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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
MIDDLE DISTRICT OF GEORGIA  
COLUMBUS DIVISION

IMER LANCERO LOPEZ,  
A#: 

Petitioner,

v.

JASON STREEVAL, Warden of Stewart Detention Center; KRISTEN SULLIVAN, Field Office Director of Enforcement and Removal Operations, Atlanta Field Office, Immigration and Customs Enforcement; TODD M. LYONS, Acting Director, U.S. Immigrations & Customs Enforcement; MARKWAYNE MULLIN, Secretary, U.S. Department of Homeland Security; U.S. Department of Homeland Security; PAMELA BONDI, U.S. Attorney General; and DAREN K. MARGOLIN, Director, Executive Office for Immigration Review,

Respondents.

Case No.:

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

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## INTRODUCTION

1. Petitioner, Imer Lancero Lopez, 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 Stewart Detention Center in Lumpkin, 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 Stewart Detention Center in Lumpkin, Georgia;

8 b. was apprehended by immigration authorities on or about February 24,  
9 2026;

10 c. entered the United States without being inspected and admitted or paroled,  
11 approximately 14 years ago, *cf. id.*; and  
12

13 d. is not detained under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(c), § 1225(b)(1), or § 1231.  
14

15 6. After apprehending Petitioner on or about February 24, 2026, the DHS placed  
16 Petitioner in removal proceedings pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1229a. DHS has charged Petitioner as  
17 being inadmissible under 8 U.S.C. §§ 1182(a)(6)(A)(i) and 1182(a)(7)(A)(i)(I), as someone who  
18 entered the United States without inspection.

19 7. The Court should expeditiously grant this petition.

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

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

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

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

11  
12 **JURISDICTION**

13 12. Petitioner is in the physical custody of Respondents. Petitioner is detained at the  
14 Stewart Detention Center in Lumpkin, Georgia.

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

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

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**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 Middle 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 Middle 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 Guatemala who has been in immigration detention since on or about February 24, 2026. After Petitioner was detained by ICE, ICE did not set bond. Petitioner has resided in the United States since 2012.

1           20.     Respondent Jason Streeval is Warden of the Stewart Detention Center, where  
2     Petitioner is detained. Respondent Streeval has immediate physical custody of Petitioner and he  
3     is sued in his official capacity.

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

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

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

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

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



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).

12  
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  
24

1 e. Grant any other and further relief that this Court deems just and proper.  
2

3 DATED this 26 of March 2026.  
4

5 *//s// Elizabeth Hildebrand Matherne*

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

2 I represent Petitioner, Imer Lancero Lopez, and submit this verification on Petitioner's  
3 behalf. I verify that the factual statements made in the foregoing Petition for Writ of Habeas  
4 Corpus are true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

5 Dated this 26 of March 2026.

6  
7 Respectfully submitted,

8 *//s// Elizabeth Hildebrand Matherne*

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10 \_\_\_\_\_  
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