

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF
PENNSYLVANIA

Julio Saldana v. Warden

Saldana · No. 3:25-CV-02472 · Decided January 26, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania dismisses Julio Saldana’s 28 U.S.C. § 2241 petition challenging the Bureau of Prisons’ refusal to apply First Step Act earned time credits. The court concludes that Saldana’s conviction for possessing fentanyl with intent to distribute is expressly disqualifying under 18 U.S.C. § 3632(d)(4)(D), regardless of whether the offense is classified as a crime of violence. The petition is dismissed with prejudice under habeas Rule 4.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Karoline Mehalchick
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania
DECIDED	January 26, 2026
DOCKET	3:25-CV-02472
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Petitioner brought a 28 U.S.C. § 2241 habeas petition challenging the Bureau of Prisons' refusal to apply First Step Act earned time credits. The district court screened the petition under Rule 4 and dismissed it with prejudice.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Under Habeas Corpus Rule 4, applied in the court’s discretion to § 2241 proceedings, the court may dismiss a petition when it is plain from the petition that the petitioner is not entitled to relief.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished
PARTIES	Julio Saldana v. Warden

TOPICS

- federal habeas corpus
- post-conviction relief
- statutory interpretation
- venue
- civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the district court was the proper venue for Saldana's § 2241 petition because he was confined within the district.
2. Whether Saldana's conviction under 21 U.S.C. § 841(b)(1)(B)(vi) independently disqualified him from accruing First Step Act earned time credits, regardless of whether the offense qualified as a crime of violence.
3. Whether the petition should be dismissed under Habeas Corpus Rule 4.

HOLDINGS

1. Venue was proper in the Middle District of Pennsylvania because Saldana was confined at FCI-Schuylkill, which is located in that district.
2. Saldana's conviction under 21 U.S.C. § 841(b)(1)(B)(vi) independently disqualified him from accruing First Step Act earned time credits, regardless of whether the conviction qualified as a crime of violence.
3. The petition was subject to dismissal with prejudice under Rule 4 because the face of the petition demonstrated that Saldana was not entitled to relief.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Saldana’s conviction under 21 U.S.C. § 841(b)(1) for the distribution of and possession with intent to distribute fentanyl is listed as a disqualifying offense under the FSA regardless of whether or not it qualified as a crime of violence.” (III)

“For the above stated reasons, the petition for writ of habeas corpus will be dismissed with prejudice pursuant to Rule 4.” (IV)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Saldana pleaded guilty to conspiracy and possession with intent to distribute fentanyl and received a 138-month federal sentence. He was incarcerated at FCI-Schuylkill and challenged the BOP's determination that his conviction made him ineligible to receive earned time credits under the First Step Act. Saldana argued that the BOP improperly treated his conviction as a crime of violence, but the court concluded that the fentanyl offense was independently listed as a disqualifying offense.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Saldana was sentenced in the District of New Hampshire after pleading guilty to federal fentanyl-distribution offenses. While incarcerated at FCI-Schuylkill in Pennsylvania, he filed a § 2241 petition in December 2025. After paying the filing fee, the district court screened the petition and dismissed it with prejudice because his fentanyl conviction independently disqualified him from receiving First Step Act time credits.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- United States v. Saldana, No. 1:18-CR-00033-JL, Doc. 596 (D.N.H.)
- Braden v. 30th Judicial Circuit Court of Kentucky, 410 U.S. 484, 494-95 (1973)
- Severino v. Warden, FCI Fort Dix, No. 23-3114, 2024 WL 208964, at *3 n.2 (D.N.J. Jan. 19, 2024)

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