

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
VIRGINIA, RICHMOND DIVISION

Juan Carlos Garcia Gonzalez v. Warden Caroline Detention Facility,
et al.

Garcia Gonzalez · No. 3:26CV38 (RCY) · Decided February 23, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia dismisses Juan Carlos Garcia Gonzalez’s § 2241 petition under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b) because counsel failed to provide a personally signed petition or establish that counsel qualified as a next friend. The court concludes that the petitioner’s transfers between detention facilities did not establish de facto inaccessibility and notes that he may file a renewed petition in the jurisdiction of his present detention.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, Richmond Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Roderick C. Young
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, Richmond Division
DECIDED	February 23, 2026
DOCKET	3:26CV38 (RCY)
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Petitioner filed a habeas petition under 28 U.S.C. § 2241 through counsel without a personally signed petition. After twice directing petitioner either to submit a personally signed petition or make a particularized showing that counsel qualified as a next friend, the court considered counsel's response and dismissed the action under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b).
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	nonprecedential

TOPICS

- federal habeas corpus
- standing
- civil procedure
- motions to dismiss

PRACTICE AREAS

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether counsel established the next-friend standing necessary to pursue a § 2241 habeas petition on behalf of petitioner.
2. Whether petitioner's transfer to other detention facilities excused compliance with the court's orders requiring a personally signed petition or a particularized showing of next-friend status.
3. Whether dismissal under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b) was warranted for failure to comply with the court's orders.

HOLDINGS

1. Counsel failed to clearly establish that petitioner was unable to litigate the petition on his own behalf and therefore failed to establish the propriety of next-friend status.
2. Petitioner's response did not excuse noncompliance with the court's prior orders, and dismissal of the petition under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b) was warranted.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“The burden is on the next friend clearly to establish the propriety of his status and thereby justify the jurisdiction of the court.”

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Counsel attempted to proceed on behalf of Juan Carlos Garcia Gonzalez but did not submit a petition personally signed by him. Counsel stated that documents had been sent to petitioner but no response had been received, and later reported that petitioner had been transferred first to Texas and then to Louisiana. Counsel did not claim that access to petitioner had been denied or otherwise establish that petitioner was unable to litigate on his own behalf.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The court previously determined that counsel's representations were insufficient to establish next-friend status and ordered petitioner to submit a petition complying with Rule 2 of the Rules Governing § 2254 Cases. Counsel responded that petitioner had been transferred from Texas to Louisiana and that counsel had not received the necessary documents, but did not assert that counsel had been denied access to petitioner. The court found the response insufficient, dismissed the petition, and stated that petitioner could file a renewed § 2241 petition in the jurisdiction of his present detention.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Aguayo v. Harvey, 476 F.3d 971, 976 (D.C. Cir. 2007)
- Hamdi v. Rumsfeld, 294 F.3d 598, 603 (4th Cir. 2002)

OPINION

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA
 Richmond Division JUAN CARLOS GARCIA GONZALEZ, Petitioner, v. Civil Action No.
 3:26CV38 (RCY) WARDEN CAROLINE DETENTION FACILITY, et al., Respondents.
 MEMORANDUM OPINION This matter is before the Court on Petitioner’s Response (ECF No.
 8) to the Court’s second Memorandum Order directing that Petitioner either submit a personally
 signed Petition or make a more particularized showing of “next friend” status.

See Order, ECF No. 7. In its Order, the Court held that Petitioner’s representations (through
 counsel) remained insufficient to support a “next friend” finding, and once again ordered
 Petitioner to submit a Petition complying with Rule 2 of the Rules Governing § 22541 Cases in
 U.S. District Courts, reaffirming that failure to comply would result in dismissal of the action.

Id. at 2. In the present Response, counsel does not represent that they have been denied access to
 Petitioner—only that counsel had sent documents to Petitioner and received nothing back. ECF
 No. 8, ¶ 2. And while counsel now further represents that Petitioner has been transferred—first to
 Texas, then to Louisiana—and that this has prevented counsel from obtaining a signed Petition in
 compliance with the Court’s Order, such transfer alone does not constitute de facto inaccessibility,
 for purposes of “next friend” standing.

Counsel has repeatedly failed to make the required showing 1 As explained in the Court’s prior
 Order, Rule 1(b) of the Rules Governing § 2254 Cases permits this Court to apply the Rules
 Governing § 2254 Cases to petitions under 28 U.S.C. § 2241. Rule 1(b), Rules Governing § 2254
 Cases; see Aguayo v. Harvey, 476 F.3d 971, 976 (D.C. Cir. 2007). that Mr. Garcia is unable to
 litigate the Petition on his own behalf, see Hamdi v. Rumsfeld, 294 F.3d 598, 603 (4th Cir.

2002) (“The burden is on the next friend clearly to establish the propriety of his status and thereby
 justify the jurisdiction of the court.” (internal quotation marks omitted)), and while the Court is not
 unsympathetic to the circumstances of Mr. Garcia and those who care for him, the Court must
 nevertheless hold Petitioner and counsel to the same Rules and standards applicable to all § 2241
 petitions brought before this Court.

Accordingly, the Court holds that Petitioner’s Response fails to excuse Petitioner’s non-
 compliance with the Court’s prior Orders, and so the Court is forced to dismiss the Petition. See
 Fed. R. Civ. P. 41(b). Petitioner may file a renewed § 2241 petition in the jurisdiction of his
 present detention, should he be so inclined. An appropriate Order will accompany this
 Memorandum Opinion.

Roderick C. Young Date: February 23, 2026 United States District Judge Richmond, Virginia

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