

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
MIDDLE DISTRICT OF GEORGIA
COLUMBUS DIVISION

KARINA DIAZ-REYES,
A# 

Petitioner,

vs.

JASON STREEVAL, in his official capacity as
Warden of Stewart Detention center; and
LADEON FRANCIS, *Field Office Director for ICE*
Atlanta Field Office, and
TODD LYONS, in his official capacity as *Acting*
Director of Immigration and Customs Enforcement; and
KRISTI NOEM, *Secretary of Homeland Security*; and
PAMELA BONDI, *U.S. Attorney General*.

Respondents.

CASE NO.:

VERIFIED PETITION FOR WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS AND
COMPLAINT FOR DECLARATORY AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This Petition challenges the current and impending unlawful detention of Petitioner, Karina Diaz-Reyes (“Petitioner”), A#  by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) at the Stewart Detention Center, Georgia. See Exhibit 1, ICE locator. This detention, unlawful from its inception, began with a warrantless arrest that lacked statutory authority and is perpetuated by Respondents’ misapplication of mandatory detention statutes meant only for noncitizens arriving at the border. Petitioner is neither a flight risk nor a danger to the community. Petitioner’s detention is unlawful under every conceivable statutory theory, trapping Respondents in a legal “Catch-22” of their own making.

The detention is void *ab initio* because it began with an illegal warrantless arrest and is now perpetuated under a statute that has no application to him. The Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) provides only two potential authorities for a civil immigration arrest in the interior of the country, and Respondents satisfied neither.

2. The primary authority, 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), unequivocally requires that an arrest be conducted “[o]n a warrant issued by the Attorney General,” a warrant Respondents failed to obtain. The statute’s narrow exception for a warrantless arrest, 8 U.S.C. § 1357(a)(2), is equally inapplicable, as it permits such an arrest only where an officer has reason to believe the individual is “likely to escape before a warrant can be obtained.” It was factually impossible for Petitioner to pose such a risk, as she was already secured in local law enforcement custody when ICE assumed control. Compounding this illegality, Respondents now attempt to justify the detention by misclassifying Petitioner—a resident of the United States for over a decade—as an “arriving alien” subject to mandatory detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b). This argument fails as a matter of law. Section 1225(b) governs the inspection and detention of noncitizens at the border who are “seeking admission”; it does not apply to an individual like Petitioner, who was arrested long after entry and deep within the interior of the country. This leaves Respondents with no lawful basis for the initial seizure. Furthermore, offering a bond hearing now cannot cure this fundamental defect. A bond hearing under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) is a procedural safeguard that follows a *lawful* arrest under that same statute. It is not a remedy for an unlawful arrest that violated the statute’s own warrant requirement from the

outset. To hold otherwise would be to retroactively sanitize an illegal seizure, rendering the warrant requirement in § 1226(a) meaningless. The government cannot violate the law to seize a person and then offer the procedures that would have followed a lawful seizure as a cure. Because the arrest itself was illegal, the entire detention is the fruit of a poisonous tree, and the only constitutionally sufficient remedy is immediate and unconditional release.

3. The government's recent policy shift—reclassifying noncitizens who entered without inspection as “arriving aliens” subject to mandatory detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)—contradicts the statute, decades of established statutory interpretation, agency regulations and practice, and binding precedent. Petitioner, apprehended in the interior years after entry, is entitled to discretionary bond hearings under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), not mandatory detention without judicial review. This legal theory has been repudiated by a tidal wave of HUNDREDS of recent district court decisions nationwide. *See* Exhibit 2, all rejecting Respondents' position. *See* also the landmark case from this Court rejecting the government's position and agreeing with Petitioner's that is entitled to a bond hearing, *J.A.M. v. Streeval*, No. 4:25-cv-342 (CDL), 2025 WL 3050094 (M.D. Ga., Nov. 1, 2025). Since habeas relief is individualized and cannot be brought as a class action, each case has to be litigated separately.
4. 3. Petitioner's initial and continued detention by ICE is unlawful and unconstitutional. The government's recent policy shift—reclassifying noncitizens who entered without inspection as “arriving aliens” subject to mandatory detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)—contradicts the statute, decades of established statutory

interpretation, agency regulations and practice, and binding precedent. Petitioner, apprehended in the interior years after entry, is entitled to discretionary bond hearings under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), not mandatory detention without judicial review. See Exhibit 2 current list of over 300 district courts from around the country agreeing with Petitioner, all rejecting Respondent's position. See also the landmark case from this Court rejecting the government's position and agreeing with Petitioner's that is entitled to a bond hearing, *J.A.M. v. Streeval*, No. 4:25-cv-342 (CDL), 2025 WL 3050094 (M.D. Ga., Nov. 1, 2025) and *P.R.S. v. Streeval*, No. 4:25-cv-330, 2025 WL 3269947 (M.D. Ga., Nov. 24, 2025). Since habeas relief is individualized and cannot be brought as a class action, each case has to be litigated separately.

5. Despite being apprehended within the interior of the United States long after arrival rather than at the border, Petitioner is now deemed ineligible for bond due to an entry without inspection. This stems from a controversial policy shift by ICE in July 2025, which aligns with a recent Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) decision. This decision disrupts decades of established legal precedent by introducing a novel interpretation of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). This interpretation, which contradicts both the statute's clear language and constitutional principles, reclassifies all noncitizens who entered without inspection, including the Petitioner, as "arriving aliens" or "applicants for admission." Consequently, they are subject to mandatory detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b), rendering them ineligible for bond hearings by immigration judges. However, this policy has now been VACATED under the Administrative

Procedure Act (APA) through a final, binding court order yet Respondents still continue to follow that policy, despite a final, binding judgment. *Maldonado Bautista v. Santacruz*, No. 5:25-cv-01873-SSS-BFM, 2025 WL 3288403 (C.D. Cal. Nov. 25, 2025). See below full discussion regarding this case and its implications. On February 18, 2026, the *Maldonado Bautista* court granted a motion to enforce that Final Judgment and, acting under 28 U.S.C. § 2202 and 5 U.S.C. § 706(2), expressly vacated the Board's decision in *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, 29 I. & N. Dec. 216 (BIA 2025), as contrary to law, holding that *Yajure Hurtado* simply parrots the unlawful July 2025 Interim Guidance and must therefore be set aside under the APA to restore the status quo ante. *Maldonado Bautista v. Santacruz*, No. 5:25-cv-01873-SSS-BFM (C.D. Cal. Feb. 18, 2026) (order granting motion to enforce judgment).

6. While § 1225 mandates detention without bond for noncitizens apprehended at the border as "seeking admission," it does not apply to those like the Petitioner, who was detained within the United States long after arrival here. Therefore, the Petitioner seeks a declaratory judgment from this Court affirming that Petitioner's detention is governed by 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a). The Petitioner requests an order for Petitioner's immediate release due to the unlawful arrest. Additionally, Petitioner requests that Respondents be prohibited from re-detaining the Petitioner or put any restraints on the Petitioner's liberty unless there are changed circumstances warranting re-arrest as detailed be and they can meet the same evidentiary standard.
7. Respondent's actions violate the Due Process Clause of the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution by depriving Petitioner of liberty without individualized

assessment or a meaningful opportunity to be heard before a neutral decisionmaker. The agencies' interpretation also contravenes the INA and its implementing regulations, the Administrative Procedure Act (APA), and the *Accardi* doctrine, which obligates administrative agencies to follow their own rules, procedures, and instructions. Numerous federal courts have rejected the government's novel reading of the detention statutes, reaffirming that interior apprehensions are governed by § 1226(a) and entitled to bond review.

8. Petitioner seeks immediate habeas, declaratory, and injunctive relief, ordering Respondents to be directed to immediately release Petitioner from custody. A detailed statement of facts and procedural history follows, supporting Petitioner's claims for relief.

II. JURISDICTION

A. This Court Has Jurisdiction Under 28 U.S.C. § 2241 and § 1331

9. This Court has jurisdiction under several legal provisions, including 28 U.S.C. § 2241, which grants federal courts the authority to issue writs of habeas corpus, and 28 U.S.C. § 1331, which provides for federal question jurisdiction. Jurisdiction over habeas claims is conferred by 28 U.S.C. § 2241, while non-habeas claims for declaratory and injunctive relief arise under 28 U.S.C. § 1331, the APA, and the Declaratory Judgment Act.
10. Additionally, jurisdiction is supported by Article I, § 9, cl. 2 of the Constitution, known as the Suspension Clause, and Article III, Section 2, which addresses the Court's authority to hear constitutional issues raised by the Petitioner. Petitioner seeks immediate judicial intervention to address ongoing violations of constitutional rights by the Respondents. This action is grounded in the United

States Constitution, the Immigration & Nationality Act of 1952, as amended (INA), 8 U.S.C. § 1101 *et seq.*, and the APA, 5 U.S.C. § 551 *et seq.* Furthermore, the Court may also exercise jurisdiction under 28 U.S.C. § 1331, as the action arises under federal law, and may grant relief pursuant to the Declaratory Judgment Act, 28 U.S.C. § 2201 *et seq.*, and the All Writs Act, 28 U.S.C. § 1651.

11. The Court has authority to issue a declaratory judgment and to grant temporary, preliminary, and permanent injunctive relief pursuant to Rules 57 and 65 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure (FRCP), as well as 28 U.S.C. §§ 2201-2202. Additionally, the Court can utilize the All Writs Act and its inherent equitable powers to provide such relief. Furthermore, the Court has the authority to issue a writ of habeas corpus pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2241.
12. This Court possesses federal question jurisdiction under the APA to “hold unlawful and set aside agency action” deemed “arbitrary, capricious, an abuse of discretion, or otherwise not in accordance with law,” as outlined in 5 U.S.C. § 706(2)(A). In the absence of a specific statutory review process, APA review of final agency actions can proceed through “any applicable form of legal action,” which includes actions for declaratory judgments, writs of prohibitory or mandatory injunction, or habeas corpus, in a court of competent jurisdiction, as specified in 5 U.S.C. § 703.
13. In *I.N.S. v. St. Cyr*, the Supreme Court held that federal courts retain *habeas corpus* jurisdiction under 28 USC § 2241, despite restrictions on judicial review enacted under the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRIRA) and the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996 (AEDPA). 533 U.S. 289 (2001). Consequently, section 2241 habeas review remains available

to Petitioner.

14. The U.S. Supreme Court has recognized district courts' jurisdiction to entertain habeas petitions raising colorable constitutional claims—including those alleging deprivation of liberty without due process, arbitrary or indefinite detention, and agency action contrary to law. Even though the government may detain individuals during removal proceedings, *Demore v. Kim*, 538 U.S. 510 (2003) (although that case involved detention under §1226(c) of certain criminal aliens), there are limitations to this power of the executive branch. Limitations like the Due Process Clause restrict the Government's power to detain noncitizens. It is well settled that individuals in deportation proceedings are entitled to due process of law under the Fifth Amendment. *Reno v. Flores*, 507 U.S. 292, 306 (1993). Courts must review immigration procedures and ensure that they comport with the Constitution.
15. Federal courts have retained the statutory authority to grant writs of habeas corpus since enactment of the Judiciary Act of 1789. In *Felker v. Turpin*, 518 U.S. 651 (1996), the Supreme Court declined to find a repeal of § 2241 by implication as to its original habeas corpus jurisdiction. See also *Boumediene v. Bush*, 553 U.S. 723 (2008). In addition to the Supreme Court in many cases, all Circuit Courts of Appeals have recognized district courts' jurisdiction to entertain habeas petitions raising colorable constitutional claims—including those alleging deprivation of liberty without due process, arbitrary or indefinite detention, and agency action contrary to law.
16. In this case, Petitioner asserts substantial constitutional violations—including deprivation of liberty without due process, arbitrary and capricious agency action,

violations of the *Accardi* doctrine, and other injuries without notice or opportunity to be heard. These claims fall squarely within the scope of habeas review preserved by statute and recognized by controlling precedent. Accordingly, this Court has both the authority and the obligation to adjudicate the constitutional and statutory claims presented in this Petition and to grant appropriate relief to remedy ongoing violations of Petitioner's rights.

B. The INA's Jurisdictional-Channeling Provisions Are Inapplicable

17. Petitioner's claims challenge only her civil immigration detention and the procedures used to prolong it—not the merits of removability or any final order of removal—and therefore fall outside 8 U.S.C. § 1252(b)(9)'s channeling provision. *See Jennings v. Rodriguez*, 583 U.S. 281, 291-292 (2018) (detention challenges are not “questions of law or fact arising from” removal proceedings). Consistent with that framing, any injunctive relief sought here is strictly as-applied to Petitioner—for example, directing Petitioner's release under § 1226(a) or barring application of § 1225 as to Petitioner—and does not “enjoin or restrain the operation” of any statute within § 1252(f)(1)'s bar. In any event, § 1252(f)(1) permits individualized, as-applied relief for a single noncitizen, even while prohibiting class-wide injunctions. *See Garland v. Aleman Gonzalez*, 596 U.S. 543, 548–49 (2022).
18. Section 1252(f)(1) does not bar the individualized injunctive relief sought here. That provision limits lower courts' authority to “enjoin or restrain the operation” of the INA's detention and removal provisions on a class-wide or programmatic basis but expressly preserves injunctive relief “with respect to the application of such provisions to an individual alien against whom proceedings under such part have

been initiated.” 8 U.S.C. § 1252(f)(1); *Garland v. Aleman Gonzalez*, 596 U.S. 543, 548–50 (2022). Petitioner seeks only as-applied relief tailored to Petitioner —e.g., directing Petitioner’s release under § 1226(a) or precluding DHS from enforcing the “arriving alien” definition of § 1225 toward Petitioner. That relief neither halts the general operation of any INA provision nor provides class-wide relief and thus falls squarely within § 1252(f)(1)’s carveout.

19. Section 1252(g) is likewise inapplicable. It is a “narrow” jurisdictional bar that applies only to three discrete decisions or actions: “to commence proceedings, adjudicate cases, or execute removal orders.” *Reno v. Am.-Arab Anti-Discrimination Comm.*, 525 U.S. 471, 482 (1999). Petitioner does not challenge any such decision. Petitioner challenges ongoing civil detention and DHS’s use of an unlawful interpretation to nullify the plain language of the INA and its regulations as applicable to these agencies. Such detention related claims and challenges to custody procedures fall outside § 1252(g). *See id.* at 482–83; cf. *Jennings v. Rodriguez*, 583 U.S. 281, 381–32 (2018) (§ 1252(b)(9) does not channel detention claims).
20. Section 1252(e)(3) is likewise inapplicable as it is narrowly tailored to channel systemic or facial challenges to the validity of the expedited removal “system” or its implementing regulations and written policies to the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, and only within 60 days of implementation. It does not bar as-applied, individualized habeas challenges to the legality or constitutionality of a particular noncitizen’s detention under § 1225(b)(2) or whether § 1225 governs Petitioner’s detention or § 1226. The text of § 1252(e)(3) is explicit: it covers

“[c]hallenges on the validity of the system” and review of “whether such a regulation, or a written policy directive, written policy guideline, or written procedure ... is not consistent with applicable provisions of this title or is otherwise in violation of law.” It does not preclude review of the legality of detention as applied to a specific individual, nor does it bar habeas review of constitutional claims or claims that the government is misapplying the statute in a particular case.

21. To prevent ouster of this Court’s habeas jurisdiction, the Court should, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1651(a) (All Writs Act) and 28 U.S.C. § 2241, issue an immediate limited order prohibiting Respondent from transferring Petitioner outside the court’s District or otherwise changing Petitioner’s immediate custodian without prior leave of Court while this action is pending. Such relief is necessary in aid of jurisdiction because habeas is governed by the district-of-confinement/immediate-custodian rule, and transfer can frustrate effective review. *See Rumsfeld v. Padilla*, 542 U.S. 426, 441–42 (2004); *Ex parte Endo*, 323 U.S. 283, 307 (1944); *FTC v. Dean Foods Co.*, 384 U.S. 597, 603–05 (1966).

III. VENUE

22. Venue is proper in the United States District Court for the Middle District of Georgia because Petitioner is currently detained at the Stewart Detention Center, Lumpkin, Georgia, under the custody of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Habeas petitions generally are filed in the district court with jurisdiction over the filer’s place of custody, also known as the district of confinement, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2241. Additionally, with respect to Petitioner’s non-habeas claims seeking prospective declaratory and injunctive relief against federal officials

(agencies and officers of the United States) sued in their official capacities, venue is proper under 28 U.S.C. § 1391(e)(1)(B) because a substantial part of the events or omissions giving rise to these claims, including the initial arrest and continued detention of Petitioner and the enforcement of the mandatory detention agency interpretation, occurred in this District. Furthermore, the Respondents are officers of United States agencies, the Petitioner is detained within this District, and there is no real property involved in this action.

IV. PARTIES

23. Petitioner, Karina Diaz Reyes, is a 44-year-old noncitizen who has resided in the United States since at least approximately 2005, following her entry without inspection through Arizona. She resides in Charlotte, North Carolina. Petitioner is currently detained at the Stewart Detention Center. She has no prior criminal record, no prior immigration proceedings, and poses neither a danger to the community nor a risk of flight.
24. Respondent Jason Streeval is the Jailer/Warden of Stewart Detention Center, Lumpkin Georgia. As such, Respondent Jason Streeval is responsible for the operation of the Detention Center where Petitioner is detained and is the immediate custodian who is currently holding Petitioner in physical custody. Because ICE contracts with private and county-operated detention facilities to house immigration detainees, Respondent Jason Streeval has immediate physical custody of the Petitioner and is sued in his official capacity.
25. Respondent Ladeon Francis is the Field Office Director for the ICE Atlanta Field Office. As such, Respondent Francis is responsible for the oversight of ICE

operations at the Stewart Detention Center. Respondent Francis is being sued in his official capacity. He is the head of the ICE office that unlawfully arrested Petitioner, and such arrest took place under his direction and supervision. He is the immediate *legal* custodian of Petitioner.

26. Respondent Todd Lyons is the Acting Director of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). As such, Respondent Lyons is responsible for the oversight of ICE operations and the head of the federal agency responsible for all immigration enforcement in the United States. Respondent Lyons is being sued in his official capacity.
27. Respondent Kristi Noem is the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). As Secretary of DHS, Secretary Noem is the cabinet-level official responsible for the general administration and enforcement of the immigration laws of the United States. Respondent Secretary Noem is being sued in her official capacity.
28. Respondent Pamela Bondi is the Attorney General of the United States and is sued in her official capacity since U.S. government agencies are Respondents in this complaint. Furthermore, the Immigration Judges who decide removal cases and applications for bond and relief from removal do so as her designees at the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR).
29. Petitioner names certain federal officials in their official capacities solely to preserve alternative, non-habeas avenues for prospective relief—such as as-applied declaratory and injunctive orders under 28 U.S.C. § 1331, the APA’s waiver of sovereign immunity, 5 U.S.C. § 702, the Declaratory Judgment Act, 28 U.S.C. §§

2201–2202, and the All Writs Act, 28 U.S.C. § 1651—necessary to enjoin enforcement of DHS regulations and their interpretation as applied to Petitioner, ensure compliance with DHS/EOIR custody regulations, prevent transfer or removal of Petitioner, and effectuate any release the Court orders at the agency level where policy and implementation authority reside. See, e.g., *Larson v. Domestic & Foreign Commerce Corp.*, 337 U.S. 682 (1949); *Dugan v. Rank*, 372 U.S. 609 (1963).¹

V. STATEMENT OF FACTS AND PROCEDURAL HISTORY

30. Petitioner, Karina Diaz Reyes is a 44-year-old noncitizen who has resided continuously in the United States since approximately 2005, following her entry without inspection through Arizona. Since that time, she has remained continuously present living in the United States for more than twenty years and has established deep family, community, and economic ties during that time. During this period, she was never placed in removal proceedings, was never issued a Notice to Appear, and was not subject to any prior order of removal. She has not previously filed any immigration applications or petitions and has never before sought relief before an immigration court.

¹ Petitioner acknowledges, consistent with *Rumsfeld v. Padilla*, 542 U.S. 426 (2004), that the proper respondent to the habeas claim is the immediate custodian, and does not rely on the federal officials as “habeas respondents.” Rather, Petitioner names these federal officials in their official capacities solely to ensure that the Court can issue effective relief on non-habeas claims, such as declaratory and injunctive relief, and to direct agency action to those with actual authority to implement it. Should the Court find these officials improper as respondents to the habeas count, Petitioner respectfully requests that any dismissal be limited to that claim and without prejudice to their continued status as respondents for the non-habeas claims. Maintaining these officials as parties is necessary to ensure that, if relief is granted, the responsible agency officials cannot simply re-arrest Petitioner or otherwise frustrate the Court’s order by invoking their erroneous interpretation of the INA. This approach is consistent with *Padilla* and ensures that the Court’s orders are both effective and enforceable.

31. Petitioner resides in Charlotte, North Carolina, where she has established deep and longstanding community ties. She is the mother of two United States citizen daughters, ages 18 and 16. One of her daughters suffers from severe eczema requiring consistent care and supervision. Petitioner has served as the primary financial provider for her household and owns her own business. She has no prior criminal history, no prior arrests, and no history of detention. The present detention constitutes her first encounter with immigration enforcement in over two decades of residence in the United States.
32. On or about February 17, 2026, Petitioner was stopped by local law enforcement while driving to work for an alleged traffic infraction, specifically a purported malfunctioning taillight. There is no indication that the stop involved any criminal conduct beyond this minor traffic matter. After running the vehicle's license plate, officers determined that the vehicle was registered to her husband, who reportedly has an outstanding order of removal. Although Petitioner herself had no outstanding warrant and no criminal record, she was placed in custody and transferred to immigration custody like a criminal.
33. Following the traffic stop, Petitioner was transported to an ICE facility in Charlotte, North Carolina. She was subsequently transferred out of state to the Stewart Detention Center in Lumpkin, Georgia, where she remains detained.
34. Upon information and belief, no Notice to Appear has been served and no removal proceedings have been formally initiated before an immigration court. There is no indication that she was presented with a judicial warrant at the time of arrest, nor that she was coerced into signing voluntary departure or any removal order. See

Exhibit 3 (EOIR). She is currently pursuing relief from removal in the form of Cancellation of Removal for Nonpermanent Residents and is represented in his removal and bond proceedings by counsel.

35. From the moment local law enforcement placed Petitioner under arrest during the traffic stop described above, she has remained continuously in secure custody and has not been at liberty. She has at all times been confined in locked detention facilities under guard and has not been free to leave on her own.
36. At no point between Petitioner's arrest and ICE's assumption of custody was Petitioner afforded any opportunity to secure release on the underlying local matter. Petitioner was not brought before a local court for a bond determination, was not permitted to post bond, and was never otherwise given the ability to exit local custody before ICE intervened.
37. ICE officers first assumed physical custody of Petitioner while she was already confined at a secure ICE facility in Charlotte, North Carolina, following her arrest during the traffic stop described above. Petitioner was not encountered in a public setting under circumstances suggesting any attempt to evade authorities. Rather, after being taken into custody by local law enforcement for a minor traffic infraction, she remained continuously detained and was transferred directly into immigration custody. She was subsequently transported out of state to the Stewart Detention Center, where she remains confined.
38. Petitioner's continued detention has caused significant hardship to her U.S. citizen children, who have been deprived of their primary caregiver and financial support. Prior to detention, Petitioner was responsible for the daily care and well-being of

her children and for maintaining household stability through her owned and operated own business. Her detention has disrupted family unity and placed emotional and financial strain on her children and extended family. Less-restrictive alternatives remain available and adequate such as release on recognizance or posting a low bond.

39. Petitioner poses no danger to the community and presents no risk of flight. She has substantial family ties, including two United States citizen daughters, a consistent employment history as a business owner, no criminal record, and no prior history of detention. Her continued and unexplained detention in the absence of formally initiated removal proceedings raises significant constitutional and statutory concerns warranting habeas relief.
40. Petitioner's detention is based solely on ICE's erroneous classification of similar noncitizens as an "arriving alien" or "applicant for admission", subject to mandatory detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b). Petitioner was apprehended in the interior of the United States several years after entry, and therefore, Petitioner's detention should be governed by 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), which allows for discretionary release on bond or recognizance.
41. Because Respondents continue to treat Petitioner as detained under § 1225(b), any request for bond redetermination before an Immigration Judge would be futile, as the Immigration Court has already disclaimed jurisdiction over such requests. Accordingly, habeas relief is the only available and effective remedy to secure Petitioner's release or a lawful custody hearing.
42. Any detention under these circumstances imposes unnecessary hardships on the

Petitioner and her family, depriving them of financial and emotional support, and violating the Petitioner's right to due process and freedom from arbitrary detention.

43. Petitioner has not received any individualized determination that her continued detention is necessary. Despite her lack of criminal history, strong equities, and eligibility for relief from removal, he remains detained pending the outcome of her immigration proceedings. Petitioner also suffers from chronic back pain resulting from a prior motorcycle accident and previously relied on pain medication, further exacerbating the hardship caused by his prolonged detention. Under these circumstances, Petitioner's continued confinement is not justified by any legitimate governmental interest and violates fundamental principles of due process.
44. Petitioner was arrested in the interior of the United States over twenty years after entry and is therefore improperly detained under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), ICE having not issued a warrant for their arrest. Had they issued a warrant, their arrest under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), which provides for discretionary bond or release on recognizance, may have been proper. Nevertheless, Respondents have classified their as an "arriving alien" and detained them under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)—rendering them ineligible for bond under their new, unlawful policy.
45. Upon information and belief, as of the time of filing of this Writ of Habeas, Petitioner remains confined at the Stewart Detention Center, Lumpkin, Georgia, solely because of ICE's invocation of its new interpretation that Petitioner is an "arriving alien" or "applicant for admission" and is therefore subject to mandatory detention. Even if Petitioner was to file for a bond redetermination with the immigration judge, they would deny it pursuant to *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, 29 I.

& N. Dec. 216. All Respondents consider that all noncitizens who entered without inspection are detained pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2). Accordingly, it would be futile for Petitioner to request a bond for release from an IJ. Due to the binding nature of *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, all immigration courts known to counsel are denying bond requests for similarly situated noncitizens, making habeas the only effective remedy. Similarly, even in cases an IJ would grant bond, ICE would appeal it which would leave Petitioner incarcerated through the appeal, which would take months and end up dismissed based on *Yajure Hurtado*.

46. Because all Respondents continue to treat Petitioner as detained under § 1225(b), any request for bond redetermination before an Immigration Judge would be futile, as the Immigration Court has already disclaimed jurisdiction over such requests. Accordingly, habeas relief is the only available and effective remedy to secure Petitioner's release or a lawful custody hearing.
47. Petitioner is a member of the nationwide "Bond Eligible Class" certified in *Maldonado Bautista v. Santacruz*, No. 5:25cv01873SSSBFM (C.D. Cal.), which, in substance, encompasses noncitizens who entered the United States without inspection, were apprehended in the interior of the country, are or were placed in removal proceedings under 8 U.S.C. § 1229a, and are or were detained by DHS under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b) based solely on their entry without inspection rather than under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a). The Final Judgment in *Maldonado Bautista* declares that such individuals are subject to discretionary bond under § 1226(a) and vacates DHS's contrary policy.
48. Petitioner satisfies each element of that class definition. First, she entered the

United States without inspection in approximately December 2005 and has never been lawfully admitted or paroled. Second, she was apprehended in the interior of the United States, in Charlotte, North Carolina, when local law enforcement officers detained her in connection with a minor traffic infraction and subsequently transferred her into immigration custody. She was later transported to the Stewart Detention Center, where ICE currently maintains custody over her.

49. Third, Petitioner has not yet been placed in removal proceedings under 8 U.S.C. § 1229a before the immigration court. Exhibit 3. Fourth, ICE is detaining Petitioner under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2) and treating her as an “arriving alien” or “applicant for admission” solely because of her entry without inspection, and not under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a)’s discretionary custody framework. ICE’s custody paperwork, including the Notice to Appear and related custody documents, reflects detention under § 1225(b)(2) and contains no allegation of criminal history, dangerousness, or prior removal order beyond Petitioner’s entry without inspection. Accordingly, Petitioner falls squarely within the Bond Eligible Class protected by the Final Judgment in *Maldonado Bautista*. Although the Maldonado Bautista court has now vacated *Yajure Hurtado* under the APA, immigration judges and ICE officers, as a practical matter, continue to treat it as controlling guidance in the absence of new EOIR instructions, so detained noncitizens like Petitioner are still being denied bond solely because of their entry without inspection, making habeas the only effective remedy.

VI. EXHAUSTION OF REMEDIES

50. **No statutory exhaustion requirement applies to habeas cases**, and the recent interpretations by DHS and EOIR have effectively closed all administrative avenues for securing release for noncitizens, like Petitioner, who entered the U.S. without inspection. ICE's internal policy from July 2025, coupled with the EOIR's Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) precedent, mandates that immigration judges deny bond to the Petitioner and similarly situated noncitizens, rendering any further administrative steps futile. An administrative remedy may be inadequate where the administrative body is shown to be biased or has otherwise predetermined the issue before it as noted in *Gibson v. Berryhill*, 411 U. S. 564, 575, n. 14 (1973). Requiring Petitioner to seek reconsideration with ICE or a bond hearing with an immigration judge "would be to demand a futile act" as no relief would be granted while Petitioner languishes in detention, as highlighted in *Houghton v. Shafer*, 392 U.S. 639, 640 (1968). Moreover, even if any remedies were available, the habeas statute does not require Petitioner to exhaust them.
51. Furthermore, even if applied, the doctrine of exhaustion of administrative remedies would have been futile on claim attacking constitutionality of ICE's actions and ICE's and EOIR's current interpretations of the mandatory detention provisions. Administrative hearings cannot address the constitutional claims at issue, rendering further proceedings ineffective. Moreover, where ICE seeks to quickly remove noncitizens like Petitioner even to third countries, without due process, particularly under the current administration's policies, underscores the inadequacy of administrative remedies. *McCarthy v. Madigan*, 503 U.S. 140, 146–49 (1992)

(futility exception to exhaustion applies where administrative remedies are inadequate or unavailable). Thus, pursuing such remedies would be an exercise in futility, as they fail to provide any meaningful opportunity to address the constitutional violations at hand.

52. Petitioner has exhausted administrative remedies to the extent required by law, and Petitioner's only remedy is by way of this judicial action.

VII. PETITIONER'S ARREST AND DETENTION ARE UNLAWFUL *AB INITIO*

53. Petitioner's detention is unlawful from its very inception because her arrest by ICE violated the clear and restrictive statutory framework established by Congress. The Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) provides only two potential authorities for a civil immigration arrest in the interior of the United States. The primary authority, 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), explicitly requires that an arrest be conducted "[o]n a **warrant** issued by the Attorney General". The statute provides a narrow exception to this rule in 8 U.S.C. § 1357(a)(2), which permits a warrantless arrest only where an officer has reason to believe the individual is unlawfully present and is "likely to escape before a warrant can be obtained." Respondents satisfied neither of these statutory requirements, rendering the seizure of Petitioner a legal nullity from the outset.
54. The warrantless seizure of Petitioner was statutorily invalid because Respondents could not possibly meet the exigency requirement of 8 U.S.C. § 1357(a)(2). The "likely to escape" determination is a mandatory prerequisite, not mere surplusage. See *United States v. Pacheco-Alvarez*, 227 F. Supp. 3d 863, 878 (S.D.

Ohio 2016). Here, it was a factual impossibility for Petitioner to pose a risk of escape, as she was secured in the custody of other law enforcement when ICE officers took her. As courts have recognized, the government cannot justify a warrantless arrest under this exception without an “individualized assessment” of flight risk, and the argument that any person in local custody is inherently likely to escape upon release has been rejected. Since the exception for a warrantless arrest is inapplicable, Respondents’ only remaining authority was 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), which required a warrant that Respondents did not possess. Having failed under both statutory provisions, the arrest was void *ab initio*.

55. Because the arrest was fundamentally unlawful, the only constitutionally sufficient remedy is immediate and unconditional release. A subsequent administrative bond hearing is wholly inadequate, as it cannot cure the initial violation of Petitioner’s liberty. The government’s continued custody of Petitioner is the direct “fruit of the poisonous tree”—the poisonous tree being the illegal arrest itself. *See Wong Sun v. United States*, 371 U.S. 471, 484–88 (1963); *Silverthorne Lumber Co. v. United States*, 251 U.S. 385, 392 (1920). Allowing subsequent proceedings, like a bond hearing, to continue would improperly legitimize a detention that never had a lawful basis. Ordering such a hearing would treat the detention as if it were lawfully initiated under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), rewarding Respondents for bypassing the statute’s explicit warrant requirement. As other courts have concluded, where detention is based on an unlawful arrest and derivative evidence is suppressed, the appropriate remedy is immediate release. *See Rosado v. Figueroa*, No. CV-25-02157-PHX DLR, 2025 WL 2337099, at *19 (D. Ariz. Aug. 11, 2025). Law and

justice require restoring the liberty that was unlawfully taken.

56. Petitioner's detention is thus unlawful under any statutory theory Respondents could possibly advance. Petitioner's detention was initiated under 8 U.S.C. § 1225, a statute district Courts around the country have repeatedly found inapplicable to interior apprehensions in dozens of cases involving similarly situated petitioners. Yet, even if Respondents had attempted to detain her under the correct statute for interior apprehensions, 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), the arrest would still be void because they failed to obtain the prerequisite warrant that the statute unequivocally requires. These are not mere procedural missteps; an arrest conducted without any statutory authority is an unreasonable seizure that violates the Fourth Amendment. Because the initial seizure and subsequent detention are unlawful *ab initio* under either statutory scheme, the only appropriate and constitutionally sufficient remedy is the one that restores the liberty that was illegally taken: immediate and unconditional release. A bond hearing under § 1226(a) is an inadequate remedy because it presupposes a lawful arrest under that statute—a condition that does not exist here.

VIII. LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND ARGUMENT

A. Foundational Constitutional Protections and Habeas Jurisdiction

57. It is a bedrock principle of constitutional law that the Fifth Amendment's Due Process Clause protects all "persons" within the United States from deprivation of liberty without due process, a protection that extends to all noncitizens, regardless of whether their presence is "lawful, unlawful, temporary, or permanent." *Zadvydas v. Davis*, 533 U.S. 678, 693 (2001); *see also Landon v. Plasencia*, 459 U.S. 21, 32 (1982); *Mathews v. Diaz*, 426 U.S. 67, 77 (1976); *Yick Wo v. Hopkins*, 118 U.S.

356, 369 (1886). “Freedom from imprisonment—from government custody, detention, or other forms of physical restraint—lies at the heart of the liberty that Clause protects.” *Zadvydas*, 533 U.S. at 690.

58. This Court has fundamental authority and a constitutional duty under 28 U.S.C. § 2241 to remedy Petitioner’s unlawful detention. The Supreme Court has consistently affirmed that the Great Writ is the primary instrument for challenging the legality of civil immigration detention. *See Zadvydas*, 533 U.S. at 687; *I.N.S. v. St. Cyr*, 533 U.S. 289, 314 (2001); *Jennings v. Rodriguez*, 583 U.S. 281, 285–86 (2018). As “perhaps the most important writ known to the constitutional law,” habeas corpus is an equitable tool that empowers this Court not just to review custody, but to “dispose of the matter as law and justice require” under 28 U.S.C. § 2243. *Fay v. Noia*, 372 U.S. 391, 400 (1963). That power explicitly includes ordering a petitioner’s immediate release. *Boumediene v. Bush*, 553 U.S. 723, 787 (2008).

B. This Court’s Holding in *J.A.M. v. Streeval: Interior Apprehensions Are Governed by § 1226(a)*

59. This Court has already rejected the government’s attempt to subject long-term residents apprehended in the interior to the mandatory detention provisions of 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2). In *J.A.M. v. Streeval*, No. 4:25-cv-342 (CDL), 2025 WL 3050094 (M.D. Ga. Nov. 1, 2025), a case with nearly identical facts, this Court harmonized the INA’s distinct detention schemes. It held that § 1225, which applies to aliens “seeking admission,” does not cover individuals already present in the U.S., as “seeking admission” requires an active attempt to enter, not mere presence. *Id.* The court therefore concluded that noncitizens apprehended in the

interior, like Petitioner, are properly detained under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) and are entitled to a bond hearing. As Petitioner's circumstances are legally indistinguishable from those in *J.A.M.*, the same statutory analysis compels the same conclusion.

C. Recent Federal Court Cases Rejecting DHS' and EOIR's New Interpretation

60. This Court's holding in *J.A.M.* aligns with a tidal wave of recent decisions from hundreds of district courts that have repudiated the government's novel reinterpretation of the INA (See Ex. 2). These courts consistently find that applying the "arriving alien" framework of § 1225 to interior apprehensions defies the statute's plain language.² As one court memorably explained, a person who sneaks into a movie theater is described as being "already present there," not as "seeking

² *Savane v. Francis*, 2025 WL 2774452 (S.D.N.Y. Sept. 28, 2025) (Petitioner arrested pursuant to 1225 which was improper; habeas petition granted and immediate release ordered within one business day); *Artiga v. Genalo*, 2025 WL 2829434 (E.D.N.Y. Oct. 5, 2025) (Petitioner unlawfully detained pursuant to 1225, government ordered to transport Petitioner back to EDNY within 24 hours and immediately upon effectuating his transfer, to release him from custody); *Cuevas Guzman v. Andrews*, 2025 WL 2617256 (E.D. Cal. Sept. 9, 2025), (petitioner entered without inspection more than 30 years ago, detained pursuant to 1225, court found 1226(a) applied based on statutory language; PI granted and court ordered release); *Echevarria v. Bondi*, 2025 WL 2821282 (D. Ariz. Oct. 3, 2025), entered without inspection in 2001, arrested in 2025 under 1225(b); the 24 year period petitioner resided in the U.S. made the plain language of 1225(b) was inapplicable to him, at the time of arrest an immigration officer was not "examining" him and he was not "seeking" admission; Based on *Jennings and Nielsen*, statutory scheme of 1226(a) applies); *Maldonado Vazquez v. Feeley*, 2025 WL 2676082 (D. Nev. Sept. 17, 2025) (entered without inspection over 20 years ago; detained July 2025; court help petitioner held pursuant to 1226(a) not as the government contends 1225(b)(2); Yajure Hurtado renders requiring prudential exhaustion futile; PI granted and release ordered on IJ bond); *Rodriguez Vazquez v. Bostock*, 2025 WL 2782499 (W.D. Wash. Sept. 30, 2025) (court granted summary judgement on behalf of a class of people without lawful status held in Tacoma who entered without inspection and not apprehended upon arrival, court held plain text of 1226(a) applies rather than 1225(b) and issues a detailed statutory analysis); *Guzman Alfaro v. Wamsley*, 2025 WL 2822113 (W.D. Wash. Oct. 2, 2025) (court granted similar relief as a class member of *Rodriguez Vasquez*; *Garcia Cortes v. Noem*, 2025 WL 2652880 (D. Colo. Sept. 16, 2025) (Court held 1226(a) and not 1225(b)(2) authorizes detention; procedural due process violated under *Mathews*, habeas granted); *Lopez-Campos v. Raycroft*, No. 2:25-cv-12486, 2025 WL 2496379, at *5-6 (E.D. Mich. Aug. 29, 2025) (granting petition for writ of habeas corpus ordering immediate release or bond hearing, where, for 30 years, courts have applied section 1226(a) to noncitizens like the petitioner who was already in the United States but facing removal, rejecting the government's argument that section 1225 applied so no bond hearing was required.

admission.” *Lopez Benitez v. Francis*, — F.Supp.3d at —, 2025 WL 2371588, at *7. The government’s position would also render § 1226(a) —the statute governing discretionary bond for interior arrests—a near nullity, a result Congress could not have intended. *Id.* at *8. While these cases confirm the illegality of Petitioner’s detention, habeas relief is individualized, necessitating this petition to vindicate Petitioner’s rights.

IX. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE RELIEF SOUGHT

A. Habeas Jurisdiction

61. This Court has fundamental authority and a constitutional duty under 28 U.S.C. § 2241 to remedy Petitioner’s unlawful detention. The Supreme Court has consistently affirmed that the Great Writ is the primary instrument for challenging the legality of civil immigration detention. *See Zadvydas v. Davis*, 533 U.S. 678, 687 (2001); *I.N.S. v. St. Cyr*, 533 U.S. 289, 314 (2001); *Jennings v. Rodriguez*, 583 U.S. 281, 285–86 (2018). As “perhaps the most important writ known to the constitutional law,” habeas corpus is an equitable tool that empowers this Court not just to review custody, but to “dispose of the matter as law and justice require” under 28 U.S.C. § 2243. *Fay v. Noia*, 372 U.S. 391, 400 (1963); *Schlup v. Delo*, 513 U.S. 298, 319 (1995). That power explicitly includes ordering a petitioner’s immediate release. *Boumediene v. Bush*, 553 U.S. 723, 787 (2008). This Court’s jurisdiction is secure, as the concept of “custody” is broad, attaching at the time of filing and persisting despite subsequent release due to the significant ongoing restraints on Petitioner’s liberty. *See Hensley v. Municipal Court*, 411 U.S. 345, 351 (1973).

B. The Administrative Procedure Act (APA)

62. Petitioner's detention is predicated on two agency actions—ICE's July 2025 "Interim Guidance" and the BIA's decision in *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, 29 I&N Dec. 216 (BIA 2025)—that are subject to this Court's review. These policies represent the "consummation of the agency's decisionmaking process" and are the direct cause of Petitioner's unlawful confinement, qualifying them as reviewable "final agency action" under the APA. See *Bennett v. Spear*, 520 U.S. 154, 178 (1997); 5 U.S.C. § 704. .

C. The Accardi Doctrine Requires Agencies to Follow Their Own Rules

63. Respondents' actions also violate the bedrock principle of administrative law that agencies are bound by their own rules. *United States ex rel. Accardi v. Shaughnessy*, 347 U.S. 260, 268 (1954). This doctrine is not limited to formal regulations but extends to internal procedures and instructions that affect individual rights. See *Morton v. Ruiz*, 415 U.S. 199, 235 (1974); *Montilla v. INS*, 926 F.2d 162, 167 (2d Cir. 1991). By abandoning their long-standing regulations and practices that have historically afforded bond hearings for interior apprehensions, Respondents have acted unlawfully, and their actions must be set aside. See *U.S. v. Heffner*, 420 F.2d 809, 812 (4th Cir. 1969).

X. PETITIONER'S DETENTION IS UNLAWFUL UNDER THE BINDING FINAL JUDGMENT IN *MALDONADO BAUTISTA*

64. Petitioner's detention is unlawful for another simple, dispositive reason: she is being held by the same government Respondents who are subject to a binding nationwide Final Judgment that expressly **VACATES** the very policy they are using to confine him. In *Maldonado Bautista v. Santacruz*, No. 5:25-cv-01873-

SSS-BFM, 2025 WL 3288403 (C.D. Cal. Nov. 25, 2025) (*Maldonado Bautista*) a federal court entered a Final Judgment under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 54(b) that:

- a. **DECLARED** that noncitizens like Petitioner—who entered without inspection and were apprehended in the interior—are subject to discretionary bond hearings under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), not mandatory detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b); and
 - b. **VACATED** the July 2025 ICE “Interim Guidance” policy as “unlawful under the APA.”
 - c. **VACATED** *Matter of Yajure Hurtado* under the APA.
65. On February 18, 2026, the *Maldonado Bautista* court granted Plaintiffs’ Motion to Enforce Judgment and, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2202 and 5 U.S.C. § 706(2), vacated *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, 29 I. & N. Dec. 216 (BIA 2025), as contrary to law. In doing so, the court held that *Yajure Hurtado* is functionally indistinguishable from the July 2025 ICE Interim Guidance previously vacated, because it adopts the same unlawful statutory interpretation and is being used to deny bond hearings to the certified “Bond Eligible Class.” The court therefore set aside *Yajure Hurtado* under the APA to “restore the status quo” that existed before DHS and EOIR adopted that interpretation. *Maldonado Bautista v. Santacruz*, No. 5:25cv01873SSSBFM (C.D. Cal. Feb. 18, 2026) (order granting motion to enforce judgment). ECF 116.
66. As a member of the certified nationwide “Bond Eligible Class” in that action, Petitioner’s rights have already been adjudicated. Respondents are collaterally

estopped from relitigating the central legal issue—the illegality of their detention policy—against Petitioner.

67. The court’s **vacatur** of the ICE policy is the critical point. A vacated agency policy is a legal nullity. It is void. Respondents cannot lawfully detain Petitioner based on authority that a federal court has already nullified. Their continued detention of Petitioner is not just an unlawful interpretation of the INA; it is an act of defiance against a binding Final Judgment entered specifically to “eliminate any doubt regarding [their] legal obligations” after they demonstrated widespread noncompliance with the court’s earlier orders.
68. The doctrine of collateral estoppel bars Respondents from relitigating the legality of the detention policy against Petitioner. The elements for estoppel are clearly met: (1) the legal issue here—whether noncitizens apprehended in the interior may be subjected to mandatory detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)—is identical to the issue decided in *Maldonado Bautista*; (2) the issue was actually litigated and resolved by a final judgment on the merits in that case; (3) Respondents, as defendants in *Maldonado Bautista*, had a full and fair opportunity to litigate the issue; and (4) the court’s determination on the illegality of the policy was essential to its final judgment vacating the policy. As Petitioner is a member of the class certified in that action, Respondents are precluded from re-arguing that their now-vacated policy provides a lawful basis for Petitioner’s detention.
69. The court’s **vacatur** of the ICE policy is the critical point. A vacated agency policy is a legal nullity. It is void. Respondents cannot lawfully detain Petitioner based on authority that a federal court has already nullified. Their continued detention of

Petitioner is not just an unlawful interpretation of the INA; it is an act of defiance against a binding Final Judgment entered specifically to “eliminate any doubt regarding [their] legal obligations” after they demonstrated widespread noncompliance with the court’s earlier orders.

70. Under the APA, when a court finds agency action “arbitrary, capricious, an abuse of discretion, or otherwise not in accordance with law,” it must “hold unlawful and set aside” that action. 5 U.S.C. § 706(2)(A). Vacatur is the default remedy; it extinguishes the legal force and effect of the challenged rule, policy, or adjudicatory precedent and restores the pre-existing legal framework. Federal courts routinely use vacatur in immigration and enforcement cases, including to nullify DHS and ICE policies that conflict with statutes or regulations. See, e.g., *Kidd v. Mayorkas*, 734 F.Supp.3d 967 (C.D. Cal. May 15, 2024) (vacating ICE’s “knock and talk” policy under the APA as contrary to the Fourth Amendment and 8 C.F.R. § 287.8(f)(2)). By vacating both the July 2025 Interim Guidance and *Yajure Hurtado*, the *Maldonado Bautista* court has already removed the only articulated legal basis DHS and EOIR had advanced for treating long-term interior entrants like Petitioner as mandatory detainees under § 1225(b) rather than bond-eligible under § 1226(a).
71. Respondents cannot claim that compliance with the *Maldonado Bautista* judgment is administratively infeasible. The Government has proven its ability to develop and implement complex, multi-agency procedures to comply with court orders impacting immigration proceedings. For instance, in *Al Otro Lado, Inc. v. Mayorkas*, 619 F.Supp.3d 1029 (S.D. Cal. 2022), ICE, CBP, and USCIS developed detailed guidance and screening procedures to identify and process potential class members for relief

under a preliminary injunction. These procedures involved creating master lists from database queries, issuing interim guidance to field offices to suspend removals, and establishing a framework for P.I. class-membership determinations. The existence of such established compliance mechanisms in other large-scale litigation demonstrates that Respondents' failure to adhere to the *Maldonado Bautista* final judgment is not a matter of incapacity but a matter of choice—a willful disregard for a binding court order.

72. This definitive ruling mandates immediate release, not a bond hearing. A bond hearing is a remedy for a detention that was lawfully initiated. It is not a remedy for a detention that was unlawful from its inception (*ab initio*). Here, the detention is based on a void policy and is therefore illegal at its core. A subsequent administrative hearing cannot cure this fundamental violation. To order a bond hearing would be to reward Respondents' non-compliance by prolonging an illegal detention and treating it as if it had a lawful basis. When a person's liberty is taken without legal authority, the only just remedy is to restore that liberty before the unlawful action occurred.
73. Because Respondents are acting in defiance of a final judgment, Petitioner's detention is void *ab initio*. This is not a case of prolonged but initially lawful detention where a bond hearing might become appropriate over time. Rather, the government's authority to detain them under the challenged policy has been judicially extinguished. To order a bond hearing would be to grant credence to a detention that has no legal foundation and would reward Respondents' non-compliance. "When liberty is restrained based on a nullified policy, the 'great writ of habeas corpus' serves as the 'best and only sufficient defence of personal freedom'. *Ex parte Yerger*,

75 U.S. 85, 95 (1868). As the ‘most speedy, direct, and powerful remedy from wrongful detention’, its purpose here is not to procure a future administrative process, but to correct the ongoing illegal confinement immediately. *Alvarez v. U.S. Immigration & Customs Enforcement*, 818 F.3d 1194 (11th Cir. 2016). Therefore, under its authority to ‘dispose of the matter as law and justice require,’ 28 U.S.C. § 2243, this Court should order Petitioner’s immediate and unconditional release.

74. This individual habeas petition is the precise vehicle required to enforce the rights declared in *Maldonado Bautista*. As the Supreme Court clarified in *Garland v. Aleman Gonzalez*, 596 U.S. 543 (2022), the INA’s jurisdictional rules at 8 U.S.C. § 1252(f)(1) prevent class actions from yielding coercive, class-wide release orders. Instead, the statutory scheme contemplates a two-step process: (1) a class-wide declaratory judgment establishes the illegality of a government policy, and (2) individual habeas petitions, which are protected by the Suspension Clause, provide the “necessary and distinct vehicle” to enforce that declaration and secure release. See *Jennings v. Rodriguez*, 583 U.S. 281, 309 (2018); *Hamama v. Adducci*, 912 F.3d 869, 879 (6th Cir. 2018).
75. Therefore, neither claim preclusion nor exhaustion bars this petition. This action seeks a coercive remedy (release) that was statutorily unavailable in the class action. The declaratory judgment in *Maldonado Bautista*, which has “the force and effect of a final judgment or decree” under 28 U.S.C. § 2201(a), serves as a predicate for this Court to grant relief, not a bar to it. See *Calderon v. Ashmus*, 523 U.S. 740, 747 (1998); *Henglein v. Colt Indus. Operating Corp.*, 260 F.3d 201, 211–12 (3d Cir. 2001); *Allard v. DeLorean*, 884 F.2d 464, 466 (9th Cir. 1989). Because the Rule

23(b)(2) declaratory relief in *Maldonado Bautista* “operates uniformly across the class,” it definitively establishes the unlawfulness of Petitioner’s detention. *Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. v. Dukes*, 564 U.S. 338, 361–62 (2011). This Court should enforce that final judgment by granting the only remedy that cures an illegal detention: immediate and unconditional release..

XI. CAUSES OF ACTION AND CLAIMS FOR RELIEF

COUNT ONE

Unlawful Arrest in Violation of the Fourth Amendment and the INA (8 U.S.C. §§ 1226(a), 1357(a)(2))

76. Petitioner realleges and incorporates by reference all paragraphs above as if fully set forth here.
77. Petitioner’s seizure and detention are unlawful *ab initio* because her arrest violated the clear statutory framework established by Congress and the Fourth Amendment’s prohibition on unreasonable seizures. The primary authority for a civil immigration arrest in the interior of the United States requires that it be conducted “[o]n a **warrant.**” 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a). The narrow exception for a warrantless arrest under 8 U.S.C. § 1357(a)(2) demands a showing that the individual is “likely to escape before a warrant can be obtained”.
78. Respondents failed to meet either requirement. It was a factual impossibility for Petitioner to be “likely to escape” in that situation as described in the facts and procedural history above. Having failed to satisfy the statute’s mandatory exigency requirement, Respondents’ only lawful path to arrest Petitioner was to obtain a warrant under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), which they have failed to do.
79. An arrest conducted without any statutory authority is an unreasonable seizure in violation of the Fourth Amendment. Because the initial seizure was void, the

government's custody over Petitioner's person is the direct "fruit of the poisonous tree" and is incurably tainted. A subsequent bond hearing cannot remedy a detention that never had a lawful beginning. The only proper remedy for this fundamental statutory and constitutional violation is immediate and unconditional release.

COUNT TWO
Unlawful Detention in Violation of a Binding Final Judgment

80. Petitioner realleges and incorporates by reference all paragraphs above as if fully set forth here.
81. Petitioner is a member of the nationwide class certified in *Maldonado Bautista v. Santacruz*, No. 5:25-cv-01873-SSS-BFM, 2025 WL 3288403 (C.D. Cal. Nov. 25, 2025). As a class member, their rights have been adjudicated by a Final Judgment which **DECLARES** that their detention is governed by 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) and **VACATES** the very DHS policy that Respondents rely on as a reason for Petitioner's mandatory detention. Similarly, *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, now officially **VACATED** as of February 18, 2026 and can no longer be used to deny bond.
82. Respondents' continued detention of Petitioner based on a vacated policy and in direct defiance of a binding Final Judgment is independently unlawful. This conduct renders Petitioner's detention illegal and warrants their immediate release as the proper enforcement of the rights adjudicated in their favor.

COUNT THREE
**Statutory Violation of the Immigration and Nationality Act, Agency Regulations
And the Accardi Doctrine**

83. Petitioner realleges and incorporates by reference all paragraphs above as if fully set forth here.

84. Petitioner's detention is the direct result of a cascade of unlawful agency actions that violate the plain text of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), contravene decades of binding agency regulations, and therefore constitute a flagrant violation of the *Accardi* doctrine. Respondents are unlawfully detaining Petitioner by misclassifying Petitioner as an "arriving alien" subject to mandatory detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b) when the statutes and the agency's own rules unambiguously require Petitioner's case to be processed under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), which provides for discretionary release on bond.
85. First, Respondents' actions defy the clear statutory scheme established by Congress. The INA creates two distinct detention frameworks: § 1225 governs the inspection and mandatory detention of aliens "arriving in the United States," while § 1226(a) governs the discretionary detention of aliens arrested "in the United States" on a warrant. Petitioner, a long-term resident apprehended in the interior, falls squarely within the latter category. By applying the "arriving alien" framework to him, Respondents unlawfully erase this critical statutory distinction.
86. Second, Respondents' actions violate their own binding regulations and long-standing practice. For over two decades, agency regulations have implemented the statutory distinction by explicitly providing for bond eligibility for interior apprehensions. After Congress amended the INA in 1996, the agency issued an interim rule clarifying that noncitizens "present without having been admitted or paroled (formerly referred to as [noncitizens] who entered without inspection) will be eligible for bond and bond redetermination" under 8 U.S.C. § 1226. This policy is enshrined in regulations such as 8 C.F.R. §§ 236.1 and 1236.1. The new policy

articulated in the July 2025 ICE memorandum and the *Yajure Hurtado* decision represents a radical and unlawful departure from these established rules, both since **vacated** under the APA.

87. Finally, by defying their own statutes and regulations, Respondents have violated the *Accardi* doctrine, a bedrock principle of administrative law that commands that federal agencies are bound by their own rules. *See United States ex rel. Accardi v. Shaughnessy*, 347 U.S. 260 (1954). The *Accardi* doctrine applies with full force not only to formal regulations but also to internal policies and guidance that confer “important procedural benefits upon individuals,” such as the right to a bond hearing. *Am. Farm Lines v. Black Ball Freight Serv.*, 397 U.S. 521, 538 (1970); *see also Montilla v. INS*, 926 F.2d 162, 167 (2d Cir. 1991).
88. In 1997, after Congress amended the INA through IIRIRA, EOIR and the then-Immigration and Naturalization Service (now DHS) issued an interim rule to interpret and apply IIRIRA. Specifically, under the heading of “Apprehension, Custody, and Detention of [Noncitizens],” the agencies explained that “[d]espite being applicants for admission, [noncitizens] **who are present without having been admitted or paroled (formerly referred to as [noncitizens] who entered without inspection) will be eligible for bond and bond redetermination.**” 62 Fed. Reg. at 10323 (emphasis added). The agencies thus made clear that individuals who had entered without inspection were eligible for consideration for bond and bond hearings before IJs under 8 U.S.C. § 1226 and its implementing regulations.
89. This is not a mere procedural error; it is a fundamental breach of the rule of law. Respondents cannot simply ignore decades of their binding procedures to achieve a

policy goal of mass mandatory detention. Because Respondents' actions were taken in direct contravention of the INA and their own established rules, those actions are invalid, rendering Petitioner's resulting detention unlawful and requiring this Court to set it aside.

90. Respondents can no longer invoke *Matter of Yajure Hurtado* as a purported justification for their departure from the text of the INA and from 8 C.F.R. §§ 236.1 and 1236.1. The *Maldonado Bautista* court has now vacated *Yajure Hurtado* under the APA as contrary to law, on the ground that it merely repackages the same unlawful theory previously embodied in the July 2025 Interim Guidance. *Maldonado Bautista v. Santacruz*, No. 5:25-cv-01873-SSS-BFM (C.D. Cal. Feb. 18, 2026). Continued reliance on *Yajure Hurtado* after its vacatur is itself arbitrary, capricious, and “not in accordance with law” under 5 U.S.C. § 706(2)(A), and further underscores Respondents' ongoing *Accardi* violations.

COUNT FOUR
Violation of the Fifth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution
Procedural and Substantive Due Process

91. Petitioner realleges and incorporates by reference all paragraphs above as if fully set forth here.
92. Petitioner's detention is a profound offense to the Fifth Amendment, violating her rights to both substantive and procedural due process. It is axiomatic that the Due Process Clause applies to all persons within the United States, regardless of immigration status, and that “freedom from imprisonment—from government custody, detention, or other forms of physical restraint—lies at the heart of the liberty that Clause protects.” *Zadvydas v. Davis*, 533 U.S. 678, 690 (2001). Respondents' actions trample upon this fundamental right.

93. **Substantive Due Process:** The detention is substantively unconstitutional because it is arbitrary and serves no legitimate, non-punitive purpose. Civil immigration detention is permissible only to prevent flight or danger to the community. See *Jennings v. Rodriguez*, 583 U.S. 281, 297 (2018). As established, Petitioner is neither a flight risk nor a danger. Petitioner’s mandatory detention, without any individualized assessment, bears no reasonable relation to any legitimate government purpose and is therefore arbitrary deprivation of liberty, excessive, and unconstitutional.
94. **Procedural Due Process:** Even if a legitimate purpose for detention existed, the procedures used to effectuate it are constitutionally rotten. Due process demands a “meaningful opportunity to be heard at a meaningful time and in a meaningful manner” before a neutral decision-maker. *Mathews v. Eldridge*, 424 U.S. 319, 333 (1976). *Landon v. Plasencia*, 459 U.S. 21, 32 (1982). The current scheme—whereby Respondents unilaterally subject Petitioner to mandatory detention based on an unlawful policy—entirely lacks these fundamental safeguards and fails the three-part balancing test set forth in *Mathews*:
95. **The Private Interest:** Petitioner’s liberty interest is paramount; the risk of erroneous deprivation is extreme considering that Petitioner is not subject to mandatory detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(c), is not a flight risk, and does not pose a danger to the community. Being free from physical detention by one’s own government “is the most elemental of liberty interests.” *Hamdi v. Rumsfeld*, 542 U.S. 507, 529 (2004). The right to be free of detention of indefinite duration pending a bail determination, is “without question, a weighty one.” *Landon v. Plasencia*. Petitioner

is being held in jail in the same conditions as criminal inmates, unable to work and is far from family. At minimum, the government must come forward with concrete, case-specific reasons that outweigh Petitioner's substantial liberty interest in continued release.

96. **The risk of erroneous deprivation** of liberty is extreme. The system lacks any neutral adjudicator, as ICE is acting as both prosecutor and judge, a structural defect that creates a constitutionally intolerable risk of wrongful deprivation, as highlighted in *Marcello v. Bonds*, 349 U.S. 302, 305-306 (1955). Respondents are effectuating prolonged detention based on their own self-serving interpretation of the law, with no check on their power. This risk is exacerbated by the coordinated actions of both DHS and EOIR, which operate under a unified approach that effectively denies bond to noncitizens in Petitioner's situation, thereby unilaterally depriving them of their liberty.
97. **The Government's Interest:** The government's interest in enforcing its detention policy is minimal, if not entirely illegitimate. There is no valid government interest in enforcing an interpretation of the law that is contrary to the plain text of the INA, that conflicts with its own regulations providing for bond hearings under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), and that is based on a policy (*Matter of Yajure Hurtado*) that has been judicially declared untenable. The government has no cognizable interest in violating the law or wasting taxpayer resources on the unnecessary detention of individuals who are neither dangerous nor flight risks.

98. All three *Mathews* factors weigh decisively in Petitioner's favor. The current scheme is fundamentally unfair, unconstitutional, and deprives Petitioner of liberty without the process that is, and has always been, due.

XII. REMEDIES

THE ONLY CONSTITUTIONALLY SUFFICIENT REMEDY IS IMMEDIATE AND UNCONDITIONAL RELEASE

99. When a person's liberty is taken without any lawful authority, the only effective and constitutionally sufficient remedy is to restore that liberty immediately and unconditionally. A subsequent bond hearing cannot cure a detention that was void from its inception (*ab initio*). Federal courts possess broad equitable power under 28 U.S.C. § 2243 to "dispose of the matter as law and justice require," which includes ordering immediate release when the government's custody is illegal. See *Hilton v. Braunskill*, 481 U.S. 770, 775 (1987); *Rosado v. Figueroa*, 2025 WL 2337099, at *19 (D. Ariz. Aug. 11, 2025). Here, law and justice demand nothing less than Petitioner's release, as her detention is a legal nullity built upon a foundation of statutory and constitutional violations.
100. Petitioner's detention is unlawful at its core because the arrest itself was executed in open defiance of the Immigration and Nationality Act's clear commands. Whether viewed as an arrest under 8 U.S.C. § 1225 or 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), the seizure was illegal. Respondents claim authority under § 1225, but that statute applies to arriving aliens at the border, not long-term interior residents like Petitioner. The correct statute for an interior apprehension, § 1226(a), unequivocally requires that an arrest be made "[o]n a warrant." Respondents had no such warrant.
101. A bond hearing is a wholly inadequate remedy for such a fundamental violation.

The purpose of a bond hearing is to assess the propriety of *continued* detention following a *lawful* arrest. It presupposes that the government's custody was, at some point, legitimate. That is not the case here. To order a bond hearing would be to retroactively sanitize an illegal seizure and give the government a "pass for not securing a warrant." *Javier De Jesus Aguilar v. English*, No. 3:25-CV-898 DRL-SJF, 2025 WL 3280219 (N.D. Ind., Nov. 25, 2025). As that court correctly reasoned when ordering immediate release under similar facts, "[t]he simple matter is this: the government has not established a lawful basis for detention... and the government must live by the rules that Congress has instituted." *Id.*

102. Granting a bond hearing would not only fail to cure the violation, it would compound the harm. It would force Petitioner to languish in unlawful custody for weeks longer while awaiting a hearing, spend additional money on a bond (if one is even granted, as bonds grants are diminishing even after habeas grants) all while Respondents have failed to produce a single shred of evidence that Petitioner is a flight risk or a danger to the community. This Court should not reward the government's disregard for the law by prolonging the very illegal detention it created. When the government's custody over a person is the "fruit of the poisonous tree"—the poisonous tree being the illegal arrest itself—the only just remedy is to sever the connection by ordering immediate and unconditional release.
103. Furthermore, should this Court nonetheless order a bond hearing as an alternative to immediate release, it is critical that the order contain specific procedural safeguards to make that remedy meaningful. There is a troubling trend of immigration judges denying bond after a habeas grant based on rote assertions of

flight risk or danger, often without the government presenting any actual evidence. To counteract this and ensure Petitioner is afforded a constitutionally adequate hearing so we do not have to return to this Court, this Court should follow the sound reasoning of another court in this District and place the burden of proof squarely on the government. In *J.G. v. Warden, Irwin Cty. Det. Ctr.*, 501 F. Supp. 3d 1331, 1341 (M.D. Ga., 2020), the court, observing that “Circuit courts considering the standard of proof in the immigration bond context have also adopted the clear and convincing standard,” held that “the government must prove by clear and convincing evidence that an alien is a flight risk . . . to justify denial of bond.” **Therefore, to prevent a perfunctory and meaningless hearing that would only prolong Petitioner’s unlawful detention, any order for a bond hearing must explicitly direct that the government bears the burden of establishing by clear and convincing evidence that Petitioner’s detention is necessary**

104. Finally, to ensure the remedy of release is not rendered illusory, the Court must explicitly ENJOIN Respondents from immediately substituting physical custody with another form of unlawful restraint: electronic monitoring. There is a now-common agency practice of subjecting virtually every noncitizen released from custody to GPS ankle monitoring—a blanket policy applied without the individualized assessment of flight risk required by due process. This reflects a de facto agency policy of imposing GPS monitoring, even after an immigration judge has made a finding that a bond is sufficient to mitigate flight risk. This practice allows the agency to unilaterally subvert a judicial release order by replacing one form of custody with another. To provide a truly meaningful remedy and prevent

Petitioner from being forced to return to this Court to challenge these new custody-like restraints, the Court should exercise its broad equitable power under 28 U.S.C. § 2243 to “dispose of the matter as law and justice require.” Accordingly, Petitioner requests that the Court’s order specify that her release is unconditional and enjoin Respondents from imposing any conditions of supervision, such as electronic monitoring, unless they first demonstrate to this Court, with five days’ advance notice, that significantly changed circumstances and a new, particularized assessment of risk justify such a severe restraint on Petitioner’s liberty.

XIII. CONCLUSION AND PRAYER FOR RELIEF

105. The continued detention of Petitioner violates due process rights. But for intervention by this Court, Petitioner has no means of release from ICE custody. Petitioner faces ongoing and irreparable harm as a result of unlawful detention, including deprivation of liberty, loss of employment, and separation from family. These injuries cannot be remedied by monetary damages and will continue absent immediate judicial intervention. The balance of equities and the public interest strongly favor expedited consideration and equitable relief, including immediate release or a prompt bond hearing. Without such relief, Petitioner will continue to suffer irreparable harm, and the constitutional and statutory violations at issue will persist.
106. Given the egregious constitutional and statutory violations underlying Petitioner’s arrest and continued detention, the only effective and constitutionally sufficient remedy is immediate and unconditional release. Federal courts possess broad

authority under 28 U.S.C. § 2243 to “dispose of the matter as law and justice require,” which includes ordering immediate release when detention is found to be unlawful. See *Hilton v. Braunskill*, 481 U.S. 770, 775 (1987).

WHEREFORE, Petitioner prays that this Court grant the following relief. Petitioner respectfully requests expedited consideration of this Petition due to the ongoing deprivation of liberty and irreparable harm:

- (1) **Grant the Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus** and, pursuant to its authority under 28 U.S.C. § 2243, order Respondents to **immediately and unconditionally release** Petitioner from custody, because Petitioner’s detention is unlawful ab initio under both 8 U.S.C. § 1225 (misclassification as an “arriving alien”) and 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) (failure to obtain the statutorily required warrant for an interior arrest), and rests solely on agency actions that are contrary to the INA, ultra vires, arbitrary and capricious, and adopted and applied in violation of the Accardi doctrine, as set forth in the APA/Accardi claim.
- (2) **In the alternative**, should the Court decline to order immediate unconditional release, issue an order directing Respondents to provide Petitioner with a bond hearing before an Immigration Judge pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) and its implementing regulations at 8 C.F.R. §§ 236.1 and 1236.1 within forty-eight (48) hours of the Court’s order, and further specifying that at any such hearing: (a) the **government bears the burden** of proving that Petitioner is either a flight risk or a danger to the community;

and (b) the government must satisfy that burden by **clear and convincing evidence**, consistent with circuit precedent adopting this standard in the immigration bond context (including *Diaz*, *Lopez* and *Lara*), in order to prevent the recurring problem of perfunctory bond denials based on unsupported assertions of risk rather than actual evidence;

- (3) **Enjoining Respondents**, upon Petitioner's release, from subjecting Petitioner to any form of electronic monitoring, GPS ankle bracelet, ISAP enrollment, or other alternative-to-detention program that functions as a custody-like restraint, absent prior leave of this Court. Respondents shall be prohibited from imposing such conditions unless, at least five (5) days in advance, they file notice with this Court and demonstrate—based on a new, particularized assessment of significantly changed circumstances and a concrete, evidence-based showing of flight risk or danger—that such conditions are necessary, and the Court expressly authorizes them pursuant to its authority under 28 U.S.C. § 2243 to dispose of the matter as law and justice require.
- (4) **Issue an Order to Show Cause** directing Respondents to file a return within three (3) days, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2243, justifying in fact and law why the writ should not be granted;
- (5) **ENJOIN** Respondents from re-detaining Petitioner in the future under 8 U.S.C. § 1225 or the DHS policy vacated by the *Maldonado Bautista* court;
- (6) **Award** Petitioner reasonable attorney's fees and costs including under the Equal Access to Justice Act, 28 U.S.C. § 2412(d), and any other applicable

fee shifting statute; and

- (7) **Grant** such other and further relief as this Court deems just, proper or equitable under the circumstances.

Respectfully Submitted,

This 24th Day of February, 2026.

/s/ Karen Weinstock

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28 U.S.C. § 2242 VERIFICATION STATEMENT

I am submitting this verification on behalf of the Petitioner because I am the Petitioner's attorney. I have discussed with Petitioner's attorney and family members and have reviewed various documents for Petitioner. On the basis of those discussions, I hereby verify that I have reviewed the foregoing Petition and that the facts and statements made in this Petition and Complaint are true and correct to the best of my knowledge or belief pursuant to 28 USC § 2242.

This 24th Day of February, 2026.

/s/ Karen Weinstock
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