

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF RHODE ISLAND

Pedro J. Reyes Muriel v. Wayne T. Salisbury, Jr.

Reyes Muriel v. Salisbury · No. C.A. No. 25-cv-424-JJM-PAS · Decided January 15, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the District of Rhode Island ordered habeas petitioner Pedro J. Reyes Muriel to file an amended petition complying with Rule 2 of the Rules Governing Section 2254 Cases. The court found that the petition did not state specific facts supporting each ground for relief and denied the motion for an evidentiary hearing without prejudice as moot.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the District of Rhode Island
WRITING FOR THE COURT	John J. McConnell, Jr.
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the District of Rhode Island
DECIDED	January 15, 2026
DOCKET	C.A. No. 25-cv-424-JJM-PAS
DISPOSITION	remanded
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Federal habeas petitioner filed a petition under 28 U.S.C. § 2254 and moved for an evidentiary hearing. The court found that the petition failed to comply with Rule 2 of the Rules Governing Section 2254 Cases and ordered petitioner to file an amended petition.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court reviewed the petition for compliance with Rule 2 of the Rules Governing Section 2254 Cases based on the allegations appearing on the face of the petition.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unknown
PARTIES	Pedro J. Reyes Muriel v. Wayne T. Salisbury, Jr.

TOPICS

- federal habeas corpus
- post-conviction relief
- pleadings
- motions to dismiss
- civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

- federal habeas corpus
- post-conviction relief
- civil procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the habeas petition substantially complied with Rule 2 of the Rules Governing Section 2254 Cases.
2. Whether the petitioner was entitled to an evidentiary hearing before filing a compliant amended petition.

HOLDINGS

1. A § 2254 petitioner must state specific, particularized facts supporting each ground for relief, with enough detail for the court to determine from the face of the petition whether further habeas review is warranted. The petition did not satisfy that requirement.
2. The motion for an evidentiary hearing was denied without prejudice as moot because the petitioner first had to submit an amended petition complying with Rule 2.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“In order to substantially comply with the Habeas Rule 2, a petitioner must state specific, particularized facts that entitle him or her to habeas corpus relief for each ground specified.”

“These facts must consist of sufficient detail to enable the Court to determine, from the face of the petition alone, whether the petition merits further habeas corpus review.”

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

The petitioner sought federal habeas corpus relief and requested an evidentiary hearing. His petition did not clearly identify the facts supporting each asserted ground for relief. Because the petition lacked an understandable statement of the claims and supporting facts, the court concluded that respondent could not meaningfully respond and that the court could not assess whether the claims had merit.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Pedro J. Reyes Muriel filed a petition for a writ of habeas corpus and a motion for an evidentiary hearing. The district court determined that the petition did not state specific facts supporting each ground for relief and therefore did not substantially comply with Habeas Rule 2. The court ordered an amended petition within sixty days, directed respondent to respond within thirty days thereafter, and denied the evidentiary-hearing motion without prejudice as moot.

DISPOSITION

remanded

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

Petitioner must file an amended petition within sixty days that clearly specifies each ground for relief and states the facts supporting each ground. Respondent must file a response within thirty days after the amended petition is filed. Failure to comply may result in dismissal.

CASES CITED

- Mayle v. Felix, 545 U.S. 644 (2005)
- Haines v. Kerner, 404 U.S. 519 (1972)

OPINION

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF RHODE ISLAND) PEDRO J. REYES MURIEL,) Plaintiff,)) v.) C.A. No. 25-cv-424-JJM-PAS) WAYNE T. SALISBURY, JR.,) Defendant.)) ORDER Rule 2 of the Rules Governing Section 2254 Cases in the United States District Courts (“Habeas Rule 2”) dictates the form and substance of a habeas petition.

In order to substantially comply with the Habeas Rule 2, a petitioner must state specific, particularized facts that entitle him or her to habeas corpus relief for each ground specified. These facts must consist of sufficient detail to enable the Court to determine, from the face of the petition alone, whether the petition merits further habeas corpus review., 545 U.S. 644, 649, 655-56 (2005) (a “notice pleading” is not enough to satisfy Rule 2(c), because the petitioner is expected to state facts that point to the real possibility of constitutional error).

Before the Court is Petitioner Pedro J. Reyes Muriel’s Petition for Habeas Corpus and Motion for Evidentiary Hearing. ECF Nos. 1, 11. Upon review of Mr. Reyes’ petition for writ of habeas corpus, the Court finds that it fails to comply with the Habeas Rule 2 requirements because it fails to state the facts supporting each ground for relief.

The Court recognizes that allegations in a pro se complaint are held to “less stringent standards than formal pleadings drafted by lawyers” and are entitled to a liberal construction. 404 U.S. 519, 520 (1972). But in the absence of an understandable statement by petitioner of his claims for habeas corpus relief and of the facts supporting those claims, it is impossible for the opposing party to respond to the petition.

In addition, it is impossible for the Court to ascertain the substance of petitioner’s claims and whether there is any merit to them. With the assistance of counsel the Court has appointed to represent Mr. Reyes throughout this action, the Court directs him to resubmit a habeas corpus petition that complies with the requirements set forth in Rule 2.

Accordingly, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED: 1. The Petitioner shall file an Amended Petition that complies with Rule 2 of the Rules Governing Section 2254 Cases by clearly specifying each ground for relief and stating facts supporting each ground. 2.

The Amended Petition shall be filed within sixty days of the date of this Order. 3. Respondent shall file a response to the Amended Petition within thirty days after the Amended Petition is filed. 4. Petitioner’s Motion for Evidentiary Hearing is DENIED WITHOUT PREJUDICE as moot. ECF No. 11. Failure to timely comply with this Order may result in dismissal of this action.

IT IS SO ORDERED. _____ John J. McConnell, Jr. Chief
United States District Judge January 15, 2026

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