

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF FLORIDA**

ROJO MORALES, ANGEL

Petitioner,

v.

SCOTTY RHODEN, in his official capacity
as Sheriff of the Baker County Facility,
GARRET RIPA, in his official
capacity as Miami Field Office Director,
Immigration and Customs Enforcement's
Enforcement and Removal Operations; TODD
LYONS, in his official capacity as Acting Director
of Immigration and Customs Enforcement; KRISTI
NOEM, in her official capacity as Secretary of the
Department of Homeland Security; PAMELA
BONDI, in her official capacity as Attorney
General; and EXECUTIVE OFFICE FOR
IMMIGRATION REVIEW

Respondents.

)
)
) Case No. _____
)

) Agency File: 
)

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

INTRODUCTION

1. Petitioner, Angel Rojo Morales, is in the physical custody of Respondents at the Baker County Facility located at 1 Sheriff's Office Drive, Macclenny, FL 32063. 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 was represented by different counsel in Removal Proceedings where the Immigration Judge denied bond due to lack of jurisdiction.

3. The Department of Homeland Security ("DHS") filed formal charges against Petitioner September 24, 2025, and charged him removable under 212(a)(6)(A)(i) and 212(a)(7)(A)(i)(I). Both charges were sustained, and relief was filed in the form of Cancellation of Removal for Certain Non-Permanent Residents (42B).

4. That petition was denied on November 5, 2025.

5. The case was properly appealed on November 12, 2025.

6. Absent an order from this Court, Petitioner will continue to suffer irreparable harm caused by his unlawful detention and violation of his constitutional rights.

7. In or about 1999, Respondent entered the United States without inspection.

8. On July 8, 2025, DHS 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 admission or inspection—to be subject to detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)(A) and therefore ineligible to be released on bond.

9. Similarly, on September 5, 2025, the Board of Immigration Appeals (“BIA” or “the Board”) issued a precedent decision, binding on all immigration judges, holding that an immigration judge has no authority to consider bond requests for any person who entered the United States without admission. *See Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, 29 I & N Dec. 216 (BIA 2025). The Board determined that such individuals are subject to detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)(A) and therefore ineligible to be released on bond.

10. 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.

11. 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.

12. Accordingly, Petitioner seeks a writ of habeas corpus requiring that he be released unless Respondents provide a bond hearing under § 1226(a) within seven days.

JURISDICTION

13. 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).

14. 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

15. Pursuant to *Braden v. 30th Judicial Circuit Court of Kentucky*, 410 U.S. 484, 493- 500 (1973), venue lies in the United States District Court for the judicial district in which Petitioner currently is detained.

16. Venue is proper in this district pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2241 and 28 U.S.C. § 1391 because Petitioner is detained at the Baker County Facility, located at 1 Sheriff's Office Drive, Macclenny, FL 32063, within the Middle District of Florida, and Petitioner's immediate physical custodian is in this District.

REQUIREMENTS OF 28 U.S.C. § 2243

17. The Court must grant the petition for writ of habeas corpus or issue an order to show cause to the Respondents “forthwith,” unless the Petitioner is not entitled to relief. 28 U.S.C. § 2243. If an order to show cause is issued, the Court must require Respondents to file a return “within three days unless for good cause additional time, not exceeding twenty days, is allowed.” *Id.*

18. Courts have long recognized the significance of the habeas statute in protecting individuals from unlawful detention. The Great Writ has been referred to as “perhaps the most important writ known to the constitutional law of England, 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).

PARTIES

19. Petitioner, Angel Rojo Morales, is a Mexican citizen who has been in immigration detention since approximately September 23, 2025. He is currently detained at the Baker County Facility, located at 1 Sheriff’s Office Drive, Macclenny, FL 32063.

20. Respondent, Scotty Rhoden, is named in his official capacity as Sheriff of Baker County. In this capacity, he is responsible for the immediate execution of detention over Petitioner and is the immediate custodian of Petitioner. Respondent Rhode’s address is 1 Sheriff’s Office Drive, Macclenny, FL 32063.

21. Respondent, Garret Ripa, is named in his official capacity as Miami Field Office Director of the ICE Enforcement & Removal Operations (“ERO”). In this capacity, he is responsible for the administration of immigration laws and the execution of immigration confinement and the institution of removal proceedings in Jacksonville, Florida, which is the jurisdiction where Petitioner is confined. As such, he is a custodian of Petitioner. Respondent Ripa’s address is 865 SW 78th Avenue, Suite 101, Plantation, FL 33324.

22. Respondent, Todd Lyons, is named in his official capacity as Acting Director of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (“ICE”). As the Senior Official Performing the Duties of the Director of ICE, he is responsible for the administration and enforcement of the immigration laws of the United States and is legally responsible for pursuing any effort to remove Petitioner and confine him pending removal. As such, he is a custodian of Mr. Rojo. His address is ICE, Office of the Principal Legal Advisor, 500 12th St. SW, Mail Stop 5900, Washington, DC 20536-5900.

23. Respondent, Kristi Noem, is named in her official capacity as the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security. In this capacity, she is responsible for the administration of the immigration laws pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1103(a); is legally responsible for pursuing any effort to confine and remove the Petitioner; and as such is a custodian of Mr. Rojo. Respondent Noem’s address is

U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of the General Counsel, 2707
Martin Luther King Jr. Ave. SE, Washington, DC 20528-0485.

24. Respondent, Pamela Bondi, is named in her official capacity as Attorney General of the United States. In this capacity, she is responsible for the administration of the immigration laws pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1103(g); and as such is a custodian of Petitioner. Respondent Bondi's address is U.S. Department of Justice, 950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20530-0001.

25. 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. The address for Respondent is 5107 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

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

27. 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).

28. 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).

29. 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).

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

31. 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).

32. 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).

33. 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 pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1226(c). 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)).

34. 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.

35. 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 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.

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

36. On September 5, 2025, the BIA adopted this same position in a published decision, *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*. There, the Board held that all noncitizens who entered the United States without admission or parole are subject to detention under § 1225(b)(2)(A) and are ineligible for IJ bond hearings.

37. Since Respondents adopted their new policies, dozens of federal courts have rejected their new interpretation of the INA's detention authorities. Courts have likewise rejected *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, which adopts the same reading of the statute as ICE.

38. Even before ICE or the BIA introduced these nationwide policies, 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. There, 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*, 779 F. Supp. 3d 1239 (W.D. Wash. 2025).

39. Subsequently, court after court has adopted the same reading of the INA's detention authorities and rejected ICE and EOIR's new interpretation. *See, e.g., Gomes v. Hyde*, No. 1:25-CV-11571-JEK, 2025 WL 1869299 (D. Mass. July 7, 2025); *Diaz Martinez v. Hyde*, No. CV 25-11613-BEM, --- F. Supp. 3d ----, 2025 WL 2084238 (D. Mass. July 24, 2025); *Rosado v. Figueroa*, No. CV 25-

02157 PHX DLR (CDB), 2025 WL 2337099 (D. Ariz. Aug. 11, 2025), *report and recommendation adopted*, No. CV-25-02157-PHX-DLR (CDB), 2025 WL 2349133 (D. Ariz. Aug. 13, 2025); *Lopez Benitez v. Francis*, No. 25 CIV. 5937 (DEH), 2025 WL 2371588 (S.D.N.Y. Aug. 13, 2025); *Maldonado v. Olson*, No. 0:25-cv-03142-SRN-SGE, 2025 WL 2374411 (D. Minn. Aug. 15, 2025); *Arrazola-Gonzalez v. Noem*, No. 5:25-cv-01789-ODW (DFMx), 2025 WL 2379285 (C.D. Cal. Aug. 15, 2025); *Romero v. Hyde*, No. 25-11631-BEM, 2025 WL 2403827 (D. Mass. Aug. 19, 2025); *Samb v. Joyce*, No. 25 CIV. 6373 (DEH), 2025 WL 2398831 (S.D.N.Y. Aug. 19, 2025); *Ramirez Clavijo v. Kaiser*, No. 25-CV-06248-BLF, 2025 WL 2419263 (N.D. Cal. Aug. 21, 2025); *Leal-Hernandez v. Noem*, No. 1:25-cv-02428-JRR, 2025 WL 2430025 (D. Md. Aug. 24, 2025); *Kostak v. Trump*, No. 3:25-cv-01093-JE-KDM, 2025 WL 2472136 (W.D. La. Aug. 27, 2025); *Jose J.O.E. v. Bondi*, No. 25-CV-3051 (ECT/DJF), --- F. Supp. 3d ----, 2025 WL 2466670 (D. Minn. Aug. 27, 2025) *Lopez-Campos v. Raycraft*, No. 2:25-cv-12486-BRM-EAS, 2025 WL 2496379 (E.D. Mich. Aug. 29, 2025); *Vasquez Garcia v. Noem*, No. 25-cv-02180-DMS-MM, 2025 WL 2549431 (S.D. Cal. Sept. 3, 2025); *Zaragoza Mosqueda v. Noem*, No. 5:25-CV-02304 CAS (BFM), 2025 WL 2591530 (C.D. Cal. Sept. 8, 2025); *Pizarro Reyes v. Raycraft*, No. 25-CV-12546, 2025 WL 2609425 (E.D. Mich. Sept. 9, 2025); *Sampiao v. Hyde*, No. 1:25-CV-11981-JEK, 2025 WL 2607924 (D. Mass. Sept. 9, 2025); *see also, e.g., Palma*

Perez v. Berg, No. 8:25CV494, 2025 WL 2531566, at *2 (D. Neb. Sept. 3, 2025) (noting that “[t]he Court tends to agree” that § 1226(a) and not § 1225(b)(2) authorizes detention); *Jacinto v. Trump*, No. 4:25-cv-03161-JFB-RCC, 2025 WL 2402271 at *3 (D. Neb. Aug. 19, 2025) (same); *Anicasio v. Kramer*, No. 4:25-cv-03158-JFB-RCC, 2025 WL 2374224 at *2 (D. Neb. Aug. 14, 2025) (same).

40. Courts have uniformly rejected DHS’s and EOIR’s new interpretation because it defies the INA. As the *Rodriguez Vazquez* court and others have explained, the plain text of the statutory provisions demonstrates that § 1226(a), not § 1225(b), applies to people like Petitioner.

41. 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].”

42. 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*, 779 F. Supp. 3d at 1257 (citing

Shady Grove Orthopedic Assocs., P.A. v. Allstate Ins. Co., 559 U.S. 393, 400 (2010)); *see also Gomes*, 2025 WL 1869299, at *7.

43. 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.

44. 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).

45. Accordingly, the mandatory detention provision of § 1225(b)(2)(A) 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

46. Petitioner has resided in the United States since approximately 1999.

47. On or about September 23, 2025, Petitioner was arrested at a traffic stop. Petitioner is now detained at the Baker County Facility.

48. Petitioner is married and together they have three United States Citizen children, ages sixteen (16), fifteen (15) and twelve (12).

49. Petitioner's contacts with law enforcement consist of minor traffic citations. For no valid DL.

50. The above-mentioned facts demonstrate that he is neither a flight risk nor a danger to the community.

51. Following Petitioner's arrest and transfer to Baker County Facility, ICE issued a custody determination to continue Petitioner's detention without an opportunity to post bond or be released on other conditions.

52. Pursuant to *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, the immigration judge is unable to consider Petitioner's bond request.

53. 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.

CLAIMS FOR RELIEF

COUNT I Violation of the INA

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

55. 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.

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

COUNT II
Violation of the Bond Regulations

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

58. In 1997, after Congress amended the INA through IIRIRA, EOIR and the then-Immigration and Naturalization Service issued an interim rule to interpret and apply IIRIRA. Specifically, under the heading of “Apprehension, Custody, and Detention of [Noncitizens],” the agencies explained that “[d]espite being applicants for admission, [noncitizens] who are present without having been admitted or paroled (formerly referred to as [noncitizens] who entered without inspection) will be eligible for bond and bond redetermination.” 62 Fed. Reg. at 10323 (emphasis added). The agencies thus made clear that individuals who had entered without inspection were eligible for consideration for bond and bond hearings before IJs under 8 U.S.C. § 1226 and its implementing regulations.

59. Nonetheless, pursuant to *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, EOIR has a policy and practice of applying § 1225(b)(2) to individual like Petitioner.

60. The application of § 1225(b)(2) to Petitioner unlawfully mandates his continued detention and violates 8 C.F.R. §§ 236.1, 1236.1, and 1003.19

COUNT III
Violation of Due Process

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

62. 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 (2001).

63. Civil immigration detention violates due process if it is not reasonably related to its statutory purpose. *See id.* at 690 (citing *Jackson v. Indiana*, 406 U.S. 715, 738 (1972)). With respect to immigration confinement, the Supreme Court has recognized two special justifications: (1) preventing flight and (2) preventing danger to the community. *See id.* at 690.

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.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

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

- (1) Assume jurisdiction over this matter;
- (2) Order that Petitioner shall not be transferred outside the Middle District of Florida while this habeas petition is pending;
- (3) Issue an Order to Show Cause ordering Respondents to show cause why this Petition should not be granted within three days;
- (4) Issue a Writ of Habeas Corpus requiring that Respondents release Petitioner or, in the alternative, provide Petitioner with a bond hearing pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) within seven days;
- (5) Declare that Petitioner's detention is unlawful; and
- (6) Grant any other and further relief that this Court deems just and proper.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Kenia Garcia

Kenia Garcia, Esq.

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Counsel for Petitioner

Dated: December 24, 2025

VERIFICATION PURSUANT TO 28 U.S.C. § 2242

I represent Petitioner, Angel Rojo Morales, and submit this verification on his behalf. I hereby verify that the factual statements made in the foregoing Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus are true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Kenia Garcia

Kenia Garcia, Esq.

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Counsel for Petitioner

Dated: December 25, 2025

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FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF FLORIDA


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EXHIBIT A