

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF
PENNSYLVANIA

Brandt v. Sage

Brandt v. Sage · No. 3:26-cv-271 · Decided March 17, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania dismissed without prejudice Kiel Brendan Brandt’s petition for habeas corpus under 28 U.S.C. § 2241. Brandt challenged the Bureau of Prisons’ prerelease placement under the Second Chance Act and the procedure used to evaluate his placement. The court held that Brandt failed to fully exhaust the Bureau of Prisons’ administrative-remedy process and found no applicable exception to the exhaustion requirement.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Robert D. Mariani
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania
DECIDED	March 17, 2026
DOCKET	3:26-cv-271
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Petitioner sought habeas relief under 28 U.S.C. § 2241 concerning prerelease placement under the Second Chance Act. The respondent moved to dismiss for failure to exhaust administrative remedies.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court applied the judicially created exhaustion requirement for federal § 2241 petitions and reviewed the undisputed administrative-record evidence concerning exhaustion.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unknown; memorandum opinion with no reporter or neutral citation.
PARTIES	Kiel Brendan Brandt v. Warden Jessica Sage

TOPICS

- federal habeas corpus
- exhaustion of remedies
- post-conviction relief
- administrative law

PRACTICE AREAS

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Brandt exhausted the BOP's administrative-remedy process before filing his § 2241 petition.
2. Whether an exception to the judicially required exhaustion requirement excused Brandt's failure to complete the BOP's Central Office appeal.
3. Whether the petition should be dismissed without prejudice for failure to exhaust.

HOLDINGS

1. Federal prisoners ordinarily must exhaust available BOP administrative remedies before petitioning for a writ of habeas corpus under § 2241, although exhaustion may be excused in recognized circumstances such as futility or when exhaustion would not serve its underlying purposes.
2. Brandt did not exhaust his administrative remedies because he did not establish that he appealed the Regional Director's denial to the BOP Central Office or received a Central Office decision.
3. No exhaustion exception applied because Brandt did not show that the exhaustion purposes would be served by bypassing the process, that exhaustion would be futile, that the issue was limited to statutory construction, or that exhaustion would cause irreparable injury.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“An inmate is not deemed to have exhausted his administrative remedies until his complaint has been pursued at all levels.” (Discussion)

“Because Brandt failed to fully and properly exhaust his administrative remedies before petitioning this Court, and because no exception to the exhaustion requirement applies here, his Section 2241 petition must be dismissed.” (Conclusion)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Brandt, a federal inmate serving a 27-month wire-fraud sentence, challenged the amount of prerelease placement time afforded to him and the BOP's application of the Second Chance Act's five factors. The BOP Unit Team reviewed him and recommended a placement date of August 30, 2026. Brandt filed an administrative remedy at the institutional level and appealed to the Regional Director, but the record showed no appeal to or final decision from the BOP Central Office.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Brandt filed a § 2241 petition challenging the Bureau of Prisons' prerelease placement decision and the procedure used to apply the Second Chance Act's five-factor review. He had pursued an institutional remedy and an appeal to the Regional Director but had not established that he filed or obtained a decision on a final appeal to the BOP Central Office. The district court dismissed the petition without prejudice for failure to exhaust, without reaching the respondent's alternative arguments.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- *Moscato v. Federal Bureau of Prisons*, 98 F.3d 757, 760-62 (3d Cir. 1996)
- *Callwood v. Enos*, 230 F.3d 627, 634 (3d Cir. 2000)
- *Coleman v. U.S. Parole Comm'n*, 644 F. App'x 159, 162 (3d Cir. 2016)
- *Vasquez v. Strada*, 684 F.3d 431, 433-34 (3d Cir. 2012)
- *Bradshaw v. Carlson*, 682 F.2d 1050, 1052 (3d Cir. 1981)
- *Rose v. Lundy*, 455 U.S. 509, 516 n.7 (1982)
- *Brown v. Warden Canaan USP*, 763 F. App'x 296, 297 (3d Cir. 2019)
- *Wilson v. MVM, Inc.*, 475 F.3d 166, 175 (3d Cir. 2007)
- *D'Amico v. CBS Corp.*, 297 F.3d 287, 293 (3d Cir. 2002)
- *Longenette v. Krusing*, 322 F.3d 758, 764 (3d Cir. 2003)
- *Woodall v. Federal Bureau of Prisons*, 432 F.3d 235, 244-51 (3d Cir. 2005)