

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA

CASE NO. 26-CV-60438-MD

**MAURICIO SANCHEZ HERNANDEZ,**

Petitioner,

v.

**[WARDEN]**, Warden,  
Broward County Transitional Center,  
in his/her official capacity;

**KRISTI NOEM**, Secretary,  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security,  
in her official capacity;

**CALEB VITELLO**, Acting Director,  
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement,  
in his official capacity,

Respondents.

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**RESPONSE TO ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE**

Respondent<sup>1</sup>, by and through the undersigned Assistant United States Attorney, hereby responds to the Court's Order to Show Cause (ECF NO.1).

Petitioner Mauricio Sanchez Hernandez ("Petitioner") challenges his detention by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("ICE"). On February 17, 2026, Petitioner filed a petition

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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 Broward Transitional Center. See Petition at ¶ 19. The only appropriate respondent is Juan Gonzalez. All other respondents should be dismissed.

for habeas corpus pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2241. The Court has ordered the government to show cause why the petition should not be granted.

The government has carefully reviewed this petition and determined that the legal issues presented concern the statutory authority for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's ("ICE") detention of Petitioner under 8 U.S.C. §§ 1225(b)(2)(A) or 1226(a), whether Petitioner is entitled to a bond hearing, and if so, whether Petitioner must first exhaust his administrative remedies. While reserving all rights, including the right to appeal, the government respectfully submits this abbreviated response to the Court's Order to Show Cause in lieu of a formal responsive memorandum of law to preserve the legal issues, to conserve judicial and party resources, and to expedite the Court's consideration of this matter. If the Court prefers to receive a formal memorandum of law, the government submit one upon request.

It is the government's position that Petitioner is subject to mandatory detention under § 1225(b)(2), because he was present in the United States without being admitted or paroled. *See Buenrostro-Mendez v. Bondi*, No. 25-20496, 25-40701, \_\_\_ F. 4th \_\_\_, 2026 WL 323330 (5th Cir. Feb. 6 2026) (holding that the 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). In *Buenrostro-Mendez*, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals recognized that presence without admission renders an individual like Petitioner 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.

Several Judges in this District have reached the same conclusion. *See, e.g., Morales v. Noem*, et al., No. 25-62598-CIV SINGHAL, ECF No. 10 (S.D. Fla. Jan. 29, 2026))(same); *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 majority opinion in *Buenrostro*); *Mokanu v. Warden, Federal Detention Center Miami*, No. 25-24121-ARTAU, ECF No. 19 (S.D.Fla. Feb. 19, 2026) (holding that 8 USC 1252(g) prohibits the Court in a habeas proceeding from reviewing the denial of bond to a person present without admission or parole who is detained pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1225, and, on the merits, finding that petitioner who had been present in the country for years on humanitarian parole was an applicant for admission and subject to detention under 8 USC 1225(b)(2); *Hernandez v. Miamia Field Office Director*, Case No. 26-20440-ALTMAN, ECF No. 8 (S.D. Fla. Feb. 27, 2026) (“The plain text of § 1225(a)(1) defines aliens, like our [p]etitioner, as “applicants for admission” notwithstanding their distance from the border or the time they’ve spent in the United States without admission”).

The government acknowledges, however, that several Judges in this District have reached the opposite conclusion. *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”); *Hernandez Alvarez v. Acting Warden Roger Morris*, et al., Case No. 25-24806-CIV-WILLIAMS, ECF No. 6 (S.D. Fla. Oct. 27, 2025) (agreeing with petitioner that “detention is governed by 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), which allows for the release of noncitizens on bond . . . not § 1225(b)(2), applicable to noncitizen “applicant[s] for admission” to the United States.); *Cerro Perez v. Parra*, et al., Case No. 25-24820-CIV-WILLIAMS, ECF No. 9 (S.D. Fla. Oct. 27, 2025) (same); *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); *Duvalon Boffill, et al.*, Case No. 25-25179-CIV-BECERRA, ECF No.9 (Nov. 20, 2025) (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)); *Ocampo Fernandez v. Ripa*, No. 25-24981-CIV-LEIBOWITZ, ECF No. 17 (S.D. Fla. Nov. 25, 2025) (declining to follow BIA order in *Hurtado* and holding that “Petitioner is detained pursuant to Section 1226 and is therefore entitled to a bond hearing”); *Espinal Encarnacion v. ICE Field Office Director, et al.*, Case 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 Gonzalez v. Noem, et al.*, Case 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.”); *Acosta v. Ripa, et. al.*, Case No. 25-62360-CIV-DIMITROULEAS, ECF No. 19 at 7 (S.D. Fla. Dec. 26, 2025) (“§ 1226(a) and its implementing regulations govern Petitioner’s detention, not § 1225(b)(2)(A)"); 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)”).

The government is appealing the judgment that 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), rather than 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b), governs detention under the facts presented in the cases above appealing to the Eleventh Circuit in *Hernandez Alvarez v. Warden, Federal Detention Center Miami*, et al., No. 25-14065 (11th Cir.) and *Cerro Perez v. Assistant Field Office Director*, et al., No. 25-14075 (11th Cir.). Until the foregoing appeals are resolved, however, the government acknowledges that this Court's recent decision in *Espinal Encarnacion v. ICE Field Office Director*, et al., Case No. 25-61898-CIV-DAMIAN, ECF No. 29 (Dec. 23, 2025) would control the result here if the Court adheres to that decision, as the legal arguments are not materially distinguishable for purposes of the Court's decision on the issue of which statutory provision authorizes Petitioner's detention.

Thus, while the government does not consent to issuance of the writ and reserves all rights, including the right to appeal, and to conserve judicial and party resources while expediting the Court's consideration of this case, the government hereby relies upon, and incorporates by reference, the legal arguments it presented in *Espinal Encarnacion v. ICE Field Office Director*, et al., Case No. 25-61898-CIV-DAMIAN, ECF No. 29 (Dec. 23, 2025) and the Court can decide this issue without further briefing. However, as noted above, should the Court prefer to receive a formal opposition brief in this matter, the government will file such a brief upon the Court's request.

Respectfully submitted,

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