

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

Civil Action No. 26-cv-00392-PAB

LUIS GABRIEL-MORALES,

Petitioner,

v.

PAMELA BONDI, in her official capacity as U.S. Attorney General,
KRISTI NOEM, in her official capacity as Secretary, U.S. Department of Homeland Security,
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY,
EXECUTIVE OFFICE FOR IMMIGRATION REVIEW,¹
FIELD OFFICE DIRECTOR, Denver Field Office, Immigration and Customs Enforcement,
ASSISTANT FIELD OFFICE DIRECTOR, Denver Field Office, Immigration and Customs Enforcement,

Respondents.

RESPONSE TO ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE (ECF No. 4)

Respondents hereby respond to the Court’s Order to Show Cause (ECF No. 4), directing them to respond to the habeas petition.

The central legal issue presented in this case concerns whether a noncitizen who

¹ Respondents dispute that the named non-individual entities are proper respondents in this habeas proceeding. A writ of habeas corpus is properly directed to the custodian of the petitioner. See 28 U.S.C. §§ 2242-43 (habeas petitions must allege “the name of the person who has custody over him,” and the writ or order to show cause “shall be directed to the person having custody of the person detained”); *Rumsfeld v. Padilla*, 542 U.S. 426, 434-35 (2004) (“[T]here is generally only one proper respondent to a given prisoner’s habeas petition. This custodian, moreover, is ‘the person’ with the ability to produce the prisoner’s body before the habeas court.”).

is present in the United States and has not been admitted or paroled is subject to mandatory detention by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (“ICE”) under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2), or whether such a noncitizen is entitled by § 1226(a) to seek a bond hearing. This issue is not materially different from an issue this Court has resolved in a prior ruling in another case. *See, e.g., Alfaro Orellana v. Noem, et al.*, 25-cv-03976-PAB, ECF No. 15. Respondents respectfully disagree with that ruling. But to conserve judicial and party resources and expedite this Court’s consideration of this case, while preserving legal arguments and reserving all of Respondents’ rights including the right to appeal, Respondents submit this abbreviated response.

When Petitioner was detained by ICE, he was present in the United States without being admitted or paroled. *See* ECF No. 1 ¶¶ 12, 34. Respondents’ position is that Petitioner is, therefore, subject to mandatory detention under § 1225(b), on the grounds set forth in *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, 29 I. & N. Dec. 216, 228 (BIA 2025). Respondents submit that this position is supported by *Jennings v. Rodriguez*, 583 U.S. 281 (2018). The Court in *Jennings* explained that a noncitizen “who . . . ‘is present’ in this country but ‘has not been admitted,’ is treated as ‘an applicant for admission.’” 583 U.S. at 287 (quoting 8 U.S.C. § 1225(a)(1)). The Court then explained that *all* “applicants for admission” are subject to detention under either 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1) or § 1225(b)(2)—both of which *require* detention. *See id.* (“Section 1225(b)(2) . . . serves as a catchall provision that applies to all applicants for admission not covered by § 1225(b)(1).”); *id.* at 297 (“Read most naturally, §§ 1225(b)(1) and (b)(2) thus mandate detention of applicants for admission until certain proceedings have concluded”).

Respondents submit that *Jennings* supports their position that all “applicants for admission”—who include noncitizens, like Petitioner, who are present in the United States and have not been admitted or paroled—are subject to mandatory detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2).

The Fifth Circuit and some district courts in this circuit have agreed with Respondents’ interpretation of the statute. *See, e.g., Buenrostro-Mendez v. Bondi*, --- F.4th ---, 2026 WL 323330, at *5–10 (5th. Cir. Feb. 6, 2026); *Montoya v. Holt*, No. CIV-25-01231-JD, 2025 WL 3733302, at *5–12 (W.D. Okla. Dec. 26, 2025). Many others have not, including this Court, as noted above. The Tenth Circuit has not ruled on this issue. A decision in this district rejecting Respondents’ position on this issue has been appealed to the Tenth Circuit. *See Mendoza Gutierrez v. Baltazar*, Civil Action No. 25-cv-02720-RMR (D. Colo.), *appeal docketed*, No. 25-1460 (10th Cir. Dec. 15, 2025). That appeal remains pending.

Respondents acknowledge that until the Tenth Circuit rules on this issue, this Court’s prior ruling on this issue would lead the Court to reach the same result here if the Court adheres to that decision, as the facts of this case are not materially distinguishable from that case for purposes of the Court’s decision on the legal issue of whether Petitioner is subject to mandatory detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2). Thus, while Respondents do not consent to issuance of the writ and reserve the right to appeal, in order to conserve judicial and party resources Respondents hereby rely upon, and incorporate by reference, the legal arguments Respondents presented on this issue in *Mendoza Gutierrez v. Baltazar*, Civil Action No. 25-cv-02720-RMR, ECF

No. 26 at 10-19.²

Respondents anticipate that this Court's ruling on the § 1225(b)(2)(A) issue in this case will resolve this habeas petition. If the Court grants the petition on this ground, it should decline to address additional arguments. *See INS v. Bagamasbad*, 429 U.S. 24, 25 (1976) ("As a general rule courts and agencies are not required to make findings on issues the decision of which is unnecessary to the results they reach."). But if the Court wishes to receive additional briefing on any other issue, Respondents request that the Court issue an order directing Respondents to address such issues.

Finally, Respondents submit that if the Court grants the petition and determines that Petitioner is entitled to a bond hearing under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), the Court should order that Respondents conduct such a bond hearing in accordance with that provision within a reasonable time and should direct Respondents to file a status report confirming that such a bond hearing was held.

² A copy of that brief is attached as Exhibit A hereto.

Respectfully submitted February 11, 2026.

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on February 11, 2026, I electronically filed the foregoing with the Clerk of Court using the CM/ECF system, which will send notification of such filing to counsel of record.

s/ Alexandra J. Berger
U.S. Attorney's Office