UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
HOUSTON DIVISION

ANA GLADYS MELGAR,	§	
	§	
Petitioner,	§	**CIVIL NO. 4:25-CV-05261**
	§	
v.	§	
	§	
PAM BONDI, BRET BRADFORD, AND WARDEN RANDALL TATE,	§	
	§	
Respondents.	§	

RESPONSE TO PETITION FOR WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS

The Government[1] files this response to the Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus under 28 U.S.C. § 2241 and for Emergency Temporary Injunctions (Dkt. 1).

First, Petitioner failed to exhaust administrative remedies. This is enough, by itself, to deny her § 2241 petition. Second, Petitioner is subject to mandatory detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2), based on the statute's plain language and structure, the history of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) decision in *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, 29 I. & N. Dec. 216 (BIA 2025), and persuasive decisions from other district courts, including the recent decision in *Cabanas v. Bondi*, No. 4:25-CV-04830, 2025 WL 3171331 (S.D. Tex. Nov. 13, 2025) (J. Eskridge).

[1] The proper respondent in a habeas petition is the person with custody over the petitioner. 28 U.S.C. § 2242; *see also* § 2243; *Rumsfeld v. Padilla*, 542 U.S. 426, 435, 124 S.Ct. 2711 (2004). That said, it is the named federal respondents, not the named warden in this case, who makes the custodial decisions regarding aliens detained in immigration custody under Title 8 of the United States Code.

Accordingly, this Court should deny Petitioner's § 2241 petition and grant summary judgment for the Government.

SUMMARY OF THE ARGUMENT

Petitioner is an immigration detainee in the custody of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) at the Montgomery Processing Center in Conroe, Texas. Dkt. 1 at p.2. Petitioner is a native and citizen of El Salvador who entered the United States without inspection. Notice to Appear, attached as Exhibit 1. She has been held in custody since October 14, 2025, approximately 49 days. Dkt. 1 at p. 2. She alleges that her current detention is in violation of the INA and that she is entitled to a writ of habeas corpus because her detention is indefinite. Dkt. 1. ICE served Petitioner with a Notice to Appear ("NTA") on November 12, 2016, charging her with removability pursuant to Immigration and Nationality Act ("INA") section 212(a)(6)(A)(i), 8 U.S.C. § 1182(a)(6)(A)(i), as an alien present in the United States without being admitted or paroled, or who arrived in the United States at any time or place other than as designated by the Attorney General. Exhibit 1. In the NTA, the examining immigration official denied Petitioner admission into the United States, explained the basis for charging Petitioner with being subject to removal, and ordered Petitioner to appear in immigration court. *Id.*

On February 21, 2023, the Immigration Judge issued an Order of Removal. Order, attached as Exhibit 2. Petitioner has appealed the decision and the appeal is still pending. Dkt. 1 at p. 2.

Petitioner does not provide an actionable challenge to her detention. Thus, the Court should dismiss the Petition.

STATEMENT OF THE ISSUES

1. Whether Petitioner has exhausted her administrative remedies if she has failed to, as a preliminary matter, request a change in her custody status from the immigration court.

2. Whether Petitioner, who entered the United States without inspection, is lawfully detained pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1225 while she is in removal proceedings.

SUMMARY JUDGMENT STANDARD

Generally, summary judgment is proper when there is no genuine dispute as to any material fact and the moving party is entitled to judgment as a matter of law. Fed. R. Civ. P. 56(a). If the moving party meets is burden of demonstrating the absence of a genuine factual dispute, the non-movant must then come forward with specific facts showing there is a genuine issue for trial. Fed. R. Civ. P. 56(c); *Matsushita Elec. Indus. Co. v. Zenith Radio Corp.*, 475 U.S. 574, 586–87, 106 S.Ct. 1348, 89 L.Ed.2d 538 (1986). The non-movant must "go beyond the pleadings and by [the nonmovant's] own affidavits, or by the depositions, answers to interrogatories, and admissions on file, designate specific facts showing that there is a genuine issue for trial." *Nola Spice Designs, LLC v. Haydel Enters., Inc.*, 783 F.3d 527, 536 (5th Cir. 2015). The non-movant's burden "will not be satisfied by 'some metaphysical doubt as to the material facts, by conclusory allegations, by unsubstantiated assertions, or by only a scintilla of evidence.'" *Boudreaux v. Swift Transp. Co.*, 402 F.3d 536, 540 (5th Cir. 2005) (quoting *Little v. Liquid Air Corp.*, 37 F.3d 1069, 1075 (5th Cir. 1994) (en banc) (per curiam)).

APPLICABLE LAW

In a petition for a writ of habeas corpus, the petitioner is challenging the legality the restraint or imprisonment. *See* 28 U.S.C. § 2241. The burden is on the petitioner to show the confinement is unlawful. *See, e.g.*, *Walker v. Johnston*, 312 U.S. 275, 286 (1941). When it comes to detention during removal proceedings, it is well-taken that the authority to detain is elemental to the authority to deport, as "[d]etention is necessarily a part of th[e] deportation procedure." *Carlson v. Landon*, 342 U.S. 524, 538 (1952); *see Wong Wing v. United States*, 163 U.S. 228, 235 (1896) ("Proceedings to exclude or expel would be vain if those accused could not be held in custody pending the inquiry into their true character, and while arrangements were being made for their deportation."). As the Supreme Court has stated in no unmistakable terms, "[d]etention during removal proceedings is a constitutionally permissible part of that process." *Demore v. Kim*, 538 U.S. 510, 531 (2003).

With this backdrop in mind, the Government proceeds to the statutory text on mandatory versus discretionary detention.

Mandatory Detention Under 8 U.S.C. § 1225

Section 1225 defines "applicants for admission" as "alien[s] present in the United States who ha[ve] not been admitted" or "who arrive[] in the United States." 8 U.S.C. § 1225(a)(1). Applicants for admission "fall into one of two categories, those covered by § 1225(b)(1) and those covered by § 1225(b)(2)." *Jennings v. Rodriguez*, 583 U.S. 281, 287 (2018).

Section 1225(b)(1) applies to arriving aliens and "certain other" aliens "initially determined to be inadmissible due to fraud, misrepresentation, or lack of valid documentation." *Id.*; 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1)(A)(i), (iii). These aliens are generally subject to

expedited removal proceedings. *See* 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1)(A)(i). But if the alien "indicates an intention to apply for asylum . . . or a fear of persecution," immigration officers will refer the alien for a credible fear interview. *Id.* § 1225(b)(1)(A)(ii). An alien "with a credible fear of persecution" is "detained for further consideration of the application for asylum." *Id.* § 1225(b)(1)(B)(ii). If the alien does not indicate an intent to apply for asylum, express a fear of prosecution, or is "found not to have such a fear," he is detained until removed. *Id.* § 1225(b)(1)(A)(i), (B)(iii)(IV).

Section 1225(b)(2) is "broader" and "serves as a catchall provision." *Jennings*, 583 U.S. at 287. It "applies to all applicants for admission not covered by § 1225(b)(1)." *Id.* Under § 1225(b)(2), an alien "who is an applicant for admission" *shall* be detained for a removal proceeding "if the examining immigration officer determines that [the] alien seeking admission is not clearly and beyond a doubt entitled to be admitted." 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)(A) (emphasis added); *see Matter of Q. Li*, 29 I. & N. Dec. 66, 68 (BIA 2025) ("[F]or aliens arriving in and seeking admission into the United States who are placed directly in full removal proceedings, section 235(b)(2)(A) of the INA, 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)(A), mandates detention 'until removal proceedings have concluded.'" (citing *Jennings v. Rodriguez*, 583 U.S. 281, 299 (2018)).

Discretionary Detention Under 8 U.S.C. § 1226

Section 1226 provides that an alien may be arrested and detained "pending a decision on whether the alien is to be removed from the United States." 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a). Under § 1226(a), the government may detain an alien during her removal proceedings, release her on bond, or release her on conditional parole. By regulation, immigration officers can

release aliens if the alien demonstrates that she "would not pose a danger to property or persons" and "is likely to appear for any future proceeding." 8 C.F.R. § 236.1(c)(8). An alien can also request a custody redetermination (*i.e.*, a bond hearing) by an immigration judge ("IJ") at any time before a final order of removal is issued. *See* 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a); 8 C.F.R. §§ 236.1(d)(1), 1236.1(d)(1), 1003.19.

At a custody redetermination, the IJ may continue detention or release the alien on bond or conditional parole. 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a); 8 C.F.R. § 1236.1(d)(1). IJs have broad discretion in deciding whether to release an alien on bond. *In re Guerra*, 24 I. & N. Dec. 37, 39–40 (BIA 2006) (listing nine factors for IJs to consider). But regardless of the factors IJs consider, an alien "who presents a danger to persons or property should not be released during the pendency of removal proceedings." *Id.* at 38.

BIA Review

The BIA is an appellate body within the Executive Office for Immigration Review ("EOIR"). *See* 8 C.F.R. § 1003.1(d)(1). Members of the BIA possess delegated authority from the Attorney General. 8 C.F.R. § 1003.1(a)(1). The BIA is "charged with the review of those administrative adjudications under the [INA] that the Attorney General may by regulation assign to it," including IJ custody determinations. 8 C.F.R. §§ 1003.1(d)(1), 236.1; 1236.1. The BIA not only resolves particular disputes before it, but also "through precedent decisions, [it] shall provide clear and uniform guidance to DHS, the immigration judges, and the general public on the proper interpretation and administration of the [INA] and its implementing regulations." *Id.* § 1003.1(d)(1). "The decision of the [BIA] shall be final except in those cases reviewed by the Attorney General." 8 C.F.R. § 1003.1(d)(7).

On September 5, 2025, the BIA issued a precedential decision in *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, 29 I. & N. Dec. 216 (BIA 2025). In that decision, the BIA held that an IJ lacks authority to hear a respondent's request for bond where the respondent is an applicant for admission and subject to mandatory detention under Section 235(b)(2)(A) of the INA, 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)(A), and the regulation at 8 C.F.R. § 235.3(b)(1)(ii). *Hurtado*, 29 I. & N. Dec. at 229.

ARGUMENT

PETITIONER FAILED TO EXHAUST HER ADMINISTRATIVE REMEDIES PRIOR TO FILING THE PETITION.

As a threshold matter, the Court should deny the habeas petition because Petitioner has not administratively exhausted her claims. In accord with the general rule that parties seeking relief against federal agencies must exhaust administrative remedies prior to seeking judicial relief, it is well-taken that a habeas petitioner must exhaust all administrative remedies prior to filing a federal habeas petition under § 2241. *See, e.g.*, *Gallegos-Hernandez v. United States*, 688 F.3d 190, 194 (5th Cir. 2012) (holding that a federal prisoner seeking habeas relief under § 2241 must first exhaust all available administrative remedies); *Hinojosa v. Horn*, 896 F.3d 305, 314 (5th Cir. 2018) (same); *United States v. Cleto*, 956 F.2d 83, 84 (5th Cir. 1992) (same).

In this case, Petitioner has not alleged that she has had a hearing before an immigration judge. Dkt 1. Petitioner has not alleged that she has sought a re-determination of her custody status. Dkt. 1.

The Fifth Circuit has recognized exceptions to the exhaustion requirement and noted that they "apply only in extraordinary circumstances," including when exhaustion would be

"patently futile." *Fuller v. Rich*, 11 F.3d 61, 62 (5th Cir. 1994) (internal quotation marks omitted). *Fuller* itself is illustrative, where the petitioner argued that administrative appeal was futile because the time for filing an appeal has already elapsed. *See id.* The Fifth Circuit disagreed, holding that "until he actually appeals and that appeal is acted on, we do not know what the appeals board will do with [petitioner]'s claim, and until the appeals board has been given an opportunity to act, [petitioner] has not exhausted his administrative remedies." *Id.*

Here, just because the administrative body is unlikely to find the law in the petitioner's favor does not mean that the "extraordinary circumstances" apply where exhaustion is futile. Petitioner must seek a bond, and if denied, she must appeal to (and receive a decision from) the BIA for the matter to be administratively exhausted. It is of little moment whether Petitioner would be able to successfully convince the BIA that *Matter of Hurtado*, 29 I. & N. Dec. 216 (BIA 2025), was wrongly decided or that her circumstances are factually distinguishable from *Hurtado*; the point is that Petitioner cannot eschew the process altogether. *See Abdoulaye Ba v. Director of Detroit Field Office, ICE*, No. 4:25-CV-02208, 2025 WL 2977712, at *2 (N.D. Ohio Oct. 22, 2025) (dismissing for failure to exhaust where petitioner sought "review of the application and interpretation of *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*" but had yet to appeal to the BIA). In sum, not only does the law require exhaustion, practical and intuitive considerations highlight why this result must follow here in the bond context.

PETITIONER IS SUBJECT TO MANDATORY DETENTION UNDER 8 U.S.C. § 1225

Petitioner's habeas petition should be denied because she falls under the plain language of the mandatory detention provisions in 8 U.S.C. § 1225. In particular, she is an alien present in the United States without being admitted or paroled, or who arrived in the

United States at any time or place other than designated by the Attorney General. *See Matter of Hurtado*, 29 I. & N. Dec. 216 (BIA 2025). Indeed, Petitioner admits that she is an alien present in the United States who entered the country unlawfully "without inspection". Dkt. 1 at p.1. As an alien "present in the United States who has not been admitted," she is by definition "an applicant for admission." 8 U.S.C. § 1225(a)(1). Thus, she is subject to mandatory detention. *See id.* § 1225(b)(2)(A) (instructing that "the alien *shall* be detained" in the case of "an alien seeking admission" who "is not clearly and beyond a doubt entitled to be admitted" (emphasis added)).

The Plain Language and Statutory Structure of the INA

"As usual, we start with the statutory text." *Restaurant Law Center v. U.S. Dep't of Labor*, 120 F.4th 163, 177 (5th Cir. 2024). Section 1225(b)(2) provides the following:

> in the case of an alien who is an applicant for admission, if the examining immigration officer determines that an alien seeking admission is not clearly and beyond a doubt entitled to be admitted, the alien shall be detained for [removal proceedings].

8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2). The INA defines "applicant for admission" as "an alien present in the United States who has not been admitted." 8 U.S.C. § 1225(a)(1). In the context presented in this case, "seeking admission" and "applying for admission" are plainly synonymous. Congress has linked these two variations of the same phrase in Section 1225(a)(3), which requires all aliens "who are applicants for admission or otherwise seeking admission" to be inspected by immigration officers. 8 U.S.C. § 1225(a)(3). The word "or" here "introduce[s] an appositive—a word or phrase that is synonymous with what precedes it ('Vienna or Wien,' 'Batman or the Caped Crusader')." *United States v. Woods*, 571 U.S. 31, 45 (2013).

Read properly, a person "seeking admission" is just another way of describing a person applying for admission, meaning she is an applicant for admission, which includes both those individuals arriving in the United States and those already present without admission. 8 U.S.C. § 1225(a)(1).

Congress used the phrase "arriving alien" throughout Section 1225. *See, e.g.*, 8 U.S.C. §§ 1225(a)(2), (b)(1), (c), (d)(2). To be sure, this phrase does distinguish an alien presently or recently "arriving" in the United States from other "applicants for admission" who, like Petitioner, have been in the United States without being admitted. But Congress did not use this phrase in Section 1225(b)(2)'s mandatory-detention provision, and instead prescribed mandatory detention for "alien[s] seeking admission." Had Congress intended to limit Section 1225(b)(2)'s scope to "arriving" aliens, it could have simply used that phrase like it did in Section 1225(b)(1). Instead, Congress used the phrase "alien seeking admission" as a plain synonym for "applicant for admission."

The statutory structure of Section 1225(b) also supports the Government's interpretation. It is true that Section 1225(b)(1) applies to applicants for admission who are "arriving in the United States" (or those who have been present for less than two years) and provides for expedited removal proceedings. It also contains its own mandatory-detention provision applicable during those expedited proceedings. *See* 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1)(B)(iii)(IV). By contrast, Section 1225(b)(2) applies to "other aliens," *i.e.*, "an alien who is an applicant for admission" who is not an arriving alien (and thus not subject to expedited removal under Section (b)(1)). These aliens too "shall be detained"—not subject to expedited removal proceedings, but pursuant to a more typical removal "proceeding

under section 1229a of this title." 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)(A). Thus, Section 1225(b) applies to two groups of "applicants for admission": Section (b)(1) applies to "arriving" or recently arrived aliens who must be detained pending expedited removal proceedings; and (b)(2) is a "catchall provision that applies to all applicants for admission not covered by § 1225(b)(1)," *Jennings*, 583 U.S. at 287, who, like Petitioner, must be "detained for a [non-expedited] proceeding under section 1229a of this title," 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2). A contrary interpretation limiting Section 1225(b)(2) to "arriving" aliens would render it redundant and without any effect.

A comparison of Section 1225's mandatory-detention provisions against the discretionary detention provisions of Section 1226 also supports the Government's interpretation. "A basic canon of statutory construction" is that "a specific provision applying with particularity to a matter should govern over a more general provision encompassing that same matter." *Hughes v. Canadian Nat'l Ry. Co.*, 105 F.4th 1060, 1067 (8th Cir. 2024); *see Matter of GFS Indus., L.L.C.*, 99 F.4th 223 (5th Cir. 2024) (explaining that to the extent one could read tension among two statutory provisions, the more specific provision should govern over the general). Here, Section 1226(a) is the general provision, applicable to aliens "arrested and detained pending a decision" on removal. 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a). Section 1225(b), by contrast, is much more specific, applying particularly to aliens who are "applicants for admission"—a specially defined subset of aliens that explicitly includes those "present in the United States who ha[ve] not be admitted." *Id.* § 1225(a). So while the general rule might be that aliens detained pending removal may be detained, the specific rule for aliens who have not been admitted is that this subset of aliens must be detained. The

Court should be loath to eviscerate the specific text of Section 1225(b)(2)(A) in favor of the more general text of Section 1226(a). *See, e.g.*, *United States v. Menasche*, 348 U.S. 528, 538-39 (1955) ("It is our duty to give effect, if possible, to every clause and word of a statute, rather than to emasculate an entire section[.]"). Because Petitioner falls squarely within the definition of individuals deemed to be "applicants for admission," the specific detention authority under § 1225(b) governs over the general authority found at § 1226(a).

History of the INA

The congressional amendments to the INA support the Government's reading of the statute. It should be noted that this argument does not rely upon "legislative history"—the internal evolution of a statute as reflected in the comments of legislative committees or individual legislators. Instead, the Government is pointing to the statutory history of the legislation. *See U.S. v. Kay*, 359 F.3d 738, 752 (5th Cir. 2004) "[s]ubsequent legislation declaring the intent of an earlier statute is entitled to great weight in statutory construction.") (citing *Red Lion Broad. Co. v. FCC*, 395 U.S. 367, 380-81, 89 (1969)). In this case, the history of the INA—specifically congressional amendments to Section 1225(b)(2)—confirms the Government's position.

As the BIA analyzed in-depth in *Hurtado*, Congress amended the INA through the passage of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 ("IIRIRA"), Pub. L. No. 104-208, Div. C, § 302(a), 110 Stat. 3009-546, 3009-579, which added § 1225(a)(1), to ensure that it did not treat aliens who unlawfully crossed the border and evaded initial detection better than those who presented themselves at ports of entry and tried to enter lawfully. *See* 29 I. & N. at 222–25. The Ninth Circuit recognized the same,

explaining that Congress passed IIRIRA to correct "an anomaly whereby immigrants who were attempting to lawfully enter the United States were in a worse position than persons who had crossed the border unlawfully." *Torres v. Barr*, 976 F.3d 918, 928 (9th Cir. 2020) (en banc). Congress "intended to replace certain aspects of the [then-]current 'entry doctrine,' under which illegal aliens who have entered the United States without inspection gain equities and privileges in immigration proceedings that are not available to aliens who present themselves for inspection at a port of entry." *Id.* This purpose flies in the face of the underlying premise of Petitioner's claims, which is that she, as a person who snuck into the country "without inspection," is entitled to more privileges in removal proceedings than an identical person who presented themselves for inspection at a port of entry. The history of the legislation, reflected in the unambiguous text, rejects Petitioner's interpretation that because she evaded detection, she is entitled to more privileges than persons who presented themselves at the border.

The BIA's Decision in *Matter of Hurtado*

The text and history of the INA are unmistakable that aliens like Petitioner already present in the United States are applicants for admission and thus subject to mandatory detention under § 1225(b)(2). To be sure, while this interpretation is straightforward, that is not to say there are no colorable counterarguments. However, the Government would point to the BIA's decision in *Hurtado*, which thoughtfully and meticulously considered and rejected a myriad of counterarguments. *See* 29 I. & N. at 221–27 (discussing and rejecting no fewer than six distinct legal counterarguments). *Hurtado* is a unanimous, published decision from the BIA and binding on immigration courts. As the Supreme Court stated when

overruling *Chevron*, agency expertise "has always been one of the factors which may give an Executive Branch interpretation particular 'power to persuade, if lacking power to control.'" *Loper Bright Enters. v. Raimondo*, 603 U.S. 369, 402 (2024) (quoting *Skidmore v. Swift & Co.*, 323 U.S. 134, 140 (1944)). Deference under *Skidmore* remains alive and well, with the degree of respect "depend[ent] upon the thoroughness evident in its consideration, the validity of its reasoning . . . and all those factors which give it power to persuade, if lacking in power to control." 323 U.S. at 140. Here, the BIA utilized its immigration expertise and gave a lengthy, comprehensive account as to why the Government's position in this case is not only correct, but comfortably so. This Court should thus accord great weight to the persuasiveness of *Hurtado*.

The BIA's interpretation of § 1225(b)(2) is not undermined by the passage of the Laken Riley Act, Pub. L. No. 119-1, § 2, 139 Stat. 3 (2025). The BIA's *Hurtado* decision specifically addressed the issue of whether its interpretation of § 1225(b)(2) rendered the recent Laken Riley Act superfluous. *Hurtado*, 29 I. & N. Dec. at 221. The BIA first pointed out that nothing in the Laken Riley Act purported to alter or amend § 1225(b)(2)'s mandatory detention requirement. *Id.* Moreover, the BIA noted that the fact that the Laken Riley Act required mandatory detention for a subset of illegal aliens that are also subject to mandator detention under § 1225(b)(2) is not a basis to ignore the mandatory detention requirement of § 1225(b)(2). *Id.* at 222. In support of this holding, the BIA cited the Supreme Court's *Barton* decision. *Id.* (citing *Barton v. Barr*, 590 U.S. 222, 239 (2020) (holding that because "redundancies are common in statutory drafting--sometimes in a congressional effort to be doubly sure, sometimes because of congressional inadvertence or lack of

foresight, or sometimes simply because of the shortcomings of human communication,"-- "[r]edundancy in one portion of a statute is not a license to rewrite or eviscerate another portion of the statute contrary to its text")). Thus, the BIA correctly concluded that both § 1225(b)'s and the Laken Riley Act's mandatory detention requirements should be given effect.

Persuasive decisions from other district courts.

In the absence of controlling authority, the Court should follow those district courts that have applied the plain language of the INA and found aliens like the Petitioner subject to mandatory detention under § 1225(b)(2). Although the Government acknowledges that there are district court decisions that hold to the contrary,[2][3] it bears mention that (1) none of these decisions are binding and (2) *Hurtado* carries far more weight considering the BIA's subject-matter expertise on the matter and the thoroughness of its analysis. Moreover, several district courts have adopted the Government's and the BIA's interpretation, and more are likely to follow. *See Vargas Lopez v. Trump*, No. 8:25-CV-00526, 2025 WL 2780351 (D. Neb. Sept. 30, 2025) and *Chavez v. Noem*, No. 3:25-CV-02325, 2025 WL 2730228 (S.D. Cal. Sept. 24, 2025). And at least one court has, albeit in a different context, adopted the Government's position here that an alien who long ago entered the country illegally is still

[2] This includes decisions from other courts in the Southern District of Texas. *See, e.g., Buenrostro-Mendez v. Bondi*, No. CV H-25-3726, 2025 WL 2886346 (S.D. Tex. Oct. 7, 2025); *Fuentes v. Lyons*, 5:25-cv-153 (S.D. Tex. October 16, 2025); *Ortiz v. Bondi*, 5:25-cv-132 (S.D. Tex. October 15, 2025); *Baltazar v. Vasquez*, 25-cv-175 (S.D. Tex. October 14, 2025); *Covarrubias v. Vergara*, 5:25-cv-112 (S.D. Texas October 8, 2025).

[3] The Court should be aware that a court in the Central District of California recently certified a class of aliens who are being detained under § 1225(b)(2). *Bautista v. Santacruz*, No. 5:25-CV-01873-SSS-BFM, 2025 WL 3288403 (C.D. Cal. Nov. 25, 2025). The *Bautista* court granted class certification and partial summary judgment for the plaintiffs in that case, but did not issue a class-wide declaratory judgment. The court also did not issue a class-wide injunction. As such, although the matter is still being reviewed by the Department of Justice, the *Bautista* court's decision does not have preclusive effect with respect to this case.

considered an applicant for admission. *See Pena v. Hyde*, 2025 WL2108913 (D. Mass. July 28, 2025) (stating that a Brazilian national who entered the country illegally in 2005 "remains an applicant for admission" in 2025).

Most recently, two district courts in the Fifth Circuit have followed *Hurtado's* reasoning in denying relief. First, in *Garibay-Robledo v. Noem*, No. 1:25-CV-00177, ECF No. 9, (N.D. Tex. October 24, 2025) Exhibit 3, a court in the Northern District of Texas agreed with the Government—including with respect to virtually all, if not all, of the points raised above. Overall, the court observed that "the plain language of the mandatory-detention provision weighs heavily against the petitioner's assertion that he is subject only to discretionary detention," and that arguments to the contrary "flatly contradict[] the statute's plain language and the history of legislative changes enacted by Congress." Exhibit 3 at 1, 5. The court also made an additional observation regarding a 1997 regulation which evinced a "clear implication" that prior administrations recognized the applicability of mandatory detention in this context but "declined to exercise the full extent of its authority under the INA." *Id.* at 5.

In addition, a district court in the Western District of Louisiana also recently agreed with the BIA's reading of the INA. *See Sandoval v. Acuna*, No. 6:25-CV-01467, 2025 WL 3048926 (W.D. La. Oct. 31, 2025). In denying the habeas petition, the court held that "[b]ecause Petitioner crossed the United States-Mexico border without being inspected by an immigration officer, [Petitioner was] therefore also appropriately categorized as an inadmissible alien . . . [and thus concluded] that § 1225(b)(2)'s plain language and the 'all applicants for admission language' of *Jennings* permits [DHS] to detain Petitioner under §

1225(b)(2)." (citations omitted). *Id.* The court reasoned that "to conclude that an alien who has unlawfully entered the United States and managed to remain in the country for a sufficient period of time is entitled to a bond hearing, while those who seek lawful entry and submit themselves for inspection are not, not only conflicts with the unambiguous language of the governing statutes, but would also seemingly undermine the intent of Congress in enacting the IIRIRA." *Id.* at *6.

Finally, in the Southern District of Texas, two cases have been decided in the Government's favor - *Cabanas v. Bondi*, No. 4:25-CV-04830, 2025 WL 3171331 (S.D. Tex. Nov. 13, 2025) (J. Eskridge) and *Maceda Jimenez v. Thompson*, No. 4:25-CV-5026, (S.D. Tex. Nov. 24, 2025)(J. Eskridge) (attached as Exhibit 4), in the Government's favor. In denying the habeas petition and granting the Government's motion for summary judgment, the *Cabanas* Court held "[t]he text of § 1225(b)(2)(A) supports the Government's position." The *Cabanas* Court reasoned that "[t]he statutory definition of *applicant for admission* is broad and, indeed, so broad that Petitioner doesn't dispute that she is such a person. []. That factual determination itself resolves the question as to whether § 1225(b)(2)(A) applies." *Id.* at *4 (emphasis in original). Thus, the *Cabanas* Court held that the plain language of the Immigration and Nationality Act required a ruling in the Government's favor. The court also explained why it was not persuaded by the many other district court decisions deciding to the contrary. *Id.* at * 5.

The Government urges this Court to reconsider its prior ruling and follow the reasoning of *Cabanas, Maceda Jimenez*, and the Government's other proffered authorities.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, the Government respectfully request that the Court deny Petitioner's request for habeas relief and grant the instant motion. The Court should enter judgment as a matter of law finding that Petitioner has failed to exhaust her administrative remedies and is lawfully subject to mandatory detention pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b).

Dated: December 2, 2025

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that on December 2, 2025, the foregoing was filed and served on counsel of record through the Court's CM/ECF system.

/s/ Christina Cullom
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Assistant United States Attorney