

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF NEVADA

STEVEN JAMES MORALES,  
Appellant,  
vs.  
THE STATE OF NEVADA,  
Respondent.

No. 59267

**FILED**

**APR 11 2012**

TRACIE K. LINDEMAN  
CLERK OF SUPREME COURT  
BY *T. Maline*  
DEPUTY CLERK

ORDER OF REVERSAL AND REMAND

This is a proper person appeal from an order of the district court denying a post-conviction petition for a writ of habeas corpus.<sup>1</sup> Eighth Judicial District Court, Clark County; Jessie Elizabeth Walsh, Judge.

Appellant filed a timely petition on May 13, 2011, raising numerous claims of ineffective assistance of trial and appellate counsel. The district court denied the petition without conducting an evidentiary hearing or appointing counsel. We conclude that the district court erred in denying the petition without appointing counsel for the reasons discussed below.

NRS 34.750 provides for the discretionary appointment of post-conviction counsel and sets forth the following factors which the court may consider in making its determination to appoint counsel: the

<sup>1</sup>This appeal has been submitted for decision without oral argument, NRAP 34(f)(3), and we conclude that the record is sufficient for our review and briefing is unwarranted. See Lockett v. Warden, 91 Nev. 681, 682, 541 P.2d 910, 911 (1975).

petitioner's indigency, the severity of the consequences to the petitioner, the difficulty of those issues presented, whether the petitioner is unable to comprehend the proceedings, and whether counsel is necessary to proceed with discovery. The determination of whether counsel should be appointed is not necessarily dependent upon whether a petitioner raises issues in a petition which, if true, would entitle the petitioner to relief.

Appellant's petition arose out of a trial with potentially complex legal issues. Appellant was represented by appointed counsel at trial. Appellant is serving a significant sentence. In addition, appellant moved for the appointment of counsel and claimed that he was indigent. The failure to appoint post-conviction counsel prevented a meaningful litigation of the petition. Thus, we reverse the district court's denial of appellant's petition and remand this matter for the appointment of counsel to assist appellant in the post-conviction proceedings. Accordingly, we

ORDER the judgment of the district court REVERSED AND REMAND this matter to the district court for proceedings consistent with this order.

Cherry, J.  
Cherry

Pickering, J.  
Pickering

Hardesty, J.  
Hardesty

cc: Hon. Jessie Elizabeth Walsh, District Judge  
Steven James Morales  
Attorney General/Carson City  
Clark County District Attorney  
Eighth District Court Clerk