

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF
WEST VIRGINIA

William Knight, II v. Correctional Officer Ronald Smith

Knight v. Smith · No. 1:25-00747 · Decided April 24, 2026

SUMMARY

The court grants Plaintiff William Knight, II’s motion for an additional twenty days to serve Defendant Correctional Officer Ronald Smith. Applying Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 4(m) and Fourth Circuit precedent, the court concludes that an extension is appropriate even without a showing of good cause.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Southern District of West Virginia
WRITING FOR THE COURT	David A. Faber
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Southern District of West Virginia
DECIDED	April 24, 2026
DOCKET	1:25-00747
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff moved for an extension of time to serve the defendant under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 4(m).
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court exercised its discretion under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 4(m) to determine whether to extend the time for service.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished district court memorandum opinion; persuasive but not binding precedent
PARTIES	William Knight, II v. Correctional Officer Ronald Smith

TOPICS

- service of process
- civil procedure
- government liability
- civil rights

PRACTICE AREAS

- civil procedure
- civil rights
- prisoner litigation

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the district court may extend the time for service under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 4(m) without a showing of good cause.
2. Whether an additional twenty days should be granted for service in this case.

HOLDINGS

1. Under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 4(m), a district court has discretion to extend the time for service even when the plaintiff has not shown good cause; if good cause is shown, the court must grant an appropriate extension.
2. An enlargement of the service period was appropriate, and plaintiff was granted an additional twenty days to serve defendant.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Rather, we hold that under Rule 4(m), a district court possesses discretion to grant the plaintiff an extension of time to serve a defendant with the complaint and summons even absent a showing of good cause by the plaintiff for failing to serve the defendant during the 90-day period provided by the Rule.”

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff William Knight, II filed this federal civil-rights action against Correctional Officer Ronald Smith. The defendant had not been served within the ninety-day period prescribed by Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 4(m). Plaintiff requested an additional twenty days to serve the defendant.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff filed the civil action and had not yet served the defendant within the Rule 4(m) ninety-day period. Plaintiff requested an additional twenty days to complete service. The district court granted the motion.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Henderson v. United States, 517 U.S. 654, 658 (1996)
- Giacomo-Tano v. Levine, 199 F.3d 1327, 1999 WL 976481, *1 (4th Cir. Oct. 27, 1999)
- Scruggs v. Spartanburg Regional Medical Center, 198 F.3d 237, 1999 WL 957698, *2 (4th Cir. Oct. 19, 1999)
- Gelin v. Shuman, 35 F.4th 212, 219-20 (4th Cir. 2022)
- Mendez