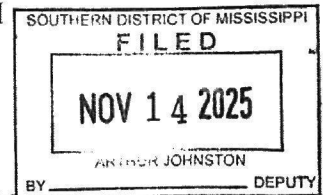


UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF MISSISSIPPI
NATCHEZ, DIVISION



THEOPHINE FERNANDEZ

Petitioner,

v.

BRIAN ACUNA, Deputy Managing Director,
New Orleans Field Office, Immigration and Customs Enforcement
And Removal Operations ("ICE/ERO");
RAFAEL VERGARA; Warden, Adams County Correctional Center,
Jena, LA; **TODD LYONS**, Acting Director of Immigration
and Customs Enforcement ("ICE");
U.S. IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS
ENFORCEMENT; **KRISTI NOEM**, Secretary of the
Department of Homeland Security ("DHS"); U.S.
DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY; **PAMELA
BONDI**, Attorney General of the United States.

Respondents,

Case No.

5:25-cv-130-DCB-BWR

**PETITION FOR WRIT
URGENT HABEAS
CORPUS AND
REQUEST FOR
DECLARATORY
RELIEF**

Petitioner, files Petition for Habeas Corpus and Complaint for Declaratory and Injunctive Relief, under 28 U.S.C. §§2241, (habeas corpus) 1331 (federal question), with the Administrative Procedure Act, 5 U.S.C. §702 et seq; 28 U.S.C. §2201 (Declaratory Judgment Act).

I. INTRODUCTION AND FACTUAL BACKGROUND

1. Petitioner respectfully petitions this Court for a writ of habeas corpus to review the lawfulness of his detention by the Respondents. Petitioner's continued detention is unlawful.

2. Petitioner a native and citizen of India, who was encountered by United states Border patrol on or about July 25, 2024. On the same day, an officer determined that Petitioner had entered the United states on the same day as the initial encounter and executed an administrative warrant for his arrest "as authorized by section 236 if the Immigration and Nationality Act ("INA")¹. Please see Exhibit A, Warrant for Arrest of Alien. At about the same

¹ 8 U.S.C. § 1226

time the Petitioner was issued Notice to Appear (“NTA”) and his removal proceedings commenced before the Executive Office for Immigration Review (“EOIR”) under section 240 of the INA². Please see Exhibit B, Notice to Appear. Specifically, Petitioner was charged with being removable as “an alien present in the United States without being admitted or paroled.” Id. Petitioner was thereafter released on her own recognizance “[p]urasant to the authority contained in section 236 of the Immigration and Nationality Act,” codified at section 1226, “and part 236 of title 8, Code of Federal Regulations. Please see Exhibit C, Order of Release on Recognizance. Petitioner promptly and timely filed his I-589 Application for Asylum and for the Withholding of Removal relief before the EOIR. Petitioner’s asylum application is currently pending before the EOIR.

3. On or about October 11, 2025, Petitioner visited his longtime family friend, Sebastian, at his place of employment, the Citgo Gas Station located in Waukegan, Illinois. During this visit, agents of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (“ICE”) conducted an enforcement action at or near the premises. The petitioner was apprehended without a warrant, during this operation despite engaging in no unlawful activity, presenting no threat to public safety, and offering no resistance or provocation of any kind. The Petitioner was later taken and detained at the Adam’s County Correctional Center. Please See Exhibit D, DHS form I-830E.

4. At the time of his arrest, Petitioner had a pending asylum application that had been properly filed and was awaiting adjudication before EOIR. Petitioner has no criminal record, has never been charged with or convicted of any offense, and has consistently complied with all immigration laws and reporting obligations. His detention, therefore, stems solely from an unprovoked enforcement action and not from any misconduct or failure to appear.

² 8 U.S.C. § 1229a

5. Furthermore, on September 5, 2025, the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA or Board) issued a precedent decision, binding on all immigration judges, holding that an immigration judge has no authority to consider bond requests for any person who entered the United States without admission. *See Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, 29 I. & N. Dec. 216 (BIA 2025). The Board determined that such individuals are subject to detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)(A) and therefore ineligible to be released on bond.

6. Petitioner's detention on this basis violates the plain language of the Immigration and Nationality Act. Section 1225(b)(2)(A) does not apply to individuals like Petitioner who previously entered, arrested pursuant to warrant under 8 USC §1357, released on ROR "[p]ursuant to the authority contained in section 236 of the Immigration and Nationality Act," codified at section 1226, "and part 236 of title 8, Code of Federal Regulations and are residing in the United states. Instead, such individuals are subject to a different statute, § 1226(a), that allows for release on conditional parole or bond. That statute expressly applies to people who, like Petitioner, are charged as inadmissible for having entered the United States without inspection and released on conditional parole - ROR.

7. Respondents' new legal interpretation is plainly contrary to the statutory framework and contrary to decades of agency practice applying § 1226(a) to people like Petitioner

8. Indeed, the Government itself has made an abrupt about-face on this issue. Respondents should be judicially estopped from asserting their current interpretation of 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)(A), because they previously prevailed in litigation after asserting the opposite interpretation. As explained in *New Hampshire v. Maine*, 532 U.S. 742 (2001), judicial estoppel applies when a party assumes a position in a legal proceeding, succeeds in maintaining that position, and then adopts a contrary position in a subsequent proceeding to gain an unfair

advantage. Here, Respondents previously, and successfully, argued that individuals who entered the United States without inspection were subject to detention under § 1226(a), and not § 1225(b)(2)(A), and courts accepted that position. Respondents now reverse course and assert that such individuals are subject to mandatory detention under § 1225(b)(2)(A), thereby denying them bond hearings. This shift in legal position undermines the integrity of the judicial process and imposes an unfair detriment on Petitioners who relied on the prior interpretation. Accordingly, Respondents should be estopped from asserting this inconsistent position.

9. Critically, DHS itself alleged in the Notice to Appear that Petitioner “entered the United States without inspection and without parole or lawful admission,” a factual assertion that squarely contradicts the Government’s current position—adopted wholesale by the Board of Immigration Appeals—that Petitioner is ineligible to apply for bond before EOIR.

10. Accordingly, Petitioner seeks a writ of habeas corpus requiring that he be released unless Respondents provide a bond hearing under § 1226(a) within seven days.

II. JURISDICTION AND VENUE

1. This action arises under the constitution of the United States and the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), 8 U.S.C. §1101 et. seq.

2. Petitioner is in Respondents custody at Adams County Correctional Center in Natchez, MS.

3. This court has subject matter jurisdiction under 28 U.S.C. §§2241 (habeas corpus), U.S.C. §1331 (federal question), and Article I, §9, cl. 2 of the United States Constitution (Suspension Clause).

4. This court may grant relief under the habeas corpus statutes, 28 U.S.C. §2241 et. seq., the Declaratory Judgement Act, 28 U.S.C. §2201 et. seq., the All-Writs Act, 28 U.S.C. §1651, and the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. §1252(e)(2).

III. VENUE

5. Venue is proper because Petitioner is in Respondents custody at Adams County Correctional Center and Venue lies in the United States District Court for the SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF MISSISSIPPI, the judicial district in which petitioner is currently detained.

6. Venue is also proper in this Court pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(e) because Respondents are employees, officers, and agencies of the United States, and because a substantial part of the events or omissions giving rise to the claims occurred in the SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF MISSISSIPPI.

IV. REQUIREMENTS OF 28 U.S.C. §§ 2241, 2243

7. The Court must grant the petition for writ of habeas corpus or issue an order to show cause (OSC) to the Respondents “forthwith,” unless the petitioner is not entitled to relief. 28 U.S.C. § 2243. If an OSC is issued, the Court must require Respondents to file a return “within three days unless for good cause additional time, not exceeding twenty days, is allowed.” *Id.*

8. Courts have long recognized the significance of the habeas statute in protecting individuals from unlawful detention. The Great Writ has been referred to as “perhaps the most important writ known to the constitutional law of England, affording as it does a swift and imperative remedy in all cases of illegal restraint or confinement.” *Fay v. Noia*, 372 U.S. 391, 400 (1963).

9. Petitioner is “in custody” for the purpose of § 2241 because Petitioner is arrested and detained by Respondents.

V. THE PARTIES

10. Petitioner is a 57-year-old citizen of India. Petitioner is present within the state of Illinois as of the time of the filing of this petition.

11. Respondent Brian Acuna, Deputy Managing Director, New Orleans Field Office.

The New Orleans Field Office is responsible for local custody decisions relating to non-citizens charges with being removable from the United States, including the arrest, detention, and custody status of non-citizens. Respondent Brian Acuna is a legal custodian of the Petitioner.

12. Respondent Todd Lyons is the acting director of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and he has authority over the actions of respondent and ICE in general. Respondent Lyons is a legal custodian of Petitioner.

13. Respondent RAFAEL VERGARA; Warden, Adams County Correctional Center, Jena, LA is a legal custodian of Petitioner.

14. Kristi Noem is the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and has authority over the actions of all other DHS Respondents in this case, as well as all operations of DHS. Respondent Noem is a legal custodian of Petitioner and is charged with faithfully administering the immigration laws of the United States.

15. Respondent Pamela Bondi is the Attorney General of the United States, and as such has authority over the Department of Justice and is charged with faithfully administering the immigration laws of the United States.

16. Respondent U.S. Immigration Customs Enforcement is the federal agency responsible for custody decisions relating to non-citizens charged with being removable from the United States, including the arrest, detention, and custody status of non-citizens.

17. Respondent U.S. Department of Homeland Security is the federal agency that has authority over the actions of ICE and all other DHS Respondents.

18. This action is commenced against all Respondents in their official capacities.

VI. STATUTORY PROVISIONS GOVERNING DETENTION AND BOND AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

19. The Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) authorizes immigration officers to arrest noncitizens without a warrant only under limited circumstances. Pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1357(a)(2), such an arrest is lawful only if the officer has probable cause to believe that the individual is (a) in violation of immigration laws and (b) likely to escape before a warrant can be obtained.
20. The implementing regulations at 8 C.F.R. §§ 287.5(c)(1) and 287.8(c)(2)(i)–(iii) impose additional procedural requirements. These include: (a) The officer must identify themselves “as soon as it is practical and safe to do so.” 8 C.F.R. § 287.5(c)(2)(iii)(A–B); (b) The officer must state that the person is under arrest and the reason for the arrest; (c) The officer must document specific, articulable facts supporting both the immigration violation and the likelihood of escape.
21. An arrest executed without a warrant or without a documented flight risk assessment violates the INA, its regulations, and binding agency policy. Such conduct constitutes: (a) Unlawful agency action under the Administrative Procedure Act (APA), 5 U.S.C. § 706(2)(A–D); (b) Ultra vires action, exceeding statutory authority and subject to judicial review.
22. Courts have consistently invalidated immigration enforcement actions that disregard statutory and regulatory limits. See: *Judulang v. Holder*, 565 U.S. 42, 53 (2011); *Calderon v. Sessions*, 330 F. Supp. 3d 944, 955–59 (S.D.N.Y. 2018); *Ramirez v. ICE*, 338 F. Supp. 3d 1, 41–43 (D.D.C. 2018).
23. The jurisdiction-stripping provisions of 8 U.S.C. § 1252 do not bar collateral APA challenges to unlawful arrest and detention. Such claims are reviewable under: (a) 28 U.S.C. § 1331 (federal question jurisdiction); (b) 28 U.S.C. § 2241 (habeas corpus). See also: *INS v. St. Cyr*,

533 U.S. 289, 308–09 (2001); *Jennings v. Rodriguez*, 138 S. Ct. 830, 841 (2018); *Canal A Media Holding v. USCIS*, 964 F.3d 1250, 1257 (11th Cir. 2020).

24. The Administrative Procedure Act (APA), 5 U.S.C. § 706(2)(A-D), provides that courts shall set aside agency action that is arbitrary, capricious, an abuse of discretion, in excess of statutory authority, or taken without observance of procedure required by law. An arrest executed without a warrant or flight risk assessment, in violation of the statutory and regulatory framework, as well as the agency’s own published policy enacting those laws, constitutes unlawful agency action under the APA.
25. Agency action that exceeds statutory authority is also ultra vires. Where immigration officers act outside the bounds of their delegated powers—such as by failing to satisfy the mandatory predicates for warrantless arrest—the resulting detention is unauthorized. The Supreme Court has recognized that ultra vires agency action is subject to judicial review and may be enjoined. See *Leedom v. Kyne*, 358 U.S. 184, 188 (1958).
26. The APA provides a cause of action to challenge such agency misconduct, and courts have consistently invalidated immigration enforcement actions that disregard statutory limits or binding agency rules. See *Judulang v. Holder*, 565 U.S. 42, 53 (2011); *Calderon v. Sessions*, 330 F. Supp. 3d 944, 955–59 (S.D.N.Y. 2018); *Ramirez v. ICE*, 338 F. Supp. 3d 1, 41–43 (D.D.C. 2018).
27. The jurisdiction-stripping provisions of 8 U.S.C. § 1252 do not apply to this APA claim. The claim does not challenge a final order of removal, does not arise from removal proceedings, and does not implicate a discretionary decision. It is a collateral legal challenge to the legality of Petitioner’s arrest and detention, reviewable under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331 and 2241. See *INS*

v. St. Cyr, 533 U.S. 289, 308–09 (2001); *Jennings v. Rodriguez*, 138 S. Ct. 830, 841 (2018); *Canal A Media Holding v. USCIS*, 964 F.3d 1250, 1257 (11th Cir. 2020).

28. The availability of declaratory relief in this context is well established. In *Nielsen v. Preap*, 139 S. Ct. 954, 962 (2019), the Supreme Court affirmed that district courts retain jurisdiction to entertain requests for declaratory relief even where injunctive relief may be limited under 8 U.S.C. § 1252(f)(1).
29. In *INS v. Lopez-Mendoza*, 468 U.S. 1032, 1044–47 (1984), the Court declined to apply the exclusionary rule in civil immigration proceedings, in part, because it reasoned that declaratory relief remains available as an alternative for individuals in custody. The Court noted that the INS had developed rules and procedures to protect Fourth Amendment rights and that suppression might still be appropriate in cases involving “egregious violations of Fourth Amendment or other liberties that might transgress notions of fundamental fairness” or “widespread violations” of constitutional protections. See *id.* at 1050–51.
30. The INA prescribes three basic forms of detention for the vast majority of noncitizens in removal proceedings.
31. First, 8 U.S.C. § 1226 authorizes the detention of noncitizens in standard removal proceedings before an IJ. See 8 U.S.C. § 1229a. Individuals in § 1226(a) detention are generally entitled to a bond hearing at the outset of their detention, see 8 C.F.R. §§ 1003.19(a), 1236.1(d), while noncitizens who have been arrested, charged with, or convicted of certain crimes are subject to mandatory detention, see 8 U.S.C. § 1226(c).
32. Second, the INA provides for mandatory detention of noncitizens subject to expedited removal under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1) and for other recent arrivals seeking admission referred to under § 1225(b)(2).

33. Last, the INA also provides for detention of noncitizens who have been ordered removed, including individuals in withholding-only proceedings, *see* 8 U.S.C. § 1231(a)–(b).
34. This case concerns the detention provisions at §§ 1226(a) and 1225(b)(2).
35. The detention provisions at § 1226(a) and § 1225(b)(2) were enacted as part of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) of 1996, Pub. L. No. 104–208, Div. C, §§ 302–03, 110 Stat. 3009–546, 3009–582 to 3009–583, 3009–585. Section 1226(a) was most recently amended earlier this year by the Laken Riley Act, Pub. L. No. 119–1, 139 Stat. 3 (2025).
36. Following the enactment of the IIRIRA, EOIR drafted new regulations explaining that, in general, people who entered the country without inspection were not considered detained under § 1225 and that they were instead detained under § 1226(a). *See* Inspection and Expedited Removal of Aliens; Detention and Removal of Aliens; Conduct of Removal Proceedings; Asylum Procedures, 62 Fed. Reg. 10312, 10323 (Mar. 6, 1997).
37. Thus, in the decades that followed, most people who entered without inspection and were placed in standard removal proceedings received bond hearings, unless their criminal history rendered them ineligible pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1226(c). That practice was consistent with many more decades of prior practice, in which noncitizens who were not deemed “arriving” were entitled to a custody hearing before an IJ or other hearing officer. *See* 8 U.S.C. § 1252(a) (1994); *see also* H.R. Rep. No. 104–469, pt. 1, at 229 (1996) (noting that § 1226(a) simply “restates” the detention authority previously found at § 1252(a)).
38. Judicial estoppel is an equitable doctrine designed to protect the integrity of the judicial process by prohibiting parties from assuming inconsistent positions in litigation to gain unfair advantage. It is “especially” applicable “if it be to the prejudice of the party who has

acquiesced in the position formerly taken by him.” *Davis v Wakelee*, 156 U.S. 680, 689 (1895).

39. The Supreme Court reaffirmed this principle in *New Hampshire v. Maine*, holding that judicial estoppel applies when: (1) a party’s later position is “clearly inconsistent” with its earlier position; (2) the party succeeded in persuading a court to accept the earlier position, such that acceptance of the later position would create the perception that the court was misled; and (especially) when (3) the party would derive an unfair advantage or impose an unfair detriment on the opposing party if not estopped. 532 U.S. 742, 749–51 (2001). The Court emphasized that these factors are not “inflexible prerequisites or an exhaustive formula,” and that “additional considerations may inform the doctrine’s application in specific factual contexts.” *Id.* at 751.
40. In *New Hampshire*, the Court barred the state from asserting a boundary interpretation that contradicted its prior position, which had been accepted by the Court and had yielded a favorable outcome. The Court found that the reversal would “undermine the integrity of the judicial process” and create a “risk of inconsistent court determinations.” *Id.* at 751, 755.
41. In *Jennings v. Rodriguez*, a case in which the government prevailed, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) explicitly acknowledged that individuals who have already entered the United States and are not apprehended within 100 miles of the border or within 14 days of entry are subject to discretionary detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), not mandatory detention under § 1225(b).
42. On July 8, 2025, ICE, “in coordination with” DOJ, announced a new policy that rejected well-established understanding of the statutory framework and reversed decades of practice.

43. The new policy, entitled “Interim Guidance Regarding Detention Authority for Applicants for Admission,”³ claims that all persons who entered the United States without inspection shall now be subject to mandatory detention provision under § 1225(b)(2)(A). The policy applies regardless of when a person is apprehended, and affects those who have resided in the United States for months, years, and even decades.
44. On September 5, 2025, the BIA adopted this same position in a published decision, *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*. There, the Board held that all noncitizens who entered the United States without admission or parole are subject to detention under § 1225(b)(2)(A) and are ineligible for IJ bond hearings.
45. Since Respondents adopted their new policies, several federal courts have rejected their new interpretation of the INA’s detention authorities. Courts have likewise rejected *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, which adopts the same reading of the statute as ICE.
46. Even before ICE or the BIA introduced these nationwide policies, IJs in the Tacoma, Washington, immigration court stopped providing bond hearings for persons who entered the United States without inspection and who have since resided here. There, the U.S. District Court in the Western District of Washington found that such a reading of the INA is likely unlawful and that § 1226(a), not § 1225(b), applies to noncitizens who are not apprehended upon arrival to the United States. *Rodriguez Vazquez v. Bostock*, 779 F. Supp. 3d 1239 (W.D. Wash. 2025).
47. A growing number of federal courts have rejected ICE and EOIR’s expanded interpretation of the Immigration and Nationality Act’s detention provisions. These courts have consistently held that § 1226(a), not § 1225(b)(2), governs the detention authority applicable

³ Available at <https://www.aila.org/library/ice-memo-interim-guidance-regarding-detention-authority-for-applications-for-admission>.

in these cases. For example, courts in Massachusetts, Arizona, New York, Minnesota, California, and Nebraska have reached this conclusion. See: *Gomes v. Hyde*, No. 1:25-CV-11571-JEK (D. Mass. July 7, 2025); *Rosado v. Figueroa*, No. CV 25-02157 PHX DLR (CDB) (D. Ariz. Aug. 11, 2025); *Lopez Benitez v. Francis*, No. 25 CIV. 5937 (DEH) (S.D.N.Y. Aug. 13, 2025); *Maldonado v. Olson*, No. 0:25-cv-03142-SRN-SGE (D. Minn. Aug. 15, 2025); *Romero v. Hyde*, No. 25-11631-BEM (D. Mass. Aug. 19, 2025); *Ramirez Clavijo v. Kaiser*, No. 25-CV-06248-BLF (N.D. Cal. Aug. 21, 2025); *Palma Perez v. Berg*, No. 8:25CV494 (D. Neb. Sept. 3, 2025).

48. These decisions reflect a clear judicial consensus that the government's reliance on § 1225(b)(2) is misplaced in cases involving those whose immigration status lawfully falls under § 1226(a).
49. Courts have uniformly rejected DHS's and EOIR's new interpretation because it defies the INA. As the *Rodriguez Vazquez* court and others have explained, the plain text of the statutory provisions demonstrates that § 1226(a), not § 1225(b), applies to people like Petitioner.
50. Section 1226(a) applies by default to all persons "pending a decision on whether the [noncitizen] is to be removed from the United States." These removal hearings are held under § 1229a, to "decid[e] the inadmissibility or deportability of a[] [noncitizen]."
51. The text of § 1226 also explicitly applies to people charged as being inadmissible, including those who entered without inspection. See 8 U.S.C. § 1226(c)(1)(E). Subparagraph (E)'s reference to such people makes clear that, by default, such people are afforded a bond hearing under subsection (a). As the *Rodriguez Vazquez* court explained, "[w]hen Congress creates 'specific exceptions' to a statute's applicability, it 'proves' that absent those

exceptions, the statute generally applies.” *Rodriguez Vazquez*, 779 F. Supp. 3d at 1257 (citing *Shady Grove Orthopedic Assocs., P.A. v. Allstate Ins. Co.*, 559 U.S. 393, 400 (2010)); see also *Gomes*, 2025 WL 1869299, at *7.

52. Section 1226 therefore leaves no doubt that it applies to people who face charges of being inadmissible to the United States, including those who are present without admission or parole.

53. By contrast, § 1225(b) applies to people arriving at U.S. ports of entry or who recently entered the United States and were not free to mingle with the general population after being free from official restraint. The statute’s entire framework is premised on inspections at the border of people who are “seeking admission” to the United States. 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)(A). Indeed, the Supreme Court has explained that this mandatory detention scheme applies “at the Nation’s borders and ports of entry, where the Government must determine whether a [noncitizen] seeking to enter the country is admissible.” *Jennings v. Rodriguez*, 583 U.S. 281, 287 (2018).

54. Accordingly, the mandatory detention provision of § 1225(b)(2)(A) does not apply to people like Petitioner, who is an uninspected entrant. Critically, DHS itself alleged in the Notice to Appear that Petitioner “entered the United States without inspection and without parole or lawful admission,” a factual assertion that squarely contradicts the Government’s current position—adopted wholesale by the Board of Immigration Appeals—that Petitioner is ineligible to apply for bond before EOIR. This reversal undermines the integrity of the adjudicative process and triggers the principles of issue preclusion recognized in *B&B Hardware, Inc. v. Hargis Indus., Inc.*, 575 U.S. 138 (2015), which require courts to respect agency determinations when the ordinary elements of preclusion are met.

VII. EXHAUSTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE REMEDIES

55. This Court has jurisdiction to review habeas petitions filed by immigration detainees who assert that they are “in custody in violation of the Constitution or laws or treaties of the United States.” 28 U.S.C. § 2241(c)(3). Since exhaustion, as the government recognizes, is not required by statute in this context, its exhaustion argument is measured against the “more permissive” common-law, rather than statutory, exhaustion standard, which “‘cedes discretion to a [federal] court to decline the exercise of jurisdiction.’” *Brito v. Garland*, 22 F.4th 240, 255-56 (1st Cir. 2021) (quoting *Anversa v. Partners Healthcare Sys., Inc.*, 835 F.3d 167, 174 (1st Cir. 2016)); see ECF 7, at 6. While the exhaustion doctrine often “‘serves the twin purposes of protecting administrative agency authority and promoting judicial efficiency,’” there are “‘circumstances in which the interests of the individual weigh heavily against requiring administrative exhaustion.’” *Portela-Gonzalez v. Sec’y of the Navy*, 109 F.3d 74, 77 (1st Cir. 1997) (quoting *McCarthy v. Madigan*, 503 U.S. 140, 145-46 (1992)). As relevant here, “a court may consider relaxing the [exhaustion requirement] when unreasonable or indefinite delay threatens unduly to prejudice the subsequent bringing of a judicial action.” *Id.* “And, relatedly, if the situation is such that ‘a particular plaintiff may suffer irreparable harm if unable to secure immediate judicial consideration of his claim,’ exhaustion may be excused even though ‘the administrative decision making schedule is otherwise reasonable and definite.’” *Id.* (quoting *McCarthy*, 503 U.S. at 147). Irreparable harm may be established where a petitioner will be incarcerated or detained pending the exhaustion of administrative remedies. See *Brito*, 22 F.4th at 256 (“[E]xhaustion might not be required if [the petitioner] were challenging her incarceration . . . or the ongoing deprivation of some other liberty interest.” (quoting *Bois v. Marsh*, 801 F.2d 462, 468 (D.C. Cir. 1986))).

56. Waiver of the exhaustion requirement is warranted here because Petitioner is likely to

experience irreparable harm if he is unable to seek habeas relief. On September 5, 2025, based on the decision made by the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) in the Matter of *Yajure Hurtado*, BIA proclaimed that any person who crossed the border and entered the United States unlawfully is no longer eligible for release based on Immigration Court bonds.

57. As a result of *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, any attempt by Petitioner to request a custody redetermination before the Immigration Court would be futile, as the Immigration Judge would lack jurisdiction or authority to grant release on bond. Consequently, Petitioner has no meaningful administrative avenue to challenge his detention.

58. Moreover, Petitioner is suffering ongoing and irreparable harm from his continued confinement. Each day of unjustified detention inflicts significant physical, psychological, and emotional hardship, and deprives him of his liberty without due process of law. The balance of equities therefore strongly favors excusing exhaustion in order to permit immediate habeas corpus review of the legality of his detention.

VIII. JENNINGS V. RODRIGUEZ ORAL ARGUMENTS

59. In *Jennings v. Rodriguez*, the Supreme Court found that immigrants detained pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1225 were detained through the completion of proceedings. 583 U.S. 281, 297 (2018). For immigrants detained pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1226, “the Attorney General ‘may release’ the alien on ‘bond . . . or conditional parole.’” *Id.* at 306 (citation omitted). Respondent argues that he is detained under 8 U.S.C. § 1226. 8 U.S.C. § 1226(e) states:

“The Attorney General’s discretionary judgment regarding the application of [§1226] shall not be subject to review. No court may set aside any action or decision by the Attorney General under this section regarding the detention or release of any alien or the grant, revocation, or denial of bond or parole.”

60. The holding in *Jennings* is unambiguous: “§1226(e) precludes an alien from challeng[ing] a discretionary judgment. . . or a decision that the Attorney General has made regarding his

detention or release. But, §1226(e) does not preclude challenges [to] the statutory framework that permits [the alien's] detention without bail.” 583 U.S. at 295 (internal quotation marks and citations omitted). While *Jennings* was written in context of an immigrant challenging a decision of the Attorney General, the statute itself does not limit the prohibition on reviewing a decision to one party. *See contra* 8 C.F.R. § 1003.2(c)(3) (subjecting immigrants to a time and number bar for motions to reopen but explicitly exempting DHS from the bar).

61. Under *Jennings*, it would be improper for the Court to allow the Department to challenge the application of § 1226 and to assume that DHS erred in exercising its discretionary authority to release Petitioner under § 1226. Any arguments that this Court find that Respondent is held pursuant to § 1225 is prohibited because the law is clear that the decision to detain or release an immigrant pursuant to § 1226 is unreviewable. *See Matter of E-R-M- & L-R-M-*, 52 I&N Dec. 520, 523 (BIA 2011) (“Applying the above general principles, we find no reason to suppose that the broad discretion given to the Executive Branch regarding charging decisions in the criminal context does not also apply to charging decisions by the Executive Branch, that is, the DHS, in the immigration context.”) By arguing that the Respondent, who was released pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1226, was supposed to be released under a different section, the Department would be asking this Court to imagine what DHS’s intentions were and question DHS’s powers of prosecutorial discretion

IX. CLAIMS FOR RELIEF

COUNT ONE

VIOLATION OF BOND REGULATION

93. 48. Petitioner incorporates by reference the allegations of fact set forth in preceding paragraphs.

94. In 1997, after Congress amended the INA through BRIRA, EOIR and the then-Immigration and Naturalization Service issued an interim rule to interpret and apply IIRIRA. Specifically, under the heading of “Apprehension, Custody, and Detention of [Noncitizens],” the agencies explained that “[d]espite being applicants for admission, [noncitizens] who are present without having been admitted or paroled (formerly referred to as [noncitizens] who entered without inspection) will be eligible for bond and bond redetermination.” 62 Fed. Reg. at 10323 (emphasis added). The agencies thus made clear that individuals who had entered without inspection were eligible for consideration for bond and bond hearings before IJs under 8 U.S.C. § 1226 and its implementing regulations.
95. Nonetheless, pursuant to *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, EOIR has a policy and practice of applying § 1225(b)(2) to individual like Petitioner.
96. The application of § 1225(b)(2) to Petitioner unlawfully mandates his continued detention and violates 8 C.F.R. §§ 236.1, 1236.1, and 1003.19.

COUNT TWO

VIOLATION OF DUE PROCESS

97. Petitioner repeats, re-alleges, and incorporates by reference each and every allegation in the preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.
98. The government may not deprive a person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law. U.S. Const. amend. V. “Freedom from imprisonment—from government custody, detention, or other forms of physical restraint—lies at the heart of the liberty that the Clause protects.” *Zadvydas v. Davis*, 533 U.S. 678, 690 (2001).
99. Petitioner has a fundamental interest in liberty and being free from official restraint.

100. The government's detention of Petitioner without a bond redetermination hearing to determine whether he is a flight risk or danger to others violates his right to due process.

COUNT THREE

JUDICIAL ESTOPPEL

101. Petitioner repeats, re-alleges, and incorporates by reference each and every allegation in the preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.
102. The Government is judicially estopped from asserting that Petitioner is subject to mandatory detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)(A). In prior litigation, including *Jennings v. Rodriguez*, the Government prevailed, and in doing so argued that individuals who entered without inspection and were not apprehended near the border or within 14 days were subject to discretionary detention under § 1226(a), not mandatory detention under § 1225(b)(2)(A). See *Jennings v. Rodriguez*, No. 15-1204, Tr. of Oral Arg. at 7-8 (Nov. 30, 2016).
103. Courts accepted that position. Now, the Government reverses course and asserts the opposite interpretation to deny bond hearings. Under *New Hampshire v. Maine*, 532 U.S. 742 (2001), judicial estoppel applies where a party assumes a position, prevails, and then adopts a contrary position to gain an unfair advantage. The Government's reversal undermines the integrity of the judicial process and prejudices Petitioners who relied on the prior interpretation.

COUNT FOUR

VIOLATION OF THE INA

104. Petitioner incorporates by reference the allegations of fact set forth in the preceding paragraphs.

105. The mandatory detention provision at 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2) does not apply to all noncitizens residing in the United States who are subject to the grounds of inadmissibility. As relevant here, it does not apply to those noncitizens who were arrested “[o]n a warrant . . . pending a decision on whether the alien is to be removed from the United States.” 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a). Such noncitizens continue to be detained under § 1226(a), unless they are subject to § 1225(b)(1), § 1226(c), or § 1231.
106. The application of § 1225(b)(2) to Petitioner unlawfully mandates his continued detention and violates the INA.

COUNT FIVE

RELIEF UNDER THE ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE ACT

107. Petitioner incorporates by reference the allegations of fact and legal standards set forth in the preceding paragraphs.
108. Respondents’ arrest and continued detention of Petitioner were unlawful under the APA. The arrest on October 11, 2025 was executed without a warrant and without a contemporaneous or documented assessment of flight risk, in violation of 8 U.S.C. § 1357(a)(2), and 8 C.F.R. § 287.8(c)(2).
109. The arrest and continued detention of Petitioner, executed without a warrant and without any documented flight risk assessment, were unlawful ab initio and remain unlawful. The detention constitutes a continuing seizure of Petitioner’s person and is a direct and uninterrupted extension of the original unlawful arrest.
110. Respondents’ actions constitute final agency action under 5 U.S.C. § 704, as they reflect the consummation of the agency’s decision-making process and determine Petitioner’s legal rights and obligations.

111. Under 5 U.S.C. § 706(2)(A), (C), and (D), the APA requires courts to set aside agency action that is arbitrary, capricious, an abuse of discretion, not in accordance with law, in excess of statutory authority, or taken without observance of procedure required by law. Respondents' arrest and detention violate all of these provisions.
112. Petitioner's APA claim is not barred by 8 U.S.C. § 1252. The jurisdiction-stripping provisions of § 1252 do not apply because this claim does not challenge a final order of removal, does not arise from removal proceedings, and does not implicate a discretionary decision. It is a collateral legal challenge to the legality of the arrest and detention, reviewable under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331 and 2241.
113. Respondents' conduct also exceeds the scope of their statutory authority and is ultra vires. DHS officers are only authorized to arrest without a warrant when both statutory predicates—immigration violation and likelihood of escape—are satisfied. Where they are not, the agency acts beyond its delegated powers.
114. Petitioner therefore seeks declaratory relief under the APA declaring the arrest and detention unlawful, and injunctive relief enjoining Respondents from continuing or repeating detention based on the same unlawful arrest.
115. Petitioner further seeks a declaration that suppression is available in this case under the APA due to the egregious nature of the Fourth Amendment violation, or in the alternative, due to widespread violations of constitutional and statutory protections, as recognized in *INS v. Lopez-Mendoza*, 468 U.S. 1032, 1050–51 (1984).

X. PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Petitioner prays that this court grant the following relief:

1. Assume Jurisdiction over this matter;

2. Order that Petitioner shall not be transferred outside the Southern District of Mississippi while this habeas petition is pending.
3. Issue an Order to Show Cause ordering Respondents to show cause why this Petition should not be granted within three days.
4. Issue a Writ of Habeas Corpus requiring that Respondents release Petitioner or, in the alternative, provide Petitioner with a bond hearing pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) within seven days;
5. Declare that Respondents' arrest of Petitioner was unlawful under the Administrative Procedure Act, 5 U.S.C. § 706(2)(A), (C), and (D), as it was executed without a warrant or flight risk assessment, in violation of 8 U.S.C. § 1357(a)(2), and 8 C.F.R. § 287.8(c)(2),
6. Declare that Respondents acted ultra vires in arresting and detaining Petitioner without statutory authority, and that the ongoing detention is a continuation of that unlawful seizure and remains unauthorized.
7. Enjoin Respondents from continuing Petitioner's detention or initiating future detention based on the same unlawful arrest or, in the alternative, order that Petitioner be granted a bond hearing.
8. Grant any other and further relief that this Court deems just and proper.

Respectfully submitted on November 11, 2025.

/s/ Theophine Fernandez

THEOPHINE FERNANDEZ
Petitioner

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on November 11th, 2025, I mailed by certified mail this Summons and Petition to:

Pamela Bondi
Attorney General of the United States
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, D.C. 20530-0001

Kristi Noem
Office of the General Counsel
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
2707 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave, SE Washington, DC 20528-0485

Brian Acuna
New Orleans Deputy Managing Director
1250 Poydras Street, Ste 325
New Orleans, LA 70113

Todd Lyons
Acting Director of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
c/o Office of the Principal Legal Advisor (OPLA)
500 12th Street SW, Mail Stop 5900 Washington, D.C. 20536-5900

Rafael Vergara
Adams County Correctional Center
20 Hobo Fork Road, Natchez, MS 39120

Patrick Lemon
United States Attorney's Office
Southern District of Mississippi
501 E. Court St., Suite 4.430
Jackson, MS 39201

/s/ Theophine Fernandez

THEOPHINE FERNANDEZ
Petitioner