

I. PARTIES & CUSTODY

1. Petitioner Ana Catalina Chitic Mateo is currently detained at the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (“ICE”) Montgomery Processing Center, located at 806 Hilbig Road, Conroe, TX 77301. She has been in ICE custody since November 13, 2025.
2. Respondent Randy Tate, in his official capacity as Warden of the Montgomery Processing Center, has refused to effect Petitioner’s release from unlawful custody at that facility.
3. Respondent Bret Bradford, in his official capacity as Director of the Houston Field Office of ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations, has refused to effect Petitioner’s release from unlawful custody at the Montgomery Processing Center.
4. Respondent Kristi Noem, in her official capacity as Secretary of the United States Department of Homeland Security, has refused to exercise her authority to oversee her department’s ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations and thereby effect Petitioner’s release from unlawful custody at the Montgomery Processing Center.
5. Respondent Pam Bondi, in her official capacity as Attorney General of the United States, has refused to exercise her authority to oversee her department’s ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations and thereby effect Petitioner’s release from unlawful custody at the Montgomery Processing Center.

II. JURISDICTION & VENUE

6. This Court has jurisdiction pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2241 to issue writs of habeas corpus when the petitioner is in custody in violation of the Constitution or laws of the United States.
7. Venue is proper in this district because Petitioner is detained within this district.

III. EXHAUSTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE REMEDIES

8. Petitioner has exhausted her administrative remedies to the extent required by law.
9. Petitioner has fully cooperated with Respondents and has not delayed or obstructed her detention.
10. Petitioner's parole request was made but denied.
11. Petitioner's only remedy is by way of this judicial action.

IV. FACTUAL AND PROCEDURAL BACKGROUND

12. Petitioner is a 25-year-old female native and citizen of Guatemala. *See attached*, Exhibit A, ID. Petitioner last entered the United States without inspection on or about May 25, 2019. Petitioner stated her intention was to seek safety and employment in the United States. She fears that, if returned to Guatemala, she would face serious harm and a substantial risk of persecution or torture.
13. On May 30, 2019, Petitioner was encountered and processed by U.S. Border Patrol and served with a Notice and Order of Expedited Removal. *See attached*, Exhibit B,

Determination of Inadmissibility. She also provided a sworn statement during expedited removal proceedings. *See attached*, Exhibit C, Record of Sworn Statement.

14. On July 10, 2019, Petitioner was issued a Notice to Appear alleging removability under an alien present without being admitted or paroled. Removal proceedings were initiated before the San Antonio Immigration Court. *See attached*, Exhibit D, Notice to Appear.

15. Petitioner was later released from ICE custody on her own recognizance on July 11, 2019, under strict reporting and monitoring conditions, including participation in the ATD program and a requirement to report to the Houston ICE office. *See attached*, Exhibit E, Order of Release on Recognizance.

16. As of November 13, 2025, Petitioner is once again detained and held at the Montgomery Processing Center in Conroe, Texas. *See attached*, Exhibit F, ICE Detainee Locator.

17. Petitioner's removal proceedings are not final. On May 24, 2024, the Immigration Judge ordered dismissal of the case. DHS's appeal was filed with the Board of Immigration Appeals ("BIA") on June 3, 2024, and remains pending. No future hearings are scheduled in Immigration Court. *See attached*, Exhibit G, EOIR Automated Case Information.

18. The government has not been able to articulate any meaningful reason why Petitioner should continue to remain in detention pending the outcome of the BIA appeal.

19. Petitioner, through Counsel, now submits the present Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus to this Honorable Court, and respectfully requests the Court to order Respondents to effect her immediate release.

V. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR RELIEF SOUGHT

20. Under U.S. Code 28 § 2241, writs of habeas corpus may be granted by the district courts on behalf of a prisoner in several instances, including when they are (1) “in custody under or by the authority of the United States or is committed for trial before some court thereof,” (3) “in custody in violation of the Constitution or laws and treaties of the United States,” and (4) when they, “being a citizen of a foreign state and domiciled therein [are] in custody for an act done or omitted under any alleged right, title, authority, privilege, protection, or exemption claimed under the commission, order or sanction of any foreign state, or under color thereof, the validity and effect of which depend upon the law of nations[.]”
21. Courts have consistently recognized “habeas corpus as an appropriate vehicle through which noncitizens may challenge the fact of their civil immigration detention.” *Vazquez Barrera v. Wolf*, 455 F. Supp. 3d 330, 336 (S.D. Tex. 2020) (citing *Zadvydas v. Davis*, 533 U.S. at 688 (ruling on merits of habeas petition challenging validity of indefinite mandatory detention)).

VI. CLAIMS FOR RELIEF

COUNT ONE:

RESPONDENTS HAVE UNLAWFULLY DETAINED PETITIONER IN VIOLATION OF THE IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION ACT.

22. Petitioner alleges and incorporates by reference paragraphs 1 through 21 above.
23. Although the Immigration Judge issued a dismissal order on May 24, 2024, the Department of Homeland Security appealed that decision, and the Board of Immigration Appeals received the Notice of Appeal on June 3, 2024. Because the appeal remains pending, there is no final order of removal, and no removal order can be executed at this time.

24. Petitioner poses no risk of danger to the community. In the six years since Petitioner came to the United States, she has never been charged with a crime, nor has she demonstrated any conduct whatsoever indicating that she is a threat to the United States or otherwise eligible for deportation.
25. Therefore, **Petitioner merits immediate release** because there has been no final order of removal issued against her, and the government cannot articulate any meaningful reason why she should continue to remain in detention while her removal proceedings are pending.

COUNT TWO:

**RESPONDENTS HAVE UNLAWFULLY DETAINED PETITIONER
IN VIOLATION OF CONSTITUTIONAL DUE PROCESS**

26. Petitioner alleges and incorporates by reference paragraphs 1 through 25 above.
27. Petitioner's continued detention violates her right to substantive and procedural due process guaranteed by the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.
28. Petitioner is unlawfully in custody pursuant to INA § 241(a)(6), 8 U.S.C. § 1231(a)(6) (2018) ("Section 241"). Under *Zadvydas*, that provision prohibits the indefinite detention of noncitizens who (i) cannot be repatriated in the reasonably foreseeable future, and (ii) pose no threat to the community. Any such detention is unconstitutional. *See Zadvydas*, 533 U.S. at 689, emphasis added ("In our view, the statute [Section 241], read in light of the Constitution's demands, limits an alien's post-removal-period detention to a period reasonably necessary to bring about that alien's removal from the United States. It does not permit indefinite detention.").

29. The Fifth Amendment's Due Process Clause prohibits the government from detaining individuals without legal authority.
30. Under 8 U.S.C. § 1231(a)(1), detention during the removal period is only authorized after a removal order becomes "final."
31. As stated above, although the Immigration Judge issued a dismissal order on May 24, 2024, the Department of Homeland Security appealed that decision. Because the appeal remains pending, there is no final order of removal, and no removal order can be executed at this time.
32. Habeas corpus remains available to challenge unlawful civil immigration detention where the government exceeds its statutory authority. *See Zadvydas*, 533 U.S. at 688 (“The aliens here, however, do not seek review of the Attorney General's exercise of discretion; rather, they challenge the extent of the Attorney General's authority under the post-removal-period detention statute. And the extent of that authority is not a matter of discretion . . . [therefore we] conclude habeas corpus proceedings remain available. . .”).
33. Therefore, this petition is not barred, as the Petitioner is not seeking to collaterally attack the final removal order, because a final order does not yet exist while the appeal is pending.
34. Petitioner's continued detention lacks statutory authority and violates her right to substantive due process under the Constitution. Therefore, she should be immediately released from custody.

VII. REQUEST FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Petitioner Ana Catalina Chitic Mateo respectfully requests that this Honorable Court **IMMEDIATELY** issue a temporary restraining order:

1. **Directing Respondents to immediately release Petitioner from custody;**
2. Restraining and enjoining Respondent, their agents, employees, and successors from removing Petitioner from the United States;
3. Directing Respondent to take all necessary steps to halt any removal preparations;
4. Requiring Respondent to notify all relevant personnel that Petitioner shall not be removed;
5. Set an expedited hearing on Petitioner's motion for preliminary injunction;
6. After hearing, issue a preliminary injunction maintaining the relief requested above during the pendency of this action;
7. Waive or set security in a nominal amount;
8. Award attorney's fees and costs; and
9. Grant such other relief as this Court deems just and proper.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Matthew Mendez

Matthew Mendez
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PETITIONER VERIFICATION

Petitioner is currently detained in ICE custody, and has authorized Counsel, Matthew Mendez, to verify, on her behalf, that the facts stated therein are true and correct to the best of her knowledge and belief.

/s/ Matthew Mendez
Matthew Mendez
Attorney for Petitioner

12/11/2025
Date

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

On December 11, 2025, Counsel for Petitioner served a copy of the attached Petition via USPS Certified Mail, in compliance with Rule 4 of Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, upon the **Respondent, Randy Tate, in his official capacity as Warden of the Montgomery Processing Center;** at the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (“ICE”) Montgomery Processing Center, located at Office of the Warden, 806 Hilbig Road, Conroe, Texas 77301.

/s/ Matthew Mendez
Matthew Mendez
Attorney for Petitioner

12/11/2025
Date

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

On December 11, 2025, Counsel for Petitioner served a copy of the attached Petition via USPS Certified Mail, in compliance with Rule 4 of Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, upon the **Respondent, Bret Bradford, in his Official Capacity as Field Office Director, of ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations Houston Field Office**, at (1) Office of the Field Office Director, Enforcement and Removal Operations, Houston Field Office, 126 Northpoint Drive, Houston, Texas 77060, and (2) to the United States at Civil Process Clerk, U.S. Attorney’s Office, 1000 Louisiana Street, Suite 2300, Houston, Texas 77002.

/s/ Matthew Mendez
Matthew Mendez
Attorney for Petitioner

12/11/2025
Date

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

On December 11, 2025, Counsel for Petitioner served a copy of the attached Petition via USPS Certified Mail, in compliance with Rule 4 of Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, upon the **Respondent, Kristi Noem, in her Official Capacity as Director of U.S. Department of Homeland Security**, at (1) Office of General Counsel, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 245 Murray Lane, SW, Mail Stop 0485, Washington, D.C. 20530; and (2) to the United States at Civil Process Clerk, U.S. Attorney’s Office, 1000 Louisiana Street, Suite 2300, Houston, Texas 77002.

/s/ Matthew Mendez
Matthew Mendez
Attorney for Petitioner

12/11/2025
Date

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

On December 11, 2025, Counsel for Petitioner served a copy of the attached Petition via email, in compliance with Rule 4 of Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, upon the **Respondent, Pam Bondi, in her Official Capacity as Attorney General of the United States**, at USATXS.CivilNotice@usdoj.gov.

/s/ Matthew Mendez
Matthew Mendez
Attorney for Petitioner

12/11/2025
Date