

TENNESSEE COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEALS

State of Tennessee v. Corey Ellis

No. W2025-01178-CCA-R3-CD · No. W2025-01178-CCA-R3-CD · Decided April 20, 2026

SUMMARY

The Tennessee Court of Criminal Appeals affirmed the revocation of Corey Ellis’s probation and ordered him to serve the remainder of his effective eight-year sentence in confinement. The court held that the trial court did not abuse its discretion by declining to order an updated risk and needs assessment and by considering Ellis’s repeated probation violations, failure to participate in required programs, criminal history, and new felony charges. The court applied the two-step probation-revocation framework established in *State v. Dagnan*.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Tennessee Court of Criminal Appeals
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Camille R. McMullen, J.; Robert W. Wedemeyer, P.J.; John W. Campbell, Sr., J.
JURISDICTION	Tennessee Court of Criminal Appeals
DECIDED	April 20, 2026
DOCKET	W2025-01178-CCA-R3-CD
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Defendant appealed as of right from the Criminal Court for Shelby County's order revoking his probation and ordering him to serve the remainder of his effective eight-year sentence in confinement.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	A trial court's decision regarding the consequence of a probation violation is reviewed for abuse of discretion with a presumption of reasonableness.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published Tennessee Court of Criminal Appeals opinion; precedential status is identified as published in the supplied metadata.
PARTIES	Corey Ellis v. State of Tennessee

TOPICS

- probation
- appellate procedure
- standard of review
- criminal procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

criminal law

probation and parole

appellate criminal procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the trial court abused its discretion by revoking probation and ordering confinement without expressly considering Ellis's amenability to future rehabilitation or whether he posed a danger to others.
2. Whether the trial court abused its discretion by failing to request and consider an updated validated risk and needs assessment before determining the consequence of the probation violations.

HOLDINGS

1. A trial court's decision whether to consider a validated risk and needs assessment, and whether to request an updated assessment, is discretionary rather than mandatory. The trial court therefore did not abuse its discretion by failing to order an updated assessment, particularly where the defendant did not request one at the revocation hearing.
2. The trial court was not required to make express findings on every factor relevant to the consequence determination, so long as its findings are sufficient to permit meaningful appellate review. The record showed that the trial court considered the nature and seriousness of the violations, Ellis's prior probation history, criminal history, and amenability to continued supervision.
3. The trial court acted within its discretion by revoking probation and ordering Ellis to serve the remainder of his effective eight-year sentence in confinement.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"Under State v. Dagnan, probation revocation requires a two-step analysis." (10)

"Given the Defendant's longstanding noncompliance, repeated violations, and the seriousness of his alleged new criminal conduct, the trial court reasonably concluded that further probationary efforts would be ineffective." (12)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Ellis was serving an effective eight-year term of supervised probation for two aggravated-assault convictions. The probation violation report alleged repeated failures to report, refusal or failure to submit to drug screens, a positive THC test, failure to attend required counseling and anger-management classes, and nonpayment of supervision fees. The State also alleged that Ellis had been arrested on new charges of rape, criminal attempt rape, and sexual battery involving a thirteen-year-old victim. After a revocation hearing, the trial court found the violations proven by a preponderance of the evidence and ordered Ellis to serve the remainder of his sentence in confinement.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Ellis pleaded guilty to aggravated assault in 2018 and received a suspended five-year sentence. In 2021, while on probation, he pleaded guilty to another aggravated assault and received a consecutive suspended three-year

sentence, resulting in eight years of probation. After the State alleged multiple probation violations, including noncompliance with reporting, drug-screening, counseling, and anger-management requirements and new felony charges, the trial court revoked probation and ordered confinement. The Tennessee Court of Criminal Appeals affirmed.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- State v. Dagnan, 641 S.W.3d 751, 753, 757-59 & n.5 (Tenn. 2022)
- State v. Hunter, 1 S.W.3d 643, 646-47 (Tenn. 1999)
- State v. Larry Lee Robertson, No. M2012-02128-CCA-R3-CD, 2013 WL 1136588, at *2 (Tenn. Crim. App. Mar. 19, 2013)
- State v. Christopher Burrell, No. E2012-00861-CCA-R3-CD, 2013 WL 1097809, at *6 (Tenn. Crim. App. Mar. 18, 2013)
- State v. Owens, No. E2021-00814-CCA-R3-CD, 2022 WL 2387763, at *5 (Tenn. Crim. App. July 1, 2022)
- State v. Rand, 696 S.W.3d 98, 106 (Tenn. Crim. App. 2024)
- State v. Charles E. Mason, Jr., No. E2018-01310-CCA-R3-CD, 2019 WL 3992473, at *5 (Tenn. Crim. App. Aug. 23, 2019)
- State v. Robinson, No. M2022-00248-CCA-R3-CD, 2022 WL 17335656, at *4 (Tenn. Crim. App. Nov. 30, 2022)