

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF GEORGIA
COLUMBUS DIVISION**

UVALDO CHUN DOMINGO,

Petitioner,

v.

JASON STREEVAL, in his official capacity as Warden of Stewart Detention Center; LADEON FRANCIS, in his official capacity as Field Office Director of Enforcement and Removal Operations, Atlanta Field Office, Immigration and Customs Enforcement; KRISTI NOEM, in her official capacity as Secretary, U.S. Department of Homeland Security; PAMELA BONDI, in her official capacity as U.S. Attorney General,

Respondents.

Case No. 4:26-cv-377

**PETITION FOR WRIT OF
HABEAS CORPUS**

1 that allows for release on conditional parole or bond. That statute expressly applies
2 to people who, like Petitioner, are charged as inadmissible for having entered the
3 United States without inspection.

4
5 5. Respondents' new legal interpretation is plainly contrary to the
6 statutory framework and contrary to decades of agency practice applying § 1226(a)
7 to people like Petitioner.

8 6. Accordingly, Petitioner seeks a writ of habeas corpus requiring that he
9 be released immediately. In the alternative, Petitioner requests that Respondents
10 provide a new custody redetermination hearing under § 1226(a) within seven days
11 whereby the Immigration Judge does have jurisdiction over Petitioner's custody
12 redetermination request, or else release Petitioner at that time.

14 JURISDICTION

15 7. Petitioner is in the physical custody of Respondents. Petitioner is
16 detained at the Stewart Detention Center in Lumpkin, Georgia.

17 8. This Court has jurisdiction under 28 U.S.C. § 2241(c)(5) (habeas
18 corpus), 28 U.S.C. § 1331 (federal question), and Article I, section 9, clause 2 of
19 the United States Constitution (the Suspension Clause).

20 9. This Court may grant relief pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2241, the
21 Declaratory Judgment Act, 28 U.S.C. § 2201 *et seq.*, and the All Writs Act, 28
22 U.S.C. § 1651.
23
24

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24

VENUE

10. Pursuant to *Braden v. 30th Judicial Circuit Court of Kentucky*, 410 U.S. 484, 493- 500 (1973), venue lies with the district court having jurisdiction over the custodian of the detainee. In the case at hand, venue is proper with the United States District Court for the Middle District of Georgia, the judicial district encompassing the Stewart Detention Center in Lumpkin, Georgia in Stewart County, Georgia.

11. Venue is also properly in this Court pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(e) because Respondents are employees, officers, and agencies of the United States, and because a substantial part of the events or omissions giving rise to the claims occurred in the Middle District of Georgia.

REQUIREMENTS OF 28 U.S.C. § 2243

12. The Court must grant the petition for writ of habeas corpus or order Respondents 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.*

13. Habeas corpus is “perhaps the most important writ known to the constitutional law . . . affording as it does a *swift* and imperative remedy in all

1 cases of illegal restraint or confinement.” *Fay v. Noia*, 372 U.S. 391, 400 (1963)
2 (emphasis added).

3 **PARTIES**

4
5 14. Petitioner Uvaldo Chun Domingo is alleged to be a citizen of the
6 Guatemala who entered the United States at an unknown location on an unknown
7 date. Petitioner encountered immigration officials in or around 2018 or 2019 and
8 was detained but subsequently released. Petitioner was issued a Notice to Appear
9 charging him as having entered the United States without admission or parole but
10 those proceedings were dismissed by the immigration judge in 2024. On or about
11 August 29, 2025, Petitioner was placed back in removal proceedings. Petitioner is
12 currently detained at the Stewart Detention Center in the custody, and under the
13 direct control, of Respondents and their agents. Petitioner has been in immigration
14 detention since February 2025. After arresting Petitioner, ICE did not set bond.

15
16 15. Respondent Jason Streeval is employed by CoreCivic as Warden of
17 the Stewart Detention Center where Petitioner is detained. He has immediate
18 physical custody of Petitioner. He is sued in his official capacity.

19
20 16. Respondent LaDeon Francis is the Director of the Atlanta Field
21 Office of ICE’s Enforcement and Removal Operations division. As such, LaDeon
22 Francis is Petitioner’s immediate custodian and is responsible for Petitioner’s
23 detention and removal. He is named in his official capacity.
24

1 21. Second, the INA provides for mandatory detention of noncitizens
2 subject to expedited removal under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1) and for other recent
3 arrivals seeking admission referred to under § 1225(b)(2).
4

5 22. Last, the INA also provides for detention of noncitizens who have
6 been ordered removed, including individuals in withholding-only proceedings, *see*
7 8 U.S.C. § 1231(a)–(b).

8 23. This case concerns the detention provisions at §§ 1226(a) and
9 1225(b)(2).

10 24. The detention provisions at § 1226(a) and § 1225(b)(2) were enacted
11 as part of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act
12 (IIRIRA) of 1996, Pub. L. No. 104–208, Div. C, §§ 302–03, 110 Stat. 3009-546,
13 3009–582 to 3009–583, 3009–585. Section 1226(a) was most recently amended
14 earlier this year by the Laken Riley Act, Pub. L. No. 119-1, 139 Stat. 3 (2025).
15

16 25. Following the enactment of the IIRIRA, EOIR drafted new
17 regulations explaining that, in general, people who entered the country without
18 inspection were not considered detained under § 1225 and that they were instead
19 detained under § 1226(a). *See* Inspection and Expedited Removal of Aliens;
20 Detention and Removal of Aliens; Conduct of Removal Proceedings; Asylum
21 Procedures, 62 Fed. Reg. 10312, 10323 (Mar. 6, 1997).
22
23
24

1 26. Thus, in the decades that followed, most people who entered without
2 inspection and were placed in standard removal proceedings received bond
3 hearings, unless their criminal history rendered them ineligible pursuant to 8
4 U.S.C. § 1226(c). That practice was consistent with many more decades of prior
5 practice, in which noncitizens who were not deemed “arriving” were entitled to a
6 custody hearing before an Immigration Judge or other hearing officer. *See* 8 U.S.C.
7 § 1252(a) (1994); *see also* H.R. Rep. No. 104-469, pt. 1, at 229 (1996) (noting that
8 § 1226(a) simply “restates” the detention authority previously found at § 1252(a)).
9

10 27. On July 8, 2025, ICE, “in coordination with” DOJ, announced a new
11 policy that rejected well-established understanding of the statutory framework and
12 reversed decades of practice.
13

14 28. The new policy, entitled “Interim Guidance Regarding Detention
15 Authority for Applicants for Admission,”¹ claims that all persons who entered the
16 United States without inspection shall now be subject to a mandatory detention
17 provision under § 1225(b)(2)(A). This interpretation of the statute applies
18 regardless of when a person is apprehended and affects those who have resided in
19 the United States for months, years, and even decades.
20

21
22
23
24

¹ Available at <https://www.aila.org/library/ice-memo-interim-guidance-regarding-detention-authority-for-applicants-for-admission>.

1 29. On September 5, 2025, the BIA adopted this same position in a
2 published decision, *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*. There, the Board held that all
3 noncitizens who entered the United States without admission or parole are subject
4 to mandatory detention under § 1225(b)(2)(A) and are therefore ineligible for bond
5 hearings.
6

7 30. Since Respondents adopted their new policies, dozens of federal
8 courts have rejected their new interpretation of the INA's detention authorities.
9 Indeed, this Court has followed suit in numerous recent decisions, ultimately
10 issuing a standing order authorizing the Magistrate Judges to issue orders granting
11 petitions for writs of habeas corpus so long as they fall within the parameters of
12 *J.A.M. v. Streeval*, No. 4:25-CV-342-CDL, 2025 WL 3050094 (M.D. Ga. Nov. 1,
13 2025) and *P.R.S. v. Streeval*, No. 4:25-cv-330-CDL, 2025 WL 3269947 (M.D. Ga.
14 Nov. 24, 2025).
15

16 31. Even before ICE or the BIA introduced these nationwide policies,
17 Immigration Judges in the Tacoma, Washington, immigration court stopped
18 providing bond hearings for persons who entered the United States without
19 inspection and who have since resided here. There, the U.S. District Court in the
20 Western District of Washington found that such a reading of the INA is likely
21 unlawful and that § 1226(a), not § 1225(b), applies to noncitizens who are not
22
23
24

1 apprehended upon arrival to the United States. *Rodriguez Vazquez v. Bostock*, 779
2 F. Supp. 3d 1239 (W.D. Wash. 2025).

3
4 32. Subsequently, several courts have adopted the same reading of the
5 INA's detention authorities and rejected ICE and EOIR's new interpretation. Most
6 notably, the Central District of California declared that indefinite detention of
7 individuals such as Plaintiff is unlawful; and vacated the underlying DHS Policy
8 that the Government relied on to continue detaining individuals like Plaintiff. *See*
9 *Maldonado Bautista v. Santacruz*, No. 5:25-CV-01873-SSS-BFM, --- F. Supp. 3d -
10 ---, 2025 WL 3289861 (C.D. Cal. Nov. 20, 2025). Then, on February 18, 2026,
11 District Court Judge Sunshine Suzanne Sykes of the Central District of California
12 granted a motion to enforce its previous decision and further issued an order
13 vacating the Board of Immigration Appeal's decision in *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*.
14 *See Maldonado Bautista v. Santacruz*, No. 25-cv-01873-SSS-BFM, 2026 WL
15 468284 (C.D. Cal. Feb. 18, 2026). Petitioner filed a motion for bond before the
16 Stewart Immigration Court arguing that Petitioner is a class member of *Maldonado*
17 *Bautista* and the hearing was scheduled for March 11, 2025. Unfortunately, the
18 Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals temporarily stayed the district court's 12/18/25
19 declaratory judgment and 2/18/26 order pending a ruling on the government's
20 emergency motion for a stay pending appeal.
21
22
23
24

1 33. Courts have uniformly rejected DHS’s and EOIR’s new interpretation
2 because it defies the INA. As the *Maldonado Bautista* court and others have
3 explained, the plain text of the statutory provisions demonstrates that § 1226(a),
4 not § 1225(b), applies to people like Petitioner.
5

6 34. Section 1226(a) applies by default to all persons “pending a decision
7 on whether the [noncitizen] is to be removed from the United States.” These
8 removal hearings are held under § 1229a, to “decid[e] the inadmissibility or
9 deportability of a[] [noncitizen].”
10

11 35. The text of § 1226 also explicitly applies to people charged as being
12 inadmissible. *See* 8 U.S.C. § 1226(c)(1)(E). Subparagraph (E)’s reference to such
13 people makes clear that, by default, such people are afforded a bond hearing under
14 subsection (a). As the *Rodriguez Vazquez* court explained, “[w]hen Congress
15 creates ‘specific exceptions’ to a statute’s applicability, it ‘proves’ that absent
16 those exceptions, the statute generally applies.” *Rodriguez Vazquez*, 779 F. Supp.
17 3d at 1257 (citing *Shady Grove Orthopedic Assocs., P.A. v. Allstate Ins. Co.*, 559
18 U.S. 393, 400 (2010)); *see also* *Gomes*, 2025 WL 1869299, at *7.
19

20 36. Section 1226 therefore leaves no doubt that it applies to people who
21 face charges of being inadmissible to the United States.

22 37. By contrast, § 1225(b) applies to people arriving at U.S. ports of entry
23 or who recently entered the United States. The statute’s entire framework is
24

1 premised on inspections at the border of people who are “seeking admission” to the
2 United States. 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)(A). Indeed, the Supreme Court has explained
3 that this mandatory detention scheme applies “at the Nation’s borders and ports of
4 entry, where the Government must determine whether a[] [noncitizen] seeking to
5 enter the country is admissible.” *Jennings v. Rodriguez*, 583 U.S. 281, 287 (2018).
6 However, such class of individuals is further distinguishable from those who were
7 apprehended at or near the border and close in time to their entry, were released on
8 recognizance, and then were re-detained by immigration authorities after residing
9 in the United States.
10

11 38. Accordingly, the detention provision of § 1225(b)(2)(A) does not
12 apply to people like Petitioner, who have already entered and were residing in the
13 United States at the time they were apprehended.
14

15 **FACTS**

16
17 39. Petitioner has resided in the United States since approximately 2018
18 and lives in Cedartown, Georgia.

19 40. Petitioner is dating U.S. citizen Belen Trejo Cruz – they have been
20 together for two years and live together with her children in the same household in
21 Cedartown, Georgia. They plan to marry in the near future.

22 41. Petitioner is prima facie eligible for relief from removal by filing
23 Form EOIR-42B Cancellation of Removal for Certain Nonpermanent Residents.
24

1 42. Petitioner was detained in or around the end of 2018 or beginning of
2 2019. He was subsequently released on his own recognizance. A Notice to Appear
3 was created placing Petitioner into removal proceedings pursuant to 8 U.S.C.
4 § 1229a.
5

6 43. According to Petitioner, on February 17, 2026, he was pulled over by
7 ICE and asked to present his documents; he provided his driver's license and was
8 subsequently detained. Petitioner is now detained by DHS at the Stewart Detention
9 Center in Lumpkin, Georgia.

10 44. The Petitioner maintains a fixed address as he lives with his partner
11 and her children in Cedartown, Georgia. Petitioner has significant ties to the
12 community and is not a flight risk.
13

14 45. To the knowledge of undersigned counsel, Petitioner has not been
15 arrested for any dangerous or violent criminal violations. As such, Petitioner is not
16 a danger to the community.
17

18 46. Following Petitioner's arrest and transfer to the Stewart Detention
19 Center, ICE issued a custody determination to continue Petitioner's detention
20 without an opportunity to post bond or be released on other conditions.

21 47. Presently in practice, following grants of habeas relief, custody
22 redetermination proceedings frequently fail to provide the individualized analysis
23 contemplated by the Court's order, instead resulting in summary denials based on
24

1 generalized findings of flight risk. Without relief from this court, specifically in the
2 form of immediate release as requested, Petitioner faces the prospect of months, or
3 even years, in immigration custody, separated from his family and community.
4

5 CLAIMS FOR RELIEF

6 COUNT I

7 **Violation of the Immigration and Nationality Act**

8
9 48. Petitioner incorporates by reference the allegations of fact set forth in
10 the preceding paragraphs.

11 49. The mandatory detention provision at 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2) does not
12 apply to all noncitizens residing in the United States who are subject to the grounds
13 of inadmissibility. As relevant here, it does not apply to those who previously
14 entered the country and have been residing in the United States for years prior to
15 being apprehended and placed in removal proceedings by Respondents. Such
16 noncitizens are detained under § 1226(a), unless they are subject to § 1225(b)(1), §
17 1226(c), or § 1231.
18

19 50. The application of § 1225(b)(2) to Petitioner unlawfully mandates his
20 continued detention and violates the INA.
21
22
23
24

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24

COUNT II

Violation of the Bond Regulations

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

52. 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 Immigration Judges under 8 U.S.C. § 1226 and its implementing regulations.

53. Nonetheless, EOIR has a policy and practice of applying § 1225(b)(2) to individuals like Petitioner.

54. 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.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24

COUNT III

Violation of Fifth Amendment Right to Due Process

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

56. 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).

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

58. The government’s detention of Petitioner without a custody redetermination hearing to determine whether he is a flight risk or danger to others violates his right to due process.

59. Petitioner has a right to a fair and impartial bond hearing.

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 Middle District Court of Georgia while this habeas petition is pending;

- 1 c. Issue an Order to Show Cause ordering Respondents to show cause
2 why this Petition should not be granted within three days;
3
4 d. Issue a Writ of Habeas Corpus requiring that Respondents
5 immediately release Petitioner; or, in the alternative, release Petitioner
6 if they do not provide Petitioner with a bond hearing pursuant to 8
7 U.S.C. § 1226(a) within seven days of the order;
8
9 e. Declare that Petitioner’s detention is unlawful.
10
11 f. Award Petitioner attorney’s fees and costs under the Equal Access to
12 Justice Act (“EAJA”), as amended, 28 U.S.C. § 2412, and on any
13 other basis justified under law; and
14
15 g. Grant any other and further relief that this Court deems just and
16 proper.

17 It is RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED this 11th day of March, 2026.

18 The Kennedy Immigration Firm, LLC
19 /s/Nikita B. Modi
20 Nikita B. Modi, Esq.
21 *Attorney for Petitioner*
22 GA Bar #440389
23 Address: 1899 Powers Ferry Road, Suite 445
24 Atlanta, GA 30339
Tel: (770) 303-8212
Email: nikita@kennedyimmigrationfirm.com