

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF GEORGIA
WAYCROSS DIVISION

ANGEL DANIEL PEÑATE RIVERA,

A 

Petitioner,

v.

WARDEN, FOLKSTON ICE
PROCESSING CENTER; KRISTI
NOEM, Secretary, U.S. Department of
Homeland Security.

Respondents.

Case No. CV 526-317

**PETITION FOR WRIT OF
HABEAS CORPUS**

INTRODUCTION

1. Petitioner, Angel Daniel Peñate Rivera, respectfully petitions this Court for a writ of habeas corpus to challenge his unlawful detention by the Department of Homeland Security.

2. Petitioner has been detained since February 20, 2026 at the Folkston ICE Processing Center. DHS has refused to provide him any bond hearing based on a recently adopted legal interpretation asserting that individuals who entered the United States without inspection must be detained under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2) and are therefore categorically ineligible for release on bond.

3. That interpretation is contrary to the text of the Immigration and Nationality Act, decades of agency practice, and recent federal court decisions—including decisions of this Court—holding that individuals apprehended inside the United States years after entry are detained under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) and are entitled to individualized custody determinations.

4. Because immigration judges are refusing to exercise jurisdiction over custody determinations based on the Board of Immigration Appeals' decision in *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, Petitioner has no administrative avenue to challenge his detention.

5. Habeas corpus therefore provides the only meaningful mechanism to vindicate Petitioner's statutory and constitutional rights. Petitioner respectfully

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2 requests that this Court order his immediate release, or in the alternative, set a
3 reasonable bond, or at minimum, order a constitutionally compliant bond hearing.

4 JURISDICTION

5 6. Petitioner is in the physical custody of Respondents. Petitioner is
6 detained at the Folkston Annex ICE Processing Center located in Folkston, Georgia.

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

11 8. This Court may grant relief pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2241, the
12 Declaratory Judgment Act, 28 U.S.C. § 2201 *et seq.*, and the All Writs Act, 28 U.S.C.
13 § 1651.

14 VENUE

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16 9. Pursuant to *Braden v. 30th Judicial Circuit Court of Kentucky*, 410 U.S.
17 484, 493- 500 (1973), venue lies in the United States District Court for the Southern
18 District of Georgia, the judicial district in which Petitioner currently is detained.

19 10. Venue is also properly in this Court pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(e)
20 because Respondent is employee, officer, and agency of the United States, and
21 because a substantial part of the events or omissions giving rise to the claims
22 occurred in the Southern District of Georgia.
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REQUIREMENTS OF 28 U.S.C. § 2243

11. The Court must grant the petition for writ of habeas corpus or order Respondent 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, Respondent must file a return “within three days unless for good cause additional time, not exceeding twenty days, is allowed.” *Id.*

12. Habeas corpus is “perhaps the most important writ known to the constitutional law . . . affording as it does a *swift* and imperative remedy in all cases of illegal restraint or confinement.” *Fay v. Noia*, 372 U.S. 391, 400 (1963) (emphasis added). “The application for the writ usurps the attention and displaces the calendar of the judge or justice who entertains it and receives prompt action from him within the four corners of the application.” *Yong v. I.N.S.*, 208 F.3d 1116, 1120 (9th Cir. 2000) (citation omitted).

PARTIES

13. Petitioner, Angel Daniel Peñate Rivera is native and citizen of El Salvador who has been in immigration detention since February 20, 2026. After arresting Petitioner, ICE did not set bond and Petitioner is unable to obtain review of his custody by an IJ, pursuant to the Board’s decision in *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, 29 I. & N. Dec. 216 (BIA 2025).

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2 14. Respondent, the Warden of the Folkston ICE Processing Center, is
3 employed by Core Civic Group. He has immediate physical custody of Petitioner.
4 He is sued in his official capacity.

5 15. Respondent Kristi Noem is the Secretary of the Department of
6 Homeland Security. She is responsible for the implementation and enforcement of
7 the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), and oversees ICE, which is responsible
8 for Petitioner's detention. Ms. Noem has ultimate custodial authority over Petitioner
9 and is sued in her official capacity.
10

11 **LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

12 16. The Immigration and Nationality Act ("INA") establishes several
13 detention schemes for noncitizens in removal proceedings.
14

15 17. First, 8 U.S.C. § 1226 governs the detention of individuals placed in
16 standard removal proceedings under § 1229a. Noncitizens detained under § 1226(a)
17 are generally entitled to a custody redetermination before an Immigration Judge
18 unless they fall into the narrow mandatory-detention categories of § 1226(c).

19 18. Second, 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1)–(2) provides for mandatory detention of
20 certain individuals seeking admission who are inspected at the border and
21 determined not "clearly and beyond a doubt entitled to be admitted." This detention
22 framework is tied to the process of arrival inspection performed by an examining
23 immigration officer.
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2 19. Third, 8 U.S.C. § 1231 governs detention of individuals who are subject
3 to final orders of removal.

4 20. This case turns on the proper application of § 1226(a) versus §
5 1225(b)(2) for a noncitizen like Petitioner—an individual who entered the United
6 States years ago, resided here, and was apprehended within the interior, not at a port
7 of entry.

8
9 21. Historically, individuals who entered without inspection and were later
10 placed in § 1229a removal proceedings were treated as detained under § 1226, not §
11 1225. EOIR regulations following IIRIRA confirm that such individuals were not
12 considered “arriving” and therefore were eligible for bond hearings. *See* 62 Fed. Reg.
13 10312, 10323 (Mar. 6, 1997).

14
15 22. For decades, consistent with this regulatory framework and prior
16 immigration law, noncitizens who entered without inspection and were apprehended
17 inside the United States received custody redeterminations unless subject to §
18 1226(c). *See* former 8 U.S.C. § 1252(a) (1994); H.R. Rep. No. 104-469, pt. 1, at 229
19 (1996).

20 **The Government’s Recent Policy Shift**

21
22 23. On July 8, 2025, ICE— “in coordination with” DOJ—issued guidance
23 declaring that all individuals who entered without inspection must now be detained
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2 under § 1225(b)(2)(A), regardless of when they entered the United States or whether
3 they were ever inspected by an immigration officer.

4 24. On September 5, 2025, the BIA adopted this new position in *Matter of*
5 *Yajure Hurtado*, 29 I. & N. Dec. 216 (BIA 2025), holding that any noncitizen who
6 entered without admission is subject to § 1225(b)(2)(A) and categorically barred
7 from a bond hearing.
8

9 **This Court Has Rejected Respondents' Interpretation**

10 25. This Court has already rejected the government's reading of § 1225
11 (b)(2). In *Villa v. Normand*, No. 5:25-cv-89, 2025 WL 3095969 *(S.D. Ga. Nov. 4,
12 2025), the Court held that § 1225(b)(2) applies only to noncitizens who are "seeking
13 admission" in the context of an arrival inspection by an examining immigration
14 officer.
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16 26. The Court explained that "seeking admission" requires an affirmative
17 act at or near the time of arrival to obtain legal entry, coupled with contemporaneous
18 inspection. The Court rejected DHS's argument that individuals apprehended years
19 after entering the United States may be treated as if they were seeking admission. *Id.*
20 at 3.
21

22 27. Applying that interpretation, the Court concluded that § 1225(b)(2)
23 does not apply to individuals like Petitioner, whose alleged inadmissibility is based
24 on conduct occurring long after entry and not in connection with an arrival inspection.

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2 28. Despite this Court's binding precedent, the Stewart Immigration Court
3 continues to decline jurisdiction over custody redeterminations for noncitizens like
4 Petitioner, based on the BIA's erroneous decision in *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*.

5 29. Because Petitioner has no administrative avenue to challenge his
6 custody, habeas corpus is the only remedy capable of addressing the ongoing
7 violation of federal law
8

9 **FACTUAL BACKGROUND**

10 30. Petitioner is a native and citizen of El Salvador who entered the United
11 States approximately eight (8) years ago without inspection (EWI). Since his arrival,
12 Petitioner has remained continuously in the United States and has established his life
13 in this country. During this time, he has developed strong ties to his community and
14 has worked to support himself and his family. Petitioner has not departed the United
15 States since his entry and has maintained continuous physical presence in the country.
16

17 31. Petitioner is the father of one (1) United States citizen children age two
18 years old. Petitioner has been a constant and stabilizing presence in his children's
19 lives and has provided consistent financial, emotional, and parental support.
20

21 32. During his time in the United States, Petitioner has worked consistently
22 in the construction industry, including remodeling and home improvement projects.
23 He has been employed by various companies and has worked at multiple job sites,
24 supporting himself and his family through honest labor. Through his steady

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2 employment over the years, Petitioner has demonstrated a strong work ethic and a
3 commitment to contributing positively to his community.

4 33. Petitioner has had very limited contact with the criminal justice system.
5 The only incident on his record arose from a misunderstanding involving an
6 argument with a girlfriend with whom he was living at the time. During the
7 disagreement, she became upset and someone contacted the police. By the time law
8 enforcement arrived, Petitioner was no longer present at the residence. Nevertheless,
9 Petitioner later voluntarily presented himself to the police to address the situation
10 and was subsequently arrested. The matter was ultimately dismissed, as the
11 prosecution could not prove the case beyond a reasonable doubt. This isolated
12 incident did not involve any allegations of violence resulting in harm to others and
13 does not reflect a pattern of criminal conduct.
14
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16 34. Petitioner poses no flight risk and no danger to the community. His
17 years of residence in the United States, provider of U.S. citizen children and
18 consistent tax compliance, overwhelmingly demonstrate that he is an appropriate
19 candidate for release on bond under INA § 236(a).
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21 35. Petitioner's continued detention violates due process because it is based
22 on an unlawful application of INA § 235 to an individual who was apprehended
23 inside the United States long after entry and who is not seeking admission. Petitioner
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2 therefore falls squarely within the discretionary detention framework of INA §
3 236(a), which entitles him to an individualized bond hearing.

4 36. By continuing to detain Petitioner without bond while his immigration
5 case remains pending—despite his extensive equities, serious family hardship, and
6 lack of any disqualifying factors—Respondents are subjecting him to prolonged and
7 arbitrary imprisonment in violation of the Fifth Amendment’s Due Process Clause,
8 thereby necessitating habeas relief.
9

10 37. Petitioner’s continued detention also violates due process because it is
11 based on an unlawful statutory interpretation already rejected by this Court and by a
12 certified nationwide class action. In *Villa v. Normand*, this Court held that 8 U.S.C.
13 § 1225(b)(2) applies only when a noncitizen is “seeking admission” in the context
14 of an arrival inspection by an examining immigration officer. Petitioner, however,
15 was apprehended inside the United States years after his entry and therefore falls
16 squarely within the detention framework of § 1226(a), which entitles him to a bond
17 hearing.
18

19 38. Because Petitioner is a long-term resident of the United States with
20 more than five years of continuous presence, deep family and community ties, his
21 continued and prolonged detention without any opportunity for individualized
22 custody review violates the fundamental requirements of due process and
23 underscores the urgent necessity of habeas relief
24

CLAIMS FOR RELIEF

COUNT I

Violation of the INA

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

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

41. The application of § 1225(b)(2) to Petitioner unlawfully mandates his continued detention and violates the INA.

COUNT II

Violation of the Bond Regulations

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

43. 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

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2 Detention of [Noncitizens],” the agencies explained that “[d]espite being applicants
3 for admission, [noncitizens] who are present without having been admitted or
4 paroled (formerly referred to as [noncitizens] who entered without inspection) will
5 be eligible for bond and bond redetermination.” 62 Fed. Reg. at 10323 (emphasis
6 added). The agencies thus made clear that individuals who had entered without
7 inspection were eligible for consideration for bond and bond hearings before IJs
8 under 8 U.S.C. § 1226 and its implementing regulations.
9

10 44. Nonetheless, pursuant to *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, EOIR has a policy
11 and practice of applying § 1225(b)(2) to individual like Petitioner.

12 45. The application of § 1225(b)(2) to Petitioner unlawfully mandates his
13 continued detention and violates 8 C.F.R. §§ 236.1, 1236.1, and 1003.19
14

15 **COUNT III**
16 **Violation of Due Process**

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

19 47. The government may not deprive a person of life, liberty, or property
20 without due process of law. U.S. Const. amend. V. “Freedom from imprisonment—
21 from government custody, detention, or other forms of physical restraint—lies at the
22 heart of the liberty that the Clause protects.” *Zadvydas v. Davis*, 533 U.S. 678, 690
23 (2001).
24

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2 48. Petitioner has a fundamental interest in liberty and being free from
3 official restraint.

4 49. The government's detention of Petitioner without a bond
5 redetermination hearing to determine whether he is a flight risk or danger to others
6 violates his right to due process.

7 REMEDY

8
9 50. The equitable and flexible nature of habeas corpus provides this Court
10 with broad authority to craft an appropriate remedy that fully addresses the statutory
11 and constitutional violations presented in this case. Habeas corpus is fundamentally
12 an equitable remedy, and courts exercising habeas jurisdiction possess significant
13 discretion to fashion relief that effectively remedies unlawful detention. *See Velasco*
14 *Lopez v. Decker*, 978 F.3d 842, 855 (2d Cir. 2020); *Schlup v. Delo*, 513 U.S. 298,
15 319 (1995).

16
17 51. The habeas statute further directs that courts shall “dispose of the matter
18 as law and justice require.” 28 U.S.C. § 2243. The Supreme Court has emphasized
19 that the statute does not limit the relief that may be granted in habeas proceedings
20 and that federal courts retain broad remedial authority when unlawful detention is
21 established. *Carafas v. LaVallee*, 391 U.S. 234, 238 (1968).

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2 52. Given the statutory and constitutional violations presented here, the
3 Court should exercise its equitable authority to order relief that effectively remedies
4 Petitioner's unlawful detention.

5 **Immediate Release**

6 53. Release from unlawful custody is the traditional and most appropriate
7 remedy in habeas proceedings. The Supreme Court has long recognized that the
8 central function of the writ of habeas corpus is to secure release from illegal
9 detention. *Preiser v. Rodriguez*, 411 U.S. 475, 484 (1973).
10

11 54. Federal courts across the country have repeatedly ordered immediate
12 release where immigration detention was imposed in violation of federal law or the
13 Constitution. Numerous courts have recognized that release is particularly
14 appropriate where detention rests on an unlawful statutory interpretation or where
15 the detainee has been deprived of meaningful procedural safeguards. Courts ordering
16 release in similar immigration detention cases include *Munoz Materano v. Arteta*,
17 2025 WL 2630826 (S.D.N.Y. Sept. 12, 2025); *Chipantiza-Sisalema v. Francis*, 2025
18 WL 1927931 (S.D.N.Y. July 13, 2025); *Rueda Torres v. Francis*, 2025 WL 3168759
19 (S.D.N.Y. Nov. 13, 2025); *Cifuentes v. Soto*, 2025 WL 3771380 (D.N.J. Dec. 31,
20 2025); *Gonzalez Centeno v. Lowe*, 2026 WL 94642 (M.D. Pa. Jan. 13, 2026); *Feisal*
21 *O. v. Noem*, 2026 WL 92857 (D. Minn. Jan. 13, 2026); *Garcia Covarrubias v.*
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2 *Holston*, 2026 WL 25970 (D. Nev. Jan. 5, 2026); and *Kenzhebaev v. Noem*, 2025
3 WL 3737975 (W.D. Mich. Dec. 29, 2025).

4 55. Courts have further recognized that ordering a bond hearing may not
5 adequately remedy constitutional violations where the detainee has already been
6 deprived of liberty without due process. In *Qasemi v. Francis*, 2025 WL 3654098
7 (S.D.N.Y. Dec. 17, 2025), the court concluded that a bond hearing would not
8 sufficiently remedy the due process violation caused by detention without lawful
9 procedures. Similarly, in *Noyola v. Bondi*, 2026 WL 607266 (W.D. Tex. Mar. 4,
10 2026), the court determined that immediate release was the appropriate remedy for
11 unlawful immigration detention.
12

13 56. Because Petitioner's detention rests on an unlawful interpretation of the
14 Immigration and Nationality Act and because he has been denied any meaningful
15 opportunity to challenge his custody, immediate release is the most appropriate and
16 effective remedy.
17

18 **Custody Determination by the Habeas Court**

19 57. If the Court declines to order immediate release, the Court possesses
20 authority to conduct its own custody determination within this habeas proceeding.
21 Federal courts exercising habeas jurisdiction have repeatedly recognized their
22 authority to determine whether continued detention is justified and to set appropriate
23 conditions of release. Courts have explained that conducting a custody determination
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2 within the habeas proceeding may be more efficient and may better ensure
3 compliance with constitutional requirements than delegating the determination back
4 to the immigration court system. See *L.G.M. v. LaRocco*, 788 F. Supp. 3d 401
5 (E.D.N.Y. 2025); *Flores-Powell v. Chadbourne*, 677 F. Supp. 2d 474 (D. Mass.
6 2010); and *Ramirez v. Watkins*, 2010 WL 6269226 (S.D. Tex. 2010).

7
8 58. Under this approach, the Court may determine whether the government
9 can demonstrate that continued detention is justified based on danger to the
10 community or risk of flight. If the government cannot meet its burden, the Court may
11 order Petitioner released on recognizance or set a reasonable bond consistent with
12 Petitioner's financial circumstances.

13 **Ineffectiveness of Immigration Court Bond Hearings**

14 Although courts sometimes order immigration judges to conduct bond
15 hearings, recent litigation across the country demonstrates that such hearings
16 frequently fail to remedy unlawful detention. Federal courts have repeatedly
17 documented systemic problems that undermine the effectiveness of such hearings.
18 One recurring problem arises when the Department of Homeland Security appeals
19 an immigration judge's bond grant and invokes the automatic stay regulation, which
20 prevents release even after a judge has determined that bond is appropriate.
21 Numerous courts have concluded that this practice raises serious due process
22 concerns. See *Merchan-Pacheco v. Noem*, 2026 WL 88526 (D. Colo. Jan. 12, 2026);
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2 *M.P.L. v. Arteta*, 2025 WL 3288354 (S.D.N.Y. Nov. 25, 2025); and *Garvey v. Noem*,
3 2026 WL 612302 (W.D. Mo. Mar. 4, 2026).

4 Courts have also documented cases in which immigration authorities imposed
5 electronic monitoring or other restrictive conditions of release that were never
6 ordered by any judge. Federal courts have repeatedly required such conditions to be
7 removed. See *Gonzalez Centeno v. Lowe*, 2026 WL 196513 (M.D. Pa. Jan. 26,
8 2026); *Diahn v. Lowe*, 2026 WL 84576 (M.D. Pa. Jan. 12, 2026); and *Montes*
9 *Aguillon v. Bondi*, 2026 WL 531899 (W.D. Tex. Feb. 25, 2026).

11 Courts have additionally documented repeated failures to conduct timely bond
12 hearings after federal courts ordered them. In *Bautista v. Santacruz*, the court
13 observed that hundreds of detainees were forced to file individual habeas petitions
14 because the government failed to provide bond hearings ordered in prior litigation.
15 These enforcement problems illustrate why immediate release or a custody
16 determination by the habeas court is often the most effective remedy for unlawful
17 immigration detention.
18

19 **Safeguards If a Bond Hearing Is Ordered**

20 If the Court determines that an immigration judge should conduct a bond
21 hearing, that hearing must include procedural safeguards sufficient to satisfy due
22 process. Courts have widely recognized that the government must bear the burden
23 of justifying continued detention in court-ordered bond hearings. See *Hernandez-*
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2 *Fernandez v. Lyons*, 2025 WL 2976923 (W.D. Tex. Oct. 21, 2025); *Gomez v. Olson*,
3 2025 WL 3768242 (N.D. Ill. Dec. 31, 2025).

4 Courts have further required that the government demonstrate danger or risk
5 of flight by clear and convincing evidence, that the immigration judge consider the
6 detainee's ability to pay any bond amount, and that the government be prohibited
7 from invoking the automatic stay regulation if bond is granted. *See Lopez-Romero*
8 *v. Lyons*, 2026 WL 92873 (D.N.M. Jan. 13, 2026); *Perez-Regalado v. Feeley*, 2026
9 WL 36112 (D. Nev. Jan. 6, 2026).

11 These safeguards ensure that any custody determination meaningfully
12 protects the constitutional liberty interests at stake.

13 **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

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15 WHEREFORE, Petitioner prays that this Court grant the following relief:

- 16 a. Assume jurisdiction over this matter;
- 17 b. Order that Petitioner shall not be transferred outside the Southern
18 District of Georgia while this habeas petition is pending;
- 19 c. Issue an Order to Show Cause ordering Respondents to show cause why
20 this Petition should not be granted within three days;
- 21 d. Issue a Writ of Habeas Corpus requiring that Respondents release
22 Petitioner or, in the alternative, set a reasonable bond or order a
constitutionally compliant bond hearing
- 23 e. Declare that Petitioner's detention is unlawful;
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2 f. Award Petitioner attorney's fees and costs under the Equal Access to
3 Justice Act ("EAJA"), as amended, 28 U.S.C. § 2412, and on any other
basis justified under law; and

4 g. Grant any other and further relief that this Court deems just and proper.

5 DATED this 12th day of March, 2026.
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10 ZAMBRANO LAW,

11 /s/ Shirley C. Zambrano

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Counsel for Petitioner

VERIFICATION PURSUANT TO 28 U.S.C. 2242

I represent Petitioner, Mr. Angel Daniel Peñate Rivera, and submit this verification on his behalf. I hereby verify that the factual statements made in the foregoing Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus are true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

DATED this 12th day of March, 2026.

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