

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA**

**CASE NO. 26-cv-60498-DAMIAN**

**DIEGO ALBERTO PEREZ MALDONADO,**

Petitioner,

v.

**WARDEN, BROWARD TRANSITIONAL  
CENTER *et al.*,**

Respondents.

/

**RESPONSE TO ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE**

Respondents, by and through the undersigned Assistant United States hereby file their Response to the Order to Show Cause [DE 5] as to why the Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2241 [DE 1] should not be granted and state in support thereof as follows:

**I. INTRODUCTION**

Petitioner is currently being detained without bond under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)(A). That section provides that aliens present in the United States without having been admitted or paroled, and who are not clearly and beyond a doubt entitled to be admitted, shall be detained for a removal proceeding under 8 U.S.C. § 1229a. *See* 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)(A). Petitioner argues his prolonged detention violates his constitutional due process rights under the Fifth Amendment and that he does not pose a danger or flight risk. [DE 1, p. 8]. As discussed below, Petitioner is subject to mandatory detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)(A) and his Petition should be denied accordingly.

## II. FACTUAL AND PROCEDURAL BACKGROUND

Petitioner is a native and citizen of Mexico who applied for admission into the United States on October 19, 2023, at Eagle Pass, Texas. *See* Ex. 1, Form I-862, Notice to Appear (NTA), dated October 19, 2023. On that same date, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) paroled Petitioner into the United States and issued an NTA, charging him with inadmissibility pursuant to Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) § 1182(a)(7)(A)(i)(I), in that he was an immigrant who, at the time of application for admission, was not in possession of a valid unexpired immigrant visa, reentry permit, border crossing card, or other valid entry document required by the Act, and a valid unexpired passport, or other suitable travel document, or document of identity and nationality as required under the regulations issued by the Attorney General under section 211(a) of the INA. *See id.*; Ex. 2, Record of Deportable/Inadmissible Alien (Form I-213), dated July 30, 2025. CBP filed the NTA with the New York Immigration Court. *See* Ex. 1, Form I-862. On February 7, 2024, the Immigration Judge changed the venue of Petitioner's removal proceedings to the Orlando Immigration Court. *See* Ex. 3, Order of the Immigration Judge, dated February 7, 2024. At a master calendar hearing on March 24, 2025, the Immigration Judge sustained the charge of inadmissibility in the NTA and designated Mexico as the country of removal. *See* Ex. 4, Declaration of Deportation Officer Vivian Delgado (Declaration), ¶ 11.

On July 27, 2025, the Polk County Sheriff's Office arrested Petitioner for Larceny- Petit Theft 1st Offense. *See* Ex. 2, Form I-213. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("ICE") Enforcement and Removal Operations ("ERO") encountered Petitioner at the Polk County Jail on July 28, 2025, and issued an immigration detainer requesting notification prior to Petitioner's release from custody. *See id.* Petitioner was transferred to the custody of ICE ERO on or about July 30, 2025. *See* Ex. 4, Declaration, ¶ 14. The venue of Petitioner's removal proceedings were

subsequently changed to the Krome Immigration Court. *Id.* at ¶ 15; Ex. 5, Form I-830, Notice to EOIR: Alien Address, dated August 6, 2025. Petitioner’s larceny charge is currently pending. *See* Ex. 4, Declaration, ¶ 16.

On August 27, 2025, the Immigration Judge denied Petitioner’s request for custody redetermination due to lack of jurisdiction, finding that Petitioner is an arriving alien. *See* Ex. 6, Order of the Immigration Judge, dated August 27, 2025. On October 7, 2025, the Immigration Judge denied Petitioner’s application for relief and ordered him removed to Mexico. *See* Ex. 4, Declaration, ¶ 18. Petitioner appealed that decision with the Board of Immigration Appeals on November 2, 2025, and the appeal is currently pending. *See* Ex. 7, Filing Receipt for Appeal or Motion, dated November 5, 2025; *see also* Ex. 4, Declaration, ¶ 19.

Petitioner is currently detained by ICE at the Broward Transitional Center in Pompano Beach, Florida. *Id.* at ¶ 20.

### III. ARGUMENT<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The government submits the following arguments in good faith, supported by the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals’ decision in *See Buenrostro-Mendez v. Bondi*, No. 25-20496, 25-40701, \_\_\_ F.4th \_\_\_, 2026 WL 323330 (5th Cir. Feb. 6 2026) and decisions rendered in this District. *See, e.g., Iraheta Morales v. Noem*, et al., No. 25-62598-CIV-SINGHAL (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 (S.D. Fla. Feb. 9, 2026)(same, adopting the analysis of the Fifth Circuit majority opinion in *Buenrostro-Mendez*); *Mokanu v. Warden, Federal Detention Center Miami*, No. 25-24121-ARTAU (S.D.Fla. Feb. 19, 2026) (holding that 8 U.S.C. §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 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)); and *Hernandez v. Miami Field Office Director*, No. 26-20440-ALTMAN (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”).

**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.**

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.*, No. 25-62598-CIV-SINGHAL, (S.D. Fla. Jan. 29, 2026) (concluding that habeas petitioner who entered the United States without

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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 (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*, No. 25-25236-CIV-COHN (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.*, No. 25-25746-CIV-BECERRA (S.D. Fla. 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 (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 (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.*, No. 25-62261-CIV-MIDDLEBROOKS/AGUSTIN-BIRCH (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*, No. 26-60020-CIV-SMITH (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)”).

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 (S.D. Fla. Feb. 9, 2026)(same, adopting the analysis of the Fifth Circuit majority opinion in *Buenrostro-Mendez*); *Mokanu v. Warden, Federal Detention Center Miami*, No. 25-24121-ARTAU (S.D. Fla. Feb. 19, 2026) (same; and holding that 8 U.S.C. § 1252(g) prohibits the Court in a habeas proceeding from reviewing the denial of bond to a person detained pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1225); and *Hernandez v. Miami Field Office Director*, No. 26-20440-ALTMAN (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 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 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).

Petitioner is 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 Fifth Circuit's decision in *Buenrostro-Mendez* 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. Mar. 8, 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. Petitioner is an Applicant for Admission in 8 U.S.C. § 1229a Removal Proceedings and, as such, his Detention Pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)(A) is Proper.**

Both arriving aliens and aliens present without admission or parole are applicants for admission and may be removed from the United States by expedited removal procedures under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1) or removal proceedings before an immigration judge under 8 U.S.C. § 1229a. See 8 U.S.C §§ 1225(b)(1), (b)(2)(A); *Jennings*, 583 U.S. at 287 (describing how “applicants for admission fall into one of two categories, those covered by § 1225(b)(1) and those covered by § 1225(b)(2)”).

Petitioner is currently in § 1229a removal proceedings and is subject to mandatory detention under § 1225(b)(2)(A). See Ex. 1, NTA. Under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)(A), “an alien who is an applicant for admission” “*shall be detained* for a proceeding under [8 U.S.C. § 1229a]” “if the examining immigration officer determines that [the] alien seeking admission is not clearly and beyond a doubt entitled to be admitted.” 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)(A) (emphasis added); 8 C.F.R. § 235.3(b)(3) (providing that an alien placed into § 1229a removal proceedings in lieu of expedited removal proceedings under 8 U.S.C. § 1225 “shall be detained” pursuant to § 1225(b)(2)). As the Supreme Court observed in *Jennings*, nothing in § 1225(b)(2)(A) “says anything whatsoever about bond hearings.” 583 U.S. at 297. Further, there is no textual basis for arguing that § 1225(b)(2)(A) applies only to arriving aliens as no provision therein refers to “arriving aliens,” or limits that

paragraph to arriving aliens. Where Congress means for a rule to apply only to “arriving aliens,” it uses that specific term of art or similar phrasing. *See, e.g.*, 8 U.S.C. §§ 1182(a)(9)(A)(i), 1225(c)(1).

**C. Section 1226 does Not Impact the Detention Authority that Governs with respect to Applicants for Admission in removal proceedings.**

Petitioner urges the Court to find that his detention (and eligibility for release on bond) is proper, but that is incorrect. [DE 1, p. 8]. Section 1226(a) is the applicable detention authority for aliens who have been admitted and are subject to removal proceedings under § 1229, and it does not impact the directive in § 1225(b)(2)(A) that “if the examining immigration officer determines that an alien seeking admission is not clearly and beyond a doubt entitled to be admitted, the alien shall be detained for a proceedings under [8 U.S.C. § 1229a].” 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)(A). Section § 1226(a) “applies to aliens already present in the United States” and “creates a default rule for those aliens by permitting—but not requiring—the [Secretary] to issue warrants for their arrest and detention pending removal proceedings.” *Jennings*, 583 U.S. at 289, 303; *Q. Li*, 29 I&N Dec. at 70; *see also M-S-*, 27 I&N Dec. at 516 (describing 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) as a “permissive” detention authority separate from the “mandatory” detention authority under 8 U.S.C. § 1225). As the Fifth Circuit observed in *Buenrostro-Mendez*, § 1226(a) “does work independent from § 1225(b)(2)(A) because only § 1226(a) applies to admitted aliens who overstay their visas, become deportable on many different grounds, or were admitted erroneously due to fraud or some other error.” *Buenrostro-Mendez*, at \*7.

Generally, such aliens may be released on bond or their own recognizance, also known as “conditional parole.” 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a); *Jennings*, 583 U.S. at 303, 306. Section 1226(a) does not, however, confer the *right* to be released on bond; rather, both DHS and immigration judges have broad discretion in determining whether to release an alien on bond as long as the alien

establishes that he or she is not a flight risk or a danger to the community. *See* 8 C.F.R. §§ 236.1(c)(8), 1236.1(c)(8); *Matter of Guerra*, 24 I&N Dec. 37, 39 (BIA 2006); *Matter of Adeniji*, 22 I&N Dec. 1102 (BIA 1999). To interpret § 1225(b)(2)(A) as not applying to all applicants for admission would render it meaningless. As explained above, Congress expanded § 1225(b) in 1996 to apply to a broader category of aliens, including those aliens who crossed the border illegally. There would have been no need for Congress to make such a change if § 1226(a) was meant to apply to aliens present without admission.

**D. 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).

**E. Petitioner's Due Process Rights have not been Violated.**

Petitioner asserts that because his detention has exceeded six months it is presumptively unreasonable pursuant to *Zadvydas v. Davis*, 533 U.S. 678 (2001). *See* [DE 1-1, p. 1.] The Court should reject such arguments because “detention during deportation proceedings is a constitutionally valid aspect of the deportation process.” *See Demore v. Kim*, 538 U.S. 510 (2003). Additionally, an individualized bond hearing need not be conducted to determine individualized flight risk; instead, detention may be mandated to combat flight. *See id.* at 528. Further, it should be noted *Zadvydas* concerned *post-removal order* immigration detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1231. However, Petitioner's order of removal is not final as it is pending appeal before the Board of Immigration Appeals. *See* Ex. 7, Filing Receipt for Appeal or Motion. Therefore, it is premature to bring a *Zadvydas* claim before the Court.

**IV. CONCLUSION**

Based upon the foregoing, the Petition should be denied.

Dated: March 3, 2026

Respectfully submitted,

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

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**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I HEREBY CERTIFY that on this 3rd day of March, 2026, I electronically filed the foregoing document with the Clerk of Court using CM/ECF. I also certify that the foregoing document is being placed in the mail to Plaintiff at the address provided in the Service List below.

By: /s/ Jeanette M. Lugo  
Assistant U.S. Attorney

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