

1 Jesse Blanco, Esq. (CA 255989)
2 BLANCO LAW GROUP
3 265 E. Street, Suite E
4 Chula Vista, CA 91910
5 Office: (619)420-4740
6 jesse@blancolegal.com

7 Attorney for Petitioner

8 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
9 SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
10 SAN DIEGO DIVISION

11 DENNIS JOSUE CRUZ RODRIGUEZ,

12 Plaintiff,

13 v.

14 Kristi NOEM, in her official capacity as
15 Secretary of Homeland Security, Christopher
16 J. LAROSE, in his official capacity as
17 Warden of Otay Mesa Detention Center,
18 Gregory J. ARCHEMBEULT, in his official
19 capacity as San Diego Field Office Director,
20 ICE Enforcement Removal Operations; Todd
21 LYONS, in his official capacity as Acting
22 Director of ICE; and Pamela BONDI, U.S.
Attorney General; IMMIGRATION AND
CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT;
DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND
SECURITY,

23 Respondents..

'26CV2340 AGS SBC

PETITION FOR WRIT OF HABEAS
CORPUS



24
25 INTRODUCTION

26 1. Petitioner DENNIS JOSUE CRUZ RODRIGUEZ ("Petitioner") is a 28-year-old
27 Honduran national who last entered the United States on August 7, 2021. On or about July 7,
28

1 2025, he was detained by Respondents at the Otay Mesa Detention Center. On February 12,
2 2026, Petitioner was denied bond solely based on lack of jurisdiction under *Matter of Yajure*
3 *Hurtado*, 29 I&N Dec. 2016 (BIA 2025). Petitioner does not have a criminal background and he
4 has a wife and child to support in the United States. Petitioner therefore seeks a writ of habeas
5 corpus directing his immediate release.
6

7 VENUE AND JURISDICTION

8
9 2. This action arises under the Constitution of the United States and the Immigration and
10 Nationality Act (INA), 8 U.S.C. § 1101 *et seq.*

11 3. This Court has subject matter jurisdiction under 28 U.S.C. § 2241 (habeas corpus), 28
12 U.S.C. § 1331 (federal question), and Article I, § 9, cl. 2 of the United States Constitution
13 (Suspension Clause).

14 4. This Court may grant relief under the habeas corpus statutes, 28 U.S.C. § 2241 *et. seq.*,
15 the Declaratory Judgment Act, 28 U.S.C. § 2201 *et seq.*, and the All Writs Act, 28 U.S.C. §
16 1651.
17

18 5. Venue is proper because Petitioner is detained at the Otay Mesa Detention Center, within
19 the San Diego Division, and Respondent LaRose is his immediate custodian. See 28 U.S.C. §§
20 2241(d), 1391(e).
21

22 PARTIES

23 6. Petitioner is a 28-year-old Honduran national who resides in San Diego, California. He is
24 currently detained by Respondents at the Otay Mesa Detention Center in San Diego, California,
25 pending removal proceedings.
26

27 7. Respondent Christopher J. LaRose is the Warden of Otay Mesa Detention Center.
28 Respondent La Rose is responsible for the operations of the Detention Center. Respondent La

1 Rose is responsible for the operation of the detention center where Petitioner is detained. As
2 such, Respondent LaRose has immediate physical custody of the Petitioner. He is being sued in
3 his official capacity.
4

5 8. Respondent Gregory J. Archambeault is the San Diego Field Office Director ("FOD") for
6 ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations. Respondent Archambeault is responsible for the
7 oversight of ICE operations at the Otay Mesa Detention Center. Respondent Archambeault is
8 being sued in his official capacity.
9

10 9. Respondent Todd Lyons is the Acting Director of ICE. Respondent Lyons is responsible
11 for the administration of ICE and the implementation and enforcement of the immigration laws,
12 including immigrant detention. As such, Respondent Lyons is a legal custodian of Petitioner and
13 is being sue in his official capacity.
14

15 10. Respondent Kristi Noem is the secretary of the Department of Homeland Security
16 ("DHS"). As Secretary of DHS, Secretary Noem is responsible for the general administration
17 and enforcement of the immigration laws of the United States. Respondent Secretary Noem is
18 being sued in her official capacity.
19

20 **REQUIREMENTS OF 28 U.S.C. § 2243**

21 11. The Court must grant the petition for writ of habeas corpus or issue an order to show
22 cause (OSC) to the respondents "forthwith," unless the petitioner is not entitled to relief. 28
23 U.S.C. § 2243. If an order to show cause is issued, the Court must require respondents to file a
24 return "within *three days* unless for good cause additional time, not exceeding twenty days, is
25 allowed." *Id.* (emphasis added).
26

27 12. Courts have long recognized the significance of the habeas statute in protecting
28 individuals from unlawful detention. The Great Writ has been referred to as "perhaps the most

1 important writ known to the constitutional law of England, affording as it does a *swift* and
 2 imperative remedy in all cases of illegal restraint or confinement.” *Fay v. Noia*, 372 U.S. 391,
 3 400 (1963) (emphasis added) (overruled on other grounds).

4 EXHAUSTION OF REMEDIES

5
 6 13. No statutory exhaustion requirement applies. *See* 8 § U.S.C. 2241; *Laing v. Ashcroft*, 370
 7 F.3d 994, 998 (9th Cir. 2004). Therefore, exhaustion is not jurisdictionally required.

8
 9 14. Additionally, further agency steps will be futile and further evidenced by the Petitioner’s
 10 prior attempt to request a bond, which was promptly denied solely under *Matter of Yajure*
 11 *Hurtado*, 28 I&N Dec. 216 (BIA 2025). In its decision, the BIA adopted DHS’ reading of 8
 12 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2), finding individuals similarly situated to the Petitioner ineligible for release
 13 on bond.

14
 15 15. In Petitioner’s case, any additional request for custody redetermination is expected to be
 16 dismissed by the Immigration Court for lack of jurisdiction and any appeal to the BIA will also
 17 be dismissed under the same basis. While recently, the Central District Court of California has
 18 issued a decision vacating *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, DHS continues to detain individuals like
 19 Petitioner under the same basis and contrary to law. *Lazaro Maldonado Bautista et al. v. Ernesto*
 20 *Santacruz Jr et al.*, No. 5:25-cv-01873-SSS-BFM, Document 116 (C.D. Cal. 2026).

21
 22 16. As a result, Petitioner cannot obtain a bond hearing in Immigration Court as a matter of
 23 law, rendering administrative remedies unavailable and inadequate.

24
 25 17. Where no administrative forum exists to review the legality of detention, habeas corpus
 26 relief is the exclusive mechanism for constitutional review. *See Zadvydas v. Davis*, 533 U.S. 678,
 27 688 (2001).

28 18. Accordingly, this Court has both jurisdiction and responsibility to remedy Petitioner’s

1 unlawful detention, either by ordering immediate release or by requiring a constitutionally
2 adequate custody hearing before a neutral decisionmaker.

3 STATEMENT OF FACTS

4
5 19. Petitioner is a 28-year-old citizen of Honduras who last entered the United States on
6 August 7, 2021. On or about July 7, 2025, he was detained by Respondents at the Otay Mesa
7 Detention Center. Petitioner has remained in Respondent's custody since that time. On February
8 12, 2026, Petitioner was denied bond solely based on lack of jurisdiction under *Matter of Yajure*
9 *Hurtado*, 29 I&N Dec. 2016 (BIA 2025). Petitioner has been scheduled for an Individual Merits
10 hearing on March 10, 2026 at 8:00 A.M. before Immigration Judge Ferdinand J. Ortiz at 7488
11 Calzada de la Fuente, San Diego, California. Petitioner now seeks habeas relief because
12 continuing his detention exceeds statutory authority and violates the Fifth Amendment.
13

14 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

15
16 20. Habeas corpus relief extends to a person "in custody under or by color of the authority of
17 the United States" if the person can show he is "in custody in violation of the Constitution or
18 laws or treaties of the United States." 28 U.S.C. § 2241 (c)(1), (c)(3); see also *Antonelli v.*
19 *Warden, U.S.P. Atlanta*, 542 F.3d 1348, 1352 (11th Cir. 2008) (holding a petitioner's claims are
20 proper under 28 U.S.C. section 2241 if they concern the continuation of execution of
21 confinement).
22

23 21. "[H]abeas corpus is, at its core, an equitable remedy," *Schlup v. Delo*, 513 U.S. 298, 319
24 (1995), that "[t]he court shall . . . dispose of [] as law and justice require," 28 U.S.C. § 2243.
25 "[T]he court's role was most extensive in cases of pretrial and noncriminal detention."
26 *Boumediene v. Bush*, 553 U.S. 723, 779–80 (2008). "[W]hen the judicial power to issue habeas
27 corpus properly is invoked the judicial officer must have adequate authority to make a
28

determination in light of the relevant law and facts and to formulate and issue appropriate orders for relief, including, if necessary, an order directing the prisoner's release." *Id.* at 787.

CLAIMS FOR RELIEF

COUNT ONE

Violation of Fifth Amendment Right to Due Process

22. Petitioner incorporates paragraphs 1 through 21 as if fully set out herein.

23. The Fifth Amendment forbids deprivation of liberty without notice and a meaningful opportunity to be heard before a neutral decision-maker. Due process protects "all 'persons' within the United States, including [non-citizens], whether their presence here is lawful, unlawful, temporary, or permanent." *Zadvydas v. Davis*, 533 U.S. 678, 698 (2001).

24. Petitioner has now been subjected to prolonged civil detention without any custody hearing, written custody determination, or opportunity to contest the factual basis for his confinement. Respondents have not alleged—let alone established—that Petitioner poses a danger to the community or a flight risk. Detention based solely on executive discretion, without procedural safeguards, creates an unacceptably high risk of erroneous deprivation of liberty.

25. Applying the balancing test set forth in *Mathews v. Eldridge*, 424 U.S. 319 (1976), Petitioner's liberty interest is profound; the risk of erroneous deprivation is substantial given the absence of a neutral adjudicator; and the government's interest in continued detention is minimal where Petitioner has no criminal history, he has ample community ties including a wife and child, and has a fear or return to his home country.. Due process therefore requires either Petitioner's immediate release or, at minimum, a prompt custody hearing at which the government bears the burden of justifying continued detention by clear and convincing evidence.

COUNT TWO

8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), NOT 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b), APPLIES TO PETITIONER

26. The allegations in the above paragraphs are re-alleged and incorporated herein.

27. Respondents have continued to argue that those in a situation similar to Petitioner are detained pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b), which mandates the detention of an “applicant for admission” throughout the entirety of removal proceedings.

28. The term “seeking admission, however, “is not defined under § 1225. As many cases in this District and this Circuit have found, “seeking admission” is best understood to require “an affirmative act such as entering the United States or applying for status.” *See Mosqueda v. Noem*, No. 25-CV-2304 CAS (BFM), 2025 WL 2591530, at *5 (C.D. Cal. Sept. 8, 2025); *see also Esquivel-Ipina v. LaRose*, No. 25-CV-2672 JLS (BLM), 2025 WL 2998361, at *5 (S.D. Cal. Oct. 24, 2025); *Rodriguez v. Bostock*, No. 3:25-CV-05240-TMC, 2025 WL 2782499, at *1 (W.D. Wash. Sept. 30, 2025) (“Every district court to address this question has concluded that the government’s position belies the statutory text of the INA, canons of statutory interpretation, legislative history, and longstanding agency practice.”). Here, Petitioner was not “seeking admission” within this interpretation. He was arrested in the interior of the United States.

29. As the Ninth Circuit explained in interpreting the phrase “applicant for admission” under § 1225(b)(1), “an immigrant submits an ‘application for admission’ at a distinct point in time,” and stretching that phrase to apply “potentially for years or decades . . . would push the statutory text beyond its breaking point.” *United States v. Gambino-Ruiz*, 91 F.4th 981, 988-89 (9th Cir. 2024) (citing *Torres v. Barr*, 976 F.3d 918, 922-26 (9th Cir. 2020) (en banc)).

30. In addition, § 1226 already provides an exception to its rule that the Attorney General

1 may set bond or release an alien on conditional parole, specifically under subsection (c). Enacted
2 by the Laken Riley Act, Pub. L. No. 119-1, 139 Stat. 3 (2025), § 1226(c)(1)(E) requires
3 mandatory detention for people who are inadmissible under §§ 1182(a)(6)(A), (6)(C), or (7) *and*
4 charged with certain crimes. 8 U.S.C. § 1226(c)(1)(E). Beyond the fact that Petitioner doesn't
5 satisfy these requirements, a new "interpretation of Section 1225(b)(2)(A) would seemingly
6 render the foregoing language from Section 1226(c) a nullity." *Lopez*, 2025 WL 3005346, at *4
7 (citations omitted). Specifically, "if § 1225(b)(2) already encompassed all inadmissible
8 noncitizens, there would be no need to pass an amendment that required detention for those who
9 are inadmissible under the same statutes and are being charged with specific crimes."
10 *Medina-Ortiz v. Noem*, No. 25-cv-02819- DMS-MMP, at *5 (S.D. Cal Oct. 30, 2025). Such an
11 "interpretation would render the Laken Riley Act, 'superfluous'" and, therefore, should not be
12 accepted. *Id.*

13
14
15
16 31. Respondents' formulated definition of "applicant for admission," which would include
17 any noncitizen who has not been formally admitted regardless of years of residence in the United
18 States, directly contradicts both the plain text of the statute and controlling Ninth Circuit
19 precedent and of numerous courts across the United States who have considered this issue.

20
21 32. Because the Petitioner has resided continuously in the United States since 2021, his
22 period as an "applicant for admission" has long since closed. He is further characterized in his
23 charging document as a noncitizen "already in the country" rather than one "seeking admission."

24 33. Petitioner's detention constitutes arbitrary and indefinite confinement in violation of the
25 Constitution and international human rights norms.

26
27 34. Applying the *Mathews v. Eldridge*, 424 U.S. 319 (1976) test, Petitioner's liberty interest
28 is paramount; the risk of erroneous deprivation is extreme when considering Petitioner is not

1 subject to mandatory detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(c) and based of his lack of criminal
 2 history and community ties, he does not pose a danger to the community or a substantial flight
 3 risk. Likewise, the risk of erroneous deprivation of liberty is great due to the lack of a
 4 non-independent adjudicator. *Marcello v. Bonds*, 39 U.S. 302, 305-06 (1995). ICE here is acting
 5 both as the prosecutor and the adjudicator.
 6

7 35. While the government has discretion to detain individuals under 8 U.S.C. § 1126(b), this
 8 discretion is not “unlimited” and must comport with constitutional due process. See *Zadvydas*,
 9 533 U.S. at 698.
 10

11 PRAYER FOR RELIEF

12 Wherefore, Petitioner respectfully requests this Court to grant the following:

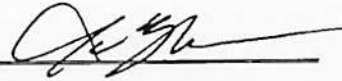
- 13 (1) Assume jurisdiction over this matter;
- 14 (2) Issue an Order to Show Cause ordering Respondents to show cause why this
 15 Petition should not be granted within three days.
 16
- 17 (3) Declare that DENNIS JOSUE CRUZ RODRIGUEZ’s detention violates the Due
 18 Process Clause of the Fifth Amendment, 8 U.S.C. § 1231(a), and 8 C.F.R.
 19 §1231(a)(6);
 20
- 21 (4) Issue a Writ of Habeas Corpus ordering Respondents to release Petitioner
 22 immediately, under reasonable conditions of supervision;
- 23 (5) In the alternative, issue a prompt custody hearing at which the government bears
 24 the burden of justifying continued detention;
- 25 (6) Order Respondents to refrain from transferring Petitioner out of the jurisdiction of
 26 this court during the pendency of these proceedings and while the Petitioner
 27 remains in Respondent’s custody;
 28

(7) Award Petitioner attorney's fees and costs under the Equal Access to Justice Act,

and on any other basis justified under law; and

(8) Grant any further relief this Court deems just and proper.

Respectfully submitted this 7th day of March, 2026.

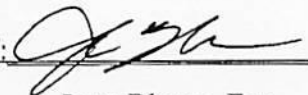
/s: 

Jesse Blanco, Esq. (CA 255989)
BLANCO LAW GROUP
265 E. Street, Suite E
Chula Vista, CA 91910
Office: (619)420-4740
jesse@blancolegal.com

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

I represent Petitioner, DENNIS JOSUE CRUZ RODRIGUEZ, 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 7th day of March, 2026.

/s: 
Jesse Blanco, Esq.