) petition as an unauthorized, successive 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) (2012). 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) (2012). When the district court denies relief on the merits, a prisoner satisfies this standard by demonstrating that reasonable jurists would find that the district court's assessment of the constitutional claims is debatable or wrong. Slack v. McDaniel, 529 U.S. 473, 484 (2000); see Miller-El v. Cockrell, 537 U.S. 322, 336-38 (2003). 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. Slack, 529 U.S. at 484-85.

We have independently reviewed the record and conclude that Sears has not made the requisite showing. Accordingly, although we grant Sears' motions for leave to amend his informal brief to add documentation and to amend his motion for a certificate of appealability, we deny Sears' motions for a certificate of

appealability and for the appointment of counsel, deny leave to proceed on appeal in forma pauperis, and dismiss this 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