

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
MIDDLE DISTRICT OF GEORGIA
VALDOSTA DIVISION

SANDRA MARTINEZ ANDRACA,

A 

Petitioner,

v.

STEWART, DETENTION
CENTER, MARKWAYNE
MULLIN Secretary, U.S.
Department of Homeland
Security

Respondent.

Case No.

**PETITION FOR WRIT OF
HABEAS CORPUS**

INTRODUCTION

1. Petitioner, Sandra Martinez Andraca, respectfully petitions this Court for a writ of habeas corpus to challenge her unlawful detention by the Department of Homeland Security.

2. Petitioner has been detained since March 29, 2026 at the Stewart Detention Center. DHS has refused to provide her any bond hearing based on a recently adopted legal interpretation asserting that individuals who entered the United States without inspection must be detained under U.S.C. § (b) () and are therefore categorically ineligible for release on bond.

3. That interpretation is contrary to the text of the Immigration and Nationality Act, decades of agency practice, and recent federal court decisions—including decisions of this Court—holding that individuals apprehended inside the United States years after entry are detained under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) and are entitled to individualized custody determinations.

4. Because immigration judges are refusing to exercise jurisdiction over custody determinations based on the Board of Immigration Appeals' decision in *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, Petitioner has no administrative avenue to challenge her detention.

5. Habeas corpus therefore provides the only meaningful mechanism to

1
2 vindicate Petitioner's statutory and constitutional rights. Petitioner respectfully
3 requests that this Court order her immediate release, or in the alternative, set a
4 reasonable bond, or at minimum, order a constitutionally compliant bond hearing.

5 6 JURISDICTION

6 6. Petitioner is in the physical custody of Respondents. Petitioner is
7 detained at the Stewart Detention Center located in Lumpkin, Georgia.

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

11 8. This Court may grant relief pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2241, the
12 Declaratory Judgment Act, 28 U.S.C. § 2201 *et seq.*, and the All Writs Act, 28 U.S.C.
13 § 1651.
14

15 16 VENUE

17 9. Pursuant to *Braden v. 30th Judicial Circuit Court of Kentucky*, 410 U.S.
18 484, 493- 500 (1973), venue lies in the United States District Court for the Middle
19 District of Georgia, the judicial district in which Petitioner currently is detained.

20 10. Venue is also properly in this Court pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(e)
21 because Respondent is employee, officer, and agency of the United States, and
22 because a substantial part of the events or omissions giving rise to the claims
23 occurred in the Middle District of Georgia.
24

REQUIREMENTS OF 28 U.S.C. § 2243

11. The Court must grant the petition for writ of habeas corpus or order Respondent to show cause “forthwith,” unless the petitioner is not entitled to relief. 28 U.S.C. § 2243. If an order to show cause is issued, Respondent must file a return “within three days unless for good cause additional time, not exceeding twenty days, is allowed.” *Id.*

12. 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 her within the four corners of the application.” *Yong v. I.N.S.*, 208 F.3d 1116, 1120 (9th Cir. 2000) (citation omitted).

PARTIES

13. Petitioner, Mrs. Sandra Martinez Andraca is native and citizen of Mexico who has been in immigration detention since March 29, 2026. After arresting Petitioner, ICE did not set bond and Petitioner is unable to obtain review of her custody by an IJ, pursuant to the Board’s decision in *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, 29 I. & N. Dec. 216 (BIA 2025).

1
2 14. Respondent, the Warden of the Stewart Detention Center, is employed
3 by Core Civic Group. He has immediate physical custody of Petitioner. He is sued
4 in his official capacity.

5 15. Respondent, Markwayne Mullin is the Secretary of the Department of
6 Homeland Security. He is responsible for the implementation and enforcement of
7 the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), and oversees ICE, which is responsible
8 for Petitioner's detention. Mr. Mullin has ultimate custodial authority over Petitioner
9 and is sued in her official capacity.
10

11 **LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

12 16. The Immigration and Nationality Act ("INA") establishes several
13 detention schemes for noncitizens in removal proceedings.
14

15 17. First, 8 U.S.C. § 1226 governs the detention of individuals placed in
16 standard removal proceedings under § 1229a. Noncitizens detained under § 1226(a)
17 are generally entitled to a custody redetermination before an Immigration Judge
18 unless they fall into the narrow mandatory-detention categories of § 1226(c).

19 18. Second, 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(1)–(2) provides for mandatory detention of
20 certain individuals seeking admission who are inspected at the border and
21 determined not "clearly and beyond a doubt entitled to be admitted." This detention
22 framework is tied to the process of arrival inspection performed by an examining
23 immigration officer.
24

1
2 19. Third, 8 U.S.C. § 1231 governs detention of individuals who are subject
3 to final orders of removal.

4 20. This case turns on the proper application of § 1226(a) versus §
5 1225(b)(2) for a noncitizen like Petitioner—an individual who entered the United
6 States years ago, resided here, and was apprehended within the interior, not at a port
7 of entry.

8
9 21. Historically, individuals who entered without inspection and were later
10 placed in § 1229a removal proceedings were treated as detained under § 1226, not §
11 1225. EOIR regulations following IIRIRA confirm that such individuals were not
12 considered “arriving” and therefore were eligible for bond hearings. *See* 62 Fed. Reg.
13 10312, 10323 (Mar. 6, 1997).

14
15 22. For decades, consistent with this regulatory framework and prior
16 immigration law, noncitizens who entered without inspection and were apprehended
17 inside the United States received custody redeterminations unless subject to §
18 1226(c). *See* former 8 U.S.C. § 1252(a) (1994); H.R. Rep. No. 104-469, pt. 1, at 229
19 (1996).

20 **The Government’s Recent Policy Shift**

21
22 23. On July 8, 2025, ICE—“in coordination with” DOJ—issued guidance
23 declaring that all individuals who entered without inspection must now be detained

1
2 under § 1225(b)(2)(A), regardless of when they entered the United States or whether
3 they were ever inspected by an immigration officer.

4 24. On September 5, 2025, the BIA adopted this new position in *Matter of*
5 *Yajure Hurtado*, 29 I. & N. Dec. 216 (BIA 2025), holding that any noncitizen who
6 entered without admission is subject to § 1225(b)(2)(A) and categorically barred
7 from a bond hearing.
8

9 **This Court Has Rejected Respondents' Interpretation**

10 25. This Court has already rejected the government's reading of §
11 1225(b)(2). In *J.A.M. v. Streeval*, Case No. 4:25-cv-342 (CDL), 2025 WL 3050094
12 (M.D. G.A. Nov. 1, 2025), the Court held that § 1225(b)(2) applies only to
13 noncitizens who are "seeking admission" in the context of an arrival inspection by
14 an examining immigration officer.
15

16 26. The Court explained that "seeking admission" requires an affirmative
17 act at or near the time of arrival to obtain legal entry, coupled with contemporaneous
18 inspection. The Court rejected DHS's argument that individuals apprehended years
19 after entering the United States may be treated as if they were seeking admission. *Id.*
20 at 3.
21

22 27. Applying that interpretation, the Court concluded that § 1225(b)(2)
23 does not apply to individuals like Petitioner, whose alleged inadmissibility is based
24 on conduct occurring long after entry and not in connection with an arrival inspection.

1
2 28. Despite this Court's binding precedent, the Stewart Immigration Court
3 continues to decline jurisdiction over custody redeterminations for noncitizens like
4 Petitioner, based on the BIA's erroneous decision in *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*.

5 29. Because Petitioner has no administrative avenue to challenge her
6 custody, habeas corpus is the only remedy capable of addressing the ongoing
7 violation of federal law.
8

9 **FACTUAL BACKGROUND**

10 30. Petitioner is a native and citizen of Mexico who entered the United
11 States approximately twenty-eight (28) years ago without inspection (EWI). Since
12 her arrival, Petitioner has remained continuously in the United States and has
13 established her life in this country. During this time, she has developed strong ties
14 to her community and has worked to support herself and her family. Petitioner has
15 not departed the United States since her entry and has maintained continuous
16 physical presence in the country.
17

18 31. Petitioner is the mother of three (3) United States citizen children, ages
19 twenty-five (25), twenty-two (22), and nineteen (19). She has been a constant and
20 essential presence in their lives, providing ongoing emotional, financial, and parental
21 support. Notably, her nineteen-year-old son suffers from autism and depends
22 significantly on her daily care and assistance. In addition, Petitioner serves as the
23 primary caregiver for her elderly mother, a lawful resident in her seventies, who
24

1
2 recently underwent spine surgery and relies on Petitioner for her recovery and daily
3 needs. Petitioner's longstanding role as the central caregiver within her family
4 underscores her deep commitment and the irreplaceable nature of her presence in the
5 household, further demonstrating her strong family ties in the United States.

6 32. During her time in the United States, Petitioner has worked consistently,
7 primarily in the restaurant industry, with limited experience in construction-related
8 work. She has been employed in various positions, supporting herself and her family
9 through honest labor. Through her steady employment over the years, Petitioner has
10 demonstrated a strong work ethic and a commitment to contributing positively to her
11 community.
12

13 33. Petitioner has had very limited contact with the criminal justice system.
14 The only incident on her record stems from a citation for driving without a valid
15 driver's license. This was an isolated, non-violent traffic-related matter that did not
16 involve any allegations of harmful or dangerous conduct. The incident does not
17 reflect a pattern of criminal behavior and does not suggest that Petitioner poses any
18 risk to the community.
19

20 34. Petitioner poses no flight risk and no danger to the community. Her
21 twenty- eight years of residence in the United States, provider of U.S. citizen
22 children and lack of criminal history overwhelmingly demonstrate that she is an
23 appropriate candidate for release on bond under INA § 236(a).
24

1
2 35. Petitioner's continued detention violates due process because it is based
3 on an unlawful application of INA § 235 to an individual who was apprehended
4 inside the United States long after entry and who is not seeking admission. Petitioner
5 therefore falls squarely within the discretionary detention framework of INA §
6 236(a), which entitles her to an individualized bond hearing.

7
8 36. By continuing to detain Petitioner without bond while her immigration
9 case remains pending—despite her extensive equities, serious family hardship, and
10 lack of any disqualifying factors—Respondents are subjecting her to prolonged and
11 arbitrary imprisonment in violation of the Fifth Amendment's Due Process Clause,
12 thereby necessitating habeas relief.

13
14 37. Petitioner's continued detention also violates due process because it is
15 based on an unlawful statutory interpretation already rejected by this Court and by a
16 certified nationwide class action. In *Villa v. Normand*, this Court held that 8 U.S.C.
17 § 1225(b)(2) applies only when a noncitizen is "seeking admission" in the context
18 of an arrival inspection by an examining immigration officer. Petitioner, however,
19 was apprehended inside the United States years after her entry and therefore falls
20 squarely within the detention framework of § 1226(a), which entitles her to a bond
21 hearing.

22
23 38. Because Petitioner is a long-term resident of the United States with
24 more than two decade of continuous presence, deep family and community ties, no
PETITION FOR WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS - 9

1
2 criminal history beyond minor traffic offenses, her continued and prolonged
3 detention without any opportunity for individualized custody review violates the
4 fundamental requirements of due process and underscores the urgent necessity of
5 habeas relief.

6
7 **CLAIMS FOR RELIEF**

8 **COUNT I**
9 **Violation of the INA**

10 39. Petitioner incorporates by reference the allegations of fact set forth in
11 the preceding paragraphs.

12 40. The mandatory detention provision at 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2) does not
13 apply to all noncitizens residing in the United States who are subject to the grounds
14 of inadmissibility. As relevant here, it does not apply to those who previously
15 entered the country and have been residing in the United States prior to being
16 apprehended and placed in removal proceedings by Respondents. Such noncitizens
17 are detained under § 1226(a), unless they are subject to § 1225(b)(1), § 1226(c), or
18 § 1231.
19

20 41. The application of § 1225(b)(2) to Petitioner unlawfully mandates her
21 continued detention and violates the INA.

22 **COUNT II**
23 **Violation of the Bond Regulations**
24

1
2 42. Petitioner incorporates by reference the allegations of fact set forth in
3 preceding paragraphs.

4 43. In 1997, after Congress amended the INA through IIRIRA, EOIR and
5 the then-Immigration and Naturalization Service issued an interim rule to interpret
6 and apply IIRIRA. Specifically, under the heading of “Apprehension, Custody, and
7 Detention of [Noncitizens],” the agencies explained that “[d]espite being applicants
8 for admission, [noncitizens] who are present without having been admitted or
9 paroled (formerly referred to as [noncitizens] who entered without inspection) will
10 be eligible for bond and bond redetermination.” 62 Fed. Reg. at 10323 (emphasis
11 added). The agencies thus made clear that individuals who had entered without
12 inspection were eligible for consideration for bond and bond hearings before IJs
13 under 8 U.S.C. § 1226 and its implementing regulations.
14
15

16 44. Nonetheless, pursuant to *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, EOIR has a policy
17 and practice of applying § 1225(b)(2) to individual like Petitioner.

18 45. The application of § 1225(b)(2) to Petitioner unlawfully mandates her
19 continued detention and violates 8 C.F.R. §§ 236.1, 1236.1, and 1003.19
20

21 **COUNT III**
Violation of Due Process

22 46. Petitioner repeats, re-alleges, and incorporates by reference each and
23 every allegation in the preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.
24

1
2 47. The government may not deprive a person of life, liberty, or property
3 without due process of law. U.S. Const. amend. V. “Freedom from imprisonment—
4 from government custody, detention, or other forms of physical restraint—lies at the
5 heart of the liberty that the Clause protects.” *Zadvydas v. Davis*, 533 U.S. 678, 690
6 (2001).

7
8 48. Petitioner has a fundamental interest in liberty and being free from
9 official restraint.

10 49. The government’s detention of Petitioner without a bond
11 redetermination hearing to determine whether he is a flight risk or danger to others
12 violates her right to due process.

13 REMEDY

14
15 50. The equitable and flexible nature of habeas corpus provides this Court
16 with broad authority to craft an appropriate remedy that fully addresses the statutory
17 and constitutional violations presented in this case. Habeas corpus is fundamentally
18 an equitable remedy, and courts exercising habeas jurisdiction possess significant
19 discretion to fashion relief that effectively remedies unlawful detention. See *Velasco*
20 *Lopez v. Decker*, 978 F.3d 842, 855 (2d Cir. 2020); *Schlup v. Delo*, 513 U.S. 298,
21 319 (1995).

22
23 51. The habeas statute further directs that courts shall “dispose of the matter
24 as law and justice require.” 28 U.S.C. § 2243. The Supreme Court has emphasized
PETITION FOR WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS - 12

1
2 that the statute does not limit the relief that may be granted in habeas proceedings
3 and that federal courts retain broad remedial authority when unlawful detention is
4 established. *Carafas v. LaVallee*, 391 U.S. 234, 238 (1968)

5 52. Given the statutory and constitutional violations presented here, the
6 Court should exercise its equitable authority to order relief that effectively remedies
7 Petitioner's unlawful detention.
8

9 **Immediate Release**

10 53. Release from unlawful custody is the traditional and most appropriate
11 remedy in habeas proceedings. The Supreme Court has long recognized that the
12 central function of the writ of habeas corpus is to secure release from illegal
13 detention. *Preiser v. Rodriguez*, 411 U.S. 475, 484 (1973).

14 54. Federal courts across the country have repeatedly ordered immediate
15 release where immigration detention was imposed in violation of federal law or the
16 Constitution. Numerous courts have recognized that release is particularly
17 appropriate where detention rests on an unlawful statutory interpretation or where
18 the detainee has been deprived of meaningful procedural safeguards. Courts ordering
19 release in similar immigration detention cases include *Munoz Materano v. Arteta*,
20 2025 WL 2630826 (S.D.N.Y. Sept. 12, 2025); *Chipantiza-Sisalema v. Francis*, 2025
21 WL 1927931 (S.D.N.Y. July 13, 2025); *Rueda Torres v. Francis*, 2025 WL 3168759
22 (S.D.N.Y. Nov. 13, 2025); *Cifuentes v. Soto*, 2025 WL 3771380 (D.N.J. Dec. 31,
23
24

2025); *Gonzalez Centeno v. Lowe*, 2026 WL 94642 (M.D. Pa. Jan. 13, 2026); *Feisal O. v. Noem*, 2026 WL 92857 (D. Minn. Jan. 13, 2026); *Garcia Covarrubias v. Holston*, 2026 WL 25970 (D. Nev. Jan. 5, 2026); and *Kenzhebaev v. Noem*, 2025 WL 3737975 (W.D. Mich. Dec. 29, 2025).

55. Courts have further recognized that ordering a bond hearing may not adequately remedy constitutional violations where the detainee has already been deprived of liberty without due process. In *Qasemi v. Francis*, 2025 WL 3654098 (S.D.N.Y. Dec. 17, 2025), the court concluded that a bond hearing would not sufficiently remedy the due process violation caused by detention without lawful procedures. Similarly, in *Noyola v. Bondi*, 2026 WL 607266 (W.D. Tex. Mar. 4, 2026), the court determined that immediate release was the appropriate remedy for unlawful immigration detention.

56. Because Petitioner's detention rests on an unlawful interpretation of the Immigration and Nationality Act and because he has been denied any meaningful opportunity to challenge her custody, immediate release is the most appropriate and effective remedy.

Custody Determination by the Habeas Court

57. If the Court declines to order immediate release, the Court possesses authority to conduct its own custody determination within this habeas proceeding.

1
2 Federal courts exercising habeas jurisdiction have repeatedly recognized their
3 authority to determine whether continued detention is justified and to set appropriate
4 conditions of release. Courts have explained that conducting a custody determination
5 within the habeas proceeding may be more efficient and may better ensure
6 compliance with constitutional requirements than delegating the determination back
7 to the immigration court system. *See L.G.M. v. LaRocco*, 788 F. Supp. 3d 401
8 (E.D.N.Y. 2025); *Flores-Powell v. Chadbourne*, 677 F. Supp. 2d 474 (D. Mass.
9 2010); and *Ramirez v. Watkins*, 2010 WL 6269226 (S.D. Tex. 2010).

11 58. Under this approach, the Court may determine whether the government
12 can demonstrate that continued detention is justified based on danger to the
13 community or risk of flight. If the government cannot meet its burden, the Court may
14 order Petitioner released on recognizance or set a reasonable bond consistent with
15 Petitioner's financial circumstances.
16

17 **Ineffectiveness of Immigration Court Bond Hearings**

18
19 59. Although courts sometimes order immigration judges to conduct bond
20 hearings, recent litigation across the country demonstrates that such hearings
21 frequently fail to remedy unlawful detention. Federal courts have repeatedly
22 documented systemic problems that undermine the effectiveness of such hearings.
23 One recurring problem arises when the Department of Homeland Security appeals
24

1
2 an immigration judge's bond grant and invokes the automatic stay regulation, which
3 prevents release even after a judge has determined that bond is appropriate.
4 Numerous courts have concluded that this practice raises serious due process
5 concerns. See *Merchan-Pacheco v. Noem*, 2026 WL 88526 (D. Colo. Jan. 12, 2026);
6 *M.P.L. v. Arteta*, 2025 WL 3288354 (S.D.N.Y. Nov. 25, 2025); and *Garvey v. Noem*,
7 2026 WL 612302 (W.D. Mo. Mar. 4, 2026).
8

9 60. Courts have also documented cases in which immigration authorities
10 imposed electronic monitoring or other restrictive conditions of release that were
11 never ordered by any judge. Federal courts have repeatedly required such conditions
12 to be removed. See *Gonzalez Centeno v. Lowe*, 2026 WL 196513 (M.D. Pa. Jan. 26,
13 2026); *Diahn v. Lowe*, 2026 WL 84576 (M.D. Pa. Jan. 12, 2026); and *Montes*
14 *Aguillon v. Bondi*, 2026 WL 531899 (W.D. Tex. Feb. 25, 2026).
15

16 61. Courts have additionally documented repeated failures to conduct
17 timely bond hearings after federal courts ordered them. In *Bautista v. Santacruz*, the
18 court observed that hundreds of detainees were forced to file individual habeas
19 petitions because the government failed to provide bond hearings ordered in prior
20 litigation. These enforcement problems illustrate why immediate release or a
21 custody determination by the habeas court is often the most effective remedy for
22 unlawful immigration detention.
23
24

Safeguards If a Bond Hearing Is Ordered

62. If the Court determines that an immigration judge should conduct a bond hearing, that hearing must include procedural safeguards sufficient to satisfy due process. Courts have widely recognized that the government must bear the burden of justifying continued detention in court-ordered bond hearings. See *Hernandez- Fernandez v Lyons*, 2025 WL 2976923 (W.D. Tex. Oct. 21, 2025); *Gomez v. Olson*, 2025 WL 3768242 (N.D. Ill. Dec. 31, 2025).

63. Courts have further required that the government demonstrate danger or risk of flight by clear and convincing evidence, that the immigration judge consider the detainee's ability to pay any bond amount, and that the government be prohibited from invoking the automatic stay regulation if bond is granted. See *Lopez-Romero v. Lyons*, 2026 WL 92873 (D.N.M. Jan. 13, 2026); *Perez-Regalado v. Feeley*, 2026 WL 36112 (D. Nev. Jan. 6, 2026).

64. These safeguards ensure that any custody determination meaningfully protects the constitutional liberty interests at stake.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

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

- a. Assume jurisdiction over this matter;
- b. Order that Petitioner shall not be transferred outside the Middle District of Georgia while this habeas petition is pending;

- c. Issue an Order to Show Cause ordering Respondents to show cause why this Petition should not be granted within three days;
- d. Issue a Writ of Habeas Corpus requiring that Respondents release Petitioner or, in the alternative, provide Petitioner with a bond hearing pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) within seven days;
- e. Declare that Petitioner's detention is unlawful;
- f. 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
- g. Grant any other and further relief that this Court deems just and proper.

DATED this 10th day of April, 2026.

ZAMBRANO LAW,

/s/ Shirley C. Zambrano

Shirley C. Zambrano

GA Bar Number: 741429

1995 North Park Place, Suite 360

Atlanta, GA 30339

Phone: 770-769-5821

Fax: 770-769-5810

szambrano@zambranolaw.com

Counsel for Petitioner

VERIFICATION PURSUANT TO 28 U.S.C. 2242

I represent Petitioner, Mrs. Sandra Martinez Andraca, and submit this verification on her behalf. I hereby verify that the factual statements made in the foregoing Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus are true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

DATED this 10th day of April, 2026.

ZAMBRANO LAW,

/s/ Shirley C. Zambrano

Shirley C. Zambrano

GA Bar Number: 741429

1995 North Park Place, Suite 360

Atlanta, GA 30339

Phone: 770-769-5821

Fax: 770-769-5810

szambrano@zambranolaw.com

Counsel for Petitioner