

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
MIDDLE DISTRICT OF GEORGIA
COLUMBUS DIVISION**

JAIRO BETANCOURT VEGA,

A# ,

Petitioner,

v.

JASON STREEVAL, Warden of
Stewart Detention Center,

LADEON FRANCIS, Field Office
Director of Enforcement and Removal
Operations, Atlanta Field Office;

TODD LYONS, in his official capacity
as Acting Director of Immigration and
Customs Enforcement;

MARKWAYNE MULLIN, Secretary,
U.S. Department of Homeland Security;
and

TODD BLANCHE, Acting U.S.
Attorney General.

Respondents.

Civil Action No.:

**VERIFIED PETITION FOR WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS
AND COMPLAINT FOR DECLARATIVE AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF**

INTRODUCTION

1. Petitioner Jairo Betancourt Vega brings this petition for a writ of habeas corpus to seek enforcement of his rights as a member of the Bond Denial Class certified in *Maldonado Bautista v. Santacruz*, No. 5:25-CV-01873-SSS-BFM (C.D. Cal.) Petitioner is in the physical custody of Respondents at the Stewart Detention Center. Petitioner now faces unlawful detention because the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) have refused to abide by the declaratory judgment issued on behalf of the certified class in *Maldonado Bautista v. Santacruz*.

2. On November 20, 2025, the district court granted partial summary judgment on behalf of individual plaintiffs, and on November 25, 2025, certified a nationwide class and extended declaratory judgment to the certified class. *Maldonado Bautista v. Santacruz*, No. 5:25-CV-01873-SSS-BFM, --- F. Supp. 3d - ---, 2025 WL 3289861, at *11 (C.D. Cal. Nov. 20, 2025) (order granting partial summary judgment to named Plaintiffs-Petitioners); *Maldonado Bautista v. Santacruz*, No. 5:25-CV-01873-SSS-BFM, --- F. Supp. 3d ----, 2025 WL 3288403, at *9 (C.D. Cal. Nov. 25, 2025) (order certifying Plaintiffs-Petitioners' proposed nationwide Bond Eligible Class, incorporating and extending declaratory judgment from Order Granting Petitioners' Motion for Partial Summary Judgment).

3. The declaratory judgment held that the Bond Denial Class members are detained under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), and thus may not be denied consideration for release on bond under § 1225(b)(2)(A). *Maldonado Bautista*, 2025 WL 3289861, at *11.

4. Notwithstanding ongoing federal litigation, the Executive Office for Immigration Review, its subagency the Immigration Court, and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) have refused to afford Petitioner a bond hearing and have instead continued to rely on *Matter of Yajure-Hurtado* to deny jurisdiction. In *Maldonado Bautista v. DHS*, the district court rejected that interpretation and held that similarly situated noncitizens are detained under INA § 236(a) and entitled to bond hearings. Although the Ninth Circuit has stayed enforcement of that decision pending appeal, the ruling confirms that DHS's categorical denial of bond rests on a legally contested framework that federal courts have already found unlawful, yet Respondent continues to detain Petitioner without an individualized bond determination.

5. Petitioner Jairo Betancourt Vega is a member of the Bond Eligible Class, as Petitioner:

- a. does not have lawful status in the United States and is currently detained at the Stewart Detention Facility. Petitioner was apprehended by immigration authorities on or about February 2, 2026.

b. entered the United States without inspection over 17 years ago and was not apprehended upon arrival, *cf. id.*; and

c. is not detained under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(c), § 1225(b)(1), or § 1231.

6. After apprehending Petitioner on or about February 2, 2026, the DHS placed Petitioner in removal proceedings pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1229a. DHS has charged Petitioner as being inadmissible under 8 U.S.C. § 1182(a)(6)(A)(i), as someone who entered the United States without inspection.

7. Habeas relief is appropriate because Petitioner has requested a bond hearing before an Immigration Judge, yet no such hearing has been scheduled or conducted. In the absence of any custody determination, there is no meaningful administrative process available to challenge Petitioner's continued detention. Any further attempt to exhaust administrative remedies would therefore be futile. Accordingly, exhaustion is satisfied or should be excused, and habeas relief is necessary to vindicate Petitioner's constitutional rights. The Court should expeditiously grant this petition.

8. Respondents are bound by the judgment in *Maldonado Bautista*, as it has the full "force and effect of a final judgment." 28 U.S.C. § 2201(a). Nevertheless, Respondents continue to flagrantly defy the judgment in that case and continue to subject Petitioner to unlawful detention despite Petitioner's clear entitlement to consideration for release on bond as a Bond Eligible Class member.

9. Immigration judges have informed class members in bond hearings that they have been instructed by “leadership” that the declaratory judgment in *Maldonado Bautista* is not controlling, even with respect to class members, and that instead IJs remain bound to follow the agency’s prior decision in *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, 29 I. & N. Dec. 216 (BIA 2025).

10. Because Respondents are detaining Petitioner in violation of the declaratory judgment issued in *Maldonado Bautista*, the Court should accordingly order that within one day, Respondent DHS must release Petitioner.

11. Alternatively, the Court should order Petitioner’s release unless Respondents provide a bond hearing under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) within seven days.

JURISDICTION

12. Petitioner is in the physical custody of Respondents. Petitioner is detained at the Stewart Detention Center in Lumpkin, GA.

13. This Court has jurisdiction under 28 U.S.C. § 2241(c)(5) (habeas corpus), 28 U.S.C. § 1331 (federal question), and Article I, section 9, clause 2 of the United States Constitution (the Suspension Clause).

14. This Court may grant relief pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2241, the Declaratory Judgment Act, 28 U.S.C. § 2201 *et seq.*, and the All Writs Act, 28 U.S.C. § 1651.

VENUE

15. Pursuant to *Braden v. 30th Judicial Circuit Court of Kentucky*, 410 U.S. 484, 493- 500 (1973), venue lies in the United States District Court for the Middle District of Georgia, the judicial district in which Petitioner currently is detained.

16. Venue is also properly in this Court pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(e) because Respondents are employees, officers, and agencies of the United States, and because a substantial part of the events or omissions giving rise to the claims occurred in the Middle District of Georgia.

REQUIREMENTS OF 28 U.S.C. § 2243

17. The Court should grant the petition for writ of habeas corpus “forthwith,” as the legal issues have already been resolved for class members in *Maldonado Bautista*.

18. Habeas corpus is “perhaps the most important writ known to the constitutional law . . . affording as it does a *swift* and imperative remedy in all cases of illegal restraint or confinement.” *Fay v. Noia*, 372 U.S. 391, 400 (1963) (emphasis added). “The application for the writ usurps the attention and displaces the calendar of the judge or justice who entertains it and receives prompt action from him within the four corners of the application.” *Yong v. I.N.S.*, 208 F.3d 1116, 1120 (9th Cir. 2000) (citation omitted).

PARTIES

19. Petitioner Jairo Betancourt Vega, a citizen of Honduras, has been in immigration detention since February 2, 2026. Since being detained, ICE has not set a bond.

20. Petitioner has requested a review of his custody by an Immigration Judge; however, no immigration bond hearing has been scheduled or conducted to date. Although Petitioner has a future hearing scheduled for pleadings in his removal proceedings, that hearing is not for purposes of custody or bond determination. As a result, Petitioner remains detained without having received an individualized hearing at which the government must justify his continued detention. This lack of a bond hearing deprives Petitioner of a meaningful opportunity to demonstrate that he is neither a danger to the community nor a flight risk, and no neutral decision-maker has made such findings. Petitioners' continued detention without an individualized determination violates the Due Process Clause of the Fifth Amendment.

21. Following the district court's issuance of partial summary judgment and subsequent class-wide declaratory relief in *Maldonado Bautista v. Santacruz*, Petitioner requested a second custody redetermination hearing. On December 2, 2025, the Immigration Judge nevertheless denied bond, reasoning that under *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, he lacked jurisdiction to consider bond for a person who

entered without inspection and had never been admitted. The Immigration Judge further stated that the *Maldonado Bautista* class certification did not bind a court sitting in the Eleventh Circuit. This denial, issued despite the nationwide declaratory judgment extending to the Bond Eligible Class, underscores the need for habeas relief.

22. Respondent Ladeon Francis is the Director of the Atlanta Field Office of ICE's Enforcement and Removal Operations division. As such, Ladeon Francis is Petitioner's immediate custodian and is responsible for Petitioner's detention and removal. He is named in his official capacity.

23. Respondent Markwayne Mullin is the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security. He is responsible for the implementation and enforcement of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), and oversees ICE, which is responsible for the Petitioner's detention. Mr. Mullin has ultimate custodial authority over Petitioner and is sued in his official capacity.

24. Respondent Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is the federal agency responsible for implementing and enforcing the INA, including the detention and removal of noncitizens.

25. Respondent Todd Blanche is the Acting Attorney General of the United States. She is responsible for the Department of Justice, of which the

Executive Office for Immigration Review and the immigration court system it operates is a component agency. She is sued in her official capacity.

26. Respondent Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) is the federal agency responsible for implementing and enforcing the INA in removal proceedings, including for custody redeterminations in bond hearings.

27. Respondent Jason Streeval is employed by The GEO Group, Inc. as Warden of the Stewart Detention Center, where Petitioner is detained. Respondent Jason Streeval has immediate physical custody of Petitioner. Respondent Jason Streeval is sued in his official capacity.

CLAIM FOR RELIEF

Violation of the INA:

Request for Relief Pursuant to *Maldonado Bautista*

28. Petitioner repeats, re-alleges, and incorporates by reference each and every allegation in the preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.

29. As a member of the Bond Eligible Class, Petitioner is entitled to consideration for release on bond under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a).

30. The order granting partial summary judgment in *Maldonado Bautista* holds that Respondents violate the INA in applying the mandatory detention statute at § 1225(b)(2) to class members.

31. The order granting class certification in *Maldonado Bautista* further orders that “[w]hen considering this determination with the MSJ Order, the Court

extends the same declaratory relief granted to Petitioners to the Bond Eligible Class as a whole.”

32. Respondents are parties to *Maldonado Bautista* and bound by the Court’s declaratory judgment, which has the full “force and effect of a final judgment.” 28 U.S.C. § 2201(a).

33. By denying Petitioner a bond hearing under § 1226(a) and asserting that Petitioner is subject to mandatory detention under § 1225(b)(2), Respondents violate Petitioner’s statutory rights under the INA and the Court’s judgment in *Maldonado Bautista*.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

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

- a. Assume jurisdiction over this matter;
- b. Issue a writ of habeas corpus requiring that within one day, Respondents release Petitioner;
- c. Alternatively, issue a writ of habeas corpus requiring Respondents to release Petitioner unless they provide a bond hearing under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) within seven days;
- d. Award Petitioner attorney’s fees and costs under the Equal Access to Justice Act (EAJA), as amended, 28 U.S.C. § 2412, and on any other basis justified under law; and

- e. Grant any other and further relief that this Court deems just and proper.

DATED this 7th of March, 2026.

//Eszter Bardi//

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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 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.

Respectfully submitted this 7th day of March, 2026.

//Eszter Bardi//

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