

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF MINNESOTA**

Hector Xavier Gavilanes Vega,

Petitioner,

v.

Todd LYONS, in his capacity as Acting Director, Immigration and Customs Enforcement; Kristi NOEM, Secretary, U.S. Department of Homeland Security; Pamela BONDI, U.S. Attorney General; EXECUTIVE OFFICE FOR IMMIGRATION REVIEW; Warden, Mike STASKO, Freeborn County Jail; Marcos CHARLES, Acting Executive Associate Director for Enforcement and Removal Operations; Peter BERG, Field Office Director of St. Paul Field Office for U.S. Department of Homeland Security, United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Enforcement and Removal Operations.

Respondents.

Case No.

**PETITION FOR WRIT OF
HABEAS CORPUS
UNDER 28 U.S.C. § 2241.**

**PETITION FOR WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS AND
REQUEST FOR ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE UNDER § 2243**

INTRODUCTION

1. Petitioner is in the physical custody of Respondents at the Freeborn County Detention Center in Alber Lea, Minnesota. He now faces unlawful detention because the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Executive Office of Immigration Review (EOIR) have concluded Petitioner is subject to mandatory detention.

2. Petitioner is charged with, inter alia, having entered the United States without inspection. 8 U.S.C. §§ 1182(a)(6)(A)(i). Ex. A.

3. Based on this allegation, Respondents have concluded that they do not have jurisdiction over Petitioner's bond hearing. On July 8, 2025, DHS, in collaboration with the Executive Office for Immigration Review (Immigration Courts) issued a new policy instructing all Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) employees to consider anyone inadmissible under § 1182(a)(6)(A)(i)—i.e., those who entered the United States without inspection—to be an “applicant for admission” under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)(A) and therefore subject to mandatory detention.

4. On September 5, 2025, the Board of Immigration Appeals turned this new policy into precedent by issuing a decision that said it did “not have the authority” to hear any bond case for someone who had entered the United States without inspection.

5. Because of this new policy and the new BIA decision, Mr. Gavilanes Vega's request a bond before the Immigration Court was denied. The Immigration Judge denied Mr. Gavilanez's bond request because it has no jurisdiction to hear the case. Ex. B

6. The Respondents have concluded that notwithstanding Petitioner's long residency in the United States, he is nevertheless an “applicant for admission” who is “seeking admission” and subject to mandatory detention under § 1225(b)(2)(A).

7. 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 and are now 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.

8. 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.

9. Accordingly, Petitioner seeks a writ of habeas corpus requiring his immediate release from custody or, in the alternative that he be provided a bond hearing under § 1226(a) within seven days in which DHS bears the burden of establishing the necessity of petitioner's continued detention and considers alternatives to detention that could mitigate flight risk.

JURISDICTION

10. Petitioner is in the physical custody of Respondents. Petitioner is detained at the Freeborn Detention Center in Albert Lea, Minnesota.

11. This Court has jurisdiction under 28 U.S.C. § 2241(c)(5) (habeas corpus), 28 U.S.C. § 1331 (federal question), and Article I, section 9, clause 2 of the United States Constitution (the Suspension Clause).

12. 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.

VENUE

13. Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2241, 28 U.S.C. § 1331, and Article I, § 9, cl.2 of the United States Constitution; the All Writs Act, 28 U.S.C. § 1651; the Administrative Procedure Act, 5 U.S.C. § 701; and the Declaratory Judgment Act, 28 U.S.C. § 2201, jurisdiction lies in the United States District Court for the District of Minnesota, the judicial district in which Petitioner currently is detained.

14. Venue is also properly 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 District of Minnesota.

REQUIREMENTS OF 28 U.S.C. § 2243

15. The Court must grant the petition for 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, the Respondents must file a return “within three days unless for good cause additional time, not exceeding twenty days, is allowed.” *Id.*

16. 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).

PARTIES

17. Petitioner, Hector Xavier Gavilanes Vega, is a citizen of Ecuador who has been in immigration detention since approximately December 8, 2025. He is detained at the Freeborn Detention Center, in Albert Lea, Minnesota.

18. Respondent Todd Lyons is the Acting Director of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. As such, Acting Director Todd Lyons is Petitioner's immediate custodian and is responsible for Petitioner's detention and removal. He is named in his official capacity.

19. Respondent Kristi Noem is the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security. She is responsible for the implementation and enforcement of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), and oversees ICE, which is responsible for Petitioner's detention. Ms. Noem has ultimate custodial authority over Petitioner and is sued in her official capacity.

20. 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.

21. Respondent Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) is the federal agency responsible for implementing and enforcing the INA in removal proceedings, including for custody redeterminations in bond hearings.

22. Respondent Peter Berg, Field Office Director of St. Paul Field Office for U.S. Department of Homeland Security, United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Enforcement and Removal Operations, is sued in his official capacity.

23. Mike Stasko is the Jail Administrator and is the is the head of the Freeborn Detention Center in Albert Lea, Minnesota where Petitioner is detained. He has immediate physical custody of Petitioner. He is sued in his official capacity.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

24. The INA prescribes three basic forms of detention for the vast majority of noncitizens in removal proceedings.

25. 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).

26. 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).

27. 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).

28. This case concerns the detention provisions at §§ 1226(a) and 1225(b)(2).

29. 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).

30. 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).

31. 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. 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)).

32. 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.

33. The new policy, entitled “Interim Guidance Regarding Detention Authority for Applicants for Admission,”¹ claims that all persons who entered the United States without inspection shall now be deemed “applicants for admission” under 8 U.S.C. § 1225, and therefore are 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.

34. On September 5, 2025, the BIA published a decision that adopts this same position and binds it on all Immigration Courts. *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, 29 I&N Dec. 216 (BIA 2025). In *Matter of Yajure-Hurado*, the BIA explicitly held that “Immigration Judges lack authority to hear bond requests or to grant bond to aliens who are present in the United States

¹ Available at <https://www.aila.org/library/ice-memo-interim-guidance-regarding-detention-authority-for-applications-for-admission>.

without admission.” *Id.* In complete contradiction of decades of judicial precedence, the Board stripped Immigration Judges of jurisdiction over bond for anyone who has entered the United States without inspection.

35. ICE and EOIR have adopted this position even though federal courts have rejected this exact conclusion. For example, after 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, 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*, --- F. Supp. 3d --- 2025 WL 1193850 (W.D. Wash. Apr. 24, 2025); *see also Gomes v. Hyde*, No. 1:25-CV-11571-JEK, 2025 WL 1869299, at *8 (D. Mass. July 7, 2025) (granting habeas petition based on same conclusion).

36. Since then, federal courts throughout the United States have agreed with the Western District of Washington and granted preliminary injunctive relief for petitioners who entered the United States without inspections years ago. *Lopez Santos v. Noem et al*, 3:25-cv-01193-TAD-KDM (W.D. La. Sept. 11, 2025); *Hernandez Marcelo v. Trump*, 3:25-cv-00094, (S.D. Iowa September 10, 2025); *Jose J.O.E. v. Bondi, et al*, 25-cv-3051 (D. Minn August 27, 2025); *Mayo Anicasio v Kramer et. al.*, 4:25-cv-3158, (D. Neb. August 14, 2025). As almost every district court that has taken up this issue has concluded, including courts in this district, “the statutory text, the statute’s history, Congressional intent, and § 1226(a)’s application for the past three decades” clearly support the finding that §1226 is the applicable statute, not §1225. *See Buenrostro-Mendez v. Bondi*, 2025 WL 2886346, at *3 (S.D. Tex. Oct. 7,

37. 2025) (quoting *Pizarro Reyes v. Raycraft*, 2025 WL 2609425, at *4 (E.D. Mich. Sept. 9, 2025) and citing *Lopez-Arevelo v. Ripa*, 2025 WL 2691828, at *7 (W.D. Tex. Sept. 22, 2025)); *Rodriguez*, 2025 WL 2782499, at *1 & n.3 (collecting cases); *Belsai D.S. v. Bondi*, 2025 WL 2802947, at *6 (D. Minn. Oct. 1, 2025)). “In recent weeks, courts across the country have held that this new, expansive interpretation of mandatory detention under the INA is either incorrect or likely incorrect.” *Lopez-Arevelo*, 2025 WL 2691828, at *7.

38. DHS’s and DOJ’s interpretation defies the INA. As the *Rodriguez Vazquez* court explained, the plain text of the statutory provisions demonstrates that § 1226(a), not § 1225(b), applies to people like Petitioner.

39. 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].”

40. 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*, 2025 WL 1193850, at *12 (citing *Shady Grove Orthopedic Assocs., P.A. v. Allstate Ins. Co.*, 559 U.S. 393, 400 (2010)).

41. 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.

42. By contrast, § 1225(b) applies to people arriving at U.S. ports of entry or who recently entered the United States. 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).

43. Accordingly, the mandatory detention provision of § 1225(b)(2) does not apply to people like Petitioner, who have already entered and were residing in the United States at the time they were apprehended.

FACTS

44. Petitioner has resided in the United States since August of 2023 and lives in Minneapolis, MN with his wife and their two young daughters, one being a U.S. citizen. He last entered the United States in around 2023 without inspection. Ex. A.

45. Mr. Gavilanes Vega has been in removal proceedings since August of 2023. In early December of 2025, Mr. Gavilanes Vega was stopped by ICE agents while driving and taken into immigration custody.

46. In August of 2023, DHS placed Petitioner in removal proceedings before the Immigration Court pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1229a. ICE has charged Petitioner with,

inter alia, being inadmissible under 8 U.S.C. § 1182(a)(6)(A)(i) as someone who entered the United States without inspection. Ex. A.

47. Upon his entry to the United States, Mr. Gavilanes Vega was released from Immigration custody on his own recognizance. He has been in immigration proceedings since his entry. Ex. A
48. On August 22, 2024, Mr. Gavilanes Vega applied for Asylum, Withholding of Removal, and Protection under the Convention against Torture with the Immigration Court. Mr. Gavilanes Vega's asylum application remains pending with the Immigration Court.
49. On or about December 10, 2025, Mr. Gavilanes Vega requested a bond from the Immigration Judge at the Fort Snelling, MN Immigration Court. On December 17, 2025 the Immigration Judge said he had no jurisdiction to issue a new bond.
50. Mr. Vega Gavilanes has a wife and two daughters, ages 7 and 2 years old. His U.S. Citizen daughter is two years old. His family depends on him for financial and emotional support. Ex. C, D, E.
51. However, because of Respondents' policy, Petitioner was denied a new bond before the Immigration Judge. *Yajure-Hurtado*, 29 I&N Dec. 216. And the Immigration Judge also refused to grant him a bond or hear his case. Ex. D.
52. As a result, Petitioner remains in detention. Without relief from this court, he faces the prospect of months, or even years, in immigration custody, separated from his family and community, including his U.S. citizen child. Any appeal to the BIA would be futile. *Id*

REMEDIES

53. Petitioner moves for this Court to order the Respondents to provide Petitioner with a constitutionally adequate bond hearing. He also moves for this Court to enjoin Respondents from invoking the auto-stay provisions during any pending bond appeal, should the Immigration Judge issue a bond to him. The auto-stay provisions have been found by other courts to be *ultra vires* because they authorize DHS to arbitrarily deny him his right to liberty.

54. 8 C.F.R. § 1003.19(i)(2) gives DHS unilateral authority to block an Immigration Judge's custody order through the auto-stay provision. Under that "automatic stay" regulation, if DHS disagrees with an Immigration Judge's custody determination, DHS can file a boilerplate notice of intent to appeal that automatically stays the Immigration Judge's order. In other words, the prosecuting officials who failed to keep the non-citizen detained in the first place can unilaterally block the Immigration Judge's order and force continued detention.

55. While the regulations provide that DHS's automatic stay will lapse in 90 days absent a BIA decision on the appeal, there are multiple avenues for extension. 8 C.F.R. §

100.36(c)(4). For example, if the BIA does not issue a decision in the 90-day window, DHS can then seek an additional discretionary stay from the BIA. 8 C.F.R. § 1003.6(c)(5). The automatic stay remains in effect for another 30 days while the BIA decides whether to grant a discretionary stay. *Id.*

56. Even if the BIA rules in favor of the non-citizen on appeal and authorizes his release on bond, that release is automatically stayed for five more business days to give DHS a chance to refer the case to the Attorney General. 8 C.F.R. § 1003.6(d). Then, if DHS refers the case to the Attorney General, the automatic stay is extended for another 15 days. *Id.* The Attorney General may then stay release for the pendency of the case. *Id.* There is no prescribed time limit for final resolution of the custody determination, meaning an individual may remain in detention indefinitely. In sum, should DHS invoke the auto-stay provisions, Petitioner will have no way of knowing how long this automatic stay will last and has no opportunity to challenge the stay. In practice, the automatic stay regulation renders any Immigration Judge's custody decisions ineffectual: If DHS disagrees with a custody decision, it can keep Petitioner detained for a minimum of 90 days, without a truly discernable end point.

57. This auto-stay provision has been deemed *ultra vires* and a violation of the APA by several courts. See, e.g., *Leal-Hernandez v. Noem*, No. 1:25-CV-02428-JRR, 2025 WL 2430025 (D. Md. Aug. 24, 2025)(finding the government's use of automatic stay provision to appeal IJ's bond decision *ultra vires* because it "renders both the discretionary nature of Petitioner's detention and the IJ's authority a nullity"); *Carmona-Lorenzo v. Trump*, No. 4:25CV3172, 2025 WL 2531521, at *5 (D. Neb. Sep. 3, 2025) (holding that the automatic stay provision is *ultra vires* because it "exceeds the

statutory authority Congress gave to the Attorney General”); *Zavala v. Ridge*, 310 F. Supp. 2d. 1071, 1079 (N.D. Cal. 2004) (finding the automatic stay regulation ultra vires because it “effectively eliminates the discretionary nature of the immigration judge's determination and results in a mandatory detention . . . of a new class of aliens, although Congress has specified that such individuals are not subject to mandatory detention”); *see also Anicasio v. Kramer*, No. 25-cv-3158, 2025 WL 2374224 (D. Neb. Aug. 14, 2025).

58. The automatic stay regulation violates the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) and is ultra vires because it is “in excess of statutory jurisdiction, authority, or limitations, or short of statutory right.” 5 U.S.C. § 706(2)(C), and Petitioner moves for this Court to enjoin Respondents from invoking it at or after any future bond hearing ordered by this Court.

CLAIMS FOR RELIEF

COUNT I

Violation of the INA

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

60. 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 who previously entered the country and have been residing in the United States prior to being apprehended and placed in removal proceedings by Respondents. Such noncitizens are detained under § 1226(a), unless they are subject to § 1225(b)(1), § 1226(c), or § 1231.

61. The application of § 1225(b)(2) to Petitioner unlawfully mandates his continued detention and violates the INA.

COUNT II

Violation of Due Process

62. Petitioner repeats, re-alleges, and incorporates by reference each and every allegation in the preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.

63. 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, 121 S.Ct. 2491, 150 L.Ed.2d 653 (2001).

64. Petitioner has a fundamental interest in liberty and being free from official restraint.

65. 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.

66. Any use of the auto-stay provision found at 8 C.F.R. § 1003.19(i)(2) is *ultra vires* and a violation of his rights to due process.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

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

- a. Assume jurisdiction over this matter;
- b. Order the Respondents to show cause within 3 days of receiving this petition
- c. Declare that the actions of Respondents as set forth in the Petition and Motion violate the Fifth Amendment of the United States Constitution, 28 U.S.C. § 2241, the APA, and the INA;

- d. Issue a writ of habeas corpus requiring that Respondents immediately release Petitioner;
- e. Or provide Petitioner with a bond hearing pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) within 7 days;
- f. Enjoin Respondents from denying Petitioner's bond under U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2);
- g. Should the Immigration Judge grant a bond, enjoin Respondents from invoking the auto-stay provision found at 8 C.F.R. § 1003.19(i)(2) during the pendency of any bond appeal; and
- h. Grant any other and further relief that this Court deems just and proper.

DATED this 18 December 2025

/s/ Thomas R. Anderson III

Anderson & Anderson Law Firm
2900 Washington Ave. N
Minneapolis, MN 55411
Attorney for Petitioner

Verification Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2242

The undersigned counsel submits this verification on behalf of the Petitioner. Undersigned Counsel has discussed with Petitioner the events described in this Petition for Motion for Preliminary Injunction and Temporary Restraining Order and, on the basis of those discussions, verify that the statements in the Petition are true and correct to the best of his knowledge and belief.

Date: 18 Dec. 2025

/s/ Thomas R. Anderson III

I certify that I caused a copy of the foregoing

**PETITION FOR WRIT OF
HABEAS CORPUS**

to be served on all counsel of record via ECF.

Dated this 18th day of December 2025.

/s/ Thomas R. Anderson III

Thomas R. Anderson III