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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF NEVADA

MILTON LOPEZ LOPEZ,

Petitioner,

v.

KRISTI NOEM, *et.al.,*

Respondents.

Case No. 2:26-cv-00047-RFB-EJY

Federal Respondents Response to the Order to Show Cause (ECF No. 4)

Federal Respondents hereby submit this Response to the Court's Order to Show Cause why Petitioner's Motion for Preliminary Injunction should not be granted. (ECF No 4). Petitioner's requested relief should be denied because he has failed to demonstrate that he is entitled to a preliminary injunction. This response is supported by the following memorandum of points and authorities.

Federal Respondents waive oral argument with respect to the Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus, the Court's Order to Show Cause, this Response, and any Reply filed by Petitioner.

I. Introduction

Petitioner is detained in Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) custody at the Nevada Southern Detention Center, in Pahrump, Nevada pending removal proceedings. ECF No. 1 at 2. Petitioner has been detained since December 6, 2025. *Id* at 1. Petitioner had

a bond reconsideration hearing scheduled for December 22, 2025. ECF No. 1-3 at 2. However, the Court later issued an order denying bond (for an unstated reason) and took the hearing off calendar. ECF No. 1 at 2. Petitioner appealed the bond order to the BIA on December 22, 2025, where it remains pending. *See* ECF No. 1-4 at 3.

Petitioner filed the instant action on January 9, 2026 (ECF No. 1) and a Motion for Preliminary Injunction on January 9, 2026. ECF No. 2.

Petitioner is claiming that he is unlawfully detained by DHS as mandatory detention under § 1225(b)(2)(A) does not apply to him since he previously entered and is now residing in the United States and such individuals are subject to a different statute, § 1226(a), that allows for release on conditional parole or bond. ECF No. 2 at 2. Petitioner's motion for injunctive relief requests that this Court order that Respondents release him on parole or, in the alternative, to provide him a bond hearing and enjoin Respondents from applying Matter of *Yajure Hurtado*, 29 I&N Dec. 216 (BIA 2025) to his bond proceedings. ECF No. 2 at 21-22. Petitioner cannot show a likelihood of success on the merits because Petitioner seeks to circumvent the detention statute under which he is rightfully detained to secure a bond hearing to which he is not entitled. The Court should deny Petitioner's Motion for Preliminary Injunction and discharge the Order to Show Cause.

II. Statutory Background

A. Detention Under 8 U.S.C. § 1225

Section 1225 applies to "applicants for admission," who are defined as "alien[s] present in the United States who [have] not been admitted" or "who arrive[] in the United States." 8 U.S.C. § 1225(a)(1). Applicants for admission "fall into one of two categories, those covered by § 1225(b)(1) and those covered by § 1225(b)(2)." *Jennings v. Rodriguez*, 583 U.S. 281, 287 (2018); *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, 29 I. & N. Dec. 216, 218 (BIA 2025).

Section 1225(b)(1) applies to arriving aliens and "certain other" aliens "initially determined to be inadmissible due to fraud, misrepresentation, or lack of valid documentation." *Jennings*, 583 U.S. at 287; 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1)(A)(i), (iii). These aliens are generally subject to expedited removal proceedings. *See* 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1)(A)(i). But

if the alien "indicates an intention to apply for asylum . . . or a fear of persecution," immigration officers will refer the alien for a credible fear interview. *Id.* § 1225(b)(1)(A)(ii). An alien "with a credible fear of persecution" is "detained for further consideration of the application for asylum." *Id.* § 1225(b)(1)(B)(ii). If the alien does not indicate an intent to apply for asylum, express a fear of persecution, or is "found not to have such a fear," they are detained until removed from the United States. *Id.* §§ 1225(b)(1)(A)(i), (B)(iii)(IV).

Section 1225(b)(2) is "broader" and "serves as a catchall provision." *Jennings*, 583 U.S. at 287. It "applies to all applicants for admission not covered by § 1225(b)(1)." *Id.* Under § 1225(b)(2), an alien "who is an applicant for admission" shall be detained for a removal proceeding "if the examining immigration officer determines that [the] alien seeking admission is not clearly and beyond a doubt entitled to be admitted." 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)(A); *see Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, 29 I. & N. Dec. at 220 ("[A]liens who are present in the United States without admission are applicants for admission as defined under section 235(b)(2)(A) of the INA, 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)(A), and must be detained for the duration of their removal proceedings."); *Matter of Li*, 29 I. & N. Dec. 66, 68 (BIA 2025) ("for aliens arriving in and seeking admission into the United States who are placed directly in full removal proceedings, section 235(b)(2)(A) of the INA, 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)(A), mandates detention 'until removal proceedings have concluded.'") (citing *Jennings*, 583 U.S. at 299). However, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has the sole discretionary authority to temporarily release on parole "any alien applying for admission to the United States" on a "case-by-case basis for urgent humanitarian reasons or significant public benefit." *Id.* § 1182(d)(5)(A); *see Biden v. Texas*, 597 U.S. 785, 806 (2022).

In this case, Petitioner is an applicant for admission because he is an alien who arrived in the United States without being admitted. Under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)(A) Petitioner is subject to mandatory detention until removal proceedings have concluded.

B. Detention Under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a)

Section 1226 provides for arrest and detention "pending a decision on whether the alien is to be removed from the United States." 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a). Under § 1226(a), the

government may detain an alien during his removal proceedings, release him on bond, or release him on conditional parole. By regulation, immigration officers can release aliens upon demonstrating that the alien "would not pose a danger to property or persons" and "is likely to appear for any future proceeding." 8 C.F.R. § 236.1(c)(8). An alien can also request a custody redetermination (i.e., a bond hearing) by an IJ at any time before a final order of removal is issued. *See* 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a); 8 C.F.R. §§ 236.1(d)(1), 1236.1(d)(1), 1003.19.

At a custody redetermination, the IJ may continue detention or release the alien on bond or conditional parole. 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a); 8 C.F.R. § 1236.1(d)(1). IJs have broad discretion in deciding whether to release an alien on bond. *In re Guerra*, 24 I. & N. Dec. 37, 39-40 (BIA 2006) (listing nine factors for IJs to consider). But regardless of the factors IJs consider, an alien "who presents a danger to persons or property should not be released during the pendency of removal proceedings." *Id.* at 38.

C. Review Before the Board of Immigration Appeals

The Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) is an appellate body within the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) and possesses delegated authority from the Attorney General. 8 C.F.R. §§ 1003.1(a)(1), (d)(1). The BIA is "charged with the review of those administrative adjudications under the [INA] that the Attorney General may by regulation assign to it," including IJ custody determinations. 8 C.F.R. §§ 1003.1(d)(1), 236.1, 1236.1.

The BIA not only resolves particular disputes before it, but is also directed to, "through precedent decisions, [] provide clear and uniform guidance to DHS, the immigration judges, and the general public on the proper interpretation and administration of the [INA] and its implementing regulations." *Id.* § 1003.1(d)(1). Decisions rendered by the BIA are final, except for those reviewed by the Attorney General. 8 C.F.R. § 1003.1(d)(7).

III. Argument

A. Petitioner's Claims and Requests are Barred by 8 U.S.C. § 1252.

Petitioner bears the burden of establishing that this Court has subject matter jurisdiction over his claims. *See Ass'n of Am. Med. Colleges v. United States*, 217 F.3d 770, 778–

79 (9th Cir. 2000); *Finley v. United States*, 490 U.S. 545, 547-48 (1989). As a threshold matter, Petitioner's claims are jurisdictionally barred under 8 U.S.C. § 1252(g) and 8 U.S.C. § 1252(b)(9).

Courts lack jurisdiction over any claim or cause of action arising from any decision to commence or adjudicate removal proceedings or execute removal orders. *See* 8 U.S.C. § 1252(g) ("[N]o court shall have jurisdiction to hear any cause or claim by or on behalf of any alien arising from the decision or action by the Attorney General to *commence proceedings, adjudicate cases*, or execute removal orders.") (emphasis added); *Reno v. Am.-Arab Anti-Discrimination Comm.*, 525 U.S. 471, 483 (1999) ("There was good reason for Congress to focus special attention upon, and make special provision for, judicial review of the Attorney General's discrete acts of "commenc[ing] proceedings, adjudicat[ing] cases, [and] execut[ing] removal orders" — which represent the initiation or prosecution of various stages in the deportation process."). In other words, § 1252(g) removes district court jurisdiction over "three discrete actions that the Attorney may take: [his] 'decision or action' to 'commence proceedings, adjudicate cases, or execute removal orders.'" *Reno*, 525 U.S. at 482 (emphasis removed). Petitioner's claims necessarily arise "from the decision or action by the Attorney General to commence proceedings [and] adjudicate cases," over which Congress has explicitly foreclosed district court jurisdiction. 8 U.S.C. § 1252(g).

Section 1252(g) also bars district courts from hearing challenges to the method by which the government chooses to commence removal proceedings, including the decision to detain an alien pending removal. *See Alvarez v. U.S. Immigr. & Customs Enf't*, 818 F.3d 1194, 1203 (11th Cir. 2016) ("By its plain terms, [§ 1252(g)] bars us from questioning ICE's discretionary decisions to commence removal" and bars review of "ICE's decision to take [plaintiff] into custody and to detain him during his removal proceedings").

In this case, Petitioner's claims stem from ICE's decision to commence removal proceedings and therefore detain him. His detention arises from the decision to commence proceedings against him. *See, e.g.*, *Valencia-Mejia v. United States*, No. CV 08-2943 CAS PJWX, 2008 WL 4286979, at *4 (C.D. Cal. Sept. 15, 2008) ("The decision to detain

plaintiff until his hearing before the Immigration Judge arose from this decision to commence proceedings."); *Wang v. United States*, No. CV 10-0389 SVW (RCX), 2010 WL 11463156, at *6 (C.D. Cal. Aug. 18, 2010); *Tazu v. Att'y Gen. United States*, 975 F.3d 292, 298–99 (3d Cir. 2020) (holding that 8 U.S.C. § 1252(g) and (b)(9) deprive district court of jurisdiction to review action to execute removal order).

Other courts have held, "[f]or the purposes of § 1252, the Attorney General commences proceedings against an alien when the alien is issued a Notice to Appear before an immigration court." *Herrera-Correra v. United States*, No. CV 08-2941 DSF (JCX), 2008 WL 11336833, at *3 (C.D. Cal. Sept. 11, 2008). "The Attorney General may arrest the alien against whom proceedings are commenced and detain that individual until the conclusion of those proceedings." *Id.* at *3. "Thus, an alien's detention throughout this process arises from the Attorney General's decision to commence proceedings" and review of claims arising from such detention is barred under § 1252(g). *Id.* (citing *Sissoko v. Rocha*, 509 F.3d 947, 949 (9th Cir. 2007)); *Wang*, 2010 WL 11463156, at *6; 8 U.S.C. § 1252(g). *But see Garcia v. Noem*, No. 25-CV-02180-DMS-MMP, 2025 WL 2549431, at *4 (S.D. Cal. Sept. 3, 2025).

Moreover, under 8 U.S.C. § 1252(b)(9), "[j]udicial review of all questions of law and fact . . . *arising from any action taken or proceeding brought to remove an alien from the United States* under this subchapter shall be available only in judicial review of a final order under this section." Further, judicial review of a final order is available only through "a petition for review filed with an appropriate court of appeals." 8 U.S.C. § 1252(a)(5). The Supreme Court has made clear that § 1252(b)(9) is "the unmistakable 'zipper' clause," channeling "judicial review of all" "decisions and actions leading up to or consequent upon final orders of deportation," including "non-final order[s]," into proceedings before a court of appeals. *Reno*, 525 U.S. at 483, 485; *see J.E.F.M. v. Lynch*, 837 F.3d 1026, 1031 (9th Cir. 2016) (noting § 1252(b)(9) is "breathtaking in scope and vise-like in grip and therefore swallows up virtually all claims that are tied to removal proceedings"). "Taken together, § 1252(a)(5)

and § 1252(b)(9) mean that *any* issue — whether legal or factual — arising from *any* removal-related activity can be reviewed *only* through the [petition for review] PFR process." *J.E.F.M.*, 837 F.3d at 1031 ("[W]hile these sections limit *how* immigrants can challenge their removal proceedings, they are not jurisdiction-stripping statutes that, by their terms, foreclose *all* judicial review of agency actions. Instead, the provisions channel judicial review over final orders of removal to the courts of appeal.") (emphasis in original); *see id.* at 1035 ("§§ 1252(a)(5) and [(b)(9)] channel review of all claims, including policies-and-practices challenges . . . whenever they 'arise from' removal proceedings").

Critically, "1252(b)(9) is a judicial channeling provision, not a claim-barring one." *Aguilar v. U.S. Immigr. & Customs Enf't Div. of Dep't of Homeland Sec.*, 510 F.3d 1, 11 (1st Cir. 2007). Indeed, 8 U.S.C. § 1252(a)(2)(D) provides that "[n]othing . . . in any other provision of this chapter . . . shall be construed as precluding review of constitutional claims or questions of law raised upon a petition for review filed with an appropriate court of appeals in accordance with this section." *See also Ajlani v. Chertoff*, 545 F.3d 229, 235 (2d Cir. 2008) ("[J]urisdiction to review such claims is vested exclusively in the courts of appeals[.]"). The petition-for-review process before the court of appeals ensures that noncitizens have a proper forum for claims arising from their immigration proceedings and "receive their day in court." *J.E.F.M.*, 837 F.3d at 1031–32 (internal quotations omitted); *see also Rosario v. Holder*, 627 F.3d 58, 61 (2d Cir. 2010) ("The REAL ID Act of 2005 amended the [INA] to obviate . . . Suspension Clause concerns" by permitting judicial review of "nondiscretionary" BIA determinations and "all constitutional claims or questions of law."). These provisions divest district courts of jurisdiction to review both direct and indirect challenges to removal orders, including decisions to detain for purposes of removal or for proceedings. *See Jennings*, 583 U.S. at 294–95 (section 1252(b)(9) includes challenges to the "decision to detain [an alien] in the first place or to seek removal").

In evaluating the reach of subsections (a)(5) and (b)(9), the Second Circuit has explained that jurisdiction turns on the substance of the relief sought. *Delgado v. Quarantillo*, 643 F.3d 52, 55 (2d Cir. 2011). Those provisions divest district courts of jurisdiction to

review both direct and indirect challenges to removal orders, including decisions to detain for purposes of removal or for proceedings. *See Jennings*, 583 U.S. at 294–95 (section 1252(b)(9) includes challenges to the "decision to detain [an alien] in the first place or to seek removal[.]"). Here, Petitioner challenges the government's decision and action to detain him, which arises from DHS's decision to commence removal proceedings, and is thus an "action taken . . . to remove [him] from the United States." *See* 8 U.S.C. § 1252(b)(9); *see also, e.g.*, *Jennings*, 583 U.S. at 294–95; *Velasco Lopez v. Decker*, 978 F.3d 842, 850 (2d Cir. 2020) (finding that 8 U.S.C. § 1226(e) did not bar review in that case because the petitioner did not challenge "his initial detention"); *Saadulloev v. Garland*, No. 3:23-CV-00106, 2024 WL 1076106, at *3 (W.D. Pa. Mar. 12, 2024) (recognizing that there is no judicial review of the threshold detention decision, which flows from the government's decision to "commence proceedings"). *But see Garcia*, 2025 WL 2549431, at *3-4. As such, the Court lacks jurisdiction over this action. The reasoning in *Jennings* outlines why Petitioner's claims are unreviewable here.

While holding that it was unnecessary to comprehensively address the scope of § 1252(b)(9), the Supreme Court in *Jennings* provided guidance on the types of challenges that may fall within the scope of § 1252(b)(9). *See Jennings*, 583 U.S. at 293–94. The Court found that "§ 1252(b)(9) [did] not present a jurisdictional bar" in situations where "respondents . . . [were] not challenging the decision to detain them in the first place." *Id.* at 294–95. In this case, Petitioner does challenge the government's decision to detain him in the first place and argues that such detention is a violation of his rights. ECF No. 2, Sections IV. B, D. Though Petitioner attempts to frame his challenge as one relating to detention authority, rather than a challenge to DHS's decision to detain him in the first instance, such creative framing does not evade the preclusive effect of § 1252(b)(9). Indeed, that Petitioner is challenging the basis upon which he is detained is enough to trigger § 1252(b)(9) because "detention *is* an 'action taken . . . to remove' an alien." *See Jennings*, 583 U.S. at 319 (Thomas, J., concurring); 8 U.S.C. § 1252(b)(9). As such, Petitioner's claims would be more appropriately presented before the appropriate federal court of appeals because he

challenges the government's decision or action to detain him, which must be raised before a court of appeals, not this Court. *See* 8 U.S.C. § 1252(b)(9).

As such, the Court should deny the pending motion and dismiss this matter for lack of jurisdiction under 8 U.S.C. § 1252.

B. Petitioner Has Failed to Exhaust Administrative Remedies.

Similarly, requiring exhaustion here would be consistent with Congressional intent to have claims, such as Petitioner's, subject to the channeling provisions of § 1252(b)(9) that provide for appeal to the BIA and then, if unsuccessful, the Ninth Circuit. "Exhaustion can be either statutorily or judicially required." *Acevedo-Carranza v. Ashcroft*, 371 F.3d 539, 541 (9th Cir. 2004). "If exhaustion is statutory, it may be a mandatory requirement that is jurisdictional." *Id.* (citing *El Rescate Legal Servs., Inc. v. Exec. Off. of Immigr. Rev.*, 959 F.2d 742, 747 (9th Cir. 1991)). "If, however, exhaustion is a prudential requirement, a court has discretion to waive the requirement." *Id.* (citing *Stratman v. Watt*, 656 F.2d 1321, 1325–26 (9th Cir. 1981)). Here, Petitioner is attempting to bypass the administrative scheme by not allowing the pending bond order appeal to be heard by the BIA and, if necessary, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeal.

"District Courts are authorized by 28 U.S.C § 2241 to consider petitions for habeas corpus." *Castro–Cortez v. I.N.S.*, 239 F.3d 1037, 1047 (9th Cir. 2001). "That section does not specifically require petitioners to exhaust direct appeals before filing petitions for habeas corpus." *Id.* That said, the Ninth Circuit "require[s], as a prudential matter, that habeas petitioners exhaust available judicial and administrative remedies before seeking relief under § 2241." *Id.* Specifically, "courts may require prudential exhaustion if (1) agency expertise makes agency consideration necessary to generate a proper record and reach a proper decision; (2) relaxation of the requirement would encourage the deliberate bypass of the administrative scheme; and (3) administrative review is likely to allow the agency to correct its own mistakes and to preclude the need for judicial review." *Puga v. Chertoff*, 488 F.3d 812, 815 (9th Cir. 2007) (internal quotation marks omitted).

"When a petitioner does not exhaust administrative remedies, a district court ordinarily should either dismiss the petition without prejudice or stay the proceedings until the petitioner has exhausted remedies, unless exhaustion is excused." *Leonardo v. Crawford*, 646 F.3d 1157, 1160 (9th Cir. 2011); *see also Alvarado v. Holder*, 759 F.3d 1121, 1127 n.5 (9th Cir. 2014) (issue exhaustion is a jurisdictional requirement); *Tijani v. Holder*, 628 F.3d 1071, 1080 (9th Cir. 2010) (no jurisdiction to review legal claims not presented in the petitioner's administrative proceedings before the BIA). Moreover, a "petitioner cannot obtain review of procedural errors in the administrative process that were not raised before the agency merely by alleging that every such error violates due process." *Vargas v. U.S. Dep't of Immigr. & Naturalization*, 831 F.2d 906, 908 (9th Cir. 1987); *see also Sola v. Holder*, 720 F.3d 1134, 1135–36 (9th Cir. 2013) (declining to address a due process argument that was not raised below because it could have been addressed by the agency).

Here, exhaustion is warranted because agency expertise is required. "[T]he BIA is the subject-matter expert in immigration bond decisions." *Aden v. Nielsen*, No. C18-1441RSL, 2019 WL 5802013, at *2 (W.D. Wash. Nov. 7, 2019). The BIA is well-positioned to assess how agency practice affects the interplay between 8 U.S.C. §§ 1225 and 1226. *See Delgado v. Sessions*, No. C17-1031-RSL-JPD, 2017 WL 4776340, at *2 (W.D. Wash. Sept. 15, 2017) (noting a denial of bond to an immigration detainee was "a question well suited for agency expertise"); *Matter of M-S-*, 27 I. & N. Dec. 509, 515–18 (2019) (addressing interplay of §§ 1225(b)(1) and 1226). *But see Vasquez-Rodriguez v. Garland*, 7 F.4th 888, 896–97 (9th Cir. 2021); *Garcia*, 2025 WL 2549431, at *4-5.

Waiving exhaustion would also "encourage other detainees to bypass the BIA (or dual track the BIA and district court) and directly appeal their no-bond determinations from the IJ to federal district court." *Aden*, 2019 WL 5802013, at *2. Individuals, like Petitioner, would have little incentive to seek relief before the BIA if this Court permits review here. And allowing a skip-the-BIA-and-go-straight-to-federal-court strategy would needlessly increase the burden on district courts. *See Bd. of Trs. of Constr. Laborers' Pension Tr. for S. California v. M.M. Sundt Constr. Co.*, 37 F.3d 1419, 1420 (9th Cir. 1994) ("Judicial economy is

an important purpose of exhaustion requirements."); *see also Santos-Zacaria v. Garland*, 598 U.S. 411, 418 (2023) (noting "exhaustion promotes efficiency"). If the IJs erred as Petitioners allege or may eventually allege, this Court should allow the administrative process to correct itself. *See id.*

Moreover, detention alone is not an irreparable injury. Discretion to waive exhaustion "is not unfettered." *Laing v. Ashcroft*, 370 F.3d 994, 998 (9th Cir. 2004). Petitioners bear the burden to show that an exception to the exhaustion requirement applies. *Leonardo*, 646 F.3d at 1161; *Aden*, 2019 WL 5802013, at *3. "[C]ivil detention after the denial of a bond hearing [does not] constitute[] irreparable harm such that prudential exhaustion should be waived." *Reyes v. Wolf*, No. C20-0377JLR, 2021 WL 662659, at *3 (W.D. Wash. Feb. 19, 2021), *aff'd sub nom. Diaz Reyes v. Mayorkas*, No. 21-35142, 2021 WL 3082403 (9th Cir. July 21, 2021). If Petitioner disagrees with the BIA decision, Congress is clear that an appeal of a BIA decision is before the circuit courts not district courts. Because Petitioner has not fully exhausted his administrative remedies, this matter should be dismissed.

C. Petitioner Fails to Establish Entitlement to Interim Injunctive Relief.

Alternatively, Petitioner's motion for preliminary injunction should be denied because he has not established that he is entitled to interim injunctive relief. The legal standard for issuing a TRO is essentially identical to the standard for issuing a preliminary injunction. *See Stuhlbarg Int'l Sales Co. v. John D. Brush & Co.*, 240 F.3d 832, 839 n.7 (9th Cir. 2001); *see also Zamfir v. Casperlabs, LLC*, 528 F. Supp. 3d 1136, 1142 (S.D. Cal. 2021). "A party seeking a preliminary injunction must meet one of two variants of the same standard." *All. for the Wild Rockies v. Pena*, 865 F.3d 1211, 1217 (9th Cir. 2017). Under the *Winter* standard, a party is entitled to a preliminary injunction if he demonstrates (1) that he is likely to succeed on the merits, (2) that he is likely to suffer irreparable harm in the absence of preliminary relief, (3) that the balance of equities tips in his favor, and (4) that an injunction is in the public interest. *Winter v. Nat. Res. Def. Council, Inc.*, 555 U.S. 7, 20 (2008); *see Nken v. Holder*, 556 U.S. 418, 426 (2009). A party must make a showing on all four

prongs. *A Woman's Friend Pregnancy Res. Clinic v. Becerra*, 901 F.3d 1166, 1167 (9th Cir. 2018) (cleaned up). Plaintiffs must demonstrate a "substantial case for relief on the merits." *Leiva-Perez v. Holder*, 640 F.3d 962, 967–68 (9th Cir. 2011). When "a plaintiff has failed to show the likelihood of success on the merits, we need not consider the remaining three [*Winter* factors]." *Garcia v. Google, Inc.*, 786 F.3d 733, 740 (9th Cir. 2015).

The final two factors required for preliminary injunctive relief — balancing of the harm to the opposing party and the public interest — merge when the Government is the opposing party. *See Nken*, 556 U.S. at 435. The Supreme Court has specifically acknowledged that "[f]ew interests can be more compelling than a nation's need to ensure its own security." *Wayte v. United States*, 470 U.S. 598, 611 (1985); *see also United States v. Brignoni-Ponce*, 422 U.S. 873, 878-79 (1975); *New Motor Vehicle Bd. of California v. Orrin W. Fox Co.*, 434 U.S. 1345, 1351 (1977); *Blackie's House of Beef, Inc. v. Castillo*, 659 F.2d 1211, 1220–21 (D.C. Cir. 1981); *Maharaj v. Ashcroft*, 295 F.3d 963, 966 (9th Cir. 2002) (movant seeking injunctive relief "must show either (1) a probability of success on the merits and the possibility of irreparable harm, or (2) that serious legal questions are raised and the balance of hardships tips sharply in the moving party's favor.") (quoting *Andreiu v. Ashcroft*, 253 F.3d 477, 483 (9th Cir. 2001)).

In his motion, Petitioner has not argued that the Ninth Circuit's more demanding standard for a mandatory, rather than prohibitory, injunction applies. In the absence of such argument, and considering the Ninth Circuit's classification of an injunction seeking to "prohibit[ ] the government from conducting new bond hearings under procedures that will likely result in unconstitutional detentions" as "a classic form of prohibitory injunction," *Hernandez v. Sessions*, 872 F.3d 976, 998 (9th Cir. 2017), the Court should apply the prohibitory standard here. *See Chavez v. Noem*, No. 3:25-CV-02325-CAB-SBC, 2025 WL 2730228 (S.D. Cal. Sept. 24, 2025). Under the Ninth Circuit's "serious questions" test, "a 'sliding scale' variant of the *Winter* test," a party is "entitled to a preliminary injunction if it demonstrates (1) serious questions going to the merits, (2) a likelihood of irreparable injury, (3) a balance of hardships that tips sharply towards the [petitioner], and (4) the injunction is

in the public interest." *Flathead-Lolo-Bitterroot Citizen Task Force v. Montana*, 98 F.4th 1180, 1190 (9th Cir. 2024) (internal quotation marks omitted). "[I]f a [petitioner] can only show that there are serious questions going to the merits—a lesser showing than likelihood of success on the merits—then a preliminary injunction may still issue if the balance of hardships tips sharply in the [petitioner's] favor, and the other two *Winter* factors are satisfied." *Alliance for the Wild Rockies*, 865 F.3d at 1217 (internal quotation marks omitted).

Petitioner cannot establish that he is likely to succeed on the underlying merits, there is no showing of irreparable harm, and the equities do not weigh in his favor.

1. Petitioner is not likely to succeed on the underlying merits.

A preliminary injunction is an "extraordinary remedy never awarded as of right." *Winter*, 555 U.S. at 7, 24. The first *Winter* factor — likely success on the merits — is "the most important" and is a threshold inquiry. *Garcia v. Google, Inc.*, 786 F.3d 733, 740 (9th Cir. 2015). Petitioners carry the burden of demonstrating a likelihood of success (or alternatively showing "serious questions going to the merits"). *See A Woman's Friend Pregnancy Resource Clinic*, 901 F.3d at 1167; *Alliance for the Wild Rockies*, 865 F.3d at 1217.

i. Petitioner is Subject to Mandatory Detention Under sec. 1225

In this case, Petitioner cannot establish that he is likely to succeed on the underlying merits of his claims for alleged statutory and constitutional violations because he is subject to mandatory detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1225. Petitioner contends that because he is a noncitizen residing in the United States who originally entered the United States without inspection or parole, and have not affirmatively sought admission, § 1225(b)(2)'s mandatory detention provision does not apply to him. ECF No. 1 at 10-16. Instead, he claims that he is likely to succeed on the merits based on the text of § 1225(b)(2) and its interplay with § 1226(a), the legislative history of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 ("IIRIRA"), and the BIA's previous longstanding agency practice of granting bond redetermination for noncitizens present in the U.S. under § 1226(a). ECF No. 2, Section I A.1-2, at 6-11.

Petitioner's interpretation is inconsistent with the text of § 1225(b). The Court should reject Petitioner's argument that § 1226(a) governs his detention instead of § 1225. When there is "an irreconcilable conflict in two legal provisions," then "the specific governs over the general." *Karczewski v. DCH Mission Valley LLC*, 862 F.3d 1006, 1015 (9th Cir. 2017). 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) applies to those arrested and detained pending a decision on removal. 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a); In contrast, § 1225 is narrower. *See* 8 U.S.C. § 1225. It applies only to "applicants for admission"; that is, as relevant here, aliens present in the United States who have not been admitted. *See id.*; *see also Florida v. United States,* 660 F. Supp. 3d 1239, 1275 (N.D. Fla. 2023). Because Petitioner falls within that category, the specific detention authority under § 1225 governs over the general authority found at § 1226(a).

Under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(a), an "applicant for admission" is defined as an "alien present in the United States who has not been admitted or who arrives in the United States." Applicants for admission "fall into one of two categories, those covered by §1225(b)(1) and those covered by § 1225(b)(2)." *Jennings*, 583 U.S. at 287. Section 1225(b)(2) — the provision relevant here — is the "broader" of the two. *Id.* It "serves as a catchall provision that applies to all applicants for admission not covered by § 1225(b)(1) (with specific exceptions not relevant here)." *Id.* And § 1225(b)(2) mandates detention. *Id.* at 297; *see also Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, 29 I. & N. Dec. at 218-19 (for "those aliens who are seeking admission and who an immigration officer has determined are 'not clearly and beyond a doubt entitled to be admitted' . . . the INA explicitly requires that this third 'catchall' category of applicants for admission be mandatorily detained for the duration of their immigration proceedings"); *Matter of Li*, 29 I. & N. Dec. at 69 ("[A]n applicant for admission who is arrested and detained without a warrant while arriving in the United States, whether or not at a port of entry, and subsequently placed in removal proceedings is detained under section 235(b) of the INA, 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b), and is ineligible for any subsequent release on bond under section 236(a) of the INA, 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a)."). Section 1225(b) therefore applies because Petitioner is present in the United States without being admitted.

The BIA has long recognized that "many people who are not *actually* requesting permission to enter the United States in the ordinary sense are nevertheless deemed to be 'seeking admission' under the immigration laws." *Matter of Lemus-Losa*, 25 I. & N. Dec. 734, 743 (BIA 2012). Petitioner "provide[s] no legal authority for the proposition that after some undefined period of time residing in the interior of the United States without lawful status, the INA provides that an applicant for admission is no longer 'seeking admission,' and has somehow converted to a status that renders him or her eligible for a bond hearing under section 236(a) of the INA." *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, 29 I. & N. Dec. at 221 (citing *Matter of Lemus-Losa*, 25 I. & N. Dec. at 743).

Statutory language "is known by the company it keeps." *Marquez-Reyes v. Garland*, 36 F.4th 1195, 1202 (9th Cir. 2022) (quoting *McDonnell v. United States*, 579 U.S. 550, 569 (2016)). The phrase "seeking admission" in § 1225(b)(2)(A) must be read in the context of the definition of "applicant for admission" in § 1225(a)(1). Applicants for admission are both those individuals present without admission and those who arrive in the United States. *See* 8 U.S.C. § 1225(a)(1). Both are understood to be "seeking admission" under §1225(a)(1). *See Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, 29 I. & N. Dec. at 221; *Matter of Lemus-Losa*, 25 I. & N. Dec. at 743. Congress made that clear in § 1225(a)(3), which requires all aliens "who are applicants for admission or otherwise seeking admission" to be inspected by immigration officers. 8 U.S.C. § 1225(a)(3). The word "or" here "introduce[s] an appositive – a word or phrase that is synonymous with what precedes it ('Vienna or Wien,' 'Batman or the Caped Crusader')." *United States v. Woods*, 571 U.S. 31, 45 (2013).

Petitioner's interpretation also reads "applicant for admission" out of § 1225(b)(2)(A). One of the most basic interpretative canons instructs that a "statute should be construed so that effect is given to all its provisions." *See Corley v. United States*, 556 U.S. 303, 314 (2009) (cleaned up). Petitioner's interpretation fails that test. It renders the phrase "applicant for admission" in § 1225(b)(2)(A) "inoperative or superfluous, void or insignificant." *See id.* If Congress did not want § 1225(b)(2)(A) to apply to "applicants for

admission," then it would not have included the phrase "applicants for admission" in the subsection. *See* 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)(A); *see also Corley*, 556 U.S. at 314.

The district court's decision in *Florida v. United States* is instructive here. There, the court held that 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b) mandates detention of applicants for admission throughout removal proceedings, rejecting the assertion that DHS has discretion to choose to detain an applicant for admission under either section 1225(b) or 1226(a). 660 F. Supp. 3d at 1275. The court held that such discretion "would render mandatory detention under § 1225(b) meaningless. Indeed, the 1996 expansion of § 1225(b) to include illegal border crossers would make little sense if DHS retained discretion to apply § 1226(a) and release illegal border crossers whenever the agency saw fit." *Id.* The court pointed to *Demore v. Kim*, 538 U.S. 510, 518 (2003), in which the Supreme Court explained that "wholesale failure" by the federal government motivated the 1996 amendments to the INA. *Florida*, 660 F. Supp. 3d at 1275. The court also relied on, *Matter of M-S-*, 27 I. & N. Dec. at 516, in which the Attorney General explained "section [1225] (under which detention is mandatory) and section [1226(a)] (under which detention is permissive) can be reconciled only if they apply to different classes of aliens." *Florida*, 660 F. Supp. 3d at 1275.

When the plain text of a statute is clear, "that meaning is controlling" and courts "need not examine legislative history." *Washington v. Chimei Innolux Corp.*, 659 F.3d 842, 848 (9th Cir. 2011). But to the extent legislative history is relevant here, nothing "refutes the plain language" of § 1225. *Suzlon Energy Ltd. v. Microsoft Corp.*, 671 F.3d 726, 730 (9th Cir. 2011). Congress passed IIRIRA to correct "an anomaly whereby immigrants who were attempting to lawfully enter the United States were in a worse position than persons who had crossed the border unlawfully." *Torres v. Barr*, 976 F.3d 918, 928 (9th Cir. 2020) (en banc), *declined to extend by, United States v. Gambino-Ruiz*, 91 F.4th 981 (9th Cir. 2024); *see Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, 29 I. & N. Dec. at 223-34 (citing H.R. Rep. No. 104-469, pt. 1, at 225 (1996)). It "intended to replace certain aspects of the [then] current 'entry doctrine,' under which illegal aliens who have entered the United States 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." *Id.* (quoting H.R. Rep. 104-469, pt. 1, at 225). The Court should reject Petitioner's interpretation because it would put aliens who "crossed the border unlawfully" in a better position than those "who present themselves for inspection at a port of entry." *Id.* Aliens who presented at a port of entry would be subject to mandatory detention under § 1225, but those who crossed illegally would be eligible for a bond under § 1226(a). *See Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, 29 I. & N. Dec. at 225 ("The House Judiciary Committee Report makes clear that Congress intended to eliminate the prior statutory scheme that provided aliens who entered the United States without inspection more procedural and substantive rights that those who presented themselves to authorities for inspection.").

In addition, on September 24, 2025, the Court in *Chavez v. Noem*, denied a TRO after finding that Petitioners who do not contest that they are "aliens present in the United States who have not been admitted." *Chavez*, 2025 WL 2730228. "By the plain language of § 1225(a)(1), then Petitioners are applicants for admission and thus subject to the mandatory detention provision of applicants for admission under § 1225(b)(2)" *Id.* Such a reading of the statute comports with Congress' addition of §1225(a)(1) by IIRIRA in 1996. Prior to IIRIRA, an "anomaly" existed "whereby immigrants who were attempting to lawfully enter the United States were in a worse position than persons who had crossed the border unlawfully." *Torres v. Barr*, 976 F.3d 918, 928 (9th Cir. 2020). The addition of § 1225(a)(1) "ensure[d] that all immigrants who have not been lawfully admitted, regardless of their physical presence in the country, are placed on equal footing in removal proceedings under the INA — in the position of an 'applicant for admission.'" *Id.* As the Ninth Circuit did recently in *United States v. Gambino-Ruiz*, 91 F.4th 981, 990 (9th Cir. 2024), we thus also "refuse to interpret the INA in a way that would in effect repeal that statutory fix" intended by Congress in enacting IIRIRA. *Chavez*, at 4. Because Petitioner is properly detained under § 1225, he cannot show entitlement to relief.

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2. Petitioner cannot show irreparable harm.

To prevail on his request for interim injunctive relief, Petitioner must demonstrate "immediate threatened injury." *Caribbean Marine Servs. Co. v. Baldrige*, 844 F.2d 668, 674 (9th Cir. 1988) (citing *Los Angeles Mem'l Coliseum Comm'n v. Nat'l Football League*, 634 F.2d 1197, 1201 (9th Cir. 1980)). Merely showing a "possibility" of irreparable harm is insufficient. *See Winter*, 555 U.S. at 22. And as discussed above, detention alone is not an irreparable injury. *See Reyes*, 2021 WL 662659, at *3 ("[C]ivil detention after the denial of a bond hearing [does not] constitute[] irreparable harm such that prudential exhaustion should be waived."). Further, "[i]ssuing a preliminary injunction based only on a possibility of irreparable harm is inconsistent with [the Supreme Court's] characterization of injunctive relief as an extraordinary remedy that may only be awarded upon a clear showing that the plaintiff is entitled to such relief." *Winter*, 555 U.S. at 22. Here, as explained above, because Petitioner's alleged harm "is essentially inherent in detention, the Court cannot weigh this strongly in favor of" Petitioner. *Lopez Reyes v. Bonnar*, No. 18-CV-07429-SK, 2018 WL 7474861, at *10 (N.D. Cal. Dec. 24, 2018).

3. Balance of Equities does not tip in Petitioner's favor.

It is well settled that the public interest in enforcement of the United States' immigration laws is significant. *See, e.g., United States v. Martinez-Fuerte*, 428 U.S. 543, 551-58 (1976); *Blackie's House of Beef, Inc.*, 659 F.2d at 1221 ("The Supreme Court has recognized that the public interest in enforcement of the immigration laws is significant.") (citing cases); *see also Nken*, 556 U.S. at 435 ("There is always a public interest in prompt execution of removal orders: The continued presence of an alien lawfully deemed removable undermines the streamlined removal proceedings IIRIRA established and permits and prolongs a continuing violation of United States law.") (internal quotation omitted). The BIA also has an "institutional interest" to protect its "administrative agency authority." *See McCarthy v. Madigan*, 503 U.S. 140, 145, 146 (1992) *superseded by statute as recognized in Porter v. Nussle*, 534 U.S. 516 (2002). "Exhaustion is generally required as a matter of preventing premature interference with agency processes, so that the agency may function efficiently and so that it

may have an opportunity to correct its own errors, to afford the parties and the courts the benefit of its experience and expertise, and to compile a record which is adequate for judicial review." *Glob. Rescue Jets, LLC v. Kaiser Found. Health Plan, Inc.*, 30 F.4th 905, 913 (9th Cir. 2022) (quoting *Weinberger v. Salfi*, 422 U.S. 749, 765 (1975)). Indeed, "agencies, not the courts, ought to have primary responsibility for the programs that Congress has charged them to administer." *McCarthy*, 503 U.S. at 145.

Moreover, "[u]ltimately the balance of the relative equities 'may depend to a large extent upon the determination of the [movant's] prospects of success.'" *Tiznado-Reyna v. Kane*, Case No. CV 12-1159-PHX-SRB (SPL), 2012 WL 12882387, at * 4 (D. Ariz. Dec. 13, 2012) (quoting *Hilton v. Braunskill*, 481 U.S. 770, 778 (1987)). Here, as explained above, Petitioner cannot succeed on the merits of his claims because his detention is under §1225(b)(2)(A). The balancing of equities and the public interest weigh heavily against granting Petitioner equitable relief.

IV. Conclusion

For the reasons stated herein Petitioner cannot satisfy the standards for such emergency relief. The Order to Show Cause should be discharged and the Petitioner's requested relief should be denied.

Respectfully submitted this 23rd day of January 2026.

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