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SC Court of Appeals

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
ADMINISTRATIVE LAW COURT

John Dale Taylor, #132925,
Appellant,
v.
South Carolina Department of Corrections,
Respondent.

Docket No. 25-ALJ-04-0701-AP

ORDER GRANTING
RESPONDENT'S MOTION TO
DISMISS

This matter is before the South Carolina Administrative Law Court (ALC or court) pursuant to the Notice of Appeal filed on October 8, 2025 by John Dale Taylor (Appellant), an inmate in the custody of the South Carolina Department of Corrections (Department or Respondent). After the Appellant's Step 1 and Step 2 Grievances were filed and denied, the Appellant filed an appeal with the court alleging that the Department had no authority to omit mandatory deductions for long-term savings even under a signed settlement agreement.

On December 5, 2025, the Department filed a Motion to Dismiss requesting the court dismiss the Appellant's appeal because on April 14, 2025, the parties settled any and all claims arising out of the Appellant's participation in the prison industries program, including any Prison Industries Enhancement Certification Program (PIECP). On December 15, 2025, the Appellant filed a response to the Department's Motion to Dismiss arguing that state statute sets forth that 10% of his hourly wages automatically goes into a long term or escrow account and the Department lacks the authority to make deals or enter into separate contracts that are against the law. Therefore, the Appellant requests the court make the Department abide by the laws.

DISCUSSION

This court's jurisdiction to hear this matter is derived entirely from the decision of the South Carolina Supreme Court in *Al-Shabazz v. State*, 338 S.C. 354, 527 S.E.2d 742 (2000). This court's appellate jurisdiction in inmate appeals is limited to cases involving denial of state created liberty interests typically involving: (1) cases in which an inmate contends that prison officials have erroneously calculated his sentence, sentence-related credits, or custody status; and (2) cases in which an inmate has received punishment in a major disciplinary hearing as a result of a serious

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rule violation. *Id.* at 369, 527 S.E.2d at 750.

When reviewing the Department's decisions in inmate grievance matters, the court sits in an appellate capacity. *Id.* at 377, 527 S.E.2d at 756. Consequently, the court's review in such cases is limited to the Record on Appeal. Pursuant to *Slezak v. S.C. Dep't of Corr.*, 361 S.C. 327, 605 S.E.2d 506 (2004), the court is to have jurisdiction over all properly perfected inmate appeals, but "[s]ummary dismissal may be appropriate where the inmate's grievance does not implicate a state-created liberty or property interest." *See Slezak*, 361 S.C. at 331, 605 S.E.2d at 508. Further, in *Skipper v. S.C. Dep't of Corr.*, 370 S.C. 267, 633 S.E.2d 910 (Ct. App. 2006), the Court of Appeals of South Carolina interpreted *Slezak* as holding that a judge "should" dismiss a prisoner's appeal where it does not implicate a state-created liberty interest. *See Skipper*, 370 S.C. at 279, 633 S.E.2d at 917.

In this matter, the Appellant is challenging the settlement agreement he signed with the Department. The Appellant argues that the Department's settlement agreement is unenforceable because it violates mandatory statutory obligations by failing to allocate the required deductions for long-term savings. The Department argues that when the Appellant signed the Final Release and Settlement Agreement for the Department to pay him the specified amount, he knowingly and voluntarily released any and all claims regarding his PI wages. Further, the settlement agreement expressly informed the Appellant that settlements are not subject to statutory deductions and specifically stated that no additional funds will be placed into long-term savings.

After reviewing the Final Release and Settlement Agreement signed by the Appellant on April 14, 2025, the court agrees that by his signature, he released all claims regarding his PI wages. Consequently, there is no state created liberty or property interest implicated in this matter and as such, the court concludes that summary dismissal is appropriate in this case. *See Allen v. S.C. Dep't of Corr.*, 439 S.C. 164, 170-71, 886 S.E.2d 671, 674 (2023) (summary dismissal appropriate where the inmate's grievance does not implicate a state-created liberty or property interest.) Therefore, based on the foregoing,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the Department's Motion to Dismiss is **GRANTED** and

this appeal is hereby **DISMISSED**.

IT IS SO ORDERED.



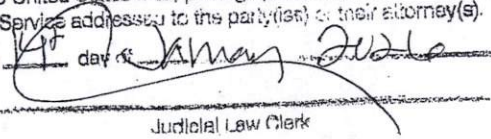
S. Phillip Lenski
Administrative Law Judge

January 14, 2026
Columbia, South Carolina

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

This is to certify that the undersigned has this date served this order in the above entitled action upon all parties to this cause by depositing a copy hereof, in the United States mail, postage paid, or in the Interagency Mail Service addressed to the party(ies) or their attorney(s).

This 14th day of January, 2026


Judicial Law Clerk