

3265493 (S.D. Tex. Nov. 24, 2025). Third, the *Bautista* class action ruling has no preclusive effect. The district court in California lacked the authority to issue a declaratory judgment binding all other district courts across the country.

Accordingly, this Court should deny the instant petition and grant summary judgment for the Government.

I. BACKGROUND

Petitioner, Luz Greisy Sanchez-Zapata, is a native and citizen of Venezuela. Dkt. 1 at p. 2. In 2021, Petitioner entered the United States without inspection. Dkt. 1 at p. 4. On or about December 1, 2025, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) apprehended and detained Petitioner. *Id.* ICE previously served Petitioner with a Notice to Appear (“NTA”) charging her with removability pursuant to Immigration and Nationality Act (“INA”) section 212(a)(6)(A)(i), 8 U.S.C. § 1182(a)(6)(A)(i), as an alien present in the United States without being admitted or paroled, or who arrived in the United States at any time or place other than as designated by the Attorney General. Dkt. 1 at p. 34. In the NTA, the examining immigration official denied Petitioner admission into the United States, explained the basis for charging Petitioner with being subject to removal, and ordered Petitioner to appear in immigration court. *Id.*

II. ARGUMENT

Prior to addressing the merits, the Government acknowledges that this Court has previously rejected its arguments concerning the applicability of § 1225(b)(2). However, the Government, with this motion, requests a reconsideration of that prior ruling. *See Camreta v. Greene*, 563 U.S. 692, 701 n. 7 (2011) (“A decision of a federal district court judge is not binding

precedent in either a different judicial district, the same judicial district, or even upon the same judge in a different case.”). For the reasons discussed below, including recent decisions from other courts in the Fifth Circuit and the Southern District of Texas, this Court should reconsider its interpretation of § 1225(b)(2) and find that Petitioner is subject to mandatory detention.

A. PETITIONER FAILED TO EXHAUST HER ADMINISTRATIVE REMEDIES PRIOR TO FILING THE PETITION.

As a threshold matter, the Court should dismiss the habeas petition because Petitioner has not administratively exhausted her claims. In accord with the general rule that parties seeking relief against federal agencies must exhaust administrative remedies prior to seeking judicial relief, it is well-taken that a habeas petitioner must exhaust all administrative remedies prior to filing a federal habeas petition under § 2241. *See, e.g., Gallegos-Hernandez v. United States*, 688 F.3d 190, 194 (5th Cir. 2012) (holding that a federal prisoner seeking habeas relief under § 2241 must first exhaust all available administrative remedies).

In this case, an immigration judge denied Petitioner’s request for a bond, finding that the immigration court lacked jurisdiction. Dkt. 1 at p. 29. Petitioner argues that seeking further review of that decision would be futile in light of *Matter of Hurtado*, 29 I. & N. Dec. 216 (BIA 2025). Dkt. 1 at p. 7. However, because Petitioner has not appealed the immigration judge’s decision, she has failed to exhaust administrative remedies. *See Fuller v. Rich*, 11 F.3d 61, 62 (5th Cir. 1994) (requiring an appeal in order to satisfy exhaustion requirement); *Abdoulaye Ba v. Director of Detroit Field Office, ICE*, No. 4:25-CV-02208, 2025 WL 2977712, at *2 (N.D. Ohio Oct. 22, 2025) (dismissing for failure to exhaust where petitioner sought “review of the application and interpretation of *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*” but had yet to appeal to the BIA).

B. PETITIONER IS SUBJECT TO MANDATORY DETENTION UNDER 8 U.S.C. § 1225.

Petitioner’s habeas petition should be denied because she falls under the plain language of the mandatory detention provisions in 8 U.S.C. § 1225. Here, Petitioner admits that she is an alien present in the United States who entered the country unlawfully “without inspection.” *See* Dkt. at p. 4. As discussed below, an alien “present in the United States who has not been admitted,” is by definition “an applicant for admission.” 8 U.S.C. § 1225(a)(1). Thus, Petitioner is subject to mandatory detention. *See id.* § 1225(b)(2)(A) (instructing that “the alien *shall* be detained” in the case of “an alien seeking admission” who “is not clearly and beyond a doubt entitled to be admitted” (emphasis added)).

1. The Plain Language and Statutory Structure of the INA

“As usual, we start with the statutory text.” *Restaurant Law Center v. U.S. Dep’t of Labor*, 120 F.4th 163, 177 (5th Cir. 2024). Section 1225(b)(2) provides the following:

in the case of an alien who is an applicant for admission, if the examining immigration officer determines that an alien seeking admission is not clearly and beyond a doubt entitled to be admitted, the alien shall be detained for [removal proceedings].

8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2). Based on this text, if an alien is an “applicant for admission”, then they are subject to mandatory detention. The INA defines “applicant for admission” as “an alien present in the United States who has not been admitted.” 8 U.S.C. § 1225(a)(1). Here, was not previously admitted into the United States, and the Petitioner is therefore subject to mandatory detention and is not eligible for a bond. *See Cabanas v. Bondi*, No. 4:25-CV-04830, 2025 WL 3171331 (S.D. Tex. Nov. 13, 2025).

2. Persuasive decisions from other district courts.

Although the Government acknowledges that many district courts have ruled against the Government on the § 1225(b)(2) issue, including this Court,² the Court should consider the recent decisions of several district courts that have adopted the Government's and the BIA's interpretation.

Most recently, another court in the Southern District of Texas decided *Cabanas v. Bondi*, 2025 WL 3171331 (S.D. Tex. Nov. 13, 2025), in the Government's favor. In denying the habeas petition and granting the Government's motion for summary judgment, the *Cabanas* Court held "[t]he text of § 1225(b)(2)(A) supports the Government's position." The *Cabanas* Court reasoned that "[t]he statutory definition of *applicant for admission* is broad and, indeed, so broad that Petitioner doesn't dispute that she is such a person. . . . That factual determination itself resolves the question as to whether § 1225(b)(2)(A) applies." *Id.* at *4 (emphasis in original). Thus, the *Cabanas* Court held that the plain language of the Immigration and Nationality Act required a ruling in the Government's favor. The court also explained why it was not persuaded by the many other district court decisions deciding to the contrary. *Id.* at *5; see also *Jimenez v. Thompson*, No. 4:25-CV-05026, 2025 WL 3265493, at *1 (S.D. Tex. Nov. 24, 2025).³

² Other courts in the Southern District of Texas have issued decisions that reject the Government's position. See, e.g., *Buenrostro-Mendez v. Bondi*, No. CV H-25-3726, 2025 WL 2886346 (S.D. Tex. Oct. 7, 2025)(on appeal); *Fuentes v. Lyons*, 5:25-cv-153 (S.D. Tex. October 16, 2025); *Ortiz v. Bondi*, 5:25-cv-132 (S.D. Tex. October 15, 2025); *Baltazar v. Vasquez*, 25-cv-175 (S.D. Tex. October 14, 2025); *Covarrubias v. Vergara*, 5:25-cv-112 (S.D. Texas October 8, 2025).

³ Although many courts originally rejected the Government's interpretation of § 1225(b)(2), including this Court, there is a growing body of case law agreeing with the Government's position. See *Alonzo v. Noem*, -- F. Supp. 3d --, 2025 WL 3208284 (E.D. Cal. Nov. 17, 2025) (Shubb, J.); *Andrade v.* (continue)

The Government urges this Court to reconsider its prior rulings and follow the reasoning of *Cabanas* and the Government's other proffered authorities.

C. BAUTISTA RULING HAS NO PRECLUSIVE EFFECT.

The class action ruling in *Bautista v. Noem*, No. 5:25-CV-1873 (C.D. Cal. Dec. 18, 2025), ECF No. 92, is neither binding nor applicable here and presents no basis for granting the petition. First, the *Bautista* declaratory judgment is void with respect to petitioners and custodians outside the Central District of California because it was issued despite a lack of jurisdiction. Second, the Court should not give preclusive effect to the declaratory judgment because it is on appeal, creating a serious risk of inconsistent judgments and unfair results if the *Bautista* judgment is reversed or vacated on appeal. Finally, issue preclusion is inapplicable

Patterson, No. 6:25-cv-01695, 2025 WL 3252707 (W.D. La. Nov. 21, 2025) (Joseph, J.); *Ba v. Dir. of Detroit Field Office*, No. 4:25-CV-02208, 2025 WL 3264535 (N.D. Ohio Nov. 24, 2025) (Calabrese, J.); *Ba v. Dir. of Detroit Field Office*, No. 4:25-CV-02208, 2025 WL 2977712 (N.D. Ohio Oct. 22, 2025) (Calabrese, J.), reconsideration denied, 2025 WL 3264535 (N.D. Ohio Nov. 24, 2025); *Candido v. Bondi*, No. 25-CV-867, 2025 WL 3484932 (W.D.N.Y. Dec. 4, 2025) (Sinatra Jr., J.); *Chavez v. Noem*, -- F. Supp. 3d --, 2025 WL 2730228 (S.D. Cal. Sept. 24, 2025) (Bencivengo, J.); *Chen v. Almodovar*, No. 1:25-cv-08350, 2025 WL 3484855 (S.D.N.Y. Dec. 4, 2025) (Vyskocil, J.); *Cruz v. Noem*, No. 8:25-CV-02566, 2025 WL 3482630 (C.D. Cal. Dec. 2, 2025) (Blumenfeld Jr., J.); *Garcia v. Immigr. & Customs Enft Dep't of Homeland Sec.*, No. 2:25-CV-1004-KCD-NPM, 2025 WL 3277163 (M.D. Fla. Nov. 25, 2025) (Dudek, J.); *Garibay-Robledo v. Noem*, No. 1:25-CV-177-H, 2025 WL 3264478 (N.D. Tex. Oct. 24, 2025) (Hendrix, J.); *Kum v. Ross*, No. 6:25-CV-00451, 2025 WL 3113646 (W.D. La. Oct. 22, 2025), (Whitehurst, M.J.), report and recommendation adopted, 2025 WL 3113644 (W.D. La. Nov. 6, 2025) (Joseph, J.); *Melgar v. Bondi*, No. 8:25CV555, 2025 WL 3496721 (D. Neb. Dec. 5, 2025) (Buescher, J.); *Mursalin v. Dedos, Warden*, No. 1:25-cv-00681, 2025 WL 3140824 (D.N.M. Nov. 10, 2025) (Strickland, M.J.); *Olalde v. Noem*, No. 1:25-cv-00168, 2025 WL 3131942 (E.D. Mo. Nov. 10, 2025) (Divine, J.); *Oliveira v. Patterson*, No. 6:25-cv-01463, 2025 WL 3095972 (W.D. La. Nov. 4, 2025) (Joseph, J.); *Pena v. Hyde*, No. 25-cv-11983, 2025 WL 2108913 (D. Mass. July 28, 2025) (Gorton, J.); *Ramos v. Lyons*, No. 2:25-cv-09785, 2025 WL 3199872 (C.D. Cal. Nov. 12, 2025) (Wilson, J.); *Rojas v. Olson*, No. 25-cv-1437, 2025 WL 3033967 (E.D. Wis. Oct. 30, 2025) (Ludwig, J.); *Sandoval v. Acuna*, No. 6:25-cv-01467, 2025 WL 3048926 (W.D. La. Oct. 31, 2025) (Joseph, J.); *Suarez v. Noem*, No. 1:25-CV-00202-JMD, 2025 WL 3312168 (E.D. Mo. Nov. 28, 2025) (Divine, J.); *Topal v. Bondi*, No. 1:25-cv-01612, 2025 WL 3486894 (W.D. La. Dec. 3, 2025) (Doughty, J.); *Ugarte-Arenas v. Olson*, No. 25-C-1721, 2025 WL 3514451 (E.D. Wis. Dec. 8, 2025) (Griesbach, J.); *Valencia v. Chestnut*, -- F. Supp. 3d --, 2025 WL 3205133 (E.D. Cal. Nov. 17, 2025) (Shubb, J.); *Vargas Lopez v. Trump*, -- F. Supp. 3d --, 2025 WL 2780351 (D. Neb. Sept. 30, 2025) (Buescher, J.).

here, particularly as preclusion principles apply with less force both against the government and in habeas corpus proceedings.

First, the *Bautista* class sought a declaratory judgment that class members such as Petitioner were unlawfully detained under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2), rather than § 1226(a). This is core habeas relief that must be brought as a habeas claim alone. As the Supreme Court made clear just this year, “[r]egardless of whether [] detainees formally request release from confinement,” if “their claims for relief necessarily imply the invalidity of their confinement[], their claims fall within the core of the writ of habeas corpus and thus must be brought in habeas.” *Trump v. J.G.G.*, 604 U.S. 670, 672 (2025) (internal quotations omitted). Given that a challenge to the legality of detention is a core habeas claim, class-wide declaratory relief is inappropriate in the habeas context. *See Calderon v. Ashmus*, 523 U.S. 740, 747 (1998). Here, the vast majority of *Bautista* class members are confined *outside* of the Central District of California by immediate custodians who are also *outside* the Central District of California and have not been named in the lawsuit. Therefore, the *Bautista* court lacked jurisdiction to issue habeas relief to all class members who are confined outside the Central District of California by immediate custodians outside that District, and a court’s judgment cannot be binding and preclusive against a party over which it lacked jurisdiction. *See Burnham v. Superior Court of Cali.*, 495 U.S. 604, 608 (1990). Indeed, another federal district court in the Fifth Circuit has already held that the *Bautista* declaratory judgment does not have preclusive effect. *See Lopez v. Lyons*, No. 1:25-CV-226-H, 2025 WL 3683918, at *14 (N.D. Tex. Dec. 19, 2025).

Second, even if the *Bautista* declaratory judgment could have preclusive effect outside the Central District of California, that judgment has been appealed to the Ninth Circuit,

Bautista, et al. v. United States Department of Homeland Security, et al., No. 25-7958 (9th Cir.), and this Court should not afford preclusive effect to that judgment in deciding whether to grant habeas relief in this case. Courts must exercise significant caution before giving preclusive effect to declaratory judgments that are on appeal. *See, e.g.*, 9 A.L.R.2d 984. In the circumstances here—and particularly given the constraints of 8 U.S.C. § 1252(f)(1)—it would not be proper to impose res judicata effect on a class-wide basis while the declaratory judgment is pending on appeal. *Id.* (the “only one safe way of avoiding conflicting judgments” is to delay a decision “until the decision on appeal has been rendered”).

Beyond the two most serious problems with giving effect to the *Bautista* declaratory judgment in this case, additional reasons counsel strongly against doing so. The government should not be precluded from litigating the issue of the proper detention authority here, where the Petitioner was not a named party to the prior *Bautista* litigation, but instead merely a member of a fundamentally flawed nationwide class. In such a circumstance, applying preclusion against the government would allow the *Bautista* court’s decision to freeze the law for all district courts nationwide, and stymies development of the law. This is particularly so because the *Bautista* court could never grant complete habeas relief to all class members as a result of § 1252(f)(1)—instead, the *Bautista* class action was merely a vehicle for seeking to use the judgment in individual habeas matters such as this one. At minimum, the court should exercise its discretion to decline to employ offensive issue preclusion, as it does in cases where a non-party seeks to invoke preclusion against a private party. *See Syverson v. Int’l Bus. Machines Corp.*, 472 F.3d 1072, 1078 (9th Cir. 2007) (citing *Parklane Hosiery Co. v. Shore*, 439 U.S. 322, 331 (1979)). Indeed, it is doubtful that issue preclusion is ever appropriate in the habeas

context. *See Hardwick v. Doolittle*, 558 F.2d 292, 295 (5th Cir. 1977) (“The doctrines of res judicate and collateral estoppel are not applicable in habeas proceedings.”).

In sum, the *Bautista* declaratory judgment has no preclusive effect on this case.

III. CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, the Government respectfully requests that the Court deny Petitioner’s request for habeas relief and grant the instant motion.

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Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that, on January 5, 2026, the foregoing was filed and served on all attorneys of record via the District's ECF system.

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