**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT**
**FOR THE DISTRICT OF MARYLAND**

**ANGELA DEL CARMEN RUIZ,**

***Petitioner,***

**v.**

**PAMELA BONDI**, Attorney General
of the United States,
**KRISTI NOEM**, Secretary of the
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
**TODD LYONS**, Acting Director,
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.
Baltimore Field Office
**VERNON LIGGINS, Acting Field Office Director**
ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations, George H. Fallon Federal Building
31 Hopkins Plaza, 6th Floor
Baltimore, MD 21201

***Respondents.***

**Case No: 1:26-cv-0417**

**A#** [redacted]

## PETITION FOR WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS

### INTRODUCTION

This is a petition for a writ of habeas corpus filed on behalf of the Petitioner, seeking relief from unlawful immigration detention. Respondents are detaining Petitioner in violation of Petitioner's constitutional due process rights and beyond the Department of Homeland Security's lawful statutory authority. By subjecting Petitioner to unlawful and indefinite detention, Respondents further violate the Eighth Amendment's prohibition on cruel and unusual punishment.

Angela is 42 years old and born in El Salvador. He entered the United States without inspection in 2023. Before January 16, 2026, the Department of Homeland Security had never encountered or detained her.

She is an applicant for asylum. On January 31, 2026, she went in person to check in with DHS. She was detained and given no reason for such detention. Her life and that of her children was turned upside down. She has no arrests and had not committed any criminal or even traffic violation.

Previously she had been reporting regularly but now she was not allowed to leave.

She remains detained in Baltimore.

The Petitioner is an asylum applicant and had not yet appeared before an immigration court.

Her son describes her as a good and developed person and mother, who is attentive to the needs of her two children. As of today, the Petitioner has been held at Baltimore Holding Room. Her A-Number is [redacted] The Petitioner submits that his detention is in violation of his constitutional rights. Her detention is not justified under the Constitution or the Immigration and Nationality Act ("INA"). He seeks an order from this Court declaring his continued detention unlawful and ordering Respondents to release him or to hold a custody redetermination hearing.

**CUSTODY**

1. The Petitioner is in physical custody of Respondents Todd Lyon, Acting Director, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and Vernon Liggins, Field Office Director, ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations.
2. At the time of the filing of this petition, the Petitioner is detained at the Baltimore Holding Room located in Baltimore, Maryland. The Facility is operated by DHS to detain noncitizens like the Petitioner.

## JURISDICTION

3. This Court has jurisdiction over this habeas action under the Constitution of the United States, the Immigration and Nationality Act ("INA"), 8 U.S.C. § 1101 *et. seq.*, as amended by the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 ("IIRIRA"), Pub. L. No. 104-208, 110 Stat. 1570. This Court has subject matter jurisdiction under 28 U.S.C. § 2241 (habeas corpus), 28 U.S.C. § 1331 (federal question), and Article I, § 9, cl. 2 of the United States Constitution (Suspension Clause), as the Petitioner is presently in custody under color of authority of the United States and such custody is in violation of the U.S. Constitution, laws, or treaties of the United States.
4. This Court may grant relief under the habeas corpus statutes, 28 U.S.C. § 2241 *et. seq.*, the Declaratory Judgment Act, 28 U.S.C. § 2201 *et seq.*, and the All Writs Act, 28 U.S.C. § 1651.

## VENUE

5. Venue is proper in this District because the Petitioner is detained at Baltimore Holding Room, within this District and because a Respondent with immediate custody is located here.

## PARTIES

6. The Petitioner, whose A Number is [redacted], is a native and citizen of El Salvador, currently detained at Baltimore Holding Center, Maryland.
7. Respondent Todd Lyons is the Acting Director, ICE ERO with responsibility for field operations relevant to Petitioner's detention. Respondent is a legal custodian with the authority to release him.
8. Respondent Vernon Liggins is the Field Office Director, ICE ERO, with responsibility for field operations relevant to Petitioner's detention
9. Respondent Kristi Noem is the Secretary of DHS and is responsible for policies and practices concerning detention and removal.
10. Respondent Pamela Bondi is the Attorney General of the United States.

## EXHAUSTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE REMEDIES

11. The Petitioner should not be required to engage in futile EOIR bond and appeal litigation where the outcome is foreordained against him
12. Even if Respondents contend that the Petitioner has not exhausted his administrative remedies because he has not file for bond with the Immigration Court or appealed a likely BIA denial, the Court should waive the exhaustion requirement. Filing for bond would be futile given that IJ decisions on bond are controlled by the BIA's *Matter of Yajure-Hurtado,* 29 I&N Dec. 216 (BIA 2025), which found that any noncitizen present in the

United States without having been inspected and admitted is subject to detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2), rather than 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), regardless of how long they have resided in the United States and where they were encountered by immigration authorities.

13. Thus, filing for bond with the Immigration Court and appealing a sure denial to the BIA would create an intolerable delay and would certainly result in the BIA affirming the IJ's bond decision. *See Shalala v. Ill. Council on Long Term Care, Inc.*, 529 U.S. 1, 13 (2000).

14. The Petitioner's only remedy is by way of this judicial action.

## STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

15. On September 5, 2025, BIA issued *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, establishing that any noncitizen present in the United States without having been inspected and admitted is subject to detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2), rather than 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), regardless of how long they have resided in the United States and where they were encountered by immigration authorities. 29 I&N Dec. 216 (BIA 2025).

### Relevant Sections of the Immigration and Nationality Act

16. **U.S.C. § 1225 / INA § 235**: Chapter titled "Inspection by immigration officers; expedited removal of inadmissible arriving aliens; referral for hearing."

17. **8 U.S.C. § 1225(a)(1) / INA § 235(a)(1)**: Defines applicant for admission, "***for purposes of this chapter***" as "an alien present in the United States who has not been admitted or who arrives in the United States[.]"

18. **U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1) / INA § 235(b)(1)**: Lays out the class of noncitizens subject to expedited removal. Section 1225(b)(1)(A)(i) subjects to expedited removal any

applicants for admission "who [are] *arriving in* the United States [("Arriving Aliens")] **or** who [are] described in clause (iii)" **and** who lack valid entry documents. 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1)(A)(i) (emphases added). Clause (iii) provides for expedited removal of applicants for admission who are not "arriving in" the United States but who have not been admitted or paroled into the United States **and** cannot establish two years of physical presence in the United States "immediately prior to the determination of inadmissibility." 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1)(A)(iii).

19. **8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)(A) / INA § 235(b)(2)(A)**: A noncitizen who is an "applicant for admission" and is not clearly and beyond a doubt entitled to be admitted *must* be kept in DHS custody during the pendency of removal proceedings under 8 U.S.C. § 1229A (INA § 240). These are non-expedited proceedings and are commenced by the issuance of a charging document known as a Notice to Appear, Form I-862. Section 1225(b)(2) applies to arriving aliens and certain individuals stopped shortly after entry.

20. **8 U.S.C. § 1226 / INA § 236:** Chapter titled "Apprehension and detention of aliens."

21. **8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) / INA § 236(a)**: Allows the Attorney General, *on warrant*, to arrest and detain a noncitizen pending the outcome of their removal proceedings. Noncitizens arrested under a warrant may be released on bond or recognizance in DHS's discretion. Predecessor statutes to § 1226(a) authorized arrest, detention, and release of noncitizens inside the United States and permitted discretionary bond; when Congress enacted the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act ("IIRIRA"), it stated that § 1226 "restates the current provisions in [the predecessor statute] regarding the authority of the Attorney General to arrest, detain, and release

on bond a[ ] [noncitizen] who is not lawfully present in the United States[,]" indicating continuity. H.R. Rep. No. 104-469, pt. 1, at 229.

22. **8 U.S.C. § 1226(c) / INA § 236(c)**: Creates grounds of mandatory detention for criminal and terrorist noncitizens. The Laken Riley Act (LRA) added 8 U.S.C. § 1226(c)(1)(E), which requires DHS to keep detained noncitizens who are arrested for, charged with, or convicted of certain crimes, who are also inadmissible for being present in the country without inspection or admission, for lacking valid documentation, or for committing fraud or misrepresentation.

23. **8 U.S.C. § 1357(a) / INA § 287(a)**: Permits immigration officials to arrest noncitizens without a warrant where (1) the officer sees the noncitizen entering the country in violation of law; (2) the officer has reason to believe that the noncitizen is in the United States unlawfully and is likely to escape before a warrant can be obtained; or (3) the officer has reason to believe the noncitizen has committed a felony. The BIA construed the "reason to believe" standard with probable cause and recognized that a person in a vehicle may be deemed likely to escape before a warrant can be secured. *Matter of Mariscal-Aguilar*, 28 I&N Dec. 666 (BIA 2022).

**Longstanding Interpretation of 8 U.S.C. §§ 1225 and 1226**

24. Since 1996, the immigration courts, Board of Immigration Appeals, and federal courts recognized the plain text of these two sections, accepting that § 1225(b) only covers a narrow subset of detainees, with the rest subject to discretionary detention under the "catch-all" provision of § 1226(a). A longstanding practice of the government applying the law in a certain way can inform the court's determination of what the law is. *Loper Bright Enterprises v. Raimondo*, 603 U.S. 369, 386 (2024).

25. The U.S. Supreme Court added temporal and geographical confines to treating a noncitizen as an applicant for admission. In *Department of Homeland Security v. Thuraissigiam,* the Court noted that DHS historically treated noncitizens as applicants for admission only when encountered within 14 days of entry, and within 100 miles of the border. 591 U.S. 121, 134 n.2 (2020) (citing 69 Fed. Reg. 48879 (2004)). When the Court analyzed the constitutionality of expedited removal proceedings, it noted that the broad definition of an applicant for admission contained in § 1225 applies *for the purposes of those subject to expedited removal. Id.* at 124.

26. Indeed, in *Jennings v. Rodriguez,* the seminal case analyzing §§ 1225 and 1226, the United States Supreme Court maintained that § 1225(b) concerns "primarily [those] seeking entry," and is generally applicable "at the Nation's borders and ports of entry, where the Government must determine whether [a noncitizen] seeking to enter the country is admissible." 583 U.S. 281, 297, 287 (2018). On the other hand, § 1226 "authorizes the Government to detain certain aliens *already in the country* pending the outcome of removal proceedings." *Id.* at 289 (emphasis added).

27. The discretionary detention provision in § 1226 has been referred to as a catch-all provision, with the Supreme Court dubbing it a "default rule" that "applies to [noncitizens] already present in the United States." *Id.* at 288, 301.

28. In *Matter of Akhmedov,* the BIA acknowledged that noncitizens arrested within the interior of the United States and placed into removal proceedings with the issuance of a Notice to Appear (NTA) are detained under § 1226(a) and therefore the Immigration Judge had jurisdiction to consider their bond request. 29 I&N Dec. 166 (BIA 2025). *Matter of Q. Li* held that the detention of a noncitizen who is detained and arrested at

or near the border and placed into *expedited* removal proceedings is not governed by § 1226(a) but rather by § 1225(b). 29 I&N Dec. 66, 69 (BIA 2025).

**Matter of Yajure-Hurtado and DHS Policy on Detention**

29. In July 2025, DHS issued a policy alert laying out a novel interpretation of these two sections unsupported by the above case law: 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2) requires mandatory detention of all noncitizens present without admission, and that Immigration Judges therefore lack jurisdiction to grant them bond.

30. In *Matter of Yajure-Hurtado*, the BIA upheld DHS's policy and departed from three decades of statutory interpretation, holding that the detention of any noncitizen who is in the United States without being admitted is governed by § 1225(b)(2), irrespective of whether the noncitizen's encounter with immigration officials was when they were "arriving" or whether they have been physically present in the United States for more than two years. 29 I&N Dec. 216 (BIA 2025).

31. Accordingly, the decision held that Immigration Judges effectively only have jurisdiction over deciding bond for noncitizens who have been inspected and admitted, and that all noncitizens present in the United States without admission or parole must be detained during the pendency of their removal proceedings. *Id.* at 218, 223. It is in this context that the Petitioner requests habeas relief.

32. Respondents continue to subject the Petitioner to what is effectively mandatory detention based on this flawed logic.

**Chevron Overruled – Independent Statutory Interpretation Required**

33. For decades, courts deferred to reasonable agency interpretations of ambiguous statutes under *Chevron* deference. On June 8, 2024, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Chevron U.S.A., Inc. v. NRDC* in *Loper Bright Enterprises v. Raimondo*, holding that the Administrative Procedure Act requires courts to exercise their own independent judgment in deciding whether an agency has acted within its statutory authority. 603 U.S. 369 (2024). In its decision, the Court emphasized that judges may not defer to an agency interpretation merely because a statute is ambiguous; instead, the courts must decide the best interpretation, giving respectful consideration - but not deference - to the Executive Branch. *Id.*

**STATEMENT OF FACTS**

34. Angela is 42 years old and born in El Salvador. He entered the United States without inspection in 2023. Before January 16, 2026, the Department of Homeland Security had never encountered or detained her.

35. She is an applicant for asylum. On January 31, 2026, she went in person to check in with DHS. She was detained and given no reason for such detention. Her life and that of her children was turned upside down. She has no arrests and had not committed any criminal or even traffic violation.

36. Previously she had been reporting regularly but now she was not allowed to leave.

37. She remains detained in Baltimore.

38. The Petitioner is an asylum applicant and had not yet appeared before an immigration court.

39. Her son describes her as a good and developed person and mother, who is attentive to the needs of her two children. As of today, the Petitioner has been held at Baltimore Holding Room. Her A-Number is [redacted] The Petitioner submits that his detention is in violation of his constitutional rights. Her detention is not justified under the Constitution or the Immigration and Nationality Act ("INA"). He seeks an order from this Court declaring his continued detention unlawful and ordering Respondents to release him or to hold a custody redetermination hearing.

40. As of today, the Petitioner has been held at Baltimore Holding Room. Her A-Number is [redacted]

## CLAIMS FOR RELIEF

### COUNT ONE

### VIOLATION OF FIFTH AMENDMENT RIGHT TO SUBSTANTIVE AND PROCEDURAL DUE PROCESS

41. The Petitioner incorporates by reference all preceding paragraphs.

42. The Petitioner's detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1225 violates his substantive due process rights under the Fifth Amendment to the United States Constitution as it subjects him to arbitrary detention.

43. "Government detention violates the Fifth Amendment "unless the detention is ordered in a *criminal proceeding* with adequate procedural protections or, in certain special and narrow nonpunitive circumstances where a special justification . . . outweighs the individual's constitutionally protected interest in avoiding physical restraint." *Zadvydas v. Davis*, 553 U.S. 678, 690 (2001) (internal citations and quotations omitted).

44. Here, there is no "special justification" which allows the Respondents to deny the Petitioner the liberty to which he is entitled. Respondents have not alleged any "special justification" to support the Petitioner's continued detention.

45. Further, the BIA's decision in *Matter of Yahure Hurtado* claims that the immigration judge lacks the jurisdiction to grant bond to any noncitizen who has entered the United States without being inspected and admitted or paroled based on 8 U.S.C. § 1225. According to the BIA, anyone who entered without inspection or parole, no matter how long present in the United Sates before encountering immigration authorities, are essentially subject to mandatory detention. 29 I&N Dec. at 228.

46. Substantive due process also affords the Petitioner "a right to adequate food, shelter, clothing, and medical care . . . [and to] safety and freedom from bodily restraint." *See Youngberg v. Romeo*, 457 U.S. 307, 315-18 (1982).

47. Without federal court action, the Petitioner will likely remain detained for months. Given that as of the third quarter for fiscal year 2025 the BIA has 186,473 cases pending and only 16 appellate immigration judges (11 permanent members and five temporary members), immediate action from this court is required to prevent the Petitioner's long-term detention. *See Executive Office for Immigration Review Adjudication Statistics*, U.S. DEP'T OF JUSTICE, https://www.justice.gov/eoir/media/1344986/dl?inline (last updated July 31, 2025); *Board of Immigration Appeals*, U.S. DEP'T OF JUSTICE, https://www.justice.gov/eoir/board-of-immigration- appeals (last updated Sept. 16, 2025).

**COUNT TWO**

**VIOLATION OF EIGHT AMENDMENT RIGHT TO PROTECTION FROM CRUEL AND UNUSUAL PUNISHMENT**

48. The Petitioner incorporates all preceding paragraphs by reference.

49. Petitioner's confinement amounts to punishment, not civil detention. She is an asylum applicant who presented herself to DHS for a routine check-in on January 31, 2026. DHS detained her without explanation, despite no prior encounter, no criminal history, and no traffic violations. She had complied with reporting and had not yet appeared in immigration court. This sudden and unexplained loss of liberty inflicts needless harm and serves no civil purpose tied to her conduct.

50. The detention is excessive in relation to any legitimate goal. Petitioner is peaceful, compliant, and seeking protection. Yet she remains confined in the Baltimore Holding Room with no stated reason and no individualized assessment. Continued custody, without justification or a prompt chance to seek release, imposes severe hardship on her and her children that far outweighs any claimed administrative interest.

51. The severity of confinement is grossly disproportionate to Petitioner's actions. She did not evade authorities; she reported in person. She did not commit any offense; she sought asylum. Holding a non-dangerous, compliant mother in jail-like conditions turns a civil process into punishment. That punishment is cruel and unusual because it is unnecessary, harsh, and disconnected from any lawful purpose.

52. Petition detention amounts to cruel and unusual punishment. The government imposed physical restraint and loss of liberty even though Petitioner posed no threat, offered no resistance, and engaged in no criminal conduct. This treatment exceeds what is necessary for a civil immigration purpose.

53. The detention is punitive rather than civil. Petitioner had lived in Maryland for more

than ten years, worked steadily, and had never been arrested or encountered by DHS. Despite these facts, the government chose the most severe response—custodial detention—without showing any need for punishment, deterrence, or control. The manner of arrest and continued confinement reflects punishment, not regulation.

54. The harm imposed is excessive and grossly disproportionate. Petitioner's peaceful conduct resulted in sudden confinement, separation from her family, and loss of work without justification. Detaining a compliant, nonviolent individual under these conditions imposes needless suffering and serves no legitimate purpose. The government's actions cross the line from civil enforcement into unconstitutional punishment.

55. This relentless mental and emotional pain, coupled with the indefinite nature of his confinement, heightens the cruelty of thc Petitioner's detention and underscores the punishment's unusual severity.

56. The Eighth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution prohibits the government from inflicting cruel and unusual punishment on individuals.

57. To state a cognizable claim under the Eighth Amendment, the Petitioner must allege acts or omissions sufficiently harmful to show deliberate indifference to his needs. *See Estelle v. Gamble*, 429 U.S. 97, 106 (1976).

58. Even if no harm has occurred, the lack of safety in the Petitioner's detention conditions is sufficient for judicial intervention. *See Helling v. McKinney*, 509 U.S. 25, 33 (1993) (explaining that the Supreme Court and Courts of Appeals have recognized a remedy for unsafe conditions where a tragic event has not yet occurred, i.e. one need not wait for a traffic event to occur to file a claim for future harm under the Eighth Amendment).

59. The Petitioner's continued unlawful detention also constitutes cruel and unusual punishment under the Eighth Amendment because the Petitioner is subject to mandatory, indefinite detention based solely on Respondents' erroneous interpretation of 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2).

60. Detainees may challenge their confinement's unconstitutional conditions through writs of habeas corpus, an avenue which the U.S. Supreme Court has never explicitly foreclosed. *See Preiser v. Rodriguez*, 411 U.S. 475, 499-500 (1973) (stating that when "a prisoner is put under additional and unconstitutional restraints during his lawful custody, it is arguable that habeas corpus will lie to remove the restraints making the custody illegal.").

61. Respondents' continued custody of the Petitioner has transformed civil immigration detention into cruel and unusual punishment.

## PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, the Petitioner respectfully requests that this Court grant the following relief:

A. Assume jurisdiction over this matter.

B. Issue an order directing Respondents to Show Cause why the Writ should not be granted.

C. Enjoin Respondents from transferring Petitioner outside this District during this action or in a way that would strip this Court's jurisdiction.

D. Order immediate release on reasonable conditions.

1. Order that Petitioner is detained under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), not § 1225(b)(2)(A);

   - **Any appeal shall not automatically stay the release order**;

E. Grant any other relief which this Court deems just and proper.

DATED: February 2, 2026

Respectfully submitted,
Petitioner

By: _____/s/_____
Jorge E. Artieda, Esq.
Counsel for Petitioner
Va. Bar # 82963
P.O. Box 343
Falls Church, VA 22040
(703) 388-6055 (telephone)
(703) 649-6491 (facsimile)
jorge@artiedalaw.com (email)

**CERTIFICATION PURSUANT TO LOCAL STANDING ORDER 2025-01**

I, the undersigned, hereby certify pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. 11, as follows: (1) I understand the Petitioner to be presently detained in Maryland, based on the fact that Petitioner was arrested by ICE in Maryland two days ago and the fact that Petitioner recently called a friend/family member from the ICE Baltimore Hold Room to inform him he was there; (2) **emergency relief is necessary**, because Petitioner is at risk of unlawful removal from the United States; and (3) this Court has subject-matter jurisdiction over the Petitioner pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2241, and no jurisdiction-stripping statute applies to prevent habeas corpus review of detention and unlawful removal.

DATED: February 2, 2026

Respectfully submitted,
Petitioner

By: /s/
Jorge E. Artieda, Esq.
Counsel for Petitioner
Va. Bar # 82963
P.O. Box 343
Falls Church, VA 22040
(703) 388-6055 (telephone)
(703) 649-6491 (facsimile)
jorge@artiedalaw.com (email)

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

I represent Petitioner 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: February 2, 2026

/s/
Jorge E. Artieda, Counsel for Petitioner

## CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on February 2, 2026, I served a true and correct copy of the foregoing Petition on Respondents by USPS Certified Mail, Signature Required, to:

**The Honorable Kristi Noem**
Secretary of Homeland Security
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Office of the Executive Secretary
Mail Stop 0525
Washington, DC 20528

**The Honorable Pamela Bondi**
Attorney General of the United States
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

**Todd Lyons, Acting Director**
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
500 12th St. SW, Mail Stop 5900
Washington, DC 20536-5900

ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations, Baltimore Field Office
**Vernon Liggins, Acting Field Office Director**
George H. Fallon Federal Building
31 Hopkins Plaza, 6th Floor
Baltimore, MD 21201

/s/

Jorge E. Artieda