UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
MIDDLE DISTRICT OF FLORIDA
FORT MYERS DIVISION

JUAN DERIS REYES UMANZOR,

Petitioner,

Case No. 2:26-cv-00606-JES-DNF

v.

SECRETARY, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY, et al.,

Respondents.

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PETITIONER'S REPLY IN SUPPORT OF PETITION FOR WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS

Petitioner, Juan Deris Reyes Umanzor, by and through undersigned counsel, respectfully submits this Reply in Support of his Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus and responds to the Government's opposition as follows:

I. INTRODUCTION

Respondents' opposition rests on the assertion that Petitioner's detention is governed by 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2) based solely on his initial encounter at or near the border in 2019. This argument ignores both the statutory framework and the binding declaratory judgment issued in *Maldonado Bautista v. Santacruz*, which squarely applies to individuals in Petitioner's position. At its core, this case

concerns Respondents' continued unlawful detention of Petitioner and their refusal to comply with controlling federal court relief requiring that individuals such as Petitioner be considered for release on bond under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a).

II. PETITIONER IS A MEMBER OF THE MALDONADO BAUTISTA CLASS

Respondents contend that Petitioner is not a member of the certified class in *Maldonado Bautista*. That contention is incorrect and based on an overly broad and legally unsupported interpretation of the phrase "apprehended upon arrival."

The Government relies heavily on the Form I-213 to argue that Petitioner was apprehended at the border. However, the I-213 reflects only that Petitioner was encountered in May 2019 in Texas after entering the United States, not that he was apprehended at a port of entry or immediately upon crossing. The distinction is critical. The class definition in *Maldonado Bautista* does not encompass every individual encountered after entry, but rather those apprehended contemporaneously with arrival in a manner consistent with inspection processing.

Moreover, Respondents' position improperly collapses the statutory distinction between 8 U.S.C. §§ 1225 and 1226. If accepted, any noncitizen ever encountered near the border could be indefinitely subject to mandatory detention under § 1225, regardless of the passage of time or subsequent circumstances. That

interpretation is inconsistent with both the statutory scheme and the reasoning underlying the *Maldonado Bautista* decision.

Even assuming arguendo that Petitioner was initially processed under § 1225, that does not justify his continued detention years later under that provision. Respondents acknowledge that Petitioner entered the United States in 2019 and has remained in the country since that time. His present detention, occurring in 2025–2026, cannot reasonably be characterized as detention "upon arrival." Instead, it falls within the ambit of § 1226(a), which governs detention pending removal proceedings for individuals already present in the United States.

III. MALDONADO BAUTISTA IS BINDING AND CONTROLLING

Respondents attempt to minimize the significance of *Maldonado Bautista* by arguing that it is irrelevant or lacks binding effect in this Court. That argument fails as a matter of law.

The district court in *Maldonado Bautista* granted partial summary judgment and certified a nationwide class, expressly extending declaratory relief to all class members. Under 28 U.S.C. § 2201, such declaratory relief carries the force and effect of a final judgment. Federal agencies and officials, including Respondents here, are bound by that judgment unless and until it is stayed or overturned by a higher court.

Respondents' reliance on *Matter of Yajure Hurtado* is misplaced. An administrative decision by the Board of Immigration Appeals cannot override a federal court's declaratory judgment. Nor does the existence of differing decisions among district courts permit Respondents to disregard binding relief applicable to members of a certified nationwide class. The Government's position effectively invites this Court to sanction noncompliance with a federal court order, a result that is inconsistent with fundamental principles of judicial authority and the rule of law.

IV. RESPONDENTS MISCHARACTERIZE THE NATURE OF THIS CASE

Respondents frame this matter as a routine statutory interpretation dispute regarding the applicability of § 1225 versus § 1226. That characterization is incomplete and misleading. Petitioner does not merely seek a favorable interpretation of the statute; he seeks enforcement of rights already adjudicated through binding declaratory relief.

The central issue before this Court is whether Respondents may continue to detain Petitioner in contravention of that relief. The Government's extensive citation to cases addressing the statutory distinction between § 1225 and § 1226 does not resolve that question. Even if courts are divided on the statutory interpretation issue, Respondents remain obligated to comply with the declaratory judgment issued in *Maldonado Bautista* as it applies to Petitioner.

V. HABEAS JURISDICTION IS PROPER

Respondents' jurisdictional arguments under 8 U.S.C. §§ 1252(g) and 1252(b)(9) are unavailing. Petitioner challenges the legality of his detention, not any discretionary decision to commence removal proceedings or execute a removal order. It is well established that habeas jurisdiction under 28 U.S.C. § 2241 remains available to review claims of unlawful detention.

Accepting Respondents' position would effectively eliminate judicial review of detention decisions, raising serious constitutional concerns under the Suspension Clause. Courts, including those within this Circuit, have consistently exercised jurisdiction over challenges to immigration detention, including disputes regarding whether detention is governed by § 1225 or § 1226.

VI. RELIEF IS WARRANTED

Respondents assert that, even if Petitioner prevails, the only appropriate remedy is a bond hearing. While a prompt bond hearing is an alternative form of relief, it is not the exclusive remedy available to this Court.

Where detention is unlawful, federal courts possess broad authority to order release. Given Respondents' continued refusal to recognize Petitioner's entitlement to a bond hearing under § 1226(a), immediate release is appropriate.

At a minimum, the Court should order that Petitioner be released unless Respondents provide a bond hearing within a defined and expedited timeframe.

VII. CONCLUSION

Respondents' opposition relies on an expansive interpretation of "apprehended upon arrival," disregards binding declaratory relief, and mischaracterizes the nature of Petitioner's claim. Petitioner is a member of the class certified in *Maldonado Bautista* and is entitled to consideration for release on bond under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a). His continued detention without such consideration is unlawful.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Petitioner respectfully requests that this Court grant the Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus, order Respondents to immediately release Petitioner, or, in the alternative, order Respondents to provide a bond hearing within seven days or release Petitioner, and grant such other and further relief as this Court deems just and proper.

Dated March 16, 2026

Respectfully submitted,

Yaritssa Plasencia

Yaritssa Plasencia, Esq.
Florida Bar No.: 1021659
Great American Law Firm PLLC
100 Frandorson Cir., Ste. 202C
Apollo Beach, FL 33572
(407) 929-9292
greatamericanlaw@gmail.com
Attorney for Petitioner