

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA

Case No. 26-cv-60345-JB

LUIS GARCIA BERMUDEZ,

Petitioner,

v.

WARDEN, BROWARD TRANSITIONAL CENTER,  
AND U.S. DEPARTMENT OF  
HOMELAND SECURITY, *et al.*,

Respondents.

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**RESPONSE TO ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE**

Respondents<sup>1</sup>, by and through the undersigned counsel, respond to the Court's Order to show cause why the Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus<sup>2</sup> should not be granted.

**I. INTRODUCTION**

Petitioner is subject to mandatory detention pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)(A) and can only be released on humanitarian parole under 8 U.S.C. § 1182(d)(5)(A), an avenue available only at the discretion of the Secretary of Homeland Security on a "case-by-case basis

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<sup>1</sup> A writ of habeas corpus must "be directed to the person having custody of the person detained." 28 USC § 2243. In cases involving present physical confinement, the Supreme Court reaffirmed in *Rumsfeld v. Padilla*, 542 U.S. 426 (2004), that "the immediate custodian, not a supervisory official who exercises legal control, is the proper respondent." *Rumsfeld v. Padilla*, 542 U.S. 426, 439 (2004). Petitioner is currently detained at the Broward Transitional Center. See Petition at ¶ 11. Therefore, the proper respondent is the Assistant Field Office Director Carlos Nunez. All other respondents should be dismissed.

<sup>2</sup> The Court also ordered a response to Petitioner's Motion for Emergency Medical Release. Given that the motion does not go beyond incorporating by reference the allegations set forth in the Petition, a separate response to the motion would be repetitive.

for urgent humanitarian reasons or significant public benefit.” 8 U.S.C. § 1182(d)(5)(A). Petitioner does not challenge the legality of his mandatory detention. Instead, Petitioner contends that continued detention poses a risk to his health and urges this Court to order his immediate release on medical and humanitarian grounds or, alternatively, impose conditions ensuring proper medical care. *See* Petition at ¶ 2-3. As demonstrated below, the Court should deny the Petition for failure to state a claim for which relief can be granted.

## II. BACKGROUND

Petitioner is a Cuban citizen who entered the United State without inspection, admission, or parole on August 4, 2022. *See* Exh. A (Form I-213). He was encountered by the Department of Homeland Security (“DHS”), charged with violating 8 U.S.C. § 1182(a)(6)(A), as an alien present in the United States without admission or parole, placed in removal proceedings pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1229a, and released on an order of recognizance. *See* Exh. B (Notice to Appear); *also see* Exh. C (Form I-220A, Order of Release on Recognizance). At Petitioner’s initial hearing in immigration court, on October 10, 2025, the Immigration Judge granted DHS’s motion to dismiss removal proceedings, and DHS took Petitioner into custody. *See* Exh. D (Order of Dismissal); *also see* Exh A (Form I-213). The Immigration Judge’s order is currently on appeal at the Board of Immigration Appeals. *See* Exh. E (Notice of Appeal). Petitioner remains detained at the Broward Transitional Center pending removal proceedings. *See* Petition at ¶ 1.

## III. ARGUMENT

### **A. Petitioner is an Applicant for Admission subject to Detention pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)(A) and 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) is Inapplicable.**

Although Petitioner does not challenge the legal authority for this detention, Respondents emphasize that Petitioner is properly detained as an applicant for admission

subject to mandatory detention pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)(A). *See Buenrostro-Mendez v. Bondi*, No. 25-20496, 25-40701, \_\_\_F. 4th \_\_\_, 2026 WL 323330 (5th Cir. Feb. 6 2026) (holding that noncitizen petitioners in removal proceedings were subject to mandatory detention under 28 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2) because they were present in the United States without being admitted or paroled, despite having entered illegally many years ago; *Iraheta Morales v. Noem*, et al., Case No. 25-62598-CIV-SINGHAL, ECF No. 10 (S.D. Fla. Jan. 29, 2026) (concluding that habeas petitioner who entered the United States without inspection in 2004 is an “applicant for admission” governed by 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b) and rejecting petitioner’s argument the government must grant a bond hearing under 8 U.S.C. § 1226); *Perez Morales v. Noem*, et al., No.26-60251-CIV DIMITROULEAS, ECF No. 15 (S.D. Fla. Feb. 9, 2026) (same, adopting the analysis of the Fifth Circuit majority opinion in *Buenrostro-Medina*).<sup>3</sup> The

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<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, the government acknowledges that Judges in this District have reached the opposite conclusion on the legal issues presented. *See, e.g., Aguilar Merino v. Ripa*, No. 25-23845-CIV-MARTINEZ, 2025 WL 2941609, at \*3, 8 (S.D. Fla. Oct. 15, 2025) (“§ 1226(a), not § 1225(b)(2), governs Petitioner’s detention”); *Gil-Paulino v. Sec’y of the U.S. Dep’t of Homeland Sec.*, 25-24292-CIV-WILLIAMS, ECF No. 41, (S.D. Fla. Oct. 10, 2025) (“§ 1226 governs Petitioner’s detention”); *Alvarez Puga v. Assistant Field Office Director Krome*, et al., No. 25-24535-CIV-ALTONAGA (S.D. Fla. Oct. 15, 2025) (concluding that “prudential exhaustion requirements are excused for futility” and finding that “section 1226(a) and its implementing regulations govern Petitioner’s detention, not section 1225(b)(2)(A)”); *Zamora Policarpo v. Parra*, Case No. 25-25236-CIV-COHN, ECF No. 8 (S.D. Fla. Dec. 22, 2025) (finding good cause to excuse Petitioner’s failure to exhaust administrative remedies where it is evident the BIA will reject Petitioner’s request for a bond hearing or release and that Petitioner is subject to detention under § 1226(a) and entitled to a bond hearing before an immigration judge); *Penagos Quintero v. Ripa*, et al., Case No. 25-25746-CIV-BECERRA, ECF NO.14 (Jan. 5, 2026) (concluding that jurisdiction is not barred by 8 U.S.C. § 1252, exhaustion was not required, and that the petitioner’s detention is governed by 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), not 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)); *Martinez v. Field Off. Dir.*, No. 25-26026-CIV-LEIBOWITZ, ECF No. 7 (S.D. Fla. Jan. 14, 2026) (“Pending the Eleventh Circuit’s resolution of this issue, the Court continues to side with the clear weight of existing authority in finding that Petitioner here is entitled to a prompt, individualized bond hearing under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a)”); *Espinal Encarnacion v. ICE Field Office Director*, et al., No. 25-61898-CIV-DAMIAN, ECF No. 29 (Dec. 23, 2025) (“this Court finds that 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) and its implementing regulations govern Petitioner’s detention, and not Section 1225(b)”); *Ocegueda*

Fifth Circuit in *Buenrostro-Mendez* recognized that “[s]ince DHS began to detain unadmitted aliens under § 1225(b)(2)(A), well over a thousand aliens have filed habeas corpus petitions seeking bond hearings[] [and,] [i]n most of these cases, the district court found in favor of the petitioner.” *Id.* at 3. Nevertheless, the court concluded that presence without admission renders an individual like Petitioner to be both an “applicant for admission” and “seeking admission” under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2) and therefore subject to mandatory detention--regardless of how much time the individual has been present in the United States. *Buenrostro-Mendez*, at 4-9.

“As with any question of statutory interpretation, [the] analysis begins with the plain language of the statute.” *Jimenez v. Quarterman*, 555 U.S. 113, 118 (2009) (citing *Lamie v. U.S. Tr.*, 540 U.S. 526, 534 (2004)). Section 1225(a)(1) defines an “applicant for admission” as an “alien present in the United States who has not been admitted or who arrives in the United States (whether or not at a designated port of arrival . . .) . . .” 8 U.S.C. § 1225(a)(1); see *Buenrostro-Mendez*, at 2 (“an alien's status as an applicant for admission does not turn on where or how the alien entered the United States”); *Matter of Velasquez-Cruz*, 26 I&N Dec. 458, 463 n.5 (BIA 2014) (“[R]egardless of whether an alien who illegally enters the United States is

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*Gonzalez v. Noem*, et al., No. 25-62261-CIV-MIDDLEBROOKS/AGUSTIN-BIRCH, ECF No. 25 (Dec. 23, 2025) (“Having concluded that Petitioner’s detention is governed by 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), Petitioner is entitled to an individualized bond hearing before an immigration judge.”); and *Fuentes Granados v. Secretary of Homeland Security*, Case No. 26-60020-CIV-SMITH, ECF No. 7 (S.D. Fla. Jan. 27, 2026) (“Petitioner is being unlawfully detained due to his improper classification as “an alien who is an applicant for admission” pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)(A);] . . .Petitioner’s proper classification is a detainee pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a)”).

caught at the border or inside the country, he or she will still be required to prove eligibility for admission.”).

By its very definition, the term “applicant for admission” includes two categories of aliens: (1) arriving aliens, and (2) aliens present without admission. *See Dep’t of Homeland Sec. v. Thuraissigiam*, 591 U.S. 103, 140 (2020) (explaining that “an alien who tries to enter the country illegally is treated as an ‘applicant for admission’”); *Matter of Lemus*, 25 I&N Dec. 734, 743 (BIA 2012) (“Congress has defined the concept of an ‘applicant for admission’ in an unconventional sense, to include not just those who are expressly seeking permission to enter, but also those who are present in this country without having formally requested or received such permission . . . .”); *Matter of E-R-M- & L-R-M-*, 25 I&N Dec. 520, 523 (BIA 2011) (stating that “the broad category of applicants for admission . . . includes, *inter alia*, any alien present in the United States who has not been admitted”). An arriving alien is defined, in pertinent part, as “an applicant for admission coming or attempting to come into the United States at a port-of-entry [(“POE”)] . . . .” 8 C.F.R. §§ 1.2, 1001.1(q).

All aliens who are applicants for admission “shall be inspected by immigration officers.” 8 U.S.C. § 1225(a)(3); *see also* 8 C.F.R. § 235.1(a) (“Application to lawfully enter the United States shall be made in person to an immigration officer at a U.S. [POE] when the port is open for inspection . . . .”). An applicant for admission at a United States POE “must present whatever documents are required and must establish to the satisfaction of the inspecting officer that the alien is not subject to removal . . . and is entitled, under all of the applicable provisions of the immigration laws . . . to enter the United States.” 8 C.F.R. § 235.1(f)(1); *see also* 8 U.S.C. § 1229a(c)(2)(A) (explaining that an applicant for admission has the burden to establish that he or she is clearly and beyond doubt entitled to be admitted and

is not inadmissible under 8 U.S.C. § 1182 in removal proceedings pursuant to § 1229a). “An alien present in the United States who has not been admitted or paroled or an alien who seeks entry at other than an open, designated [POE] . . . is subject to the provisions of [8 U.S.C. § 1182(a)] and to removal under [8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)] or [8 U.S.C. § 1229a].” 8 C.F.R. § 235.1(f)(2).

Here, Petitioner entered the United States without inspection, admission, or parole. *See* Exh. A (For I-213). Petitioner is, therefore, an alien present in the United States without admission or parole and, consequently, an applicant for admission – even though he appears to have resided in the country for several years. *See Buenrostro-Mendez*, at 2, 4-5. An alien's status as an applicant for admission does not turn on where or how the alien entered the United States; an alien present without inspection or admission is necessarily an “applicant for admission” and “seeking admission,” as contemplated in 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2).

The decision issued by the BIA in *Matter of Yajure Hurtado* is similarly instructive. In *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, the BIA rejected the alien's argument that “because he has been residing in the interior of the United States for almost 3 years . . . he cannot be considered as ‘seeking admission.’” 29 I&N Dec. at 221. The BIA determined that this argument “is not supported by the plain language of the INA” and creates a “legal conundrum.” *Id.* If the alien “is not admitted to the United States (as he admits) but he is not ‘seeking admission’ (as he contends), then what is his legal status?” *Id.* (parentheticals in original). The BIA's decision is consistent not only with the plain language of § 1225(b)(2), but also with the Supreme Court's decision in *Jennings v. Rodriguez*, 583 U.S. 281 (2018), and subsequent caselaw post *Jennings*. Specifically, in *Jennings*, the Supreme Court explained that § 1225(b) applies to all applicants

for admission, noting that the language of § 1225(b)(2) is “quite clear” and “unequivocally mandate[s]” detention. 583 U.S. at 300, 303.

Additionally, in *Matter of Q. Li*, 29 I&N Dec. 66 (BIA 2025), the BIA held that an alien who unlawfully entered the United States between POEs, was arrested and detained without a warrant while arriving, and was previously released from DHS custody pursuant to an 8 U.S.C. § 1182(d)(5)(A) parole is detained under § 1225(b) upon re-detention. 29 I&N Dec. at 70-71. This ongoing evolution of the law makes clear that all applicants for admission in various procedural postures are subject to detention under § 1225(b). *Cf. Niz-Chavez v. Garland*, 593 U.S. 155, 171 (2021) (stating that “no amount of policy-talk can overcome a plain statutory command”); *see generally Florida v. United States*, 660 F. Supp. 3d 1239, 1275 (N.D. Fla. 2023) (explaining that “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”). *Florida’s* conclusion “that § 1225(b)’s ‘shall be detained’ means what it says and . . . is a mandatory requirement . . . flows directly from *Jennings*.” *Florida*, 660 F. Supp. 3d at 1273.

**B. Applicants for Admission may Only be Released from Detention on an 8 U.S.C. § 1182(d)(5) Parole.**

DHS has the exclusive 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.” 8 U.S.C. § 1182(d)(5); *see* 8 C.F.R. § 212.5(b). In *Jennings*, the Supreme Court placed significance on the fact that § 1182(d)(5) is the specific provision that authorizes temporary release from detention under § 1225(b). 583 U.S. at 300.

Parole, like an admission, is a factual occurrence. *See Hing Sum*, 602 F.3d at 1098; *Matter of Roque-Izada*, 29 I&N Dec. 106 (BIA 2025) (treating whether an alien was paroled as

a question of fact). The parole authority under 8 U.S.C. § 1182(d)(5) is “delegated solely to the Secretary of Homeland Security.” *Matter of Castillo-Padilla*, 25 I&N Dec. 257, 261 (BIA 2010); see 8 C.F.R. § 212.5(a). Thus, neither the BIA nor immigration judges have authority to parole an alien into the United States under § 1182(d)(5). *Castillo-Padilla*, 25 I&N Dec. at 261; see also *Matter of Arrabally and Yerrabelly*, 25 I&N Dec. 771, 777 n.5 (BIA 2002) (indicating that “parole authority [under 8 U.S.C. § 1182(d)(5)] is now exercised exclusively by the DHS” and “reference to the Attorney General in [8 U.S.C. § 1182(d)(5)] is thus deemed to refer to the Secretary of Homeland Security”). Lastly, because DHS has exclusive jurisdiction to parole an alien into the United States, the manner in which DHS exercises its parole authority may not be reviewed by an immigration judge or the BIA. *Castillo-Padilla*, 25 I&N Dec. at 261; see *Matter of Castellon*, 17 I&N Dec. 616, 620 (BIA 1981) (noting that the BIA does not have authority to review the way DHS exercises its parole authority).

### **C. Challenging Conditions of Confinement is Not Proper Under Habeas**

Petitioner challenges the conditions of his confinement. See generally *Petition*. However, “claims challenging the conditions of confinement fall outside of habeas corpus law”. *Vaz v. Skinner*, 634 F. App'x 778, 780 (11th Cir. 2015) (citing *Nelson v. Campbell*, 541 U.S. 637, 644, 124 S.Ct. 2117, 158 L.Ed.2d 924 (2004)); see also *A.S.M. v. Donahue*, No. 20-cv-62, 2020 WL 1847158, at 1 (M.D. Ga. Apr. 10, 2020) (finding that a writ of habeas corpus was not the appropriate jurisdictional vehicle for releasing detainees due to COVID-19); *Matos v. Lopez Vega*, 614 F.Supp.3d 1158 (S.D. Fla. 2020) (finding that petitioners seeking to contest the conditions of their confinement “cannot avail themselves of a petition for writ of habeas corpus.”) See *A.S.M.*, 2020 WL 1847158, at 1 (citing *Vaz*, 634 F. App'x at 781) (“Although the Eleventh Circuit has not addressed the issue in a published opinion, an unpublished

opinion in this Circuit has concluded that a petition for writ of habeas corpus is not the appropriate mechanism for contesting a prisoner's conditions of confinement.”).

As the Eleventh Circuit and the Southern District of Florida have already addressed this issue, this Court should dismiss the Habeas Petition to the extent it seeks to challenge Petitioner’s conditions of confinement.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Based upon the foregoing, the Petition should be dismissed because detention is lawful under § 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)(A) and Petitioner has failed to state a claim upon which relief can be granted.

Respectfully submitted,

**JASON A. REDING QUIÑONES**  
**UNITED STATES ATTORNEY**

By: /s/ Liviu Lungu  
LIVIU LUNGU  
SPECIAL ASSISTANT U.S. ATTORNEY  
Fla. Bar. No. 69683  
99 N.E. 4th Street  
Miami, Florida 33132  
Telephone: (305)961-9011  
Email: [Liviu.Lungu@usdoj.gov](mailto:Liviu.Lungu@usdoj.gov)

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I, Liviu Lungu, HEREBY CERTIFY that on February 16, 2026, I mailed the foregoing via regular mail to Petitioner at the address below:

Broward Transitional Center  
3900 N Powerline Road  
Pompano Beach, FL 33073

Respectfully submitted,

**JASON A. REDING QUIÑONES**  
**UNITED STATES ATTORNEY**

By: /s/ Liviu Lungu  
LIVIU LUNGU  
SPECIAL ASSISTANT U.S. ATTORNEY  
Fla. Bar. No. 69683  
99 N.E. 4th Street  
Miami, Florida 33132  
Telephone: (305)961-9011  
Email: [Liviu.Lungu@usdoj.gov](mailto:Liviu.Lungu@usdoj.gov)

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