

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

FILED

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS

SEP 28 2026

FOR THE NINTH CIRCUIT

MOLLY C. DWYER, CLERK
U.S. COURT OF APPEALS

CHRISTOPHER NEAMAN,

Plaintiff - Appellant,

v.

WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF
CORRECTIONS; TERRA AMBROSE;
ELISA SAHORE,

Defendants - Appellees,

DAVID ARCURI, DAVID HATCH,

Defendants.

No. 25-3254

D.C. No.

3:24-cv-05176-BHS

MEMORANDUM*

Appeal from the United States District Court
for the Western District of Washington
Benjamin H. Settle, District Judge, Presiding

Argued and Submitted August 4, 2026
Seattle, Washington

Before: HAWKINS, McKEOWN, and CHRISTEN, Circuit Judges.

Christopher Neaman appeals the district court's grant of summary judgment for the Washington Department of Corrections ("DOC") and two of its employees,

* This disposition is not appropriate for publication and is not precedent except as provided by Ninth Circuit Rule 36-3.

Terra Ambrose and Elisa Sahore. He challenges the grant of summary judgment on his claim of false imprisonment under state law and his claim of deprivation of a liberty interest under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 and the Fourteenth Amendment’s Due Process Clause. The parties are familiar with the facts, and we do not recite them here. We have jurisdiction under 28 U.S.C. § 1291, and we affirm.

We review de novo a grant of summary judgment while “view[ing] the facts in the light most favorable to the nonmoving party and draw[ing] all inferences in that party’s favor.” *S.R. Nehad v. Browder*, 929 F.3d 1125, 1132 (9th Cir. 2019). Summary judgment is proper if “there is no genuine dispute as to any material fact and the movant is entitled to judgment as a matter of law,” Fed. R. Civ. P. 56(a), and may be affirmed on any ground supported by the record, *Jensen v. Lane Cnty.*, 222 F.3d 570, 573 (9th Cir. 2000).

Neaman’s false imprisonment claim fails because he does not show that “DOC acted without lawful authority” and that his “imprisonment was not enacted pursuant to a valid legal process.” *Stephens v. State*, 345 P.3d 870, 872–73 (Wash. Ct. App. 2015); *see also Blick v. State*, 328 P.3d 952, 956 (Wash. Ct. App. 2014) (“An imprisonment enacted pursuant to a valid legal process and court sentence is not false imprisonment.” (citing *Mundt v. United States*, 611 F.2d 1257, 1259–60 (9th Cir. 1980))). Washington law “make[s] clear” that “even if a sentence is clearly erroneous, it is not the role of DOC to ‘correct’ this error” by undertaking

its own action, such as electing an earlier or later release date that it thinks is correct. *Dress v. Washington State Dep't of Corr.*, 279 P.3d 875, 879 (Wash. Ct. App. 2012) (quoting *In re Davis*, 834 P.2d 92, 96 (Wash. Ct. App. 1992)). Even assuming that an implied duty of good faith existed, causation is absent because the court's order, not the defendants' actions, resulted in Neaman's incarceration.

Neaman's constitutional claim under Section 1983 fails because the officers are protected by qualified immunity. Neaman does not demonstrate violation of a "clearly established" constitutional right under the facts of his case. *See Pearson v. Callahan*, 555 U.S. 223, 236–42 (2009) (outlining the two-pronged qualified immunity inquiry, in which either prong can be addressed first). On the facts of this case, Ambrose and Sahore had no "independent duty to investigate the legality of the court's sentencing order before enforcing it." *Engbretson v. Mahoney*, 724 F.3d 1034, 1042 n.7 (9th Cir. 2013) (collecting cases). There is likewise no evidence that they engaged in judicial deception by "deliberately or recklessly" providing false information to the court. *Hervey v. Estes*, 65 F.3d 784, 789 (9th Cir. 1995). They are therefore entitled to qualified immunity.

AFFIRMED.