

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF SOUTH
CAROLINA, CHARLESTON DIVISION

Thomas V. Lampley v. Scotty Bodiford

Lampley v. Bodiford · No. 2:26-cv-00027-JDA · Decided March 12, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the District of South Carolina dismissed with prejudice, but not on the merits, a pro se state pretrial detainee’s petition for a writ of habeas corpus under 28 U.S.C. § 2241. The court adopted the Magistrate Judge’s recommendation, as modified, and dismissed the petition under the abstention doctrine established in *Younger v. Harris*. The court also denied a certificate of appealability.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the District of South Carolina, Charleston Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Jacquelyn D. Austin
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the District of South Carolina, Charleston Division
DECIDED	March 12, 2026
DOCKET	2:26-cv-00027-JDA
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	A state pretrial detainee filed a pro se petition for a writ of habeas corpus under 28 U.S.C. § 2241. The matter was referred to a magistrate judge, who recommended summary dismissal under <i>Younger v. Harris</i> . The petitioner filed no objections, and the district court reviewed the recommendation for clear error.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	In the absence of specific objections to the magistrate judge's Report and Recommendation, the district court reviews the recommendation for clear error on the face of the record. Specific objections would require de novo review under 28 U.S.C. § 636(b).
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished district court opinion; precedential status not stated
PARTIES	Thomas V. Lampley v. Scotty Bodiford

TOPICS

federal habeas corpus

post-conviction relief

civil procedure

pleadings

constitutional law

PRACTICE AREAS

federal habeas corpus

post-conviction relief

federal civil procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the district court should accept the magistrate judge's Report and Recommendation when the petitioner filed no objections.
2. Whether the petition should be dismissed under *Younger v. Harris* because federal intervention in the state pretrial proceedings was barred by abstention principles.
3. Whether a certificate of appealability should issue after dismissal on procedural grounds.

HOLDINGS

1. When no timely specific objection is filed to a magistrate judge's Report and Recommendation, the district court need only review the recommendation for clear error on the face of the record rather than conduct de novo review.
2. The petition was barred by *Younger* abstention and was therefore dismissed with prejudice on procedural, nonmerits grounds.
3. A certificate of appealability should not issue because the petitioner did not satisfy the required showing for appellate review of the procedural dismissal.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"Accordingly, the Petition is DISMISSED with prejudice, not on the merits, under Younger."

"The Court will review the Report only for clear error in the absence of an objection."

"When the district court denies relief on procedural grounds, the prisoner must demonstrate both that the dispositive procedural ruling is debatable, and that the petition states a debatable claim of the denial of a constitutional right."

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Lampley was a state pretrial detainee who filed a federal habeas petition under 28 U.S.C. § 2241. The petition sought federal habeas relief while related state criminal proceedings were apparently ongoing. The court relied on the magistrate judge's recommendation that *Younger* abstention barred the action.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The petition was docketed on January 6, 2026. On February 11, 2026, the magistrate judge issued a Report and Recommendation recommending summary dismissal because the petition was barred by *Younger* abstention. After the petitioner failed to object, the district court accepted the recommendation as modified, dismissed the petition with prejudice on nonmerits grounds, and determined that a certificate of appealability should not issue.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- *Younger v. Harris*, 401 U.S. 37 (1971)
- *Mathews v. Weber*, 423 U.S. 261, 270-71 (1976)
- *Diamond v. Colonial Life & Accident Insurance Co.*, 416 F.3d 310, 315 (4th Cir. 2005)
- *Nivens v. Gilchrist*, 444 F.3d 237, 247 (4th Cir. 2006)
- *Slack v. McDaniel*, 529 U.S. 473, 484-85 (2000)
- *Miller-El v. Cockrell*, 537 U.S. 322, 336-38 (2003)

OPINION

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE UNITED STATES FOR THE DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA CHARLESTON DIVISION Thomas V. Lampley,) Case No. 2:26-cv-00027-JDA)
Petitioner,)) v.) OPINION AND ORDER) Scotty Bodiford,)) Respondent.)) This matter is
before the Court on Petitioner’s Petition seeking a writ of habeas corpus under 28 U.S.C. § 2241
and a Report and Recommendation (“Report”) of the Magistrate Judge.

[Docs. 1; 6.] In accordance with 28 U.S.C. § 636(b) and Local Civil Rule 73.02(B)(2) (D.S.C.), this matter was referred to United States Magistrate Judge Mary Gordon Baker for pre-trial proceedings. On January 6, 2026, the Clerk docketed a petition for writ of habeas corpus filed pro se by a state pretrial detainee pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2241. [Doc. 1.]

On February 11, 2026, the Magistrate Judge issued a Report recommending summary dismissal of the Petition because the action was barred by *Younger v. Harris*, 401 U.S. 37 (1971). [Doc. 6.] The Magistrate Judge advised Petitioner of the procedures and requirements for filing objections to the Report and the serious consequences if he failed to do so. [Id. at 8.]

Petitioner has not filed objections or otherwise responded to the Report, and the time to do so has lapsed. The Magistrate Judge makes only a recommendation to this Court. The recommendation has no presumptive weight, and the responsibility to make a final determination remains with the Court. See *Mathews v. Weber*, 423 U.S. 261, 270–71 (1976).

The Court is charged with making a de novo determination of any portion of the Report of the Magistrate Judge to which a specific objection is made. The Court may accept, reject, or modify, in whole or in part, the recommendation made by the Magistrate Judge or recommit the matter to the Magistrate Judge with instructions. See 28 U.S.C. § 636(b).

The Court will review the Report only for clear error in the absence of an objection. See *Diamond v. Colonial Life & Accident Ins.*, 416 F.3d 310, 315 (4th Cir. 2005) (stating that “in the absence of

a timely filed objection, a district court need not conduct a de novo review, but instead must only satisfy itself that there is no clear error on the face of the record in order to accept the recommendation” (internal quotation marks omitted)).

The Court has reviewed the record in this case, the applicable law, and the Report of the Magistrate Judge for clear error. Having done so, the Court accepts the Report and Recommendation of the Magistrate Judge as modified and incorporates it by reference to the extent consistent with this Order.

Accordingly, the Petition is DISMISSED with prejudice, not on the merits, under *Younger*. See *Nivens v. Gilchrist*, 444 F.3d 237, 247 (4th Cir. 2006). CERTIFICATE OF APPEALABILITY “The district court must issue or deny a certificate of appealability when it enters a final order adverse to the applicant.” Rule 11(a) of the Rules Governing Section 2254 Cases; see Rule 1(b) of the Rules Governing Section 2254 Cases (stating that a district court may apply these rules to a habeas petition not filed pursuant to § 2254).

A certificate of appealability will not issue absent “a substantial showing of the denial of a constitutional right.” 28 U.S.C. § 2253(c)(2). When the district court denies relief on the merits, a petitioner satisfies this standard by demonstrating that reasonable jurists would find that the court's assessment of the constitutional claims is debatable or wrong.

Slack v. McDaniel, 529 U.S. 473, 484 (2000); see *Miller-El v. Cockrell*, 537 U.S. 322, 336–38 (2003). When the district court denies relief on procedural grounds, the prisoner must demonstrate both that the dispositive procedural ruling is debatable, and that the petition states a debatable claim of the denial of a constitutional right. *Slack*, 529 U.S. at 484–85.

In this case, the legal standard for the issuance of a certificate of appealability has not been met. IT IS SO ORDERED. s/ Jacquelyn D. Austin United States District Judge March 12, 2026 Charleston, South Carolina