UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF GEORGIA
WAYCROSS DIVISION

Malkeet SINGH Petitioner, v. Warden, Folkston ICE Processing Facility, Respondents	Case No. **PETITION FOR WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS**

INTRODUCTION

1. Petitioner Malkeet Singh (**A#** [redacted]) is in the physical custody of the Respondent Warden at the Folkston ICE Processing Center in Folkston, Georgia. He is being detained under the government's position that he is subject to mandatory detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)(A) and therefore ineligible for release on bond or a bond hearing.

2. The government is detaining Petitioner under the position that he is subject to mandatory detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)(A) as an "applicant for admission," and therefore ineligible for release on bond and ineligible for a bond hearing before an Immigration Judge under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a).

3. This detention theory has been advanced through DHS's July 8, 2025 interim guidance regarding detention authority for "applicants for admission" and the Board of Immigration Appeals' precedential decision, *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, 29 I. & N. Dec. 216 (BIA 2025), which holds that individuals "present in the United States without admission" are detained under § 1225(b)(2)(A) and are not bond-eligible before an Immigration Judge.

4. Petitioner's detention under § 1225(b)(2)(A) is unlawful. Section 1225 governs inspection and admission at the border for people "seeking admission." It does not authorize mandatory detention of individuals like Petitioner who were arrested inside the United States after having already entered and who are not arriving at a port of entry seeking admission. Instead, detention in these circumstances is governed by 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), which allows release on bond or conditional parole.

5. The Southern District of Georgia (Waycross Division) has already addressed the government's expansive § 1225 theory and rejected it. In See *Villa v. Normand*, No. 5:25-cv-00089 (S.D. Ga. Nov. 4, 2025), 2025 WL 3095969 (holding that detention of individuals present in the United States is governed by 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) and not § 1225(b)(2)(A)), the court concluded that § 1225(b)(2) is inapplicable to noncitizens arrested and detained after being present in the United States (i.e., not "seeking admission"), and that such individuals are entitled to discretionary bond under § 1226(a) notwithstanding *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*.

6. Petitioner's continued detention is therefore unlawful for two independent reasons: (a) DHS is applying the wrong detention statute (§ 1225(b)(2) instead of § 1226(a)); and (b) DHS is detaining Petitioner while denying him any meaningful process to challenge his detention, including by leaving him in detained without the possibility to request a bond hearing.

7. Petitioner seeks a writ of habeas corpus ordering Respondent to release Petitioner or, in the alternative, to provide Petitioner a bond hearing under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) within seven (7) days.

JURISDICTION

8. Petitioner is in the physical custody of Respondent. Petitioner is detained at the Folkston Detention Center, Folkston, Georgia.

9. 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).

10. 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

11. Venue is proper in the Southern District of Georgia because Petitioner is detained within this District at the Folkston ICE Processing Center, and the immediate custodian is located within this District.

12. 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 Southern District of Georgia, the judicial district in which Petitioner currently is detained.

13. Venue is also properly in this Court pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(e) because Respondent is an employee, officer, and or agencies of the United States, and because a substantial part of the events or omissions giving rise to the claims occurred in the Southern District of Georgia.

REQUIREMENTS OF 28 U.S.C. § 2243

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

PARTIES

15. Petitioner Malkeet Singh (A# 243-103-374) is a citizen of India who has been in immigration detention since September 15, 2025 and currently detained at the Folkston ICE Processing Center in Folkston, Georgia.

16. Respondent, Warden, Folkston ICE Processing Center is named in his official capacity as the Warden of the Folkston Detention center, where Petitioner is detained. As Warden, he is responsible for the operations of the Folkston Detention Center, including overseeing the people in the facility's custody, and as such he is a custodian of the Petitioner. Respondent Warden's address is Folkston ICE Processing Center, 6999 McKinley Road Folkston, GA 31537. He is sued in his official capacity.

FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

17. Petitioner is a citizen of India who entered the United States without inspection through the U.S.-Mexican border on December 3, 2022.

18. On September 15, 2025, Petitioner was arrested by Immigration and Customs at his annual ICE reporting at 26 Federal Plaza, New York, NY.

19. Petitioner was immediately placed in ICE custody and subsequently transferred to the Folkston ICE Processing Center.

20. Petitioner's case was docketed with the immigration court since 10/24/2025, however he has not yet been given a hearing date, his case is still pending before the Immigration Court.

21. At the same time, DHS is detaining Petitioner under the position that he is subject to mandatory detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)(A) and therefore is ineligible for bond under § 1226(a). Under *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, DHS and EOIR take the position that an

Immigration Judge lacks authority to grant bond or conduct a bond redetermination for individuals charged as present without admission.

22. Petitioner has already attempted to request a bond before the Atlanta Immigration Court on two separate occasions, 10/30/20258, and again on 12/29/2025, however both were denied under *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*.

23. Petitioner has no pending criminal charges nor convictions.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

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

25. 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).

26. 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).

27. 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).

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

29. 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).

30. 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).

31. 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)).

32. 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.

33. 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/ice-memo-interim-guidance-regarding-detention-authority-for-applications-for-admission

34. 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.

35. 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.

36. 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).

37. Subsequently, court after court—including all three federal districts in Georgia—has adopted the same reading of the INA's detention provisions and rejected ICE and EOIR's new interpretation. In *J.A.M. v. Streeval*, the Middle District of Georgia held that §1225(b)(2)(A) does not apply to a long-term resident arrested inside the United States who is not 'seeking admission,' concluded that § 1226(a) governs such detention, and ordered DHS to provide a bond hearing under § 1226(a)(2). *J.A.M. v. Streeval*, No. 4:25-cv-342 (CDL), 2025 WL 3050094, at *5–8 (M.D. Ga. Nov. 1, 2025). Likewise, in *Aguirre Villa v. Normand*, the Southern District of Georgia rejected DHS's reliance on *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, held that applying § 1225(b)(2)(A) to noncitizens arrested after years of residence 'renders § 1226 largely

superfluous,' and granted habeas relief ordering bond hearings under § 1226(a). *Aguirre Villa v. Normand*, No. 5:25-cv-89, 2025 WL 3095969, at *8–10 (S.D. Ga. Nov. 4, 2025).

38. Similarly, courts throughout different jurisdictions within the United States have 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).

39. 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.

40. 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]."

41. 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.

42. 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.

43. 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).

44. 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.

CLAIMS FOR RELIEF

COUNT I

Violation of the INA

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

46. 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.

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

COUNT II
Violation of the Bond Regulations

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

49. 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.

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

51. 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

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

53. 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).

54. Petitioner has a fundamental interest in liberty and being free from official restraint.

55. 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:

a. Assume jurisdiction over this matter;

b. Order that Petitioner shall not be transferred outside the Southern District of Georgia while this habeas petition is pending;

c. Issue an Order to Show Cause ordering Respondents to show cause why this Petition should not be granted within three days;

d. 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;

e. Declare that Petitioner's detention is unlawful;

f. 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

g. Grant any other and further relief that this Court deems just and proper.

DATED: January 30, 2026

Respectfully submitted,

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