

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
MIDDLE DISTRICT OF GEORGIA
VALDOSTA DIVISION**

ADRIAN TERRAZAS-HERNANDEZ,

Petitioner,

v.

Civil Action No.

WARDEN, Irwin County Detention Center; KRISTEN SULLIVAN, Acting Field Office Director, Atlanta Field Office; TODD LYONS, Acting Director, United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement; MARKWAYNE MULLIN, Secretary of Department of Homeland Security; and TODD BLANCHE, Acting Attorney General of the United States,

Respondents.

VERIFIED PETITION FOR WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS

Petitioner Adrian Terrazas-Hernandez petitions this Court for a writ of habeas corpus pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2241 to compel his release from custody, as his current civil immigration detention violates the Due Process Clause of the United States Constitution and the Administrative Procedure Act.


JURISDICTION AND VENUE

1. This action arises under the Constitution of the United States and the Immigration and Nationality Act (“INA”), 8 U.S.C. § 1101 *et. seq.*
2. This court has subject matter jurisdiction under 28 U.S.C. §§ 2241 and 1331, and Article I, section 9, clause 2 of the United States Constitution.

3. This Court may grant relief under the habeas corpus statutes, 28 U.S.C. § 2241 *et seq.*, the All Writs Act, 28 U.S.C. § 1651, and the INA, 8 U.S.C. § 1252(e)(2). This Court also has remedial authority under the Declaratory Judgment Act, 28 U.S.C. § 2201 *et seq.*

4. Venue is proper in the United States District Court for the Middle District of Georgia, Valdosta Division, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(e)(1), because at least one Respondent is in this District and Division, Petitioner is currently detained in this District and Division, and Petitioner's immediate physical custodian is in this District and Division.

PARTIES AND BACKGROUND

5. **Petitioner Adrian Terrazas-Hernandez** (A# ) is a native of Mexico, who entered the United States in about 2006 without inspection. Petitioner is married a U.S. citizen in 2011 and has four U.S. citizen children. One of Petitioner's children is diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, requiring constant supervision, structured care, and substantial parental support. Petitioner serves as a primary caregiver for this child. Petitioner has also alleged that he is the victim of domestic violence, and is pursuing relief before the immigration court. Petitioner has strong ties to the community, long-term residence in the United States, and is neither a danger nor a flight risk.

6. Petitioner was apprehended by United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("ICE"). Petitioner filed a motion for a bond hearing with an immigration judge at the Stewart Immigration Court. On March 26, 2026, the immigration judge denied the motion, determining that the judge lacked jurisdiction under the *Matter of*

Yajure Hurtado. See Order Denying Bond, attached as **Exhibit 1**. According to the order:

“The evidence shows Respondent illegally entered the U.S. several years ago without inspection, and there was no evidence submitted to show he was ever admitted.

Therefore, the court lacks jurisdiction to consider bond in this case. *Id.*

7. Petitioner remains detained at the Irwin County Detention Center in Irwin County, Georgia, within this District and Division. Petitioner is “in custody” for the purpose of 28 U.S.C. § 2241 because Petitioner is arrested and detained by Respondents.

8. **Respondent Warden** is the Warden of the Irwin County Detention Center, where Petitioner is being held. Respondent Warden is a legal custodian of Petitioner and he is sued in his official capacity.

9. **Respondent Todd Lyons** is Acting Director, United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (“ICE”). ICE is the federal agency responsible for custody decisions relating to noncitizens charged with being removable from the United States, including the arrest, detention, and custody status of non-citizens. As Acting Director of ICE, Respondent Lyons has authority over its actions, including Petitioner’s detention. He is sued in his official capacity.

10. **Respondent Kristen Sullivan** is the Acting Field Office Director for ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations (“ERO”) in Atlanta, Georgia. The ERO Atlanta Field Office is responsible for the enforcement of U.S. immigration laws in the states of Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. She is sued in her official capacity.

11. **Respondent Markwayne Mullin** is the Secretary of the United States Department of Homeland Security (“DHS”). DHS is the federal agency that has authority over the actions of ICE. As Secretary of DHS, Respondent Mullin has authority over its actions, including Petitioner’s detention. He is sued in her official capacity.

12. **Respondent Todd Blanche** is the Acting Attorney General of the United States and the senior official of the U.S. Department of Justice. He is sued in her official capacity. In that capacity, he has the authority to adjudicate removal cases and to oversee the Executive Office for Immigration Review, which administers the immigration courts and the BIA. Respondent Blanche is responsible for decisions relating to noncitizens charged with being removable from the United States, including the arrest, detention, and custody status of noncitizens. Therefore, he is also Petitioner’s legal custodian.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

13. District courts have the power to grant writs of habeas corpus. 28 U.S.C. § 2241(a). The Constitution guarantees that the writ of habeas corpus is available to every individual detained within the United States. *Hamdi v. Rumsfeld*, 542 U.S. 507, 525 (2004) (citing U.S. Const. Art. I, § 9, cl. 2); *Preiser v. Rodriguez*, 411 U.S. 475, 484 (1973) (“The essence of habeas corpus is an attack by a person in custody upon the legality of that custody, and ... the traditional function of the writ is to secure release from illegal custody.”).

14. A district court’s power includes jurisdiction to hear habeas challenges to immigration-related detention. *Zadvydas v. Davis*, 533 U.S. 678, 687 (2001). Indeed,

noncitizens in immigration proceedings are entitled to Due Process under the Fifth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. *Reno v. Flores*, 507 U.S. 292, 306 (1993).

Petitioner is Not Being Detained Under 8 U.S.C § 1225(b)(2)

15. The immigration court concluded that Petitioner must be mandatorily detained under the INA as set forth in *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, in which the BIA concluded ICE could treat undocumented immigrants already present in the United States as arriving aliens subject to mandatory detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1225.

16. The IJ's reliance on *Hurtado* would make Petitioner ineligible for bond based on his arrival without inspection in 2022. In *Hurtado*, the BIA concluded that noncitizens "who have been residing in the United States for years without lawful status" are considered "applicants for admission" and are thus subject to the mandatory detention provision in INA § 235(b)(2)(A), 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)(A) "for the duration of the immigration proceedings[.]" *Hurtado*, 29 I&N Dec. at 220.

17. But section 1225(b)(2) does not apply to Petitioner as he is not a recent arrival nor is he seeking admission. His continued detention under section 1225(b)(2) is therefore unlawful. Instead, as a noncitizen who previously entered the United States, section 1226(a) governs his detention.

18. Under section 1225(b)(2), "in the case of an alien who is an *applicant for admission*, 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." 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2) (emphasis added). By contrast, a noncitizen arrested on a warrant issued by the Attorney General "*may*" be detained but is also eligible for

release on bond. 8 U.S.C § 1226(a) (emphasis supplied). “Courts have repeatedly held that § 1225 applies to arriving aliens, while § 1226 governs detention of ‘aliens already in the country.’” *Palma v. Trump*, 2025 WL 2624385, at *2 (D. Neb. Sept. 11, 2025) (quoting *Jennings v. Rodriguez*, 583 U.S. 281, 281 (2018)). As the Court in *Palma* noted, “[t]he BIA’s decision in *Hurtado* represents a stark departure from that approach.” *Palma*, 2025 WL 2624385, at *2.

19. Indeed, courts in this Division have reached the same conclusion. *J.A.M. v. Streeval*, 2025 WL 3050094 (M.D. Ga. Nov. 1, 2025); *P.R.S. v. Streeval*, 2025 WL 3269947 (M.D. Ga. Nov. 24, 2025).

20. Finally, the BIA’s controlling authority on the IJ is not dispositive. *Garcia v. Shanahan*, 615 F. Supp. 2d 175, 179 (S.D.N.Y. 2009) (“While the Immigration and Nationality Act ... precludes review of the ‘Attorney General’s discretionary judgment’ with regard to ‘detention or release of any alien or the grant, revocation, or denial of bond or parole,’ 8 U.S.C. § 1226(e), the United States Supreme Court rejected the contention that § 1226(e) deprives courts of jurisdiction to consider challenges to the interpretation of the mandatory detention statute.”) (citing *Demore v. Kim*, 538 U.S. 510, 517, 123 S.Ct. 1708, 155 L.Ed.2d 724 (2003)). Courts have independent judgment in determining whether an agency has acted within its statutory authority. *Loper Bright Enters. v. Raimondo*, 603 U.S. 369, 412, 144 S.Ct. 2244, 219 L.Ed.2d 832 (2024).

21. As other courts have concluded since *Hurtado*, “[t]he text of Sections 1225 and 1226, together with binding Supreme Court precedent interpreting those provisions [...] confirm that [the petitioner] is subject to Section 1226(a)’s discretionary

detention scheme.” *Sampiao v. Hyde*, 2025 WL 2607924, at *8 (D. Mass. Sept. 9, 2025) (granting habeas relief to a noncitizen who was arbitrarily detained following three years of release on an order of recognizance).

22. Here, Petitioner has been physically present in the United States since 2006, has a pending application for relief, is beneficial member of the community and parent and caregiver to United States citizen children. To determine that he is *seeking admission* after living in the United States for two decades is nonsensical, contrary to the plain meaning of the statutes, and the Court should disregard the *Hurtado* decision as contrary to the INA and federal law.

23. As such, under section 1226(a), this Court has the authority to review Petitioner’s request for habeas relief and release from immigration detention

Petitioner Should Not Await Further Determination by the BIA

24. Because Petitioner is detained subject to section 1226(a), not section 1225(b)(2), the Court should, in the event it is raised by Respondents, find that exhaustion is not required here. Because BIA has adopted a policy that deprives Petitioner of jurisdiction to seek a bond from immigration detention, further review of the IJ’s decision invoking *Hurtado* will be futile. *Vazquez v. Feeley*, 2025 WL 2676082, at *10 (D. Nev. Sept. 17, 2025) (“Because, as discussed below, this Court finds the BIA has adopted a policy [in *Hurtado*] that likely violates federal law, awaiting the BIA’s decision regarding Petitioner is futile.”).

COUNT I
Violation of Fifth Amendment Right to Due Process
(against all Respondents)

25. Petitioner re-incorporates and re-alleges paragraphs 1-24 above as if fully set forth herein.

26. “[T]he Due Process Clause applies to all ‘persons’ within the United States, including aliens, whether their presence here is lawful, unlawful, temporary, or permanent.” *Zadvydas*, 533 U.S. at 693. While certain constitutional protections do not extend outside the “geographic borders” of the United States, “legal circumstances change” as soon as a noncitizen “enters the country.” *Id.*; see also *A.A.R.P. v. Trump*, 605 U.S. 91, 94 (2025) (“[T]he Fifth Amendment entitles aliens to due process of law in the context of removal proceedings.”) (quoting *Trump v. J.G.G.*, 145 S. Ct. 1003, 1006 (2025) (per curiam)).

27. To determine whether civil detention violates a detainee’s due process rights, courts apply the three-part test in *Mathews v. Eldridge*, 424 U.S. 319 (1976). Under *Mathews*, courts consider (1) the private interest that will be affected by the official action; (2) the risk of an erroneous deprivation of such interest through the procedures used, and the probable value, if any, of additional or substitute procedural safeguards; and (3) the Government’s interest, including the function involved and the fiscal and administrative burdens that the additional or substitute procedural requirement would entail. *See id.* at 335.

28. Here, all three factors favor Petitioner. He has a significant private interest at stake. *Hamdi v. Rumsfeld*, 542 U.S. 507, 529 (2004) (freedom from physical

detention is “the most elemental of liberty interests”); *see also Zadvydas*, 533 U.S. at 690 (“Freedom from imprisonment—from government custody, detention, or other forms of physical restraint—lies at the heart of the liberty that [the Due Process] Clause protects.”). Petitioner is experiencing all the deprivations that come with physical detention, including separation from his children and community. Next, there is a large risk of the erroneous deprivation of Petitioner’s liberty interest through the procedures used in the immigration court proceedings. There are also alternative procedures, such as a cash bond, and other measures that might mitigate against the risk of flight. Finally, to the extent there is any government interest in detention, it is minimal compared with Petitioner’s liberty interest.

29. Here, Respondents have chosen to detain Petitioner under the wrong statute and in an arbitrary manner, not based on a rational and individualized determination of whether he is a safety or flight risk, in violation of due process. Because section 1225 does not apply, Respondents’ detention of Petitioner violates the Fifth Amendment.

COUNT II

Violation of the Administrative Procedure Act (“APA”), 5 U.S.C. § 706(2)(A) (against all Respondents)

30. Petitioner re-incorporates and re-alleges paragraphs 1-24 above as if fully set forth herein.

31. Under the APA, a court “shall . . . hold unlawful . . . agency action” that is “not in accordance with law;” “contrary to constitutional right;” “in excess of statutory jurisdiction, authority, or limitations;” or “without observance of procedure required by

law.” 5 U.S.C. § 706(2)(A)-(D).

32. Congress has made it clear that mandatory detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b) applies to “applicant[s] for admission” who are determined to be “seeking admission.” By contrast, Congress permits other noncitizens who are arrested on a warrant issued by the Attorney General to be detained (using the language “may”) but those noncitizens are also eligible for release on bond. 8 U.S.C § 1226(a).

33. Courts have interpreted section 1225 to apply to arriving noncitizens, while section 1226 applies to noncitizens already in the United States.

34. Petitioner entered the United States without inspection in 2006. The government contends Petitioner is an applicant for admission to which section 1225 applies. The IJ at the immigration hearing determined the court lacked jurisdiction to determine whether Petitioner was eligible for bond because of the section 1225 bar.

35. Respondents’ determination that Petitioner is “seeking admission” under section 1225(b)(2) was arbitrary, capricious, an abuse of discretion, and not otherwise in accordance with law. 5 U.S.C. § 706(2)(A). Indeed, “ICE, like any agency, ‘has the duty to follow its own federal regulations.’” *Rombot v. Souza*, 296 F. Supp. 3d 383, 388 (D. Mass. 2017) (quoting *Haoud v. Ashcroft*, 350 F.3d 201, 205 (1st Cir. 2003)).

36. Because Petitioner is not subject to mandatory detention, Respondents’ determination was unlawful.

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PRAYER FOR RELIEF

Petitioner Adrian Terrazas-Hernandez respectfully requests that the Court:

- A. Retain jurisdiction over this action;
- B. Issue an Order to Show Cause ordering Respondents to show cause why this Petition should not be granted within three days pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2243;
- C. Declare that Petitioner's detention violates the Due Process Clause of the Fifth Amendment and the Administrative Procedure Act;
- D. Issue a Writ of Habeas Corpus ordering Respondents to release Petitioner from custody or in the alternative provide a bond hearing under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a);
- E. Award Petitioner attorneys' fees and costs under the Equal Access to Justice Act, and on any other basis justified under law; and
- F. Grant all other relief that the Court deems just and proper.

Dated: April 8, 2026

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ James M. Slater

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VERIFICATION PURSUANT TO 28 U.S.C. § 2242

I submit this verification on behalf of Petitioner Adrian Terrazas-Hernandez because I am the Petitioner's attorney. I hereby verify that the statements made in the foregoing Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus are true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Dated: April 8, 2026

/s/ James M. Slater

James M. Slater