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5 **UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT**
6 **SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF GEORGIA**
7 **WAYCROSS DIVISION**

8 **ELMER VIRGILIO TURCIOS CACERES,**

9 **Petitioner,**

10 **v.**

11 **Warden of Folkston ICE Processing Center (Annex)**
12 **in their official capacity; KRISTEN SULLIVAN,**
13 **Field Office Director of Enforcement and Removal**
14 **Operations, Atlanta Field Office, Immigration and**
15 **Customs Enforcement; TODD M. LYONS, Acting**
16 **Director, U.S. Immigrations & Customs**
17 **Enforcement; KRISTI NOEM, Secretary, U.S.**
18 **Department of Homeland Security; U.S.**
19 **Department of Homeland Security; PAMELA**
20 **BONDI, U.S. Attorney General; and DAREN K.**
21 **MARGOLIN, Director, Executive Office for**
22 **Immigration Review,**

23 **Respondents.**
24

Case No.: CV 526-320

VERIFIED PETITION
FOR WRIT OF
HABEAS CORPUS
UNDER 28 U.S.C. § 2241

INTRODUCTION

1. Petitioner, Elmer Virgilio Turcios Caceres , brings this petition for a writ of habeas corpus to seek enforcement of Petitioner's rights as a member of the Bond Eligible Class certified in *Maldonado Bautista v. Santacruz*, No. 5:25-CV-01873-SSS-BFM (C.D. Cal.). Petitioner is in the physical custody of Respondents at the Folkston Processing Center in Folkston, Georgia. Petitioner now faces unlawful detention because the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) have refused to abide by the declaratory judgment issued on behalf of the certified class in *Maldonado Bautista v. Santacruz*.

2. On November 20, 2025, the district court granted partial summary judgment on behalf of individual plaintiffs and on November 25, 2025, certified a nationwide class and extended declaratory judgment to the certified class. *Maldonado Bautista v. Santacruz*, No. 5:25-CV-01873-SSS-BFM, --- F. Supp. 3d ----, 2025 WL 3289861, at *11 (C.D. Cal. Nov. 20, 2025) (order granting partial summary judgment to named Plaintiffs-Petitioners); *Maldonado Bautista v. Santacruz*, No. 5:25-CV-01873-SSS-BFM, --- F. Supp. 3d ----, 2025 WL 3288403, at *9 (C.D. Cal. Nov. 25, 2025) (order certifying Plaintiffs-Petitioners' proposed nationwide Bond Eligible Class, incorporating and extending declaratory judgment from Order Granting Petitioners' Motion for Partial Summary Judgment).

3. The declaratory judgment held that the Bond Eligible Class members are detained under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), and thus may not be denied consideration for release on bond under § 1225(b)(2)(A). *Maldonado Bautista*, 2025 WL 3289861, at *11.

1 4. Nonetheless, the Executive Office for Immigration Review and its subagency the
2 Immigration Court and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) have blatantly refused to
3 abide by the declaratory relief and have unlawfully ordered that Petitioner be denied the
4 opportunity to be released on bond.

5 5. Petitioner is a member of the Bond Eligible Class, as Petitioner:

6 a. does not have lawful status in the United States and is currently detained
7 at the Folkston ICE Processing Center in Folkston, Georgia;

8 b. was apprehended by immigration authorities on or about January 10,
9 2026;

10 c. entered the United States without being inspected and admitted or paroled,
11 approximately 17 years ago, *cf. id.*; and

12 d. is not detained under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(c), § 1225(b)(1), or § 1231.

13 6. After apprehending Petitioner on or about January 10, 2026, the DHS placed
14 Petitioner in removal proceedings pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1229a. DHS has charged Petitioner as
15 being inadmissible under 8 U.S.C. §§ 1182(a)(6)(A)(i) and 1182(a)(7)(A)(i)(I), as someone who
16 entered the United States without inspection.

17 7. The Court should expeditiously grant this petition.

18 8. Respondents are bound by the judgment in *Maldonado Bautista*, as it has the full
19 “force and effect of a final judgment.” 28 U.S.C. § 2201(a). Nevertheless, Respondents continue
20 to flagrantly defy the judgment in that case and continue to subject Petitioner to unlawful
21 detention despite Petitioner’s clear entitlement to consideration for release on bond as a Bond
22 Eligible Class member.

9. Immigration judges have informed class members in bond hearings that they have been instructed by “leadership” that the declaratory judgment in *Maldonado Bautista* is not controlling, even with respect to class members, and that instead immigration judges remain bound to follow the agency’s prior decision in *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, 29 I. & N. Dec. 216 (BIA 2025).

10. Because Respondents are detaining Petitioner in violation of the declaratory judgment issued in *Maldonado Bautista*, the Court should accordingly order that within one day, Respondent DHS must release Petitioner.

11. Alternatively, the Court should order Petitioner's release unless Respondents provide a bond hearing under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) within seven days.

JURISDICTION

12. Petitioner is in the physical custody of Respondents. Petitioner is detained at the Folkston Processing Center in Folkston, Georgia.

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

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

VENUE

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

16. 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 Southern District of Georgia.

REQUIREMENTS OF 28 U.S.C. § 2243

17. The Court should grant the petition for writ of habeas corpus “forthwith,” as the legal issues have already been resolved for class members in *Maldonado Bautista*.

18. 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

19. Petitioner is a citizen of Honduras who has been in immigration detention since on or about January 10, 2026. After Petitioner was detained by ICE, ICE did not set bond. Petitioner has resided in the United States since 2008.

1 20. Respondent Warden of the Folkston ICE Processing Center (Annex), where Petitioner is
2 detained. The Warden of the Folkston ICE Processing Center (Annex) has immediate physical
3 custody of Petitioner. The Warden of the Folkston ICE Processing Center (Annex) is sued in the
4 Warden's official capacity.

5 21. Respondent Kristen Sullivan is the Acting Director of the Atlanta Field Office of
6 ICE's Enforcement and Removal Operations division. As such, she is a legal custodian of
7 Petitioner, is responsible for Petitioner's detention and removal, and has authority to release her.
8 She is named in her official capacity.

9 22. Respondent Todd M. Lyons is the Acting Director of ICE, which is the federal
10 agency responsible for implementing and enforcing the INA, including the detention and
11 removal of noncitizens. Respondent Lyons has control over the actions of Respondent Sullivan
12 and ICE in general. Respondent Lyons is a legal custodian of Petitioner and is sued in his official
13 capacity.

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

18 24. Respondent Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is the federal agency
19 responsible for implementing and enforcing the INA, including the detention and removal of
20 noncitizens.

21 25. Respondent Pamela Bondi is the Attorney General of the United States. She is
22 responsible for the Department of Justice, of which the Executive Office for Immigration Review
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1 and the immigration court system it operates is a component agency. She is sued in her official
2 capacity.

3 26. Respondent Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) is the federal
4 agency responsible for implementing and enforcing the INA in removal proceedings, including
5 for custody redeterminations in bond hearings.

6 27. Respondent Daren K. Margolin is the Director of EOIR, which is the federal
7 agency responsible for implementing and enforcing the INA in removal proceedings, including
8 for custody redeterminations in bond hearings. Respondent Margolin is sued in his official
9 capacity.

10
11 **CLAIM FOR RELIEF**

12 **Violation of the INA:**

13 **Request for Relief Pursuant to *Maldonado Bautista***

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

16 29. As a member of the Bond Eligible Class, Petitioner is entitled to consideration for
17 release on bond under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a).

18 30. The order granting partial summary judgment in *Maldonado Bautista* holds that
19 Respondents violate the INA in applying the mandatory detention statute at § 1225(b)(2) to class
20 members.

21 31. The order granting class certification in *Maldonado Bautista* further orders that
22 “[w]hen considering this determination with the MSJ Order, the Court extends the same
23 declaratory relief granted to Petitioners to the Bond Eligible Class as a whole.”
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1 32. Respondents are parties to *Maldonado Bautista* and bound by the Court's
2 declaratory judgment, which has the full "force and effect of a final judgment." 28 U.S.C.
3 § 2201(a).

4 33. By denying Petitioner a bond hearing under § 1226(a) and asserting that Petitioner
5 is subject to mandatory detention under § 1225(b)(2), Respondents violate Petitioner's statutory
6 rights under the INA and the Court's judgment in *Maldonado Bautista*.

7 34. Assuming, *arguendo*, that *Maldonado Bautista* does not apply, find that Petitioner
8 is currently detained under § 1226(a) and therefore not subject to mandatory detention as
9 required by § 1225(b)(2). *See J.A.M. v. Streeval*, No. 4:25-CV-342-CDL, 2025 WL 3050094
10 (M.D. Ga. Nov. 1, 2025); *P.R.S. v. Streeval*, No. 4:25-CV-330-CDL, 2025 WL 3269947 (M.D.
11 Ga. Nov. 24, 2025).

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13 **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

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

- 15 a. Assume jurisdiction over this matter;
- 16 b. Issue a writ of habeas corpus requiring that within one day, Respondents release
17 Petitioner;
- 18 c. Alternatively, issue a writ of habeas corpus requiring Respondents to release
19 Petitioner unless they provide a bond hearing under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) within
20 seven days;
- 21 d. Award Petitioner attorney's fees and costs under the Equal Access to Justice Act
22 (EAJA), as amended, 28 U.S.C. § 2412, and on any other basis justified under
23 law; and
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1 e. Grant any other and further relief that this Court deems just and proper.

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3 DATED this 13th of March 2026.

4 *//s/ Elizabeth Hildebrand Matherne*

5 _____
6 Elizabeth Hildebrand Matherne
7 Georgia Bar No. 547425
8 Wannamaker Crimmigration
9 3740 Davinci Court, Suite 150
10 Peachtree Corners, GA 30092
11 Tel.: 470-749-9996
12 Fax: 404-990-4936
13 elizabeth@sternlawfirm.us

14 *Attorney for Petitioner*
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VERIFICATION PURSUANT TO 28 U.S.C. § 2242

I represent Petitioner, Elmer Virgilio Turcios Caceres, and submit this verification on Petitioner's behalf. I 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 13th of March 2026.

Respectfully submitted,

//s// Elizabeth Hildebrand Matherne

Elizabeth Hildebrand Matherne
Georgia Bar No. 547425
Wannamaker Crimmigration
3740 Davinci Court, Suite 150
Peachtree Corners, GA 30092
Tel.: 470-749-9996
Fax: 404-990-4936
elizabeth@sternlawfirm.us