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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

MELISSA J. ESPINOZA IBARRA, Petitioner, v. WARDEN OF IMPERIAL REGIONAL DETENTION FACILITY, Respondent.	Case No.: 26-cv-03923-RBM-DEB **RESPONSE TO PETITION**

Petitioner has filed a habeas petition under 28 U.S.C. § 2241. The government has carefully reviewed this petition and determined that the legal issues presented concern the statutory authority for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) detention of Petitioner under 8 U.S.C. §§ 1225(b)(2)(A) or 1226(a). While reserving all rights, including the right to appeal, the government respectfully submits this abbreviated response to preserve the legal issues, to conserve judicial and party resources, and to expedite the Court's consideration of this matter.

It is the government's position that Petitioner is subject to mandatory detention under § 1225(b)(2). However, the government acknowledges that Petitioner appears to be a member of the Bond Eligible Class certified in *Maldonado Bautista v. Santacruz*, 813 F. Supp. 3d 1084 (C.D. Cal. 2025). The Ninth Circuit has stayed application of the Order beyond the Central District of California. However, Respondents acknowledge the prior orders from this District directing bond hearings pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) in similar cases. Respondents therefore do not oppose an order from this Court directing a bond hearing be held pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a).[1] Respondents do not request an evidentiary hearing.

DATED: July 17, 2026

ADAM GORDON
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s/Danielle L. Brown
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[1]To the extent the Court issues an order directing a bond hearing under 1226(a), considering heavy caseloads and staffing levels, Respondents respectfully request that such order provide the government 14 days from issuance to hold such bond hearing. The Ninth Circuit has confirmed that at a bond hearing under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), the burden is on the detainee to demonstrate by a preponderance of the evidence that he is not a flight risk or danger to the community. *See Rodriguez Diaz v. Garland*, 53 F.4th 1189, 1197 (9th Cir. 2022); *see also Dos Santos v. Becerra*, No. 26-cv-01423-GPC-VET, 2026 WL 800201 (S.D. Cal. Mar. 23, 2026).