

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
KENTUCKY

Dawn Bennett v. Warden David Paul

No. Civil Action No. 5:25-073-KKC, United States District Court for the Eastern District of Kentucky
(December 18, 2025)

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of Kentucky denied Dawn Bennett’s petition for a writ of habeas corpus under 28 U.S.C. § 2241. The court concluded that Bennett had not clearly shown that the Bureau of Prisons incorrectly calculated or applied her First Step Act time credits and rejected her requests for home confinement, compassionate release, relief concerning confinement conditions, and collateral review of her convictions. The action was dismissed and stricken from the court’s docket.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Kentucky
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Kentucky
DECIDED	December 18, 2025
DOCKET	Civil Action No. 5:25-073-KKC
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	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, release-date calculations, confinement placement, and related claims.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The petitioner bears the burden of clearly demonstrating entitlement to habeas relief and showing that the Bureau of Prisons’ calculations are incorrect or inconsistent with applicable law.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished district court memorandum opinion

TOPICS

- [federal habeas corpus](#) [post-conviction relief](#) [prisoners rights](#) [civil rights](#)

PRACTICE AREAS

- [federal habeas corpus](#) [prisoner litigation](#) [civil rights](#)

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Bennett demonstrated that the Bureau of Prisons incorrectly calculated or applied her First Step Act time credits.
2. Whether Bennett was entitled to immediate placement in home confinement under 18 U.S.C. §§ 3621(b) and 3624(c).
3. Whether claims seeking compassionate release, challenging conditions of confinement, or collaterally attacking the underlying conviction and sentence were cognizable in a § 2241 petition.

HOLDINGS

1. Bennett was not entitled to habeas relief because she failed to clearly demonstrate that the Bureau of Prisons' comprehensive time-credit assessment was incorrect or inconsistent with applicable law.
2. Bennett was not entitled to immediate home confinement because the Bureau of Prisons has discretion to determine a prisoner's place of confinement.
3. A request for compassionate release must be presented to the sentencing court rather than to the district court adjudicating Bennett's § 2241 petition.
4. Bennett's conditions-of-confinement claims were not cognizable in this habeas action and had to be pursued in a standalone civil-rights action.
5. Claims collaterally attacking Bennett's underlying federal convictions or sentence were not cognizable in this § 2241 proceeding.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"a prisoner is neither entitled nor guaranteed such placement for any minimum amount of time." (at 2)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Bennett is incarcerated at the Federal Medical Center in Lexington, Kentucky, and challenged the Bureau of Prisons' calculation and application of her First Step Act time credits. The government represented that she had earned 945 days of relevant credits, of which 365 days—the applicable statutory maximum—had been applied toward early transfer to supervised release, advancing her release date by one year. The remaining 580 days could potentially be applied toward prerelease custody, but Bennett did not clearly demonstrate that the Bureau of Prisons' assessment was erroneous.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Bennett, proceeding pro se and incarcerated at the Federal Medical Center in Lexington, Kentucky, filed a § 2241 petition. The United States Attorney's Office responded, and Bennett filed a reply. The district court denied the petition, denied pending motions as moot, dismissed the action, and struck it from the docket.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Schmutzler v. Quintana, No. 5:19-cv-046-DCR, 2019 WL 727794, at *2 (E.D. Ky. Feb. 20, 2019)
- Martin v. LeMaster, No. 21-6247, 2022 WL 18145207, at *2 (6th Cir. Oct. 19, 2022)
- Wilson v. Williams, 961 F.3d 829, 837-38 (6th Cir. 2020)
- Cox v. United States, No. 23-3966, 2024 WL 4948683, at *1 (6th Cir. Apr. 17, 2024)

OPINION

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT EASTERN DISTRICT OF KENTUCKY CENTRAL DIVISION LEXINGTON DAWN BENNETT, Petitioner, Civil Action No. 5:25-073-KKC v. WARDEN DAVID PAUL, MEMORANDUM OPINION AND ORDER Respondent. *** **

*** Dawn Bennett is incarcerated at the Federal Medical Center in Lexington, Kentucky. Proceeding without a lawyer, Bennett filed a petition for a writ of habeas corpus pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2241 in which she asserts various claims, including that the Federal Bureau of Prisons (“BOP”) is failing to award her time credits that she has earned pursuant to the First Step Act (“FSA”) and otherwise improperly calculating her release date.

[See R. 1]. The United States Attorney’s Office for the Eastern District of Kentucky entered an appearance on behalf of the Respondent and filed a response in opposition to Bennett’s petition. [See R. 15]. Bennett then filed a reply in support of her request for relief. [See R. 22].

Thus, this matter is ripe for a decision. The Court has fully reviewed the parties’ submissions and will deny Bennett’s petition because she has neither clearly shown how the BOP’s calculations are incorrect nor otherwise adequately demonstrated that she is entitled to habeas relief.

The U.S. Attorney’s Office has explained that Bennett has earned 945 days of relevant time credits, and the BOP has applied 365 of those days (which is the applicable statutory maximum) toward early transfer to supervised release, advancing Bennett’s release date by a full year—from December 2034 to December 2033. [R. 15 at 2].

The U.S. Attorney’s Office has also indicated that Bennett’s remaining 580 days of time credits could be applied toward prerelease custody, meaning that, under a best-case scenario, she could be released to a residential reentry center or home confinement as early as January 2030. [Id.]. While Bennett offers her own series of calculations, her submissions are difficult to follow, and she certainly has not demonstrated in any clear way how the BOP’s comprehensive time credit assessment [R.

15-1 at 72-77] is wrong or otherwise inconsistent with applicable law. Nevertheless, Bennett suggests she should immediately be placed on home confinement. But her request is simply unavailing. Pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 3624(c), the BOP has the discretion to determine Bennett’s place of confinement; indeed, as this Court has recognized, “a prisoner is neither entitled nor

guaranteed such placement for any minimum amount of time.” *Schmutzler v. Quintana*, No. 5:19-cv-046-DCR, 2019 WL 727794, at *2 (E.D.

Ky. Feb. 20, 2019); see also 18 U.S.C. § 3621(b) (giving the BOP the authority to determine where a prisoner is housed). Finally, while Bennett puts forth several other arguments, her claims are either not cognizable in a habeas petition or are otherwise unavailing.

For example, Bennett appears to seek compassionate release, but a request for such relief must be raised with the sentencing court, not this Court. See *Martin v. LeMaster*, No. 21-6247, 2022 WL 18145207, at *2 (6th Cir. Oct. 19, 2022). Bennett also complains about the conditions of her present and past confinement, but she has failed to show that there is no set of conditions under which her confinement would be constitutionally permissible.

See *Wilson v. Williams*, 961 F.3d 829, 837-38 (6th Cir. 2020). As a result, Bennett must pursue her claims via a standalone civil rights action rather than in this matter. And to the extent that Bennett is trying to collaterally attack her underlying federal convictions and sentence, such claims are not cognizable via this § 2241 case. See *Cox v. United States*, No. 23-3966, 2024 WL 4948683, at *1 (6th Cir.

Apr. 17, 2024). 2 Accordingly, it is ORDERED that: 1. Bennett’s petition for a writ of habeas corpus pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2241 [R. 1] is DENIED. 2. All pending motions are DENIED as moot. 3. This action is DISMISSED and STRICKEN from the Court’s docket. 4.

The Court will enter a corresponding Judgment. This 18th day of December, 2025. 3