

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLORADO**

Civil Action No. 25-cv-04089-NYW

JUAN ANTONIO DIAZ LOPEZ,

Petitioner,

v.

KRISTI NOEM, Secretary, U.S. Department  
of Homeland Security, in her official capacity;

PAMELA BONDI, Attorney General, U.S.  
Department of Justice, in her official capacity;

ROBERT HAGAN, Field Office Director,  
Denver Field Office, U.S. Immigration and  
Customs Enforcement, in his official capacity;  
and

JUAN BALTAZAR, Warden of the Denver  
Contract Detention Facility, Aurora, Colorado,  
in his official capacity;

Respondents.

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**RESPONSE TO ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE [ECF No. 4]**

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Pursuant to the Court's December 22, 2025, Order, ECF No. 4, Respondents hereby respond to Petitioner Juan Antonio Diaz Lopez's Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus, ECF No. 1 (filed December 19, 2025) (the "Petition"). Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2241, Petitioner, through counsel, asserts violations of substantive due process, procedural due process, and the Immigration and Nationality Act ("INA"), alleging that Respondents have unlawfully detained him under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2). *See* ECF No. 1 ¶¶ 49-76. He claims he is not subject to § 1225(b)(2)(A) but is instead subject to 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a). *See id.* ¶¶ 33-35.

As discussed below, the Petition should be denied because Petitioner is an applicant for admission within the scope of § 1225(b)(2). The Court should therefore deny Petitioner's requests for relief because he is subject to § 1225(b)(2)(A).

### INTRODUCTION

This case involves a question of statutory interpretation. The Department of Homeland Security ("DHS") is detaining Petitioner under a statutory provision of the INA, 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)(A), that applies to noncitizens<sup>1</sup> who, like Petitioner, are treated as "applicants for admission" because they entered the country without inspection and have never been admitted. Section 1225(b)(2)(A) requires detention of an "applicant for admission" if an "examining immigration officer determines that [the] alien seeking admission is not clearly and beyond a doubt entitled to be admitted."

Petitioner claims he is not subject to § 1225(b)(2)(A) but is instead subject to 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), a provision that also authorizes detention of certain noncitizens while removal proceedings are pending. The practical difference between the two sections is that Congress has provided that noncitizens detained under § 1225(b)(2)(A) are ordinarily not eligible for bond hearings, while those detained under § 1226(a) are. Based on the premise that his detention is governed by § 1226(a), Petitioner seeks a writ of habeas corpus declaring that § 1226, not § 1225, applies, and that he is therefore eligible for a bond hearing.

The Court should conclude that Petitioner is an applicant for admission within the scope of § 1225(b)(2) based on the text of the statute and the Supreme Court's interpretation of it in *Jennings v. Rodriguez*, 583 U.S. 281 (2018). Respondents recognize that numerous

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<sup>1</sup> The INA uses the term "alien," which is defined as "any person not a citizen or national of the United States." See 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(3).

nonprecedential decisions have reasoned otherwise. But as explained below, a close reading of the Supreme Court's explanation in *Jennings* of the scope of § 1225 supports Respondents' view, and the reasoning of many lower court decisions does not square with the Supreme Court's interpretation of the statute. The Court should therefore deny Petitioner's requests for relief because he is subject to § 1225(b)(2)(A).

Petitioner additionally argues that he is a member of a class recently certified in *Maldonado Bautista v. Noem, et al.*, No. 25-cv-01873-SSS-BFM, --- F.R.D. ----, 2025 WL 3288403 (C.D. Cal. Nov. 25, 2025). Petitioner argues that the district court in *Bautista* granted declaratory relief to that class. On December 18, 2025, the *Bautista* court entered partial final judgment on behalf of the class. *See Order, Maldonado Bautista v. Noem, et al.*, No. 25-cv-01873-SSS-BFM (C.D. Cal. Dec. 18, 2025) (ECF No. 92) at 7-12. This Court should not grant preclusive effect to that decision (which is now on appeal), for multiple reasons.

### **FACTUAL BACKGROUND**

#### **Petitioner's entry into the United States.**

Petitioner is a native and citizen of Mexico. *See* Ex. A, Declaration of John Mansur, ¶ 4. He has never been admitted or paroled into the United States. *Id.* ¶ 6. Thus, he is being treated as an applicant for admission.

#### **Petitioner's immigration history and detention pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2).**

On November 7, 2025, Petitioner was arrested in Weld County, Colorado for Driving Under Restraint in violation of C.R.S. § 42-2-138(1)(a) and Driving Under the Influence in violation of C.R.S. § 42-4-1301(1)(a). *Id.* ¶ 8. On the same date, ICE officers encountered Petitioner after his release from state custody. *Id.* ¶ 9. Upon interviewing Petitioner and reviewing relevant immigration databases, ICE officials determined that Petitioner did not

possess documentation authorizing his entry into or presence in the United States. *Id.* ICE officials concluded that Petitioner is subject to removal and arrested and detained him pending resolution of removal proceedings. *Id.* Petitioner is detained pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b). *Id.* ¶ 10.

On November 7, 2025, DHS ICE issued a Notice to Appear (NTA), initiating removal proceedings under 8 U.S.C. § 1229a, before the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR). *Id.* ¶ 11. The NTA charged Petitioner with being deportable from the United States pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1182(a)(6)(A)(i) (alien present in the United States without being admitted or paroled, or who arrives in the United States at any time or place other than as designated). *Id.*

On November 18, 2025, Petitioner appeared before the Immigration Judge (IJ) at the Aurora Immigration Court for his initial appearance in removal proceedings. *Id.* ¶ 13. The IJ advised Petitioner of his rights and responsibilities in removal proceedings. Petitioner requested additional time to hire an attorney. *Id.* The IJ granted his request. *Id.*

On December 2, 2025, Petitioner appeared before the IJ for a master calendar hearing in the removal proceedings. *Id.* ¶ 13. Petitioner requested additional time to prepare his case. *Id.* The IJ granted his request. *Id.*

On December 20, 2025, Petitioner filed a motion for custody redetermination hearing before the IJ. *Id.* ¶ 14. EOIR scheduled the hearing for January 2, 2026. *Id.*

Petitioner's removal proceedings remain pending before the immigration court and his case is scheduled for a master calendar hearing on January 12, 2026. *Id.* ¶ 15. Petitioner remains detained at the Denver Contract Detention Facility in Aurora, Colorado, pending resolution of his removal proceedings. *Id.* ¶ 16.

**Petitioner's habeas petition.**

Petitioner, through counsel, filed a Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2241 on December 19, 2025. ECF No. 1. In the Petition, Petitioner asserts four claims for relief. *See* ECF No. 1 ¶¶ 49-76. First, he alleges a violation of his substantive due process rights because of Respondents' alleged failure to provide Petitioner a bond hearing. *Id.* ¶¶ 49-53. Second—and on the same grounds—he alleges a violation of his procedural due process rights. *Id.* ¶¶ 54-59. Third, he alleges that Respondents have violated the INA by subjecting him to detention under § 1225(b)(2)(A), rather than under § 1226(a). *Id.* ¶¶ 60-70. Finally, Petitioner asserts that he is a member of a nationwide class certified in *Maldonado Bautista*, in which the court recently entered declaratory judgment. *Id.* ¶¶ 71-76. As relief, Petitioner requests that the Court enter an order declaring that 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) governs his detention; requiring Respondents to either release Petitioner or provide him a bond hearing “at which 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)(A) cannot be applied,” DHS bears the burden of proof, and the IJ considers his ability to pay bond; and grant attorneys' fees and costs of suit under the Equal Access to Justice Act, 5 U.S.C. § 504 and 28 U.S.C. § 2412(s). *Id.* at 20.

On December 22, 2025, this Court issued an Order to Show Cause. ECF No. 4. Pursuant to the All Writs Act, the Court further ordered that Respondents must not remove Petitioner from the District of Colorado or the United States unless or until the Court or the Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit vacates the Order. *Id.*

**LEGAL BACKGROUND**

In the INA, Congress established rules governing when certain noncitizens may be detained or removed. As relevant here, 8 U.S.C. § 1225 governs the processes for the detention and removal of noncitizens who are “applicants for admission.” *See* 8 U.S.C. § 1225(a)(1). The

scope of § 1225 was analyzed by the Supreme Court in *Jennings*. At issue in that case was whether certain noncitizens are entitled to periodic bond hearings during prolonged detention. Because in that case, as in this one, “[t]he primary issue [wa]s the proper interpretation of §§ 1225(b), 1226(a), and 1226(c),” 583 U.S. at 289, the Supreme Court’s explanation in *Jennings* of § 1225’s scope should guide the Court’s analysis here. Five key points from *Jennings* are set forth below:

**1) Section 1225 applies to “applicants for admission,” a term that includes noncitizens who are unlawfully present and never admitted.**

Section 1225 provides, in relevant part, that “[a]n alien present in the United States who has not been admitted ... shall be *deemed* for purposes of this chapter [to be] an applicant for admission.” 8 U.S.C. § 1225(a)(1) (emphasis added). The *Jennings* Court confirmed that § 1225 applies to “applicants for admission,” and that this term applies to *both* (a) an “arriving alien,” as well as (b) an individual who is *present* in the United States but has not been “admitted” through a lawful entry at a port of entry.<sup>2</sup>

The Court in *Jennings* recognized that the statute uses the term “applicant for admission” as a term of art. “Under ... 8 U.S.C. § 1225, an alien who ‘arrives in the United States,’ or ‘is present’ in this country but ‘has not been admitted,’ is *treated as* ‘an applicant for admission.’” 583 U.S. at 287 (emphasis added). In other words, noncitizens who are present in the country and were never lawfully admitted are “treated as”—in the words of § 1225(a)(1), they are “deemed” to be—“applicants for admission.”

**2) “Applicants for admission” are not limited to noncitizens who have submitted an immigration application.**

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<sup>2</sup> The INA defines “admission” to mean “lawful entry” after “inspection and authorization by an immigration officer”—such as may occur at a port of entry. *Id.* § 1101(a)(13)(A) (defining “admission” and “admitted” as “the lawful entry of the alien into the United States *after inspection and authorization* by an immigration officer”) (emphasis added).

The *Jennings* Court’s discussion of “applicant for admission” as a term of art made clear that the term “applicant for admission” is not limited to noncitizens who have submitted an immigration application. Rather, there are two criteria to be an applicant for admission: “an alien who [1] ‘is present’ in this country but [2] ‘has not been admitted’ is *treated as* ‘an applicant for admission.’” *Id.* at 287 (emphasis added, marks added).

The Court commented later in its opinion that “[i]n sum, U.S. immigration law authorizes the Government to detain certain aliens seeking admission into the country under §§ 1225(b)(1) and (b)(2).” *Id.* at 289. But the reference to “aliens seeking admission” did not add a new “seeking admission” criterion for § 1225. Rather, this reference reflected the Court’s prior explanation that noncitizens who fall within §§ 1225(b)(1) and (b)(2) are, as a matter of law, “treated as” “applicants for admission.” *Id.* at 287.

Indeed, § 1225 elsewhere recognizes that the *status* of being an applicant for admission is one way that a noncitizen may be “seeking admission.” It states, “All aliens ... who are applicants for admission *or otherwise seeking admission* ... shall be inspected by immigration officers.” 8 U.S.C. § 1225(a)(3). Section 1225 thus confirms that a noncitizen can seek admission simply by meeting the definition of an applicant for admission *or* can “otherwise” seek admission by directly applying for admission.

**3) Section 1225(b) applies to all applicants for admission, not just arriving aliens or those who unlawfully entered the country recently.**

The *Jennings* Court’s discussion of § 1225’s scope indicates that “applicants for admission” does not somehow *exclude* those who entered without inspection years ago. The Court explained that § 1225(b)(1) applies to two subcategories of applicants for admission. One subcategory applies to those arriving noncitizens who have been “initially determined to be

inadmissible due to fraud, misrepresentation, or lack of valid documentation.” *Jennings*, 583 U.S. at 287 (citing § 1225(b)(1)(a)(i)). Another subcategory applies to certain noncitizens who are: (1) designated by the Attorney General in her discretion; (2) unlawfully present without being admitted; and (3) recent arrivals. That is, it applies to those who have “not been admitted or paroled into the United States, and ... ha[ve] not affirmatively shown, to the satisfaction of an immigration officer, that the alien has been physically present in the United States continuously for the 2-year period immediately prior to the date of the determination of inadmissibility under this subparagraph.” *See Jennings*, 583 U.S. at 287; § 1225(b)(1)(A)(iii). Noncitizens in those two subcategories are subject to “expedited removal.” *Jennings*, 583 U.S. at 287 (“Aliens covered by § 1225(b)(1) are normally ordered removed ‘without further hearing or review’ pursuant to an expedited removal process.” (quoting 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1)(A)(i)).

The Court then explained that *all* applicants for admission who fall outside those narrow two subcategories are covered by the *second* subsection of § 1225(b)—*i.e.*, § 1225(b)(2). It described § 1225(b)(2) as a “*catchall* provision that applies to *all* ‘applicants for admission’ not covered by” § 1225(b)(1).” 583 U.S. at 287 (emphasis added).

Thus, a noncitizen who meets the general definition of applicant for admission (such as an individual who is unlawfully present and has not been admitted) but does not fall within the two § 1225(b)(1) subcategories described above is still an “applicant for admission” who falls under the “catchall” provision of § 1225(b)(2).

**4) In § 1225, Congress did not grant applicants for admission a right to a bond hearing.**

The Court in *Jennings* recognized that § 1225 does not provide for a bond hearing. It explained that Congress has provided that aliens covered by § 1225(b)(2) generally “shall be detained” during their removal proceedings, with narrow exceptions. *Jennings*, 583 U.S. at

287-88 (quoting 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)(A)). Under § 1225(b)(2)(A), all other applicants for admission whom an immigration officer determines are “not clearly and beyond a doubt entitled to be admitted” shall be detained for removal proceedings under 8 U.S.C. § 1229a.

**5) Section 1226, in contrast, provides for detention, and bond hearings, for other categories of noncitizens subject to removal.**

The *Jennings* Court recognized that a different statutory provision—§ 1226(a)—governs the detention of other noncitizens, including those who had been “admitted.” As the Court explained in *Jennings*,

Even once inside the United States, aliens do not have an absolute right to remain here. For example, an alien present in the country may still be removed if he or she falls ‘within one or more ... classes of deportable aliens.’ § 1227(a). That includes aliens who were inadmissible at the time of entry or who have been convicted of certain criminal offenses since admission. See §§ 1227(a)(1), (2).

583 U.S. at 288. Thus, § 1226(a) extends to those who were admitted.

The Court did *not* suggest that § 1226(a) governs the detention of noncitizens who are covered by § 1225(b)(2). Rather, the Court appeared to recognize that these two provisions—§ 1225(b)(2) and § 1226(a)—authorize detention for *different* sets of individuals: the detention of noncitizens covered by § 1225 is authorized by § 1225, and *other* individuals in the country not covered by § 1225 may be detained under § 1226:

U.S. immigration law authorizes the Government to detain certain aliens seeking admission into the country under §§ 1225(b)(1) and (b)(2). It also authorizes the Government to detain certain aliens already in the country pending the outcome of removal proceedings under §§ 1226(a) and (c).

*Jennings*, 583 U.S. at 289. In distinguishing between these detention authorities, the *Jennings* Court did *not* suggest that noncitizens who are properly covered by § 1225 (where Congress has not authorized bond) should instead be governed by the detention authority set forth in § 1226(a)—the provision where Congress *has* expressly authorized bond.

## ARGUMENT

### I. There is no violation of the INA because Petitioner is subject to § 1225(b)(2)(A).

As explained above, § 1225(b)(2) applies to “applicants for admission,” which include noncitizens who entered without inspection and have been present in the country for more than two years. Here, Petitioner is present in the country but has not been “admitted”—*i.e.*, he has not made a “lawful entry ... after inspection and authorization by an immigration officer.” 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(13)(A); ECF No. 1 ¶ 23. The Supreme Court’s explanation in *Jennings* of the scope of § 1225 shows that a noncitizen in Petitioner’s position is treated as an “applicant for admission.” Moreover, § 1225(b)(2)(A) mandates detention for a noncitizen “who is an applicant for admission” if he is “not clearly and beyond a doubt entitled to be admitted.” In short, the text of the statute supports detention without bond under § 1225.

#### A. The language of the statute establishes that § 1225 applies to Petitioner.

When interpreting the language of a statute, the starting point is always the language of the statute itself.” *McGraw v. Barnhart*, 450 F.3d 493, 498 (10th Cir. 2006) (quoting *United States v. Quarrell*, 310 F.3d 664, 669 (10th Cir. 2002)).

Looking to the text of § 1225, as the *Jennings* Court explained, § 1225 applies to “applicants for admission,” a term of art encompassing *both* those just arriving in the United States *and* those who entered without inspection. For example, § 1225(b)(1)(A)(i) is not limited to noncitizens “arriving in the United States” who are rendered inadmissible for the specified reasons (*i.e.*, misrepresentation or lack of a valid entry document). Instead, § 1225(b)(1)(A)(i) also applies, through its reference to § 1225(b)(1)(A)(iii), to some noncitizens who have *already* been residing in the United States and are inadmissible for the same reasons—that is, applicants for admission who have “not been admitted or paroled” and have not “affirmatively shown, to the satisfaction of an immigration officer, that [they] ha[ve] been physically present in the United

States continuously for the 2-year period immediately prior to the date of the determination of inadmissibility under this subparagraph.” 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1)(A)(iii)(II).

In *Jennings*, the Supreme Court expressly recognized that § 1225(b)(2), which refers to a “broader” category of noncitizens than those described in § 1225(b)(1), applies to all “applicants for admission” who do not fall within § 1225(b)(1). The Court stated that § 1225(b)(2) is a “catchall provision that applies to *all applicants for admission* not covered by § 1225(b)(1).” 583 U.S. at 287 (emphasis added). Accordingly, § 1225(b)(2) applies *both* to applicants for admission just arriving at the border who do not fall within Section 1225(b)(1)(A)(i) *and* to applicants for admission who have been physically present in the United States but are not covered by § 1225(b)(1)(A)(iii)(II).

Nor do the phrases “arriving” and “seeking admission” in § 1225(b)(2)(A) suggest otherwise. Section 1225(b)(1) contains no “seeking admission” language. Its detention provision applies, in the Attorney General’s discretion, even to some noncitizens who are not “arriving” at the time of their inspection by an immigration officer. *See* 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1)(A)(i) (applying to an “alien ... who is arriving in the United States *or* is described in clause (iii)” (emphasis added)); *id.* § 1226(b)(1)(A)(iii) (describing a noncitizen “who has not affirmatively shown” that they have “been physically present in the United States continuously for the 2-year period immediately prior to the date of determination of inadmissibility”).

Other parts of § 1225 confirm that *anyone* falling within the category of “applicant for admission” is deemed, as a matter of law, to be seeking admission. *See* 8 U.S.C. § 1225(a)(3) (“All aliens ... who are applicants for admission or *otherwise seeking admission* ... shall be inspected by immigration officers.” (emphasis added)); *id.* § 1225(a)(5) (“An applicant for admission may be required to state ... the purposes and intentions of the applicant *in seeking*

*admission ...*” (emphasis added)).

In short, the Court in *Jennings* confirmed that all noncitizens who are “applicants for admission” are “seeking admission” by virtue of that status. Thus, based on the language of the statute, § 1225 applies to Petitioner.

**B. Section 1225 applies to noncitizens seeking admission regardless of whether the noncitizen is apprehended at the border or a port of entry.**

Petitioner takes the position that § 1225(b)(2)(A) only applies 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. ECF No. 1 at 33. But that reading of § 1225(b)(2)(A)—that it extends only to *new* arrivals—does not comport with the text of § 1225 or make sense in the context of the whole section, as the Court in *Jennings* explained and as discussed above.

**II. Petitioner’s arguments that § 1225(b)(2)(a) does not apply to him are unavailing.**

Petitioner makes several arguments about why § 1225(b)(2)(A) should not apply to him: (1) it is inconsistent with the Government’s prior practice of applying § 1226 to aliens already present in the United States; (2) it is inconsistent with the INA’s legislative history; and (3) courts that have reviewed this issue have “almost universally” rejected Respondents’ interpretation. ECF No. 1 ¶¶ 29-42. The Court should reject these arguments.

**A. Updates in agency policy comport with the statutory language of § 1225(b)(2)(A).**

Petitioner asserts that prior to an “abrupt reject[ion]” of its earlier practice—an internal ICE memo titled “Interim Guidance Regarding Detention and Authority for Applicants for Admission that was announced on July 8, 2025—noncitizens who entered the country without admission were considered detained under Section 1226(a) and placed in standard removal proceedings in which the noncitizens received bond hearings. *See* ECF No. 1 ¶¶ 35-38. He

alleges that, until recently, “[c]ourts 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 ... subject to detention under § 1226. *Id.* ¶¶ 35 (citing 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)).

Petitioner’s argument fails. First, the Federal Register entry he cites as evidence of prior practice appears to acknowledge that noncitizens who are present without having been admitted are “applicants for admission.” *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). That entry states that “[d]espite 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.” *Id.* (emphasis added). Thus, the cited language implicitly acknowledges that applicants for admission are not eligible for bond hearings under the statute. Instead, it apparently regarded them as eligible for bond hearings as a matter of administrative discretion, not of statutory interpretation.

Second, the Federal Register entry does not change the plain language of the statute. The weight given to agency interpretations must “depend upon their thoroughness evident in its consideration, the validity of its reasoning, its consistency with earlier and later pronouncements, and all those factors which give it power to persuade.” *Loper Bright Enterprises v. Raimondo*, 603 U.S. 369, 388 (2024) (quoting *Skidmore v. Swift & Co.*, 323 U.S. 134, 140 (1944)). Here, the agency provided little analysis to support the reasoning for its statement about granting bond hearings to applicants for admission. *See* 62 Fed. Reg. at 10323. A prior practice by the agency of making such individuals eligible for bond hearings therefore carries little weight in

interpreting the text of § 1225. And, as discussed above, Respondents' interpretation is consistent with the statutory text.

**B. Legislative history supports Respondents' reading of § 1225.**

Contrary to Petitioner's contention, legislative history weighs in favor of Respondents' interpretation. *See* ECF No. 1 ¶ 39-40. Before the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 ("IIRIRA"), § 1225 provided for the inspection of noncitizens only when they were arriving at a port of entry. *See* 8 U.S.C. § 1225(a) (1990) (discussing inspection of all noncitizens "arriving at ports of the United States"). It required that such noncitizens be placed in exclusion proceedings. *Id.* § 1225(c). By contrast, noncitizens who "entered without inspection" were deemed deportable under 8 U.S.C. § 1251(a)(1)(B) (1994) and placed in deportation proceedings, where they could be eligible for bond. *Id.* § 1252(a)(1) (1994).

In short, under the pre-IIRIRA regime, whether a noncitizen was placed in exclusion proceedings or deportation proceedings depended on whether they had "entered" the country. But this focus on "entry" "resulted in an anomaly"—"non-citizens who had entered without inspection could take advantage of the greater procedural and substantive rights afforded in deportation proceedings, while noncitizens who presented themselves at a port of entry for inspection were subjected to more summary exclusion proceedings." *Hing Sum v. Holder*, 602 F.3d 1092, 1100 (9th Cir. 2010).

The IIRIRA sought to address this anomaly "by substituting 'admission' for 'entry' and by replacing deportation and exclusion proceedings with a general 'removal' proceeding." *Id.* Congress thus expanded § 1225 to address not only those who presented themselves at a port of entry, but to include all applicants for admission—*i.e.*, all noncitizens arriving or present in the country who had not been lawfully admitted. The House Judiciary Committee Report confirms this intent, stating that the IIRIRA was intended to replace certain aspects of the current "entry

doctrine,” under which “[i]llegal aliens who have entered ... without inspection gain equities and privileges in immigration proceedings that are not available to aliens who present themselves for inspection at a port of entry.” H.R. Rep. No. 104-469, pt. 1, at 225 (1996). Hence, the pivotal factor in determining an alien’s status will be whether or not he has been lawfully admitted. The Report also explains that before the IIRIRA, “aliens who ha[d] entered without inspection [were] deportable under section [1251(a)(1)(B)]” but that after the IIRIRA “such aliens will not be considered to have been admitted.” *Id.* at 226. The revisions to § 1225 “ensure[d] that all immigrants who have not been lawfully admitted, regardless of their physical presence in the country,” would be on “equal footing in removal proceedings” as applicants for admission. *Torres v. Barr*, 976 F.3d 918, 928 (9th Cir. 2020) (en banc) (citing 8 U.S.C. § 1225(a)(1)).

If the Court interprets § 1225 in the manner advocated by Petitioner, it would undo the fix that Congress enacted through the IIRIRA. On Petitioner’s reading, a noncitizen who enters without inspection would often be entitled to a bond hearing while a noncitizen who presents themselves to immigration officers at a port of entry would not. Such a reading would recreate the anomalous pre-IIRIRA incentives for those entering the country without inspection. But as the Supreme Court has recognized, a statutory interpretation that would allow applicants for admission to avoid mandatory detention simply by evading immigration officers when they enter the country would enshrine in our law “a perverse incentive to enter at an unlawful rather than a lawful location.” *DHS v. Thuraissigiam*, 591 U.S. 103, 140 (2020).

**C. Many courts have issued well-reasoned decisions affirming Respondents’ interpretation of § 1225.**

Petitioner argues that “[c]ourts that have reviewed this issue have almost universally rejected Respondents’ new reading of the statute.” ECF No. 1 ¶ 41. However, each of the decisions he cites is non-precedential, and the question has not been decided by a Federal Court

of Appeals in any circuit. *See id.* And in fact, numerous courts have affirmed Respondents' interpretation of § 1225, often articulating their reasoning in careful detail. *See, e.g., Altamirano Ramos v. Lyons*, – F. Supp. 3d –, 2025 WL 3199872, at \*4 (C.D. Cal. Nov. 12, 2025); *Mejia Olalde v. Noem*, No. 1:25-cv-168, 2025 WL 3131942, at \*2-3 (E.D. Mo. Nov. 10, 2025); *Rojas v. Olson*, No. 25-cv-1437, 2025 WL 3033967, at \*6 (E.D. Wis. Oct. 30, 2025); *Cabanas v. Bondi*, 4:25-cv-04830, 2025 WL 3171331 (S.D. Tex. Nov. 13, 2025); *Sandoval v. Acuna*, No. 6:25-cv-01467, 2025 WL 3048926 (W.D. La. Oct. 31, 2025); *Topal v. Bondi*, No. 1:25-cv-01612, 2025 WL 3486894 (W.D. La. Dec. 3, 2025); *Xiaoquan Chen v. Almodovar*, No. 1:25-cv-8350, 2025 WL 3484855 (S.D.N.Y. Dec. 4, 2025); *Candido v. Bondi*, No. 25-cv-867, 2025 WL 3484932 (W.D.N.Y. Dec. 4, 2025).

**II. Petitioner has been afforded due process as required under § 1225(b)(2)(A).**

Petitioner alleges that his detention without a bond hearing violates his substantive and procedural due process rights. ECF No. 1 ¶¶ 49-59. This argument fails because Petitioner is subject to detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)(A), as set forth above, and he has received the due process that is set forth by statute.

To show that he has been denied due process, Petitioner would need to show that he has been deprived of a statutory right. The Supreme Court has “often reiterated” the “important rule” that for “foreigners who have never been ... admitted into the country pursuant to law,” “the decisions of executive or administrative officers, acting within powers expressly conferred by Congress, are due process of law.” *Thuraissigiam*, 591 U.S. at 138. There, the Court explained that an alien who was an “applicant for admission” had “only those rights regarding admission that Congress has provided by statute,” and “the Due Process Clause provides nothing more.” *Id.* at 140.

Second, Petitioner has not shown any prejudice. He has not shown that he is being

denied procedures in his immigration proceedings, where he can challenge the determination that § 1225(b)(2)(A) applies. He thus has not shown a violation of procedural due process. *See Duran-Hernandez v. Ashcroft*, 348 F.3d 1158, 1163 (10th Cir. 2003) (where a noncitizen failed to show “that additional procedural safeguards would have changed” the immigration court’s decision, this “failure to prove prejudice leads us to reject [his] due process claim”). As another Court in this District has explained in analyzing a due-process challenge to immigration detention, “so long as the government reasonably affords noncitizen detainees in ongoing immigration proceedings administrative process to challenge the *merits* determinations that are keeping them in custody, continued custody is permissible.” *Bonilla Espinoza v. Ceja*, Civil Action No. 25-cv-01120-GPG (D. Colo. May 21, 2025), ECF No. 11 at 13.

Third, Petitioner’s detention has been sufficiently short that it is presumptively constitutional. He has been detained for less than two months as of the date of this submission. *See* ECF No. 1 ¶ 1. In a different immigration context—noncitizens already ordered removed and indefinitely awaiting their removal—the Supreme Court has explained that detention of up to six months is presumptively constitutional. *See Zadvydas v. Davis*, 533 U.S. 678, 701 (2001). In other contexts, even this presumptive constitutional limit has been distinguished as unnecessarily restrictive. In *Demore v. Kim*, 538 U.S. 510 (2003), the Supreme Court explained that noncitizens who were convicted of certain crimes may be detained during the entire course of their removal proceedings. 538 U.S. at 513. In that case, like this one, Congress mandated detention pending removal proceedings. *See id.*; 8 U.S.C. § 1226(c). The Court reasoned that the “definite termination point” of the detention at the end of removal proceedings assuaged any constitutional concern about the length of detention. *See Demore*, 538 U.S. at 512.

The same is true here. Petitioner is detained in immigration custody “pending completion of his removal proceedings.” ECF No. 1 ¶ 1; *see also* Ex. A ¶¶ 11-16. Congress’s decision to detain him pending removal is a “constitutionally permissible part of th[is] process.” *See Demore*, 538 U.S. at 531.

**III. No nationwide declaratory relief entitles Petitioner to a bond hearing or release.**

Petitioner claims that he falls within the nationwide class certified in *Bautista v. Noem*, No. 5:25-CV-1873 (C.D. Cal.). ECF No. 1 ¶¶ 43-48. On December 18, 2025, the court in that case issued declaratory judgment as part of a grant of partial final judgment. *See id.*, ECF No. 92. That decision is now on appeal. This Court should not grant preclusive effect to that decision, for four reasons.

*First*, for a prior judgment to have preclusive effect, the judgment must be “entered by a court of competent jurisdiction.” *N. Nat. Gas Co. v. Grounds*, 931 F.2d 678, 683 (10th Cir. 1991); *see* Restatement (Second) of Judgments § 1 (1982). Here, the *Bautista* court lacked jurisdiction to determine the legality of Petitioner’s detention. That court addressed whether class members were unlawfully detained under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2), and such a challenge to the legality of detention can only be brought in habeas. *Trump v. J.G.G.*, 604 U.S. 670, 672 (2025). Under habeas principles, “jurisdiction lies in only one district: the district of confinement.” *Rumsfeld v. Padilla*, 542 U.S. 426, 443 (2004). And a habeas petitioner must name his immediate custodian. *Id.* at 435. The *Bautista* court thus lacked jurisdiction to determine the legality of the detention of class members like Petitioner confined outside the Central District of California. That court also lacked jurisdiction to grant a declaratory judgment in a class action to determine a preliminary issue that class members then rely on to seek relief in individual habeas actions. *See Calderon v. Ashmus*, 523 U.S. 740, 747 (1998).

*Second*, while courts have “discretion to determine when [offensive collateral estoppel] should be applied.” *Parklane Hosiery Co. v. Shore*, 439 U.S. 322, 329–31 (1979), offensive collateral estoppel is disfavored when applied against the federal government. *See United States v. Mendoza*, 464 U.S. 154, 159 (1984) (recognizing that the federal government’s unique position weighs against “a broad application of collateral estoppel”).

*Third*, the existence of prior inconsistent judgments weighs against applying issue preclusion. *Parklane Hosiery*, 439 U.S. at 330-31. District courts have interpreted 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2) differently from the *Bautista* court. *See, e.g., Altamirano Ramos v. Lyons*, – F. Supp. 3d –, 2025 WL 3199872, at \*4 (C.D. Cal. Nov. 12, 2025) (citing cases). These varying rulings support not giving the *Bautista* judgment preclusive effect. *See Order, Calderon Lopez v. Lyons*, No. 25-cv-00226 (N.D. Tex. Dec. 19, 2025), ECF No. 12, at 11 & 28.

*Fourth*, the pendency of an appeal to the Ninth Circuit of the district court’s *Bautista* decision supports not giving that decision preclusive force at this time. While the mere “pendency of an appeal does not prevent application of the collateral estoppel doctrine,” *Ruyle v. Cont’l Oil Co.*, 44 F.3d 837, 846 (10th Cir. 1994), applying preclusive force to a judgment that has been appealed can cause difficulty because a judgment that is reversed “is thereby deprived of all conclusive effect.” *United States v. Lacey*, 982 F.2d 410, 412 (10th Cir. 1992). Courts thus should strive to avoid this “evil result[.]” 9 A.L.R.2d 984. When a prior judgment has been appealed, the second court may hold the “disposition in abeyance until the pending appeal [is] resolved.” *See Ruyle*, 44 F.3d at 846. Indeed, “strong reasons must be found to justify proceeding with the second action pending appeal from the first judgment.” C. Wright, 18A Fed. Prac. & Prod. § 4433. Here, if this Court is inclined to grant collateral estoppel effect to the *Bautista* decision, it should hold its decision in abeyance until the Ninth Circuit rules.

Based on all these factors, this Court should decline to accord the *Bautista* decision preclusive effect here as to Petitioner. Rather, this Court should simply address the proper scope of § 1225(b)(2) based on the analysis set forth above.

**CONCLUSION**

For the reasons discussed above, the Court should deny the Petition.

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Respectfully submitted,

PETER MCNEILLY  
United States Attorney

s/ Katherine A. Ross  
***Katherine A. Ross***  
Assistant United States Attorney  
United States Attorney's Office  
1801 California Street, Suite 1600  
Denver, CO 80202  
Phone: (303) 454-0286  
Email: katherine.ross@usdoj.gov

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I hereby certify that on December 30, 2025, I electronically filed the foregoing with the Clerk of Court using the CM/ECF system which will send notification of such filing.

s/ Katherine A. Ross  
U.S. Attorney's Office