UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
BROWNSVILLE DIVISION

MARIO ALDANA SOSA, [redacted]

Petitioner,

v.

KRISTI NOEM,
Secretary, U.S. Department of Homeland Security;

PAMELA BONDI,
U.S. Attorney General;

MIGUEL VERGARA ,
Field Office Director of Enforcement and Removal Operations, San Antonio Field Office, Immigration and Customs Enforcement; and

WARDEN,
Warden of Port Isabel Service Detention Center,

Respondents.

Case No. 1:25-cv-282

PETITION FOR WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS PURSUANT TO 28 U.S.C. § 2241

INTRODUCTION

1. Petitioner Mario Aldana Sosa ("Mr. Aldana") is a noncitizen who entered the United States around nineteen years ago and has resided continuously in this country since his entry. On November 7, 2025, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("ICE") arrested Mr. Aldana without probable cause and placed him in immigration custody pending completion of removal proceedings. Mr. Aldana arrived in the United States years ago and does not have a significant criminal history, yet the Department of Homeland Security ("DHS") and the Executive Office of Immigration Review ("EOIR") have concluded that Mr. Aldana is subject to mandatory

immigration detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2), as an "applicant for admission" who is "seeking admission" to the United States.

2. DHS's interpretation of its detention authority under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2) marks a complete reversal of the interpretation of the statute that the government has embraced since its inception three decades ago, its prior practice, Supreme Court precedent, and the plain language of the Immigration and Nationality Act ("INA").

3. This Court should therefore intervene and grant Mr. Aldana's petition for a writ of habeas corpus and order his release from immigration custody immediately upon payment of his bond.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

4. Mr. Aldana is detained at the Port Isabel Service Detention Center in Los Fresnos, Texas, and is in physical custody of Respondents. *See* Ex. A, ICE Detainee Locator.

5. This Court has jurisdiction under 28 U.S.C. § 2241 (habeas corpus), 28 U.S.C. § 1331 (federal question), and 28 U.S.C. §§ 2201-02 (declaratory relief). Mr. Aldana's detention by Respondents is a "severe restraint" on his individual liberty "in custody in violation of the . . . laws . . . of the United States." *See Hensley v. Municipal Court, San Jose-Milpitas Jud. Dist.*, 411 U.S. 345, 351 (1973).

6. This Court may grant relief pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2241, the Declaratory Judgment Act, 28 U.S.C. § 2201 *et seq.*, and the All Writs Act, 28 U.S.C. § 1651.

7. Venue lies in the United States District Court for the Southern District of Texas, the judicial district in which Mr. Aldana was detained at the time the petition was filed. 28 U.S.C. § 1391(e); *Rumsfeld v. Padilla*, 542 U.S. 426, 434, 447 (2004).

REQUIREMENTS OF 28 U.S.C. § 2243

8. The Court must grant the petition for a writ of habeas corpus or order Respondents to show cause "forthwith," unless the petitioner is not entitled to relief. 28 U.S.C. § 2243. If an order to

show cause is issued, Respondents must file a return "within three days unless for good cause additional time, not exceeding twenty days, is allowed." *Id.*

9. Habeas corpus is "perhaps the most important writ known to the constitutional law . . . 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) (emphasis added). "The application for the writ usurps the attention and displaces the calendar of the judge or justice who entertains it and receives prompt action from him within the four corners of the application." *Yong v. I.N.S.*, 208 F.3d 1116, 1120 (9th Cir. 2000) (citation omitted).

10. Mr. Aldana requests the Court issue an Order to Show Cause, and direct Respondents to file a response within three days, in light of the significant restraint on Mr. Aldana's liberty and clear Constitutional violations in this case.

PARTIES

11. Petitioner Mario Aldana Sosa is a native and citizen of Guatemala who has been in immigration custody since November 7, 2025. Mr. Aldana is detained in ICE custody at the Port Isabel Detention Center in Los Fresnos, Texas. Ex. A.

12. Respondent Kristi Noem is the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security. She is responsible for the implementation and enforcement of the INA, and oversees ICE, which is responsible for Mr. Aldana's detention. Secretary Noem has ultimate custodial authority over Mr. Aldana and is sued in her official capacity.

13. Respondent Pamela Bondi is the Attorney General of the United States. She is responsible for the Department of Justice, of which the Executive Office for Immigration Review and the immigration court system it operates is a component agency. She is sued in her official capacity.

14. Respondent Miguel Vergara is the Director of the San Antonio Field Office of ICE's Enforcement and Removal Operations division. As such, he is Mr. Aldana's immediate custodian

and is responsible for his detention and removal. Mr. Vergara is sued in his official capacity.

15. Respondent Warden is employed as Warden of the Port Isabel Service Detention Center, where Mr. Aldana is detained. He has immediate physical custody of Mr. Aldana and is sued in his official capacity.

EXHAUSTION

16. The failure to exhaust administrative remedies does not bar Mr. Aldana's claim unless "Congress specifically mandates" exhaustion. *McCarthy v. Madigan*, 503. U.S. 140, 144 (1992).

17. Moreover, because Mr. Aldana's continued detention violates his right to due process—a constitutional right—administrative exhaustion is excused. *See Guitard v. U.S. Sec'y of the Navy*, 967 F.2d 737, 741 (2d Cir. 1992) ("Exhaustion of administrative remedies may not be required when . . . a plaintiff has raised a 'substantial constitutional question.'").

18. Although the Court may impose exhaustion requirements as a prudential matter, it should not do so in this case because further administrative exhaustion would be futile. Critically, as part of a recent policy shift, the Board of Immigration Appeals issued *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, 29 I. & N. Dec. 216 (BIA 2025), concluding that noncitizens who entered the United States without inspection at any point are forever after considered to be "arriving aliens" who are "seeking admission" and thus subject to mandatory detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)(A). Even though, as discussed below, this decision is legally erroneous, all immigration judges—including Appellate Immigration Judges at the Board—are obligated to apply published Board precedent. 8 C.F.R. § 103.10(b). Thus, waiting for the resolution of DHS's appeal to the Board with respect to a bond request would be futile because the result is foreclosed.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

19. Mr. Aldana entered the United States around nineteen years ago, crossing the southern border without inspection.

20. Prior to his detention, Mr. Aldana lived in Manassas, Virginia with his partner, their U.S. citizen son, and his partner's U.S. citizen son, whom he cares for as his own. Mr. Aldana is an active member the Christian Manassas Church of Christ in Manassas, Virginia, which began as a small group of family and friends called a "Cell Church" who gathered to pray and discuss their faith.

21. Mr. Aldana has no significant criminal convictions and is neither a flight risk nor a danger to society.

22. Nonetheless, on November 7, 2025, without an administrative warrant, ICE officers arrested Mr. Aldana while he was returning home after work.

23. Mr. Aldana now faces prolonged detention and separation from his partner and children without relief from this Court.

LEGAL BACKGROUND

Immigration Detention Authority (8 U.S.C. §§ 1225 and 1226)

24. In 1996, Congress passed the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act ("IIRIRA"), Pub. L. 104-208, which set forth separates procedures for the removal and detention of arriving or recently arrived noncitizens and those who have entered and established a presence in the United States, even those who have done so in violation of the immigration laws. *Compare* 8 U.S.C. § 1225 ("Inspection by immigration officers; expedited removal of inadmissible arriving aliens; referral for hearing"), *with* 8 U.S.C. §§ 1226 ("Apprehension and detention of aliens"), 1229a ("Removal proceedings"). For those individuals with an established presence in the United States, the INA mandates that "an immigration judge shall conduct proceedings for deciding the inadmissibility or deportability of a [noncitizen]." 8 U.S.C. § 1229a(a)(1). Removal proceedings under 8 U.S.C. § 1229a(a)(1) "shall be the sole and exclusive procedure from the United States" unless otherwise specified in the INA. 8 U.S.C. § 1229a(a)(3).

25. During the pendency of standard removal proceedings under 8 U.S.C. § 1229a, § 1226 provides for the detention of noncitizens already in the United States, even those who entered illegally or without inspection. While § 1226(c) mandates the detention of certain classes of criminal noncitizens, § 1226(a) sets forth the rule for noncitizens subject to discretionary detention under § 1226. Under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), a noncitizen "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). After an arrest, the noncitizen may continue to be detained, released on conditional parole, or released on a bond of at least $1,500. *Id.*

26. Once a noncitizen is detained, DHS makes an initial custody determination. 8 C.F.R. §§ 1003.19(a), 1236.1(d). The noncitizen may have the initial custody determination reviewed by an immigration judge, *see* 8 C.F.R. §§ 1003.19(a), 1236.1(d), and ultimately by the Board, *see* 8 C.F.R. § 1236.1(d)(3).

27. As part of IIRIRA, Congress created an expedited removal process to be implemented during inspection at the border for certain "applicants for admission" deemed to be "arriving aliens." 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b). The INA defines an applicant for admission as a noncitizen "present in the United States who has not been admitted or who arrives in the United States (whether or not at a designated port of arrival and including a [noncitizen] who is brought to the United States after having been interdicted in international or United States waters)." 8 U.S.C. § 1225(a)(1). The INA further clarifies that the term "application for admission" has "reference to the application for admission *into* the United States," making clear that the term applies to those applying to enter into the United States. 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(4) (emphasis added). Notably, individuals subject to expedited removal are not eligible for bond pending completion of their removal hearings. *Jennings v. Rodriguez*, 583 U.S. 281, 287 (2018); *see id*. at 303 (distinguishing individuals subject to § 1225(b) from those "already present in the United States").

28. Critically, expedited removal proceedings do not apply to all "applicants for admission." Instead, they may be applied only to: (1) individuals who are arriving in the United States at a port of entry without valid documents; and (2) those without valid documents who have been in the United States for less than two years and have not been admitted or paroled. 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1)(A)(iii)(II); *see Dep't of Homeland Sec. v. Thuraissigiam*, 591 U.S. 103, 109 (2020). Further, this second subset of individuals—noncitizens who have been in the United States for less than two years and have not been admitted or paroled—only become subject to expedited removal if so designated by DHS. *See* 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1)(A)(iii)(I) (granting discretionary authority to apply expedited removal to any or all noncitizens described in 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1)(A)(iii)(II)); *See* Notice, Designating Aliens for Expedited Removal, 90 Fed. Reg. 8139, 8139 (Jan. 24, 2025) (designating the entire subset of noncitizens described in 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1)(A)(iii)(II) subject to expedited removal: noncitizens "determined to be inadmissible under [8 U.S.C. §§ 1182(a)(6)(C) or (a)(7)] who have not been admitted or paroled into the United States and who have not affirmatively shown . . . that they have been physically present in the United States continuously for if so designated by DHS.").

29. Noncitizens placed in expedited removal proceedings are referred to standard removal proceedings under § 1229a if they establish a credible fear of persecution if removed. *See* 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b). Otherwise, the noncitizen is ordered removed "without further hearing or review." 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1)(B)(iii). Further, any noncitizen "subject to the procedures under [8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)] shall be detained pending a final determination of credible fear of persecution and, if found not to have such a fear, until removed." 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1)(B)(iv).

30. Finally, § 1225(b)(2) mandates the detention of certain "applicants for admission" not covered by § 1225(b)(1). Yet in keeping with the statute's focus on arriving aliens, the statute does not mandate detention for all applicants for admission. Instead, § 1225(b)(2)(A) only mandates the

detention of "an applicant for admission" when "the examining immigration officer determines" that the noncitizen who "seeking admission is not clearly and beyond a doubt entitled to be admitted."

31. Courts and the U.S. Government have consistently taken the position that noncitizens who have entered without inspection and are encountered in the United States years after their initial entry are entitled to removal proceedings under § 1229a and subject to detention under § 1226. *See, e.g.*, *Jennings*, 583 U.S. at 303 ("While the language of §§ 1225(b)(1) and (b)(2) is quite clear, §1226(c) is even clearer. As noted, § 1226 applies to aliens *already present in the United States*.") (emphasis added); IIRIRA Implementing Regulation, 62 Fed. Reg. 10312, 10323 (Mar. 6, 1997) ("Despite being applicants for admission, aliens who are present without having been admitted or paroled (formerly referred to as aliens who entered without inspection) will be eligible for bond and bond redetermination."). This is because these individuals are not "seeking admission." *See Lopez Benitez v. Francis*, -- F. Supp. 3d --, 2025 WL 2371588 (S.D.N.Y. Aug. 8, 2025) (holding that a noncitizens who has been residing in the United States for more than two years cannot be classified as an "alien seeking admission"); *Martinez v. Hyde*, 792 F. Supp. 3d 211 (D. Mass. July 24, 2025); *see also* Ex. B, Letter from Congressmen Lamar Smith Describing Legislative Intent.

32. Indeed, nearly 30 years of agency interpretation of the law would have provided Mr. Aldana with an opportunity to seek review of his custody through a hearing before an immigration judge under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a).

33. Yet in July 2025, the Government abruptly rejected the reading of 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) it had embraced when IIRIRA was first enacted and over three decades since. In a complete reversal, "DHS, in coordination with the Department of Justice (DOJ) . . . revisited its legal position on detention and release authorities," and issued guidance instructing all ICE employees that 8 U.S.C. § 1225 rather than § 1226 "is the applicable immigration detention authority for all applicants for

admission." Ex. C, ICE Memorandum: Interim Guidance Regarding Detention Authority for Applicants for Admission.

34. And in September 2025, the Board of Immigration Appeals adopted DHS's novel statutory reading of 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)(A) in *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, 29 I. & N. Dec. 216 (BIA 2025). The Board found no distinction between the statutory terms "applicant for admission" and "seeking admission," and concluded that § 1225(b)(2) must be read to include all noncitizens who have not been inspected and admitted at any point. *Id*. at 221-22. Further, the Board asserted that legislative history supported its construction, although it did not cite any legislative history addressing the detention statutes.[1] *Id*. at 223-25.

35. Legislative history actually contradicts the Board's analysis. In February 1997, Congressman Lamar Smith, then Chair of the House Subcommittee on Immigration and Claims for the Committee on the Judiciary, wrote to the former Immigration and Naturalization Service ("INS") in response to the INS's proposed rulemaking to implement the provisions of IIRIRA. *See* Ex. B. In his comment on the proposed regulation, he explained the legislative intent behind several provisions of IIRIRA that focused on "prompt apprehension, adjudication, and removal of aliens who are not lawfully present in the United States." *Id*. at 4. Specifically, he discussed expedited removal, the concept of arriving aliens, limitations on relief, changes to proceedings before an immigration judge, and limitations of appeals. *See generally id*.

36. Relevant here, Congressman Smith explained that the definition of "arriving alien" should be limited and noted that the legislation used the term "arriving alien" "to distinguish aliens at the

[1] This decision represents a complete change in statutory interpretation. In fact, just weeks prior to *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, the Attorney General designated for publication a decision recognizing that a noncitizen arrested in the interior of the United States and placed into removal proceedings under 8 U.S.C. § 1229a is detained under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) and eligible for release on bond. *See Matter of Akhmedov*, 29 I. & N. Dec. 166 (BIA 2025).

border of the United States from those who have made a substantial physical entry into the United States." *Id*. at 5-6. Congressman Smith thus recommended the regulations adopt a temporal limitation to who is considered "arriving," because "[c]riteria based on time are preferable [and] would embrace both those who remain close to the border as well as those who escape shortly after having made an entry." *Id*. at 6. Congressman Smith continued, "[b]riefly put, if the alien is caught on the day he or she arrives, the alien is an 'arriving' alien, but not otherwise. This is a common sense approach that should be easy for INS officials to understand and implement." *Id*.

37. Indeed, courts that have reviewed this issue have almost universally agreed with this "common sense approach" and overwhelmingly rejected Respondents' new reading of the statute. *See, e.g.*, *Covarrubias v. Vergara*, No. 5:25-CV-112, 2025 WL 2950097 (S.D. Tex. Oct. 8, 2025); *Buenrostro-Mendez v. Bondi*, No. H-25-3726, 2025 WL 2886346 (S.D. Tex. Oct. 7, 2025); *see also Morales Rodriguez v. Arnott*, No. 6:25-cv-836-MDH (W.D. Mo. Nov. 18, 2025); *Quintero Flores v. Noem*, No. 25-cv-1614-RDA-LRV (E.D. Va. Oct. 29, 2025); *Mendoza Gutierrez v. Baltasar*, No. 25-CV-2720-RMR, 2025 WL 2962908 (D. Colo. Oct. 17, 2025); *Lopez-Arevelo v. Ripa*, No. EP-25-CV-337-KC, 2025 WL 2691828 (W.D. Tex. Sept. 22, 2025); *Lopez Benitez*, 2025 WL 2371588; *Martinez*, 792 F. Supp. 3d 211.

38. Notwithstanding the resounding rejection of DHS and DOJ's policy, Respondents continue to defend the policy. Yet this policy deprives Mr. Aldana of any process by subjecting him—an individual without significant criminal history and with many years' residence in the United States—to the same mandatory detention provisions as applicants at the border seeking to initially enter the United States.

CLAIMS FOR RELIEF

COUNT ONE
Violation of Substantive Due Process
Arbitrary Detention; 8 U.S.C. §§ 1225 and 1226

39. Mr. Aldana realleges and incorporates by reference the paragraphs above.

40. 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). Indeed, the liberty interest in freedom from detention "is the most elemental of liberty interests." *Hamdi v. Rumsfeld*, 542 U.S. 507, 529 (2004).

41. Mr. Aldana has a fundamental interest in liberty and being free from official restraint, and the government's new, erroneous classification of Mr. Aldana as an "arriving alien" who is "seeking admission" to the United States and thus subject to mandatory detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)(A) without any avenue to challenge that detention violates his substantive right to due process.

42. Respondents' insistence that Mr. Aldana remain in immigration custody pursuant to these policies is a violation of Mr. Aldana's due process rights.

COUNT TWO
Violation of Procedural Due Process
Arbitrary Detention; 8 U.S.C. §§ 1225 and 1226

43. Mr. Aldana realleges and incorporates by reference the paragraphs above.

44. The Supreme Court has been clear that for noncitizens "*on the threshold of initial entry* . . . [w]hatever the procedure authorized by Congress is, it is due process." *Shaughnessy v. United States ex rel. Mezei*, 345 U.S. 206, 212 (1953) (emphasis added). However, Mr. Aldana—after nearly twenty years in the United States—is clearly not on the threshold of initial entry. Indeed, it

is well established that noncitizens like Mr. Aldana who "once passed through our gates, even illegally" are entitled to greater constitutional protections. *Id.*; *see also Zadvydas*, 553 U.S. at 693 ("It is well established that certain constitutional protections available to persons inside the United States are unavailable to [noncitizens] outside of our geographic borders."). "The fundamental requirement of due process is the opportunity to be heard at a meaningful time and in a meaningful manner." *Mathews v. Eldridge*, 424 U.S. 319, 333 (1976). Thus, even if the Government were to argue that Mr. Aldana is properly detained under § 1225(b)(2)—which he is not—his detention does not comply with due process.

45. Mr. Aldana has a strong private interest in remaining free from detention. Indeed, the Supreme Court has affirmed that even for noncitizens, "[f]reedom from imprisonment—from government custody, detention, or other forms of physical restraint—lies at the heart of the liberty that [the Due Process] Clause protects." *Zadvydas*, 533 U.S. at 690. And the Supreme Court, recognizing the strong private interest in remaining free from detention, has held "that detention violates that Clause unless the detention is ordered in a criminal proceeding with adequate procedural protections, or, in certain special and narrow non-punitive circumstances where a special justification, such as harm-threatening mental illness, outweighs the individual's constitutionally protected interest in avoiding physical restraint." *Id*. (cleaned up).

46. While the government has an interest in ensuring Mr. Aldana's appearance at his removal proceedings and protecting the community, *see id*., the bond procedures established under § 1226(a) adequately serve both interests by allowing an immigration judge to make an individualized assessment of a noncitizen's flight risk and the danger he may pose to the community. And the government cannot plausibly justify denying a bond hearing based on "administrative burdens" when it has, for the past three decades, consistently provided bond hearings to noncitizens like Mr. Aldana who have established a presence in the United States after

previously entering without inspection.

47. Finally, this case demonstrates the high risk of erroneous deprivation that would result from allowing DHS to detain noncitizens like Mr. Aldana without any opportunity to challenge his detention before the administrative agency. Without a bond hearing, there is a high probability that Mr. Aldana would be detained even though his continued detention serves no non-punitive purpose as it is unnecessary to protect the community or to ensure his appearance at his removal proceedings.

48. In Respondents' contrasting version of the INA, as espoused in *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, Mr. Aldana may be stripped of any mechanism to require the government to justify his detention. Such a lack of *any* process, necessarily leading to an erroneous deprivation of liberty, cannot be supported by the Constitution.

COUNT THREE
Violation of the Immigration and Nationality Act
Arbitrary Detention; 8 U.S.C. §§ 1225 and 1226

49. Mr. Aldana realleges and incorporates by reference the paragraphs above.

50. This Court should rule that Mr. Aldana is subject to detention under § 1226(a). Respondents' contrary reading of the statute has been overwhelmingly rejected in more than two hundred district courts decisions that have ruled on the issue. *See, e.g.*, *Mendoza Gutierrez*, 2025 WL 2962908; *Singh v. Lyons*, No. 1:25-cv-1606, 2025 WL 2932635 (E.D. Va. Oct. 14, 2025); *Covarrubias*, 2025 WL 2950097; *Buenrostro-Mendez*, 2025 WL 2886346; *S.D.B.B. v. Johnson*, No. 1:25-cv-882 (M.D.N.C. Oct. 7, 2025); *Ortiz Ventura v. Noem*, No. 1:25-cv-01429-MSN-WBP (E.D. Va. Oct. 2, 2025); *Quispe-Ardiles v. Noem*, No. 1:25-cv-01382-MSN-WEF (E.D. Va. Sept. 30, 2025); *Lopez-Arevelo v. Ripa*, No. EP-25-CV-337-KC, 2025 WL 2691828 (W.D. Tex. Sept. 22, 2025); *Hasan v. Crawford*, No. 1:25-cv-01408-LMB-IDD, 2025 WL 2682255 (E.D. Va. Sept. 19, 2025); *Sampiao v. Hyde*, -- F. Supp. 3d --, 2025 WL 2607924 (D. Mass. Sept. 9, 2025); *Alvarez-*

Martinez v. Noem, No. 5:25-CV-01007-JKP, 2025 WL 2598379, at *4 (W.D. Tex., Sept. 8, 2025); *Leal-Hernandez*, No. 1:25-cv-2428, 2025 WL 2430025 (D. Md. Aug. 24, 2025); *Lopez Benitez*, 2025 WL 2371588; *Martinez*, 792 F. Supp. 3d 211; *Gomes v. Hyde*, -- F. Supp. 3d --, 2025 WL 1869299 (D. Mass. July 7, 2025); *Rodriguez Vazquez v. Bostock*, 779 F. Supp. 3d 1239 (W.D. Wash. 2025).

51. As the Supreme Court recognized in *Jennings*, § 1225(b) focuses on individuals arriving at the border and ports of entry and thus are in the process of "seeking admission." *Jennings*, 583 U.S. at 297, 303; *see also* 8 C.F.R. § 1.2 (addressing noncitizens who are geographically "coming or attempting to come into the United States."). Conversely, § 1226(a) focuses on individuals who are in the United States and the Government is seeking to remove through removal proceedings. *Id*. at 303. The INA further clarifies that the term "application for admission" has "reference to the application for admission into the United States," making clear that the term applies to those applying to enter into the United States physically. 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(4). Mr. Aldana cannot reasonably be described as "seeking admission" to a country he has resided in for twenty years.

52. The titles of the two statutory sections make this distinction clear. *Compare* 8 U.S.C. § 1225 (titled "Inspection by immigration officers; expedited removal of inadmissible arriving aliens; referral for hearing"), *with* 8 U.S.C. § 1226 ("Apprehension and detention of aliens").

53. Furthermore, equating the term "applicant for admission" with "seeking admission," as EOIR has concluded in *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, would render the phrase "seeking admission" superfluous because it "violates the principle that Congress is presumed to have acted intentionally in choosing different words in a statute, such that different words and phrases should be accorded different meanings." *Lopez Benitez*, 2025 WL 2371588, at *6; *TRW Inc. v. Andrews*, 534 U.S. 19, 31 (2001) ("[N]o clause, sentence, or word shall be superfluous, void, or insignificant."); *accord Martinez*, 792 F. Supp. 3d at 221; *Mendoza Gutierrez*, 2025 WL 2962908, at *7. Section 1225's

mandatory detention regime applies to noncitizens who meet three criteria; first, the noncitizen must be "an 'applicant for admission' (a 'term of art' in the INA that includes noncitizens who 'arrive[] in the United States,' as well as those already 'present in the United States who ha[ve] not been admitted," second, the noncitizen must be "actively 'seeking admission' to the country," and third, the noncitizen must be "one whom an examining immigration officer determines 'is not clearly and beyond a doubt entitled to be admitted.'" *Lopez Benitez*, 2025 WL 2371588, at *6 (quoting *Martinez*, 792 F. Supp. 3d at 214).

54. In addition, "Respondents' reading of § 1225(b)(2)(A) 'negates the plain meaning of the text.'" *Id.* (quoting *Martinez*, 792 F. Supp. 3d at 218). The phrase "seeking admission," is in the present tense, connoting a current action. Yet, Mr. Aldana was not actively seeking admission when DHS apprehended him and placed him in custody; he "ha[d] already 'entered' the country (albeit unlawfully)." *Id.*

55. Similarly, the ordinary meaning of the terms "seeking" and "admission" do not apply to noncitizens, like Mr. Aldana, who are not actively seeking inspection to enter the United States but instead have been residing in the country for many years. *Lopez Benitez*, 2025 WL 2371588; *Jose Alejandro v. Olson*, 2025 WL 2896348 (S.D. Ind. Oct. 11, 2025).

56. Additionally, applying § 1225(b)(2) to all noncitizens except those who have been admitted could not have been Congress's intent because it would render other mandatory detention provisions, such as § 1226(c)(1)(E), unnecessary. *Sampiao*, 2025 WL 2607924, at *8; *Rodriguez Vasquez*, 779 F. Supp. 3d at 1259; *Gomes*, 2025 WL 1869299, at *7. Section 1225(c) requires mandatory detention for individuals who are present in the United States without being admitted or paroled and who are subject to specific criminal conduct criteria. *Sampiao*, 2025 WL 2607924, at *8. If all noncitizens who are inadmissible are subject to mandatory detention, there would be no reason for Congress to have enumerated which inadmissible noncitizens are subject to

mandatory detention under § 1226(c). *Id*. If Congress intended § 1225(b) detention to extend to all noncitizens who have not been admitted, the recent amendments would be surplusage. *Sampiao*, 2025 WL 2607924, at *8 (citing *Marx v. Gen. Revenue Corp.*, 568 U.S. 371, 386 (2013) ("The canon against surplusage is strongest when an interpretation would render superfluous another part of the same statutory scheme.")).

57. For these reasons, the plain language of § 1225(b)(2)(A) demonstrates that an individual, such as Mr. Aldana, is not an "applicant for admission" who is "seeking admission" to the United States.

58. Thus, this Court must find that to subject Mr. Aldana to mandatory detention under 8 U.S.C.§ 1225(b)(2)(A) would be a clear violation of the INA.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

Based on the foregoing, Mr. Aldana requests that this Court:

a. Assume jurisdiction over the matter;

b. Issue an order requiring Respondents to show cause why this Petition should not be granted within three days;

c. Declare that 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) governs Mr. Aldana's detention by U.S. immigration authorities;

d. Order a bond hearing as authorized under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) at which 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)(A) cannot be applied, DHS bears the burden of proof, and the immigration judge considers Mr. Aldana's ability to pay bond as part of the factors in setting bond; and

e. Grant any other and further relief this Court deems just and proper.

Dated: November 19, 2025

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Jessica A. Dawgert
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MARK B. WILSON
Law Clerk

Counsel for Petitioner

VERIFICATION BY SOMEONE ACTING ON PETITIONER'S BEHALF PURSUANT TO 28 U.S.C. § 2242

I am submitting this verification on behalf of the Petitioner because I am Petitioner's attorney. I or my legal assistants have discussed with Petitioner and/or his family the events described in this Petition. Based on those discussions and documents Petitioner's family has provided to me, I hereby verify that the statements made in this Petition for a Writ of Habeas Corpus are true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Dated: November 19, 2025

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Jessica A. Dawgert

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