

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLORADO

Joseph R. Vigil v. Warden J. Wadas

Vigil v. Wadas · No. 25-cv-00361-CNS · Decided March 13, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the District of Colorado denied Joseph R. Vigil’s amended application for a writ of habeas corpus under 28 U.S.C. § 2241 and dismissed the case with prejudice. The court held that although Vigil had earned 106 First Step Act time credits, the credits were not being applied because he remained classified as having a high risk of recidivism, and he had not shown that the Bureau of Prisons violated his rights.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the District of Colorado
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Charlotte N. Sweeney
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the District of Colorado
DECIDED	March 13, 2026
DOCKET	25-cv-00361-CNS
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Applicant Joseph R. Vigil filed an amended petition for a writ of habeas corpus under 28 U.S.C. § 2241, challenging the Bureau of Prisons' calculation and application of First Step Act time credits. After ordering the respondent to show cause and receiving the respondent's response, the court denied the application and dismissed the case with prejudice.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court liberally construed the pro se application but independently reviewed the record to determine whether Vigil was entitled to habeas relief under 28 U.S.C. § 2241.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unpublished federal district court order; precedential status unknown.
PARTIES	Joseph R. Vigil v. Warden J. Wadas, FCI Terre Haute

TOPICS

- federal habeas corpus
- post-conviction relief
- statutory interpretation
- administrative law

PRACTICE AREAS

federal habeas corpus

post-conviction relief

statutory interpretation

administrative law

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Vigil was entitled to habeas relief under 28 U.S.C. § 2241 based on the Bureau of Prisons' calculation and application of First Step Act time credits.
2. Whether earned First Step Act time credits must be applied to prerelease custody or supervised release when the prisoner remains at a high risk of recidivism and has not successfully petitioned the warden for application.

HOLDINGS

1. First Step Act time credits earned through qualifying programming are not automatically applied to prerelease custody or supervised release; application requires satisfaction of the statutory eligibility conditions, including the applicable recidivism-risk requirements.
2. Vigil was not entitled to habeas relief because he did not present a reasoned argument that the Bureau of Prisons violated his rights in administering his First Step Act time credits.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Thus, an application for a writ of habeas corpus “challenges the fact or duration of . . . confinement and seeks immediate release or a shortened period of confinement.”” (at 3)

“Under the First Step Act, earning time credits from participating in EBRR programs is separate and distinct from having the time credits applied to a prisoner’s time in prerelease custody or supervised release.” (at 4)

“Thus, Mr. Vigil fails to present any reasoned argument that his rights were violated in any way with respect to his time credits under the FSA.” (at 5)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Vigil is a federal prisoner incarcerated at FCI Terre Haute. He claimed that the Bureau of Prisons improperly denied him First Step Act time credits for qualified activities completed after sentencing but before transfer to his designated facility. The respondent stated that Vigil had earned 106 days of credits, but that the credits were not being applied because his PATTERN assessment placed him at a high risk of recidivism. Vigil did not dispute the high-risk assessment or allege that he had successfully petitioned the warden for application of the credits.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Vigil filed an amended pro se § 2241 application on February 12, 2025, asserting that the Bureau of Prisons improperly denied him First Step Act time credits for programming completed after sentencing but before arrival at his designated facility. The respondent argued both that the claim was not cognizable in habeas and that the Bureau properly calculated the credits. The court resolved the matter by concluding that, although Vigil had

earned 106 days of credits, he was not entitled to their application because he remained at a high risk of recidivism, and dismissed the case with prejudice.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Haines v. Kerner, 404 U.S. 519, 520-21 (1972) (per curiam)
- Hall v. Bellmon, 935 F.2d 1106, 1110 (10th Cir. 1991)
- Preiser v. Rodriguez, 411 U.S. 475, 484 (1973)
- Palma-Salazar v. Davis, 677 F.3d 1031, 1035 (10th Cir. 2012)
- McIntosh v. U.S. Parole Commission, 115 F.3d 809, 812 (10th Cir. 1997)