

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
SAN DIEGO DIVISION**

THOMAS VELASQUEZ GREGORIO,

Agency No. 

'26CV2775 RBM JLB

Petitioner,

v.

MARKWAYNE MULLIN, Secretary, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, et.

al.,

Respondents.

PETITIONER'S PETITION FOR WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS

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9 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
10 SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
11 SAN DIEGO DIVISION
12

13 THOMAS VELASQUEZ GREGORIO,)

'26CV2775 RBM JLB

14 Petitioner,)

PETITION FOR WRIT
OF HABEAS CORPUS

15 v.)

16 Markwayne MULLIN, in his official capacity as)
17 Secretary of Homeland Security, Jeremy Casey,)
18 in his official capacity as Warden of Imperial)
19 Detention Center, Gregory J. Archambeault)
20 in his official capacity as San Diego Field)
21 Office Director, ICE Enforcement Removal)
22 Operations; Todd LYONS, in his official capacity as)
23 Acting Director of ICE; and Todd BLANCHE, U.S.)
24 Attorney General; IMMIGRATION AND)
25 CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT; DEPARTMENT OF)
26 HOMELAND SECURITY,)

27 Respondents.)
28

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Petitioner THOMAS VELASQUEZ GREGORIO, ("Petitioner") is a
28-year-old Guatemalan national who last entered the United States in 2017.

2. On April 01, 2026, Petitioner was detained by Respondents at the

1 Imperial Regional Adult Detention Facility.

2 3. Petitioner has not requested a custody redetermination as the impact
3 of the Board of Immigration Appeals (“BIA”) decision in *Matter of Yajure*
4 *Hurtado*, 28 I&N Dec. 216 (BIA 2025) has meant that all requests for custody
5 redetermination under Petitioner’s circumstances have been dismissed for lack
6 of jurisdiction. Accordingly, requesting a bond hearing would be frivolous.

7 4. Petitioner therefore seeks a writ of habeas corpus directing his
8 immediate release.
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10 11 12 II. VENUE AND JURISDICTION

13 5. This Court has jurisdiction under 28 U.S.C. § 2241 (habeas corpus),
14 28 U.S.C. § 1331 (federal question), and Article I, § 9, cl. 2 of the Constitution
15 (Suspension Clause), as Petitioner is presently in custody under the authority
16 of the United States and challenging his detention as in violation of the
17 Constitution, laws, or treaties of the United States.

18 6. The federal district courts have jurisdiction under Section 2241 to
19 hear habeas claims by individuals challenging the lawfulness of their detention
20 by ICE. *See Jennings v. Rodriguez*, 583 U.S. 281, 290-92 (2018).

21 7. Venue is proper because Petitioner is detained in the Imperial
22 Regional Adult Detention Facility, within the San Diego Division, and
23 Respondent Casey is his immediate custodian. *See* 28 U.S.C. §§ 2241(d), 1391(e).
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III. PARTIES

8. Petitioner is a 28-year-old Guatemalan national who resides in San Diego, California. He is currently detained by Respondents at the Imperial Regional Adult Detention Facility in Calexico, California, pending removal proceedings.

9. Respondent Jeremy Casey is the Warden of Imperial Regional Adult Detention Facility. Respondent Casey is responsible for the operation of the Detention Center where Petitioner is detained. As such, Respondent Casey has immediate physical custody of the Petitioner. He is being sued in his official capacity.

10. Respondent Gregory J. Archambeault is the San Diego Field Office Director ("FOD") for ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations. Respondent Archambeault is responsible for the oversight of ICE operations at the Imperial Regional Adult Detention Facility. Respondent Archambeault is being sued in his official capacity.

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

12. Respondent Markwayne Mullin is the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security ("DHS"). As Secretary of DHS, Secretary Mullin is

1 responsible for the general administration and enforcement of the immigration
2 laws of the United States. Respondent Secretary Mullin is being sued in his
3 official capacity.

4 5 IV. EXHAUSTION OF REMEDIES

6 13. No statutory exhaustion requirement applies. *See* 8 § U.S.C. 2241;
7 *Laing v. Ashcroft*, 370 F.3d 994, 998 (9th Cir. 2004). Therefore, exhaustion is not
8 jurisdictionally required. Moreover, exhaustion should not be required here
9 because any attempt to exhaust would be futile, as BIA appeals routinely take
10 more than six months to reach a decision.

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12 14. Additionally, further agency steps will be futile. Recently, the BIA
13 published *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, 28 I&N Dec. 216 (BIA 2025). In its decision,
14 the BIA adopted DHS' reading of 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2), finding individuals
15 similarly situated to Petitioner ineligible for release on bond.

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17 15. In Petitioner's case, any request for custody redetermination will be
18 dismissed by the Immigration Court for lack of jurisdiction and any appeal to
19 the BIA will be dismissed. *Matter of Yajure Hurtado* currently controls in
20 Petitioner's case and any attempt to request agency evaluation of his detention
21 will be futile.

22 23 V. STATEMENT OF FACTS

24 16. Petitioner is a Guatemalan national born . He
25 last entered the United States around 2017.

26 17. On or about April 01, 2026, Petitioner was detained by Respondents
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1 at the Imperial Regional Adult Detention Facility.

2 18. Petitioner has remained in Respondents' custody since that time.

3 19. Petitioner's next master hearing is scheduled for May 15, 2026, at
4 1:00 p.m. before Immigration Judge Drew T. Nishiyama at 2409 La Brucherie
5 Road Imperial, CA 92251.
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7 20. Petitioner now seeks habeas relief because continuing his detention
8 exceeds statutory authority and violates the Fifth Amendment.
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10 VI. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR RELIEF SOUGHT 11

12 21. Habeas corpus relief extends to a person "in custody under or by color
13 of the authority of the United States" if the person can show he is "in custody
14 in violation of the Constitution or laws or treaties of the United States." 28
15 U.S.C. § 2241 (c)(1), (c)(3); see also *Antonelli v. Warden, U.S.P. Atlanta*, 542
16 F.3d 1348, 1352 (11th Cir. 2008) (holding a petitioner's claims are proper under
17 28 U.S.C. section 2241 if they concern the continuation or execution of
18 confinement).
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20 22. "[H]abeas corpus is, at its core, an equitable remedy," *Schlup v.*
21 *Delo*, 513 U.S. 298, 319 (1995), that "[t]he court shall ... dispose of [] as law
22 and justice require," 28 U.S.C. § 2243. "[T]he court's role was most extensive
23 in cases of pretrial and noncriminal detention." *Boumediene v. Bush*, 553
24 U.S. 723, 779–80 (2008). "[W]hen the judicial power to issue habeas corpus
25 properly is invoked the judicial officer must have adequate authority to make
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1 a determination in light of the relevant law and facts and to formulate and
2 issue appropriate orders for relief, including, if necessary, an order directing
3 the prisoner's release." *Id.* at 787.
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5 6 VII. CAUSES OF ACTION

7 COUNT ONE

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

9 23. Petitioner incorporates paragraphs 1 through 22 as if fully set out
10 herein.

11 24. Recently, Respondents began arguing that those in situations similar
12 to Petitioner are detained pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2), which mandates
13 the detention of an "applicant for admission" throughout the entirety of
14 removal proceedings.
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16 25. Respondents' newly formulated definition of "applicant for
17 admission," which would include any noncitizen who has not been formally
18 admitted regardless of years of residence in the United States, directly
19 contradicts both the plain text of the statute and controlling Ninth Circuit
20 precedent.
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22 26. As the Ninth Circuit explained in interpreting the phrase "applicant
23 for admission" under § 1225(b)(1), "*an immigrant submits an 'application for*
24 *admission' at a distinct point in time,*" and stretching that phrase to apply
25 "*potentially for years or decades ... would push the statutory text beyond its*
26 *breaking point.*" *United States v. Gambino-Ruiz*, 91 F.4th 981, 988–89 (9t
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1 h Cir. 2024) (citing *Torres v. Barr*, 976 F.3d 918, 922–26 (9th Cir. 2020) (en
2 banc)).

3 27. Because Petitioner has resided continuously in the United States
4 since 2017, his period as an “applicant for admission” has long since closed.

5 28. Numerous courts across the United States have considered this issue
6 subsequent to Respondents’ new policy of treating the vast majority of
7 immigrants in their custody as being detained pursuant to 8 U.S.C. §
8 1225(b)(2) and the BIA’s decision supporting this interpretation in *Matter of*
9 *Yajure Hurtado*, 28 I&N Dec. 216 (BIA 2025).
10

11 29. This Court, joining the general consensus with other courts across
12 this country, previously held those similarly situated to Petitioner are being
13 held under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) and therefore are not subject to mandatory
14 detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b). *See e.g., Martinez Lopez v. Noem, et al.*, No:
15 25-cv-2717-JES-AHG, 2025 WL 3030457 (S.D. Cal. Oct. 30, 2025).
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19 **COUNT TWO**
20 **(PROCEDURAL DUE PROCESS)**

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

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

2 32. Subsection 1003.19(i)(2) strips Petitioner of that protection by
3 allowing the prosecuting agency—after losing at the bond hearing—to veto the
4 Immigration Judge’s order with a one-page notice that requires no showing of
5 danger, flight risk, or likelihood of success on appeal.
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7 33. Applying the *Mathews v. Eldridge*, 424 U.S. 319 (1976), test,
8 Petitioner’s liberty interest is paramount; the risk of erroneous deprivation is
9 extreme considering the Immigration Judge’s determination that Petitioner is
10 not subject to mandatory detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(c) and does not pose
11 a danger to the community. Likewise, the risk of erroneous deprivation of
12 liberty is great due to the lack of a non-independent adjudicator. *Marcello v.*
13 *Bonds*, 39 U.S. 302, 305-306 (1955). In filing Form EOIR-43, ICE is acting as
14 both the prosecutor as well as the adjudicator.
15

16 34. While the government has discretion to detain individuals under 8
17 U.S.C. § 1226(a) and to revoke custody decisions under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(b), this
18 discretion is not “unlimited” and must comport with constitutional due process.
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20 *See Zadvydas*, 533 U.S. at 698.
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22 PRAYER FOR RELIEF

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

- 24
25 1) Assume jurisdiction over this matter;
26 2) Grant Petitioner a writ of habeas corpus directing the Respondents to
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1 immediately release him from custody, under reasonable conditions of
2 supervision;

3 3) Order Respondents to refrain from transferring Petitioner out of the
4 jurisdiction of this court during the pendency of these proceedings and while
5 the Petitioner remains in Respondents' custody;

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7 4) Order Respondents to file a response within 3 business days of the filing of
8 this petition;

9 5) Award attorneys' fees to Petitioner; and

10 6) Grant any other and further relief which this Court deems just and proper.

11
12 I affirm, under penalty of perjury, that the foregoing is true and correct.

13
14 Respectfully submitted this 1st day of May, 2026.

15 /s/ Murray D. Hilts

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