

IN THE COURT OF APPEALS OF OHIO
FOURTH APPELLATE DISTRICT
ADAMS COUNTY

STATE OF OHIO,	:	
	:	Case No. 25CA1223
Plaintiff-Appellee,	:	
	:	
v.	:	<u>DECISION AND JUDGMENT</u>
	:	<u>ENTRY</u>
WILLIAM MILES SANDLIN, Jr.,	:	
	:	
Defendant-Appellant.	:	RELEASED: 08/10/2026

APPEARANCES:

Colin P. Cochran, Dayton, Ohio, for appellant.

Ariana Bowles Norris¹, Adams County Prosecuting Attorney, and Sean M. Donovan, Assistant Adams County Prosecuting Attorney, West Union, Ohio, for appellee.

Wilkin, J.

{¶1} This appeal arises from an Adams County Court judgment of conviction entry in which appellant, William Miles Sandlin, Jr., was found guilty of nonsupport of dependents, as a first-degree misdemeanor offense. The trial court imposed the maximum sentence of 180 days. In his sole assignment of error, Sandlin challenges the imposition of the maximum sentence.

{¶2} We dismiss the appeal because we cannot provide Sandlin with any effectual relief. Sandlin completed his sentence on December 27, 2025, which was just several days after the State filed its appellate brief. With the challenged maximum sentence having been voluntarily served, and Sandlin's failure to

¹ On our own accord, we substitute Ariana Bowles Norris, the newly appointed Adams County Prosecuting Attorney, for Aaron E. Haslam, who resigned while the appeal was pending.

demonstrate collateral consequences from the conviction, we must dismiss the appeal.

FACTS AND PROCEDURAL BACKGROUND

{¶3} As the father of the minor child L.M., Sandlin, in July 2014, was ordered to pay monthly child support of \$190.31, which included a \$2.55 processing fee. Sandlin was not abiding by the monthly child support order obligations, and as a result, there were 30 hearings in the juvenile court, with 2 contempt findings, and 7 capias orders issued.

{¶4} Sandlin's failure to pay pursuant to the child support order escalated to a criminal charge of nonsupport of dependents as a first-degree misdemeanor, on January 24, 2025. The charge was based on Sandlin's failure to pay child support for a 24-month period, from January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2024.

{¶5} After being apprehended in April 2025, Sandlin pleaded not guilty to the offense, and the matter proceeded to a bench trial on June 30, 2025. The only witness was Rebecca Stevens, child support lead worker at the Adams County Department of Job and Family Services. She testified that in 2023, Sandlin made only one child support payment of \$250.00 on June 2, 2023, and that in 2024, Sandlin made no child support payments. Additionally, she testified that the outstanding total child support obligation at the time of the hearing was \$17,556.37.

{¶6} After the testimony of lead worker Stevens and the admission of the State's exhibit of the child support order, the trial court found that Sandlin only made one payment during the 24-month period in the complaint. The trial court,

thus, found Sandlin guilty of nonsupport of dependents. After finding Sandlin guilty, the trial court proceeded to sentencing and imposed no fines, but sentenced Sandlin to the maximum sentence of 180 days with a release date of December 27, 2025.

{¶7} It is from this judgment of conviction entry that Sandlin appeals.

ASSIGNMENT OF ERROR

THE TRIAL COURT ABUSED ITS DISCRETION IN IMPOSING THE MAXIMUM SENTENCE IN THE PRESENCE OF MITIGATING FACTORS.

{¶8} In his sole assignment of error, Sandlin maintains that the trial court abused its discretion when it imposed the maximum sentence of 180 days. Sandlin contends that the trial court considered factors that are not listed in R.C. 2929.21 and R.C. 2929.22, and he does not meet the “offender characteristics identified in R.C. 2929.22(C)” to warrant the imposition of a maximum sentence. The trial court’s sentence, according to Sandlin, was arbitrarily decided and was not pursuant to the applicable sentencing factors. Sandlin asserts that the trial court failed to consider the mitigating factor that he is not employed and cannot work due to his constant serious physical pain, which is why he is in the process of applying for social security disability. Therefore, Sandlin requests that we remand the matter for resentencing with instructions to the trial court to impose community-control sanctions.

{¶9} The State disagrees, and contends that the trial court’s sentence was not arbitrary. Further, contrary to Sandlin’s claim, the State maintains that the trial court did not determine the appropriate sentence before considering the

sentencing factors, and that Sandlin took the pre-trial discussions out of context. The State asserts that the maximum sentence was warranted in which Sandlin had over \$17,000 in child support arrears and, during a 24-month period, he only made one voluntary payment. The State claims that the trial court considered the principles and purposes of sentencing and the applicable statutory sentencing provisions before imposing the maximum sentence of 180 days. The State, thus, requests that we affirm Sandlin's sentence.

Law and analysis

{¶10} This court's judicial power is limited to deciding " 'actual controversies where the judgment can be carried into effect, and not . . . give opinions upon moot questions or abstract propositions, or . . . declare principles or rules of law which cannot affect the matter at issue in the case before [us].' " *Maurent v. Spatny*, 2025-Ohio-5002, ¶ 9, quoting *Travis v. Public Util. Comm.*, 123 Ohio St. 355, 359 (1931). Thus, "[t]he judicial power does not extend to moot cases, because when a case becomes moot, there is no longer any controversy for a court to decide." *Id.* at ¶ 10.

{¶11} "An issue becomes moot when it is or has 'become fictitious, colorable, hypothetical, academic or dead.' " *Jones v. Jones*, 2021-Ohio-1498, ¶ 53 (4th Dist.), quoting *Culver v. Warren*, 84 Ohio App. 373, 393 (7th Dist. 1948). Therefore, "when events occur that make it impossible for a court to grant 'any effectual relief whatever,' a case is moot and the court must dismiss the appeal." *Maurent* at ¶ 11.

{¶12} In the context of a defendant convicted of a misdemeanor offense

who completed his sentence, the “appeal is moot unless the person either (1) demonstrates collateral consequences from the conviction or (2) shows that he did not voluntarily serve the sentence.” *Id.* at ¶ 18, citing *Cleveland Hts. v. Lewis*, 2011-Ohio-2673, ¶ 18-19. “ ‘A collateral disability is an adverse legal consequence of a conviction or judgment that survives despite the court’s sentence having been satisfied or served.’ ” *State v. Pizzo*, 2025-Ohio-2790, ¶ 10 (2d Dist.), quoting *In re S.J.K.*, 2007-Ohio-2621, ¶ 10. “For example, a person may be subject to further penalties or disabilities under state or federal law even after a judgment has been satisfied.” *In re SJK*, 2007-Ohio-2621, ¶ 10, citing *St. Pierre v. U.S.*, 319 U.S. 41 (1943).

{¶13} However, “ ‘[s]peculation is insufficient to establish a legally cognizable interest for which a court can order relief using the collateral-consequences exception to the mootness doctrine.’ ” *State v. Charleston*, 2026-Ohio-2103, ¶ 8 (2d Dist.), quoting *Cyran v. Cyran*, 2016-Ohio-7323, ¶ 11 (2d Dist.).

{¶14} In the matter at bar, Sandlin is not challenging his conviction of nonsupport of dependents. Sandlin is solely challenging the trial court’s imposition of the maximum sentence of 180 days. He has not presented any argument that he is subject to further penalty or disability. And any claim of “collateral disability cannot be speculative based on the potential enhancement for reoffending.” *State v. Landers*, 2025-Ohio-5143, ¶ 14 (8th Dist.), *appeal not allowed*, 2026-Ohio-667.

{¶15} Additionally, Sandlin voluntarily served his sentence. Therefore, he

failed to demonstrate a “substantial stake in the judgment of conviction.” See *State v. Wilson*, 41 Ohio St.2d 236, 237 (1975). The Supreme Court of Ohio found “the fact that a misdemeanant moved for a stay to be an indication that he did not serve the sentence voluntarily.” *Maurent*, 2025-Ohio-5002, ¶ 18; see also *Toledo v. Cowans*, 2008-Ohio-2989, ¶ 9 (6th Dist.), citing *State v. Miller*, 2007-Ohio370, ¶ 18 (9th Dist.) (“If a defendant fails to file a motion to stay execution of sentence in a case involving a misdemeanor, she is deemed to have voluntarily served her sentence.”).

{¶16} Sandlin did not file a motion to stay his sentence, which he completed on December 27, 2025. With his sentence being voluntarily served, we cannot provide Sandlin with relief.

{¶17} Accordingly, we dismiss the appeal.

CONCLUSION

{¶18} Sandlin’s sole assignment of error challenges the trial court’s decision to impose the maximum sentence of 180 days for his conviction of nonsupport of dependents. With Sandlin having served the 180-days sentence voluntarily, we cannot grant him any effectual relief. Therefore, this case is moot.

APPEAL IS DISMISSED.

JUDGMENT ENTRY

It is ordered that the CAUSE IS DISMISSED and that appellant shall pay the costs.

The Court finds there were reasonable grounds for this appeal.

It is ordered that a special mandate issue out of this Court directing the Adams County Common Pleas Court to carry this judgment into execution.

A certified copy of this entry shall constitute the mandate pursuant to Rule 27 of the Rules of Appellate Procedure.

Smith, P.J. and Hess, J.: Concur in Judgment and Opinion.

For the Court,

BY: _____
Kristy S. Wilkin, Judge

NOTICE TO COUNSEL

Pursuant to Local Rule No. 22, this document constitutes a final judgment entry and the time period for further appeal commences from the date of filing with the clerk.