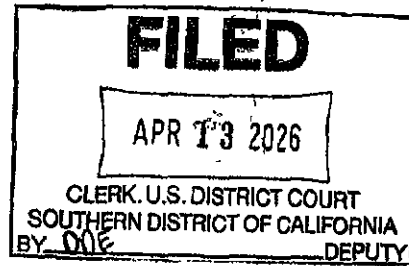


UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA  
333 West Broadway, Suite 420  
San Diego, California 92101



RONANGEL DANIEL BRIZUELA SANTAELLA



Petitioner,

'26 CV2364 TWR DDL

v.

DIRECTOR, OTAY MESA DETENTION CENTER;  
SECRETARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY;  
DIRECTOR OF U.S. IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT (ICE),  
Respondents.

PETITION FOR WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS  
(28 U.S.C. § 2241)

**I. INTRODUCTION**

Petitioner, Ronangel Daniel Brizuela Santaella, respectfully submits this Petition for a Writ of Habeas Corpus pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2241, challenging his immigration detention as unlawful, arbitrary, and unconstitutional.

Petitioner is a 19-year-old high school student in San Diego, with an active immigration process and pending relief, including an affirmative asylum application before USCIS.

Despite having his case previously terminated by an immigration judge, Petitioner was detained again by ICE and placed back into removal proceedings, which constitutes a disproportionate action contrary to due process.

**II. JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

This Honorable Court has jurisdiction pursuant to:

28 U.S.C. § 2241

28 U.S.C. § 1331

Article I, Section 9 of the United States Constitution (Suspension Clause)

Petitioner is detained at the Otay Mesa Detention Center within the Southern District of California.

**III. STATEMENT OF FACTS**

**A. Immigration History and Re-initiation of Proceedings**

Petitioner entered the United States in or around August 2023.

Subsequently, an immigration judge terminated his case without prejudice, due to the existence of pending immigration relief (TPS).

Petitioner was granted TPS and later filed an affirmative asylum application (Form I-589), which is currently pending before USCIS.

However, following his detention on March 15, 2026, Petitioner was placed again into removal proceedings, despite:

Not having a final order of removal

Having pending immigration relief

Having had his case previously terminated by an immigration judge

This constitutes an arbitrary and unjustified re-detention.

#### B. Personal Circumstances

Petitioner:

Is 19 years old

Is an active high school student in San Diego

Has no criminal history

Possesses employment authorization and a Social Security number

Has strong family and community ties

Additionally, Petitioner is potentially eligible for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) due to abandonment by his biological mother, which provides an additional pathway to immigration relief.

#### C. Circumstances of Detention

On March 15, 2026, Petitioner was detained along with his father at South Shores Park while performing routine maintenance of their residence (RV).

Petitioner and his father fully cooperated with ICE officers, did not resist, and provided valid documentation.

Despite their cooperation and active immigration processes, they were detained and transported to the Otay Mesa Detention Center.

Petitioner:

Has no criminal record

Did not leave the United States

Did not attempt to re-enter the country

Did not abandon his asylum application

Did not commit any crime

He was detained that same day and has remained in custody since.

He has not received a bond hearing nor an individualized custody determination.

Petitioner is a person of good moral character, a high school student, and has community support, as evidenced by letters of recommendation attached hereto.

#### IV. LEGAL GROUNDS

##### FIRST CLAIM

##### UNLAWFUL DETENTION – IMPROPER APPLICATION OF INA § 235(b)

Mandatory detention under INA § 235(b) applies to individuals seeking admission into the United States.

At the time of his detention:

Petitioner was already physically present in the United States

He was not seeking admission

He had not departed the country

He was not in active proceedings before the Immigration Court, as his case had already been closed since January 2024

The automatic application of § 235(b) in these circumstances constitutes an overly broad interpretation of the statute.

Even if the TPS program was later terminated, Petitioner was already within the United States and his immigration court case had already been closed. He was not attempting to re-enter the country.

Therefore, his detention under a mandatory custody framework lacks proper statutory basis.

## SECOND CLAIM

### VIOLATION OF DUE PROCESS (FIFTH AMENDMENT)

Petitioner's detention is unconstitutional because:

There was no final order of removal

He has a pending asylum application

His case was previously terminated by an immigration judge

He was placed back into proceedings without adequate justification

This constitutes arbitrary detention in violation of due process.

Immigration detention is civil, not criminal. Therefore, it must be reasonably related to a legitimate purpose and accompanied by adequate procedural safeguards.

In this case:

Petitioner has not received a bond hearing

There has been no individualized determination of flight risk

There has been no determination of danger to the community

The Government has not demonstrated the necessity of continued detention

The absence of neutral review renders the detention automatic and arbitrary.

Supreme Court and Ninth Circuit precedent establish that immigration detention must comply with due process principles and cannot be prolonged without sufficient legal justification.

In *Zadvydas v. Davis*, the Supreme Court held that indefinite detention without a reasonable likelihood of removal is unconstitutional. Similarly, in *Casas-Castrillon v. DHS* and *Singh v.*

*Holder*, the Ninth Circuit held that individuals without final removal orders are entitled to bond hearings, and that the government bears the burden of proving danger or flight risk. In *Diouf v.*

*Napolitano*, the court reaffirmed that prolonged detention without adequate judicial review violates due process.

Here, Petitioner has no criminal history, faces no criminal charges, and poses no danger, rendering his detention unjustified.

Detention without a bond hearing violates both substantive and procedural due process.

## THIRD CLAIM

### ARBITRARY DETENTION OF TPS BENEFICIARY AND ASYLUM APPLICANT

At the time of detention, Petitioner had been granted TPS and had filed an affirmative asylum application.

He was exercising a statutory right to seek protection from persecution.

The detention of an asylum applicant who:

Appeared for his proceedings  
Is complying with immigration processes  
Has no criminal record  
Has not attempted to evade authorities  
without a bond hearing or individualized determination constitutes a disproportionate restriction  
on liberty incompatible with due process.

#### V. CONSTITUTIONAL VIOLATIONS

Respondents' actions violate:

##### 1. Fifth Amendment -- Due Process Clause

Petitioner has been deprived of liberty without:

Neutral hearing

Individualized assessment

Proper burden of proof by the Government

Reasoned decision justifying continued detention

Automatic detention without review constitutes arbitrary deprivation of liberty.

##### 2. Suspension Clause -- Article I, Section 9

Habeas corpus guarantees meaningful judicial review of detention.

If Petitioner is held under a rigid interpretation that prevents real review of the legality of  
detention, the right to habeas corpus is effectively nullified.

Denial of meaningful review violates the Constitution.

#### VI. REQUEST FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Petitioner respectfully requests that this Court:

Declare his detention unlawful and unconstitutional;

Order that he not be transferred while this case is pending;

Order his immediate release; OR, in the alternative,

Order an individualized bond hearing before an immigration judge, where the Government bears  
the burden of proof;

Grant any other relief deemed just and proper.

#### VII. DESIGNATION OF ADDRESS FOR SERVICE

Petitioner respectfully requests that all notices and communications be sent to the following  
address instead of the detention facility, due to limited access to mail:

6976 Fulton Street

San Diego, CA 92111


#### VIII. VERIFICATION

I, Ronangel Daniel Brizuela Santaella, declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true  
and correct.

Respectfully submitted,

*Ronangel Brizuela*

Ronangel Daniel Brizuela Santaella  
Pro Se

  
Signed on: April 8, 2026  
Otay Mesa Detention Center  
7488 Calzada de la Fuente  
San Diego, CA 92154

IX. CERTIFICATE / PROOF OF SERVICE

I certify that on 04-08-2026, I served a true and correct copy of this Petition upon:

U.S. Attorney – Southern District of California  
880 Front Street, Room 6293  
San Diego, CA 92101

Secretary of Homeland Security  
2707 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave SE  
Washington, DC 20528

Director, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement  
500 12th Street SW  
Washington, DC 20536

ICE – OPLA San Diego  
880 Front Street, Suite 2246  
San Diego, CA 92101

Director, Otay Mesa Detention Center  
7488 Calzada de la Fuente  
San Diego, CA 92154

*Ronangel Brizuela*

Ronangel Daniel Brizuela Santaella  
Pro Se



Dated: 04-08-2026

Location: Otay Mesa Detention Center  
7488 Caizada de la Fuente  
San Diego, CA 92154



Date: February 18, 2026

Regarding: Ronangel Brizuela

Parent/ Guardian: Rincon, Yannymar

Address: [Redacted]

San Diego, CA [Redacted]

[Redacted]

Grade Level: 10

To Whom It May Concern:

Ronangel Brizuela has been enrolled at San Diego Workforce Innovation High since 12/13/2024 to Present.  
Please contact us if you have any questions.

Thank you.

Tamara  
Gudino

Digital signed by Tamara  
Gudino  
Date: 2026.02.18 15:17:59  
+0600

Tamara Gudino

Registrar

Staff Signature

Printed Name

Title

Innovation High School

March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2026

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this letter to express my sincere and supportive recommendation on behalf of Ronangel Daniel Brizuela who is a student at San Diego Workforce Innovation High School. During his time, I have witnessed his academic achievements and personal development. I've also had the opportunity to work with him one-on-one to help prepare for his future.

Ronangel has consistently demonstrated qualities of responsibility, honesty and integrity. He fulfills his school expectations by attending his scheduled weekly appointments with his Supervising teacher, turning in 1 credit per week and meeting with me for tutoring. Also, he participates in experiential learning by attending college field trips. He wants to pursue his education in music.

Furthermore, he has been meeting with our JAG Specialist to gain invaluable skills increasing his employability. Recently, he attended a job fair. I have had the pleasure of knowing Ronangel for 2 years and he has a strong desire to achieve, learn and succeed in life.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions or require additional information. I am more than happy to discuss Ronangel's character further. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mercedes Carter

Paraprofessional Tutor

San Diego Workforce Innovation High School at City Heights

March 19, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this letter on behalf of Daniel Brizuela in strong support of his character and in consideration of his immigration case. I have had the pleasure of working with Daniel as one of his teachers at Innovation High School – City Heights, and I can confidently say that he is an exceptional student.

Daniel is a dedicated and hardworking student who consistently demonstrates a strong commitment to his education. He takes his academic responsibilities seriously, completes his work diligently, and shows genuine effort in all that he does. Beyond his academics, Daniel is respectful, polite, and kind to both staff and his peers. He is the type of student who sets a strong example for others through his behavior and attitude. Daniel communicates respectfully, follows through on expectations, and shows a sincere desire to succeed and build a better future for himself. His determination and perseverance are truly commendable.

I strongly believe that Daniel has a bright future ahead of him and will continue to be a positive and contributing member of his community. I respectfully ask that you take his character, work ethic, and dedication into consideration.

If you have any questions or need further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Castaneda

Lead Teacher ( Science Teacher

Innovation High School – City Heights

# innovation high



March 20, 2026

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Jessica McKenna, and I serve as the school counselor at San Diego Workforce Innovation High School, located in the City Heights community of San Diego. I am writing on behalf of our student, Ronangel Daniel Brizuela, whom we refer to as Daniel on campus.

Daniel has been enrolled at our school since December 2024 and has been a valued member of our school community. He is a hardworking, respectful, and insightful student who consistently demonstrates a strong commitment to his education. Daniel has maintained excellent academic performance and has actively participated in a variety of extracurricular activities.

During his time on campus, Daniel has engaged in positive and constructive pursuits, including practicing guitar. Most recently, he participated in our Black History Month events and attended a field trip on March 12, 2026, to a local community college. During this visit, Daniel expressed a strong interest in the Culinary Arts program and was actively engaged in learning about post-secondary opportunities and planning for his future.

At present, Daniel has 38 credits remaining to complete the requirements for his high school diploma. He has worked diligently to improve his English proficiency and remains committed to successfully completing his high school education. My wish is that he can continue his education with us and create a beautiful and safe future for himself and his family.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jessica McKenna".

Jessica McKenna

School Counselor

# innovation high



March 20, 2026

From: Sylvia Morales, Supervising Teacher, San Diego Workforce Innovation High School in City Heights, Learn4Life Schools

To Whom It May Concern,

I have known Daniel (Ronangel) Brizuela since December of 2024. I am his Supervising Teacher at Innovation High School in City Heights and also have been his English and Music teacher.

During this past year and several months I have seen Daniel apply himself seriously and enthusiastically to his studies. His English has improved tremendously and he is always making an effort to continue improving by speaking most of the time in English.

During the fall semester of this current academic year, (July, 2025 - January, 2025), Daniel completed several credits towards his high school diploma with an outstanding grade point average of 3.95.

Daniel also has attended his weekly appointments at school consistently on time. He seeks out help when he needs assistance. Daniel is always seeking out ways to learn and improve, for example, by attending several workshops and field trips that our school offers. He takes his education seriously and has completed all of the State of California tests for high school students during his time at our school.

Daniel is a respectful, kind and responsible person. He regularly communicates with me by email or text. I have seen Daniel in his interactions with other students, staff and teachers and he impresses me with his kindness, maturity, sense of humor and generosity.

My wish is that he can continue to work towards completing his high school education with us and continue to thrive.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Sylvia Morales'.

Sylvia Morales  
Supervising Teacher