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**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
SAN DIEGO DIVISION**

EDGAR LEON-MORALES,)

Petitioner,)

v.)

Kristi NOEM, in her official capacity as Secretary)
of Homeland Security, Christopher J. LAROSE,)
in his official capacity as Warden of Otay Mesa)
Detention Center, Gregory J. ARCHAMBEAULT,)
in his official capacity as San Diego Field Office)
Director, ICE Enforcement Removal Operations;)
Todd LYONS, in his official capacity as Acting Director)
of ICE; and Pamela BONDI, U.S.)
Attorney General; IMMIGRATION AND)
CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT; DEPARTMENT OF)
HOMELAND SECURITY,)

Respondents.)

'25CV3220 GPC JLB

**PETITION FOR WRIT
OF HABEAS CORPUS**



I. INTRODUCTION

1. Petitioner EDGAR LEON-MORALES (“Petitioner”) is a 47-year-old Mexican national who last entered the United States in 2014.

2. On November 7, 2025, Petitioner was detained by Respondents at the Otay Mesa Detention Center.

3. Petitioner has not requested a custody redetermination as the impact

1 of the Board of Immigration Appeals (“BIA”) decision in *Matter of Yajure*
2 *Hurtado*, 28 I&N Dec. 216 (BIA 2025) has meant that all requests for custody
3 redetermination under Petitioner’s circumstances have been dismissed for lack
4 of jurisdiction.

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6 4. Petitioner therefore seeks a writ of habeas corpus directing his
7 immediate release.

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9 **II. VENUE AND JURISDICTION**

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11 5. This Court has jurisdiction under 28 U.S.C. § 2241 (habeas corpus),
12 28 U.S.C. § 1331 (federal question), and Article I, § 9, cl. 2 of the Constitution
13 (Suspension Clause), as Petitioner is presently in custody under the authority
14 of the United States and challenging his detention as in violation of the
15 Constitution, laws, or treaties of the United States.

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17 6. The federal district courts have jurisdiction under Section 2241 to
18 hear habeas claims by individuals challenging the lawfulness of their detention
19 by ICE. *See Jennings v. Rodriguez*, 583 U.S. 281, 290-92 (2018).

20
21 7. Venue is proper because Petitioner is detained in the Otay Mesa
22 Detention Center, within the San Diego Division, and Respondent LaRose is his
23 immediate custodian. *See* 28 U.S.C. §§ 2241(d), 1391(e).

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25 **III. PARTIES**

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27 8. Petitioner is a 47-year-old Mexican national who resides in

1 Oceanside, California. He is currently detained by Respondents at the Otay
2 Mesa Detention Center in San Diego, California, pending removal proceedings.

3 9. Respondent Christopher J. LaRose is the Warden of Otay Mesa
4 Detention Center. Respondent La Rose is responsible for the operation of the
5 Detention Center where Petitioner is detained. As such, Respondent LaRose
6 has immediate physical custody of the Petitioner. He is being sued in his
7 official capacity.
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9 10. Respondent Gregory J. Archambeault is the San Diego Field Office
10 Director (“FOD”) for ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations. Respondent
11 Archambeault is responsible for the oversight of ICE operations at the Otay
12 Mesa Detention Center. Respondent Archambeault is being sued in his official
13 capacity.
14

15 11. Respondent Todd Lyons is the Acting Director of ICE. Respondent
16 Lyons is responsible for the administration of ICE and the implementation and
17 enforcement of the immigration laws, including immigrant detention. As such,
18 Respondent Lyons is a legal custodian of Petitioner and is being sued in his
19 official capacity.
20

21 12. Respondent Kristi Noem is the Secretary of the Department of
22 Homeland Security (“DHS”). As Secretary of DHS, Secretary Noem is
23 responsible for the general administration and enforcement of the immigration
24 laws of the United States. Respondent Secretary Noem is being sued in her
25 official capacity.
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IV. EXHAUSTION OF REMEDIES

13. No statutory exhaustion requirement applies. *See* 8 § U.S.C. 2241; *Laing v. Ashcroft*, 370 F.3d 994, 998 (9th Cir. 2004). Therefore, exhaustion is not jurisdictionally required.

14. Additionally, further agency steps will be futile. Recently, the BIA published *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, 28 I&N Dec. 216 (BIA 2025). In its decision, the BIA adopted DHS' reading of 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2), finding individuals similarly situated to Petitioner ineligible for release on bond.

15. In Petitioner's case, any request for custody redetermination will be dismissed by the Immigration Court for lack of jurisdiction and any appeal to the BIA will be dismissed. *Matter of Yajure Hurtado* currently controls in Petitioner's case and any attempt to request agency evaluation of his detention will be futile.

V. STATEMENT OF FACTS

16. Petitioner is a Mexican national  He first entered the United States in 2014.

17. On or about November 7, 2025, Petitioner was apprehended by ICE when he attended a scheduled appointment with them.

18. Petitioner has remained in Respondents' custody since that time.

19. Petitioner's next master hearing is scheduled for November 20, 2025, at 8:00 a.m. before Immigration Judge Mark Sameit at 7488 Calzada de la

1 Fuente, San Diego, California.

2 20. Petitioner now seeks habeas relief because continuing his detention
3 exceeds statutory authority and violates the Fifth Amendment.
4

5
6 **VI. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR RELIEF SOUGHT**

7 21. Habeas corpus relief extends to a person “in custody under or by color
8 of the authority of the United States” if the person can show he is “in custody
9 in violation of the Constitution or laws or treaties of the United States.” 28
10 U.S.C. § 2241 (c)(1), (c)(3); see also *Antonelli v. Warden, U.S.P. Atlanta*, 542
11 F.3d 1348, 1352 (11th Cir. 2008) (holding a petitioner’s claims are proper under
12 28 U.S.C. section 2241 if they concern the continuation or execution of
13 confinement).
14

15 22. “[H]abeas corpus is, at its core, an equitable remedy,” *Schlup v.*
16 *Delo*, 513 U.S. 298, 319 (1995), that “[t]he court shall ... dispose of [] as law
17 and justice require,” 28 U.S.C. § 2243. “[T]he court’s role was most extensive
18 in cases of pretrial and noncriminal detention.” *Boumediene v. Bush*, 553
19 U.S. 723, 779–80 (2008). “[W]hen the judicial power to issue habeas corpus
20 properly is invoked the judicial officer must have adequate authority to make
21 a determination in light of the relevant law and facts and to formulate and
22 issue appropriate orders for relief, including, if necessary, an order directing
23 the prisoner’s release.” *Id.* at 787.
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VII. CAUSES OF ACTION

COUNT ONE

8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), NOT 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b), APPLIES TO PETITIONER

23. Petitioner incorporates paragraphs 1 through 22 as if fully set out herein.

24. Recently, Respondents began arguing that those in situations similar to Petitioner are detained pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2), which mandates the detention of an “applicant for admission” throughout the entirety of removal proceedings.

25. Respondents’ newly formulated definition of “applicant for admission,” which would include any noncitizen who has not been formally admitted regardless of years of residence in the United States, directly contradicts both the plain text of the statute and controlling Ninth Circuit precedent.

26. As the Ninth Circuit explained in interpreting the phrase “applicant for admission” under § 1225(b)(1), *“an immigrant submits an ‘application for admission’ at a distinct point in time,”* and stretching that phrase to apply *“potentially for years or decades ... would push the statutory text beyond its breaking point.”* *United States v. Gambino-Ruiz*, 91 F.4th 981, 988–89 (9th Cir. 2024) (citing *Torres v. Barr*, 976 F.3d 918, 922–26 (9th Cir. 2020) (en banc)).

27. Because Petitioner has resided continuously in the United States since 2014, his period as an “applicant for admission” has long since closed.

28. Numerous courts across the United States have considered this issue

1 subsequent to Respondents’ new policy of treating the vast majority of
2 immigrants in their custody as being detained pursuant to 8 U.S.C. §
3 1225(b)(2) and the BIA’s decision supporting this interpretation in *Matter of*
4 *Yajure Hurtado*, 28 I&N Dec. 216 (BIA 2025).

5
6 29. This Court, joining the general consensus with other courts across
7 this country, has previously held those similarly situated to Petitioner are
8 being held under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) and therefore are not subject to mandatory
9 detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b). *See e.g., Martinez Lopez v. Noem, et al.*, No:
10 25-cv-2717-JES-AHG, 2025 WL 3030457 (S.D. Cal. Oct. 30, 2025).

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13 **COUNT TWO**
14 **(PROCEDURAL DUE PROCESS)**

15 30. Petitioner incorporates paragraphs 1 through 22 as if fully set out
16 herein.

17 31. The Fifth Amendment forbids deprivation of liberty without notice
18 and a meaningful opportunity to be heard before a neutral decision-maker. Due
19 process protects “all ‘persons’ within the United States, including [non-
20 citizens], whether their presence here is lawful, unlawful, temporary, or
21 permanent.” *Zadvydas v. Davis*, 533 U.S. 678, 698 (2001).

22
23 32. Subsection 1003.19(i)(2) strips Petitioner of that protection by
24 allowing the prosecuting agency—after losing at the bond hearing—to veto the
25 Immigration Judge’s order with a one-page notice that requires no showing of
26 danger, flight risk, or likelihood of success on appeal.
27

1 33. Applying the *Mathews v. Eldridge*, 424 U.S. 319 (1976), test,
2 Petitioner's liberty interest is paramount; the risk of erroneous deprivation is
3 extreme considering the Immigration Judge's determination that Petitioner is
4 not subject to mandatory detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(c) and does not pose
5 a danger to the community. Likewise, the risk of erroneous deprivation of
6 liberty is great due to the lack of a non-independent adjudicator. *Marcello v.*
7 *Bonds*, 39 U.S. 302, 305-306 (1955). In filing Form EOIR-43, ICE is acting as
8 both the prosecutor as well as the adjudicator.
9

10
11 34. While the government has discretion to detain individuals under 8
12 U.S.C. § 1226(a) and to revoke custody decisions under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(b), this
13 discretion is not "unlimited" and must comport with constitutional due process.
14 *See Zadvydas*, 533 U.S. at 698.
15

16
17 **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

18 WHEREFORE, Petitioner prays that this Court grant the following relief:

- 19 1) Assume jurisdiction over this matter;
20 2) Grant Petitioner a writ of habeas corpus directing the Respondents to
21 immediately release him from custody, under reasonable conditions of
22 supervision;
23 3) Order Respondents to refrain from transferring Petitioner out of the
24 jurisdiction of this court during the pendency of these proceedings and while
25 the Petitioner remains in Respondents' custody;
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- 1 4) Order Respondents to file a response within 3 business days of the filing of
2 this petition;
3 5) Award attorneys' fees to Petitioner; and
4 6) Grant any other and further relief which this Court deems just and proper.
5

6 I affirm, under penalty of perjury, that the foregoing is true and correct.

7
8 Respectfully submitted this 19th day of November, 2025.

9 /s/ Murray D. Hilts

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13 CA Bar # 2169690

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EDGAR LEON-MORALES,

Agency No. 

Petitioner,

v.

KRISTI NOEM, Secretary, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, et. al.,

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