

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF GEORGIA  
COLUMBUS DIVISION**

**Katia Cristel DELGADO-VARGAS,** )  
(Agency No. A ) )

Petitioner, )

vs. )

CIVIL ACTION FILE

**Jason STREEVAL,** Warden, Stewart )  
Detention Center; )

**Ladeon FRANCIS,** Field Office )  
Director of Atlanta for The U.S. )

Case No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Immigration and Customs Enforcement; )

**Todd M. LYONS,** Acting Director of )  
U.S. Immigration and Customs )

Enforcement; )

**Kristi NOEM,** Secretary of )  
the Department of Homeland Security; )

**Habeas Corpus**

in their official capacities, )

**28 U.S.C. §2241**

Respondents. )

**PETITION FOR WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS**  
**AND COMPLAINT FOR DECLARATORY**  
**AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF**

Petitioner Katia Cristel Delgado-Vargas, by and through her undersigned counsel, hereby respectfully petitions this Honorable Court for a writ of habeas corpus to seek enforcement of their rights pursuant to *J.A.M. v. Streeval*, No. 4:25-CV- 342-CDL, 2025 WL 3050094 (M.D. Ga. Nov. 1, 2025) and *P.R.S. v. Streeval*, No. 4:25-CV- 330-CDL, 2025 WL 3269947 (M.D. Ga. Nov. 24, 2025). Ms.

Delgado-Vargas alleges as follows:

### INTRODUCTION

1. Petitioner is in the physical custody of Respondents at the Stewart Detention Center (SDC) in Lumpkin, Georgia. She now faces unlawful detention because an immigration judge denied her bond, and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) continues to detain her in violation of her statutory and constitutional rights.

2. The Executive Office for Immigration Review and its subagency, the Immigration Court, together with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), have unlawfully continued Petitioner's detention by denying her a meaningful opportunity for release on bond, notwithstanding her statutory and constitutional rights.

3. Petitioner Katia Cristel Delgado-Vargas is eligible for bond, as she does not have lawful status in the United States and is currently detained at the Stewart Detention Center (SDC) in Lumpkin, Georgia. She was apprehended by immigration authorities on November 21, 2003; entered the United States without inspection over 23 years ago and was not apprehended upon arrival; and is not detained under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(c), § 1225(b)(1), or § 1231.

4. Respondents are bound by the judgment in *Maldonado Bautista*, as it has

the full “force and effect of a final judgment.” 28 U.S.C. § 2201(a). Nevertheless, Respondents continue to flagrantly defy the judgment in that case and continue to subject Petitioner to unlawful detention despite her clear entitlement to consideration for release on bond as a Bond Eligible Class member.

5. Immigration judges have informed class members in bond hearings that they have been instructed by “leadership” that the declaratory judgment in *Maldonado Bautista* is not controlling, even with respect to class members, and that instead IJs remain bound to follow the agency’s prior decision in *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, 29 I. & N. Dec. 216 (BIA 2025).

6. In any event, this Honorable Court already ruled on many occasions that aliens detained under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) are not subject to mandatory detention under § 1225(b)(2) and are entitled to consideration for release on bond by immigration officers and, if not released, a custody redetermination hearing before an immigration judge.

7. At the time of his arrest, Petitioner was an alien in the United States who had not been lawfully admitted, and thus she falls within the broad definition of “applicant for admission,” but based on the present record, she was not attempting to be lawfully admitted. Therefore, she does not qualify as an “alien seeking admission” subject to mandatory detention under § 1225(b)(2)(A), which requires

both presence and seeking admission.

8. Because Respondents are detaining Petitioner in violation of the declaratory judgment issued in *Maldonado Bautista*, the Court should accordingly order that within one day, Respondent DHS must release Petitioner.

9. In addition, pursuant to *J.A.M. v. Streeval*, No. 4:25-CV- 342-CDL, 2025 WL 3050094 (M.D. Ga. Nov. 1, 2025) and *P.R.S. v. Streeval*, No. 4:25-CV- 330-CDL, 2025 WL 3269947 (M.D. Ga. Nov. 24, 2025) which are controlling in this case, the Court should order Petitioner's release unless Respondents provide another bond hearing under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) within seven days.

#### **JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

10. Petitioner is in the physical custody of Respondents. Petitioner is detained at the Stewart Detention Center (SDC) in Lumpkin, Georgia.

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

12. This Court may grant relief pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2241, the Declaratory Judgment Act, 28 U.S.C. § 2201 et seq., and the All Writs Act, 28 U.S.C. § 1651.

13. 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 Middle

District of Georgia (Columbus Division), the judicial district in which Petitioner currently is detained.

14. Venue is also properly in this Court pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(e) because Respondents are employees, officers, and agencies of the United States, and because a substantial part of the events or omissions giving rise to the claims occurred in the Middle District of Georgia (Columbus Division).

#### **REQUIREMENTS OF 28 U.S.C. § 2243**

15. The Court should grant the petition for writ of habeas corpus “forthwith,” as the legal issues have already been resolved for class members in *Maldonado Bautista*.

16. Habeas corpus is “perhaps the most important writ known to the constitutional law . . . affording as it does a *swift* and imperative remedy in all cases of illegal restraint or confinement.” *Fay v. Noia*, 372 U.S. 391, 400 (1963) (emphasis added). “The application for the writ usurps the attention and displaces the calendar of the judge or justice who entertains it and receives prompt action from him within the four corners of the application.” *Yong v. I.N.S.*, 208 F.3d 1116, 1120 (9th Cir. 2000) (citation omitted).

#### **PARTIES**

17. Petitioner, Katia Cristel Delgado-Vargas, is a citizen of Mexico who has

been in immigration detention since November 21, 2025. After Petitioner was arrested, ICE did not set bond, and Petitioner requested review of her custody by an IJ. On December 16, 2025, Petitioner was denied bond by an IJ at the Stewart Immigration Court because she was deemed an “applicant for admission.” Petitioner has resided in the United States since she was 7 years old.

18. Respondent Jason Streewal is the Warden of SDC, where Petitioner Katia Cristel Delgado-Vargas is currently detained. He is Petitioner’s immediate custodian and is named in his official capacity. See Doe, 108 F.4th at 1194-97

19. Respondent Ladeon Francis is the Field Office Director of the Atlanta Field Office of ICE with administrative jurisdiction over Ms. Delgado-Vargas’ case. He is Katia Cristel Delgado-Vargas’ legal custodian and is named in his official capacity.

20. Respondent Todd M. Lyons is the Acting Director of ICE. is responsible for ICE’s policies, practices, and procedures, including those relating to the detention of immigrants. He is a legal custodian of Petitioner and is named in his official capacity.

21. Respondent Kristi Noem is the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (“DHS”), an agency of the United States, is responsible for the administration of the immigration laws. 8 U.S.C. § 1103(a). She is a legal

custodian of Petitioner and is named in her official capacity.

**CLAIMS FOR RELIEF**

**COUNT ONE**

**Violation of the INA:**

**8 U.S.C. § 1226(A)**

22. Petitioner is detained under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), which authorizes the government to detain certain individuals during removal proceedings with the option to release them on bond or conditional parole.

23. After Petitioner was arrested, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) did not set bond. Petitioner therefore requested review of her custody status by an Immigration Judge. On December 16, 2025, an Immigration Judge at the Stewart Immigration Court denied Petitioner bond after determining that she was an “applicant for admission.” See Exhibit 1.

24. Petitioner has resided in the United States since she was seven years old. Despite her longstanding ties to the United States, the denial of bond has resulted in her continued detention without a meaningful opportunity for release, raising serious statutory and constitutional concerns.

25. In *Leal-Hernandez v. Noem*, the court rejected the Government’s assertion that a noncitizen who had resided in the United States for over 20 years without

admission or parole was subject to mandatory detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b). Instead, the court held that because the petitioner was not apprehended at a port of entry or interdicted at sea, and had not recently entered the country, he was not an “arriving alien” or “applicant for admission” under the INA and was therefore subject to discretionary detention under § 1226(a), not mandatory detention. See *Leal-Hernandez v. Noem*, No. 1:25-cv-02428-JRR, (D. Md. Aug. 24, 2025).

26. As in *Leal-Hernandez*, the original NTA in this case did not charge Petitioner as an “arriving alien,” but rather as an “alien present in the United States who has not been admitted or paroled,” removable under INA § 212(a)(6)(A)(i). Petitioner was arrested inside the United States, not at a port of entry, and was never charged or treated as an “arriving alien” under 8 C.F.R. § 1001.1(q). The Government cannot retroactively reclassify Petitioner as an arriving alien or applicant for admission merely by modifying the charge sheet and therefore cannot invoke the mandatory detention provisions of § 1225(b) to override the immigration judge’s valid exercise of bond authority under § 1226(a).

27. This Honorable Court also ruled that aliens detained under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) are not subject to mandatory detention under § 1225(b)(2) and are entitled to consideration for release on bond by immigration officers and, if not released, a custody redetermination hearing before an immigration judge. See *J.A.M. v.*

*Streeval*, No. 4:25-CV- 342-CDL, 2025 WL 3050094 (M.D. Ga. Nov. 1, 2025) and *P.R.S. v. Streeval*, No. 4:25-CV- 330-CDL, 2025 WL 3269947 (M.D. Ga. Nov. 24, 2025).

28. ICE’s refusal or failure to release Petitioner following this lawful bond determination constitutes unauthorized detention under the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) and violates the plain language of § 1226(a).

29. Petitioner’s detention is no longer tethered to any lawful purpose under the INA and therefore exceeds the statutory framework, warranting immediate release.

### **COUNT TWO**

#### **Violation of the Due Process Clause of the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution:**

30. The Due Process Clause of the Fifth Amendment forbids the government from depriving any person of liberty 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*, 533 U.S. at 690. This protection applies to all persons within the United States, including noncitizens in immigration detention.

31. 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)). In the immigration context, the Supreme Court has recognized

only two valid purposes for civil detention. First, the primary purpose is to mitigate the risk of flight, so that the government's goal of removal proceedings and, ultimately, removal, may be effectuated; and a secondary purpose is to prevent danger to the community while removal proceedings and/or removal efforts are pending. *Id.*; *Demore v. Kim*, 538 U.S. 510, 528 (2003).

32. Prolonged civil detention also violates due process unless it is accompanied by strong procedural protections to guard against the erroneous deprivation of liberty. *Zadvydas*, 533 U.S. at 690–91; *Kansas v. Hendricks*, 521 U.S. at 346, 364–69 (1997); *Foucha v. Louisiana*, 504 U.S. 71, 81–83 (1992); *United States v. Salerno*, 481 U.S. 739, 750–52 (1987).

33. Further, procedural due process requires that a detained individual be provided with a meaningful opportunity to challenge their detention. Here, Petitioner received a custody hearing but was denied bond and continues to be detained without sufficient justification or meaningful access to further process.

#### **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

WHEREFORE, Petitioner Katia Cristel Delgado-Vargas prays that this Court grant the following relief:

- (1) Assume jurisdiction over this matter;
- (2) Issue a writ of habeas corpus requiring that within one day,

Respondents release Petitioner;

- (3) Alternatively, issue a writ of habeas corpus requiring Respondents to release Petitioner unless they provide a bond hearing under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) within seven days;
- (4) Award Petitioner attorney's fees and costs under the Equal Access to Justice Act (EAJA), as amended, 28 U.S.C. § 2412, and on any other basis justified under law; and
- (5) Grant any other and further relief which this Honorable Court deems just and proper.

This 23<sup>rd</sup> day of January, 2026

Respectfully Submitted,



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