UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA
Richmond Division

Alexander Fermin Contreras Perez, *Petitioner*, v. Kristi Noem, *Secretary of Homeland Security, U.S. Department of Homeland Security* Todd Lyons, *Acting Director, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement*, Joseph Simon, *Director, Washington ICE Field Office, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement*, Pamela Bondi, *Attorney General, U.S. Department of Justice*, Jeffrey Crawford, *Warden, Farmville Detention Center* *Respondents.*	Civil Action No. 3:25cv882

PETITION FOR WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS

INTRODUCTION

Petitioner is a citizen of El Salvador. Petitioner entered the United States without inspection in or around 2005 and was not encountered by immigration officials upon entry nor issued a Notice to Appear to commence removal proceedings. Rather, Petitioner's first and only contact with immigration officials was during his arrest and detention in September 2025, over twenty years since his first and only entry. Due to a new policy announced by ICE in July 2025, and a September 2025 Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) decision that overturns decades of settled law, Respondents contend that Petitioner is detained under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2). However, while §

1225 requires mandatory detention and does not allow release on bond, it only applies to noncitizens apprehended at the border as "arriving aliens" or applicants for admission "seeking admission." Petitioner therefore brings this action for a declaratory judgment from this Court that he is properly detained (if at all) only pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a); and seeking an order that Respondents schedule him for a discretionary bond hearing pursuant to § 1226(a) before an Immigration Judge within 15 days.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

1. This Court has jurisdiction to hear this case under 28 U.S.C. § 2241; 28 U.S.C. § 2201, the Declaratory Judgment Act; and 28 U.S.C. § 1331, Federal Question Jurisdiction. In addition, the individual Respondents are United States officials. 28 U.S.C. § 1346(a)(2).

2. The Court has authority to enter a declaratory judgment and to provide temporary, preliminary and permanent injunctive relief pursuant to Rules 57 and 65 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, 28 U.S.C. §§ 2201-2202, the All Writs Act, and the Court's inherent equitable powers, as well as issue a writ of habeas corpus pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2241.

3. This Court also has federal question jurisdiction, through the APA, to "hold unlawful and set aside agency action" that is "arbitrary, capricious, an abuse of discretion, or otherwise not in accordance with law." 5 U.S.C. § 706(2)(A). APA review of a final agency action may proceed, absent a special statutory review proceeding, by "any applicable form of legal action, including actions for declaratory judgments or writs of prohibitory or mandatory injunction or habeas corpus, in a court of competent jurisdiction." 5 U.S.C. § 703.

4. Venue lies in this District because Petitioner is currently detained within the territorial jurisdiction of this division of this District; and each Respondent is an agency or officer of the United States sued in his or her official capacity. 28 U.S.C. § 2241; 28 U.S.C. § 1391(e)(1).

THE PARTIES

5. Petitioner Alexander Fermin Contreras Perez is a citizen and native of El Salvador and is currently detained by Respondents at the Farmville Detention Center, VA within the territorial jurisdiction of this Court.

6. Respondent Kristi Noem is the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security ("DHS"). She is the cabinet-level secretary responsible for all immigration enforcement in the United States.

7. Respondent Todd Lyons is the Acting Director of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("ICE"). He is the head of the federal agency responsible for all immigration enforcement in the United States.

8. Respondent Joseph Simon is the Director of the Washington ICE ERO Field Office. He is the head of the ICE office that unlawfully arrested each Petitioner, and such arrests took place under his direction and supervision. He is Petitioner's immediate legal custodian.

9. Respondent Pamela Bondi is the Attorney General of the United States. The Immigration Judges who decide removal cases and applications for bond and relief from removal do so as her designees.

10. Respondent Jeffrey Crawford is the warden of the Farmville Detention Center in Farmville, Va., where Contreras Perez is currently detained. He is the immediate custodian who is currently holding Petitioner in physical custody. He is sued in his official capacity.

11. All government Respondents are sued in their official capacities.

LEGAL BACKGROUND

A. Immigration Detention Legal Framework

12. When a noncitizen is alleged to have violated immigration laws, they are generally placed into traditional removal proceedings, during which an immigration judge will determine whether they are removable and then whether they have a legal basis to remain in the United States. 8 U.S.C. § 1229a.

13. Detention is authorized for "certain aliens already in the country pending the outcome of removal proceedings under § 1226(a) and 1126(c)." *See Jennings v. Rodriguez*, 583 U.S. 281, 289 (2018). The statute provides that an individual may be subject to either discretionary detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) generally, or mandatory detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(c) if they have been arrested or convicted of certain crimes. Discretionary detention under § 1226(a) has been described as the "default" provision for immigration detention for those subject to traditional removal proceedings. *Id.* at 288. Under § 1226(a), "'[e]xcept as provided in subsection (c) of this section,' the Attorney General 'may release' an alien detained under § 1226(a) 'on ...bond' or 'conditional parole.'" *Id.*

14. Alternatively, mandatory detention is authorized for "certain aliens *seeking admission* into the country under §§ 1225(b)(1) and 1225(b)(2)," [emphasis added]. *Jennings*, 583 U.S. at 289. Individuals inspected under § 1225(b) and determined to be "applicants for admission" may be subject to mandatory detention under two separate subsections. Applicants for admission include someone:

> "present in the United States who has not been admitted or who arrives in the United States (whether or not at a designated port of arrival and including an alien who is brought to the United States after having been interdicted in international or United States waters) shall be deemed for the purposes of this chapter to be an applicant for admission."

§ 1225(a)(1).

15. The first subset, under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1), may be subject to expedited removal and mandatory detention if they are determined to be an "arriving alien," and if they have not been physically present in the United States continuously for a two-year period immediately prior. Regulations define an "arriving alien" as:

> "an applicant for admission coming or attempting to come into the United States at a port-of-entry, or an alien seeking transit through the United States at a port-of-entry, or an alien interdicted in international or United States waters and brought into the United States by any means, whether or not to a designated port-of-entry, and regardless of the means of transport."

8 C.F.R. § 1.2.

16. Otherwise, 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2) provides for the detention of "applicant for admission" specifically when "the examining immigration officer determines that an alien *seeking admission* is not clearly and beyond a doubt entitled to be admitted, the alien shall be detained for a proceeding under section 1229a of this title," i.e. for traditional removal proceedings [emphasis added].

17. An "arriving alien" or an applicant for admission "seeking admission" may only be released from detention on parole (which is a form of release on recognizance), under 8 U.S.C. § 1182(d)(5). *Jennings*, 583 U.S. at 288. There is no bond available to an arriving alien or applicant for admission seeking admission. *Id.* There is no such thing as a "parole bond" – a release must be either parole under § 1182(d)(5) or a bond (conditional parole) under § 1226(a). *Id.*

18. For a noncitizen subject to discretionary detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), ICE makes an initial custody determination to either set a bond or hold the individual at no bond. The noncitizen may then seek a review of ICE's initial custody determination before the IJ (a "custody review hearing"), who has the authority to modify ICE's custody determination and set bond in a

case in which ICE has designated no bond, lower bond when ICE has set a cash bond amount, or deny bond completely. 8 C.F.R. § 1003.19.

19. Custody review hearings are separate from hearings in the underlying removal proceedings. 8 C.F.R. § 1003.19(d). If a noncitizen is granted bond by the IJ, she must still appear in immigration court for the IJ to determine her removability and hear any claim for relief from removal. At a custody review hearing, once jurisdiction over bond is established, the IJ's inquiry is limited to whether the detainee is a danger to the community or a flight risk, and bond may only be granted when an IJ has determined that the detainee meets his burden of proof that he is neither. *Matter of Guerra*, 24 I&N Dec. 37 (BIA 2006).

20. For decades, it has been Respondents' practice to afford § 1226(a) discretionary bond hearings and custody review hearings to those individuals who have been encountered neither at a point of entry nor seeking admission to the United States. *See Rosado v. Figueroa*, No. CV 25-02157 PHX DLR (CDB), 2025 WL 2337099, at *10 (D. Ariz. Aug. 11, 2025), *report and recommendation adopted sub nom. Rocha Rosado v. Figueroa*, No. CV-25-02157-PHX-DLR (CDB), 2025 WL 2349133 (D. Ariz. Aug. 13, 2025) ("Respondents' proposed application of § 1226 is also belied by the Department of Homeland Security's 'longstanding practice' of treating noncitizens taken into custody while living in the United States, including those detained and found inadmissible upon inspection and then released into the United States with the government's acquiescence, who have committed no crime after release, as detained under § 1226(a)." citing *Loper Bright Enter. v. Raimondo*, 603 U.S. 369, 386 (2024)).

B. New ICE memo reinterpreting 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)

21. On July 8, 2025, Respondent ICE issued new interim guidance that announced a breathtakingly broad interpretation of 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2). *See* ICE memorandum "Interim

Guidance Regarding Detention Authority for Applications for Admission."[1] This memo concerns the detention of "applicants for admission" as defined by § 1225(a)(1). "Effective immediately, it is the position of DHS that such aliens are subject to detention under INA § 235(b) [8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)] and may not be released from ICE custody except by INA § 212(d)(5) [8 U.S.C. § 1182(d)(5)]." *Id.* DHS is explicit that this new policy is a marked deviation from prior interpretation and treatment of affected noncitizens. *Id.* ("For custody purposes, these aliens are now treated in the same manner that "arriving aliens" have historically been treated.")

22. In addition to the announcement re-interpreting § 1225(b)(2), the memo further clarifies that "[t]he only aliens eligible for a custody determination and release on recognizance, bond or other conditions under INA § 236(a) [8 U.S.C. § 1226(a)] during removal proceedings are aliens admitted to the United States and chargeable with deportability under INA § 237 [8 U.S.C. § 1227], with the exception of those subject to mandatory detention under INA § 236(c) [8 U.S.C. § 1226(c)]." *Id.*

23. Moreover, ICE maintains that "DHS does not take the position that prior releases of applicants for admission pursuant to INA § 236(a) were releases on parole under INA § 212(d)(5) based on this change in legal position." *Id.* ICE fails to clarify under what legal authority, then, those prior releases were effectuated. Rather, ICE signals the resulting lack of "correct" paperwork is nonetheless permissible. *Id.* ("Accordingly, ERO and HIS are not required to 'correct' the release paperwork by issuing INA § 212(d)(5) parole paperwork.")

24. Nationwide implementation of the ICE § 1225(b)(2) mass detention policy ensued.

[1] Available at: https://www.aila.org/library/ice-memo-interim-guidance-regarding-detention-authority-for-applications-for-admission (last visited October 6, 2025).

C. Recent BIA decision *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*

25. On September 5, 2025, the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA), which oversees all appeals of IJ decisions including custody redeterminations, upheld ICE's re-interpretation of § 1225(b)(2). *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, 29 I. & N. Dec. 216 (BIA 2025).

26. The BIA held that the respondent was an "applicant for admission" within the scope of § 1225(b), and therefore subject to mandatory detention.

27. The BIA characterized the issue before it as "one of statutory construction: Does the INA require that *all* applicants for admission, even those like the respondent who have entered without admission or inspection and have been residing in the United States for years without lawful status, be subject to mandatory detention for the duration of their immigration proceedings, and thus the Immigration Judge lacks authority over a bond request filed by an alien in this category?" [emphasis added]. *Id.* at 220.

28. The BIA reasoned that individuals "who surreptitiously cross into the United States remain applicants for admission until and unless they are lawfully inspected and admitted by an immigration officer." *Id.* at 228.

29. The BIA acknowledged the decades of precedent preceding its decision that authorized release of individuals present without having been inspected and admitted or paroled under § 1226(a). *Id.* at 225, FN6 ("We acknowledge that for years Immigration Judges have conducted bond hearings for aliens who entered the United States without inspection. However, we do not recall either DHS or its predecessor, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, previously raising the current issue that is before us. In fact, the supplemental information for the 1997 Interim Rule titled 'Inspection and Expedited Removal of Aliens; Detention and Removal of Aliens; Conduct of Removal Proceedings; Asylum Procedures,' 62 Fed. Reg. 10312, 10323 (Mar.

6, 1997), reflects that the Immigration and Naturalization Service took the position at that time that '[d]espite being applicants for admission, aliens who are present without having been admitted or paroled (formerly referred to as aliens who entered without inspection) will be eligible for bond and bond redetermination.'")

30. Ultimately, the BIA upheld the decision that the IJ lacked jurisdiction under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2) to consider the respondent for discretionary bond. *Id.* at 229.

31. The BIA decision is binding on all immigration judges nationwide.

32. Respondents' new policy and interpretation of 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2) stand to sweep millions of noncitizens into mandatory detention, without any consideration for release on bond (regardless of their ties to their community or lack of dangerousness or flight risk). *Rosado*, 2025 WL 2337099, at *11 ("It has been estimated that this novel interpretation would require the detention of millions of immigrants currently residing in the United States.")

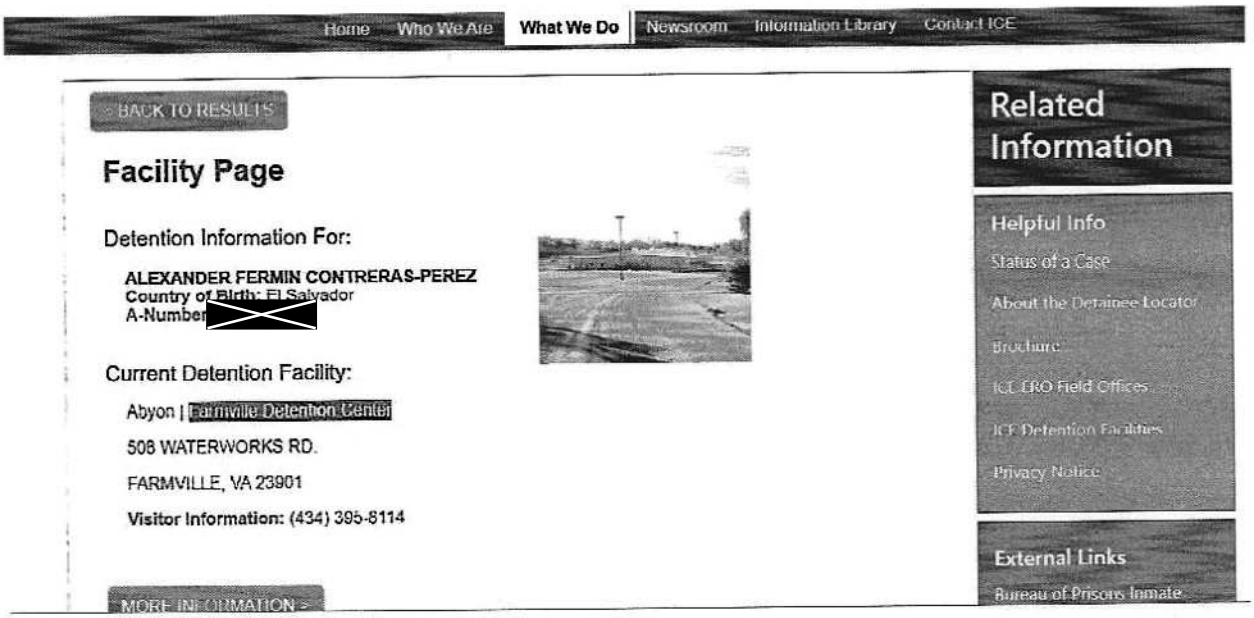
FACTS

33. Petitioner is a citizen of El Salvador. He entered the United States without inspection between ports of entry, across the U.S.-Mexico border, on or around 2005. He was not encountered by immigration officials nor issued a Notice to Appear upon entry.

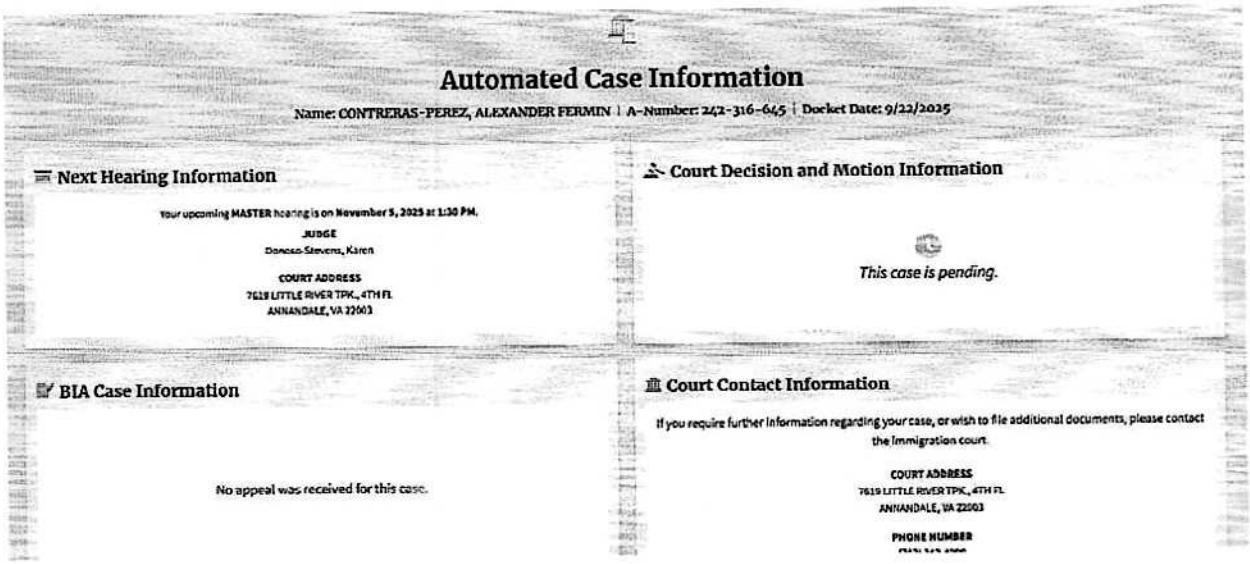
34. Petitioner then made his way to the Maryland area, where he established a life. He currently resides in Mount Rainier, Maryland with his pregnant wife and two U.S. citizen children.

35. In September 2025, Petitioner encountered immigration officials for the first time (15 years after his entry) during a traffic stop, when he was arrested by ICE agents and detained.

36. Petitioner is currently detained at the Farmville Detention Center in Farmville, VA within the territorial jurisdiction of this Court. *See* ICE Detainee Locator information (available at https://locator.ice.gov/ (last visited on October 23, 2025)):



37. Respondent ICE issued a Notice to appear commencing removal proceedings against Petitioner on September 18, 2025. *See* Ex. 1 (ICE Notice to Appear). Petitioner has pending removal proceedings (a Master Calendar Hearing set for November 5, 2025), and is not subject to a final order of removal. *See* EOIR Automated Case Information (available at https://acis.eoir.justice.gov/ (last visited on October 23, 2025)):



38. Petitioner was the beneficiary of an I-130 Petition for Alien Relative based on his marriage to his Legal Permanent Resident wife, which was approved on August 16, 2025. *See* Ex. 2 (I-130 Approval Notice). In an effort to regularize his immigration status, Petitioner subsequently filed an I-601A Application for Provisional Unlawful Presence Waiver on May 16, 2024, which remains pending. *See* Ex. 3 (I-601A Receipt Notice). Petitioner is currently awaiting adjudication of this waiver so that he may complete his immigration process and lawfully adjust his status.

39. The Petitioner is the sole breadwinner of his family. His detention has placed an unbearable emotional and financial burden on his family. His wife, who is currently pregnant, now bears the full responsibility of caring for their two U.S. citizen daughters, ages one and eight, as well as managing the household expenses. Their eight-year-old daughter has been deeply affected by her father's absence—she cries daily, constantly asks when her father will return, and the school has already recommended psychological counseling to help her cope with the separation. Petitioner also has two additional daughters who are lawful permanent residents and continue to depend on his emotional and financial support. Since his detention, Petitioner's brother has been covering some household expenses, but the family's situation remains extremely difficult, as his wife struggles to meet basic needs while caring for the children and her pregnancy alone.

40. All Respondents consider Petitioner detained pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2). *See Yajure Hurtado*, 29 I. & N. Dec. 216. Accordingly, it would be futile for Petitioner to request a bond from the IJ. Exhaustion of administrative remedies would therefore be futile.

FIRST CLAIM FOR RELIEF:
Declaratory Judgment

41. Petitioner re-alleges and incorporates by reference paragraphs 1-40.

42. Petitioner requests a declaration from this Court that he is not an applicant for admission "seeking admission" or "an arriving alien" subject to mandatory detention under 8

U.S.C. §§ 1225(b)(1) or (b)(2), and that his current detention by Respondents is proper, if at all, only under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a).

SECOND CLAIM FOR RELIEF:
No-Bond Detention in Violation of 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a)

43. Petitioner re-alleges and incorporates by reference paragraphs 1-40.

44. Since Petitioner is not applicants for admission "seeking admission" or "an arriving aliens" subject to 8 U.S.C. §§ 1225(b)(1) or (b)(2), and has no disqualifying criminal arrests or convictions subject to 8 U.S.C. § 1226(c), he is entitled to a bond redetermination hearing by an immigration judge pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a).

45. Respondents' actions, as set forth herein, violate Petitioner's statutory right to a bond redetermination hearing in front of an immigration judge.

THIRD CLAIM FOR RELIEF:
Detention in Violation of Due Process

46. Petitioner re-alleges and incorporates by reference paragraphs 1-40.

47. Immigration detention is civil, not criminal, in nature. There are only two permissible reasons for immigration detention: to avoid flight risk, and to avoid danger to the community.

48. After entering the United States unlawfully, Petitioner went on to develop ties to the community over the course of several years. Petitioner is therefore a "person" within the meaning of the Due Process Clause of the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, and has a liberty interest in freedom from physical restraint.

49. Respondents' actions in detaining Petitioner without a bond hearing before a neutral and detached magistrate deprives Petitioner of his rights without due process of law.

REQUEST FOR RELIEF

Petitioner prays for judgment against Respondents and respectfully request that the Court enters an order:

a) Issuing an Order to Show Cause, ordering Respondents to justify the basis of Petitioners' detention in fact and in law, forthwith;

b) Enjoin Petitioner's transfer outside of this judicial district pending this litigation;

c) Declare that Petitioner is not an applicant for admission "seeking admission" or "an arriving alien" subject to 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b);

d) Declare that Respondents' actions, as set forth herein, violate Petitioner's due process rights;

e) Declare that Respondents may properly detain Petitioner, if at all, only pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a);

f) Order that Respondents conduct bond hearings for Petitioner pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) within 15 days;

g) Grant the writ of habeas corpus and order Respondents to release Petitioner forthwith, upon payment of the bond as ordered by the Immigration Judge;

h) Award Petitioner his costs of suit; and

i) Grant any other relief that this Court deems just and proper.

[signature block on following page]

Respectfully submitted,

Date: October 24, 2025

/s/ Simon Sandoval-Moshenberg
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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA
Alexandria Division

ALEXANDER FERMIN CONTRERAS PEREZ, *Petitioner*, v. KRISTI NOEM, Secretary of Homeland Security, U.S Department of Homeland Security, *et al.*, *Respondents.*	)	Civil Action No._____

INDEX OF EXHIBITS

Ex. 1) ICE Notice to Appear

Ex. 2) I-130 Approval Notice

Ex. 3) I-601A Receipt Notice

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, the undersigned, hereby certify that on this date, I will send a copy by certified U.S. mail, return receipt requested, to:

Civil Process Clerk
U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Virginia
919 E Main St., Suite 1900
Richmond, VA 23219.

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Washington, DC 20528-0485

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Farmville Detention Center
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Respectfully submitted,

Date: October 24, 2025

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