

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF
MICHIGAN, SOUTHERN DIVISION

Isselmou Abdel Aziz v. Kevin Raycraft et al.

Abdel Aziz · No. 1:25-cv-1838 · Decided January 6, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Western District of Michigan conditionally grants an immigration detainee’s petition for a writ of habeas corpus under 28 U.S.C. § 2241. The court concludes that detention is governed by 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), rather than the mandatory-detention provision of § 1225(b)(2)(A), and that the existing detention framework violates the petitioner’s Fifth Amendment due process rights. Respondents must provide a bond hearing within five business days or release the petitioner, and certain respondents are dismissed.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Western District of Michigan, Southern Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Robert J. Jonker
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Western District of Michigan, Southern Division
DECIDED	January 6, 2026
DOCKET	1:25-cv-1838
DISPOSITION	writ_granted
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Petitioner sought habeas relief under 28 U.S.C. § 2241 and emergency injunctive relief challenging his immigration detention. The court conditionally granted the petition and ordered a bond hearing or release.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The opinion applied de novo legal analysis to the statutory and constitutional questions presented in the § 2241 habeas petition.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished district court opinion
PARTIES	Isselmou Abdel Aziz v. Kevin Raycraft et al.

TOPICS

- immigration detention
- due process
- procedural due process
- statutory interpretation
- civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

immigration detention

habeas corpus

constitutional law

civil procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether prudential exhaustion of administrative remedies should bar Petitioner's § 2241 challenge to his immigration detention.
2. Whether 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), rather than the mandatory-detention provision in 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)(A), governs detention of a noncitizen who had resided in the United States and was apprehended within the country.
3. Whether Petitioner's detention under the mandatory-detention framework violated the Fifth Amendment Due Process Clause.
4. Which government officials and entities were proper respondents in the habeas action.

HOLDINGS

1. The court declined to enforce prudential exhaustion against Petitioner and alternatively concluded that waiver of exhaustion was appropriate.
2. Section 1226(a), not 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)(A), governs detention of noncitizens who have resided in the United States and were already within the country when apprehended and arrested.
3. Petitioner's continued detention under the mandatory-detention framework of § 1225(b)(2)(A) violated the Due Process Clause of the Fifth Amendment.
4. The ICE Detroit Field Office Director and the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security were proper respondents, while the Department of Homeland Security, the Attorney General, and the Executive Office for Immigration Review were dismissed as respondents.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“The Court will order Respondents to provide Petitioner with a bond hearing under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) within five business days of the date of this Court’s opinion and judgment or, in the alternative, immediately release Petitioner from custody.” (Conclusion)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Petitioner, a citizen of Mauritania, entered the United States near San Ysidro, California, on or about March 5, 2023, without being admitted or paroled. Homeland Security issued a notice to appear charging inadmissibility under INA § 212(a)(6)(A)(i), and Petitioner was initially released on his own recognizance. ICE arrested him at a gas station on October 9, 2025, and he remained detained without an opportunity to post bond or obtain release under other conditions.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Petitioner filed a counseled § 2241 petition and complaint for emergency injunctive relief on December 18, 2025. The court issued an order to show cause, Respondents filed a response, and Petitioner filed a reply. The

court declined to enforce prudential exhaustion, alternatively waived exhaustion, reached the merits, conditionally granted habeas relief, retained certain respondents, and dismissed others.

DISPOSITION

writ_granted

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

Respondents were ordered to provide Petitioner with a bond hearing under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) within five business days of the opinion and judgment or immediately release him. Respondents were also ordered to file a status report within six business days certifying compliance and describing the hearing, bond decision, and any bond conditions or reasons for denial.

CASES CITED

- Hamdi v. Rumsfeld, 542 U.S. 507, 525 (2004)
- Zadvydas v. Davis, 533 U.S. 678, 687 (2001)
- A. A. R. P. v. Trump, 145 S. Ct. 1364, 1367 (2025)
- Antelex Cobix v. Raycraft, No. 1:25-cv-1669, 2025 WL 3562651 (W.D. Mich. Dec. 12, 2025)
- Candela Bastidas v. Noem, No. 1:25-cv-1528, 2025 WL 3562638 (W.D. Mich. Dec. 12, 2025)
- Acuna Sanchez v. Noem, No. 1:25-cv-1442, 2025 WL 3562577 (W.D. Mich. Dec. 12, 2025)
- Penagos Robles v. U.S. Dep’t of Homeland Sec., No. 1:25-cv-1578, 2025 WL 3558128 (W.D. Mich. Dec. 12, 2025)

OPINION

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT WESTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN SOUTHERN DIVISION _____ ISSELMOU ABDEL AZIZ, Petitioner, Case No. 1:25-cv-1838 v. Honorable Robert J. Jonker KEVIN RAYCRAFT et al., Respondents. _____/ OPINION Petitioner, a United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detainee currently detained at the North Lake Processing Center located in Baldwin, Lake County, Michigan, initiated this action on December 18, 2025, by filing a counseled petition for writ of habeas corpus pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2241 and complaint for emergency injunctive relief.

(Pet., ECF No. 1.) For the following reasons, the Court will conditionally grant Petitioner’s petition for a writ of habeas corpus pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2241. Discussion I. Procedural History In Petitioner’s § 2241 petition, Petitioner challenges the lawfulness of his current detention and asks the Court to, inter alia, declare that Respondents’ actions to detain Petitioner violate the Due Process Clause of the Fifth Amendment and the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), and issue a writ of habeas corpus pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2241 either ordering Respondents to release Petitioner or ordering Respondents to conduct a bond hearing to satisfy the requirements of due process.

(Pet., ECF No. 1, PageID.25.) In an order entered on December 19, 2025, the Court directed Respondents to show cause, within three business days, why the writ of habeas corpus and other relief requested by Petitioner should not be granted. (Order, ECF No. 3.) Respondents filed their response on December 30, 2025, (ECF No. 5.), and Petitioner filed his reply on January 2, 2026, (ECF No.).

II. Factual Background Petitioner is a citizen of Mauritania. (Pet., ECF No. 1, PageID.6; Notice to Appear (NTA), ECF No. 5-1, PageID.53.) Petitioner entered the United States on or about March 5, 2023 at or near at San Ysidro, California without being “admitted or paroled.” (NTA, ECF No. 5-1, PageID.53.) That same day, a United States Border Patrol Agent encountered and addressed Petitioner.

(I-213, ECF No. 5-2, PageID.64.) The Department of Homeland Security issued Petitioner a Form I-862, NTA, charging Petitioner with inadmissibility under § 212(a)(6)(A)(i) of the INA because Petitioner is an immigrant “present in the United States without being admitted or paroled, or who arrived in the United States at any time or place other than as designated by the Attorney General.” (NTA, ECF No. 5-1, PageID.53.)

Petitioner was released from custody on his own recognizance. (Order of Release, ECF No. 5-3, PageID.66.) On October 9, 2025, Petitioner was at a gas station when he was encountered and arrested by an ICE agent. (Pet., ECF No. 1, PageID.6, 8.) Petitioner has been in custody since that time and has not been provided with “an opportunity to post bond or to be released under other conditions.” (Id., PageID.9.)

III. Habeas Corpus Legal Standard The Constitution guarantees that the writ of habeas corpus is “available to every individual detained within the United States.” *Hamdi v. Rumsfeld*, 542 U.S. 507, 525 (2004) (citing U.S. Const., Art I, § 9, cl. 2). Section 2241 of Title 28 confers the federal courts with the power to issue writs of habeas corpus to persons “in custody in violation of the Constitution or laws or treaties of the United States.” 28 U.S.C. § 2241.

This includes challenges by non-citizens in immigration- related matters. See *Zadvydas v. Davis*, 533 U.S. 678, 687 (2001); see also *A. A. R. P. v. Trump*, 145 S. Ct. 1364, 1367 (2025). IV. Exhaustion Respondents argue that the Court should deny Petitioner’s request for habeas corpus relief because Petitioner has not exhausted his administrative remedies. Specifically, Respondents argue that Petitioner should pursue a bond hearing and, if necessary, appeal any unfavorable decision to the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA).

The Court declines to enforce the doctrine of prudential exhaustion against Petitioner, and even if the Court were to conclude that exhaustion is warranted, the Court concludes in the alternative that waiver of exhaustion is appropriate, for the reasons set forth in the Court’s exhaustion analysis in

each of the following cases: *Antele Cobix v. Raycraft*, No. 1:25-cv-1669, 2025 WL 3562651, at *2–3 (W.D.

Mich. Dec. 12, 2025); *Candela Bastidas v. Noem*, No. 1:25-cv- 1528, 2025 WL 3562638, at *2–4 (W.D. Mich. Dec. 12, 2025); *Acuna Sanchez v. Noem*, No. 1:25- cv-1442, 2025 WL 3562577, at *2–4 (W.D. Mich. Dec. 12, 2025); *Penagos Robles v. U.S. Dep’t of Homeland Sec.*, No. 1:25-cv-1578, 2025 WL 3558128, at *2–3 (W.D. Mich. Dec. 12, 2025).

Accordingly, the Court will proceed to address the merits of Petitioner’s § 2241 petition. V. Merits Discussion A. Statutory Basis for Petitioner’s Detention Petitioner contends that Respondents have violated the INA by concluding that Petitioner is detained pursuant to the mandatory detention provisions set forth in 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2). Respondents, however, contend that Petitioner meets every element for detention under § 1225(b)(2), and that the statute’s structure and history support Respondents’ interpretation.

The Court concludes that § 1226(a), not § 1225(b)(2)(A), governs noncitizens, such as Petitioner, who have resided in the United States and were already within the United States when apprehended and arrested for the reasons set forth in the Court’s statutory analysis in each of the following cases: *Antele Cobix v. Raycraft*, No. 1:25-cv-1669, 2025 WL 3562651, at *3–6 (W.D.

Mich. Dec. 12, 2025); *Candela Bastidas v. Noem*, No. 1:25-cv-1528, 2025 WL 3562638, at *4–6 (W.D. Mich. Dec. 12, 2025); *Acuna Sanchez v. Noem*, No. 1:25-cv-1442, 2025 WL 3562577, at *4–7 (W.D. Mich. Dec. 12, 2025); *Penagos Robles v. U.S. Dep’t of Homeland Sec.*, No. 1:25- cv-1578, 2025 WL 3558128, at *3–6 (W.D. Mich. Dec. 12, 2025). B. Fifth Amendment Due Process Considerations Petitioner also argues that his detention violates the Fifth Amendment’s Due Process Clause.

Respondents counter Petitioner’s arguments by stating that Petitioner has received notice of the charges against him, has access to counsel, is scheduled to attend hearings with an immigration judge, has the right to appeal the denial of any request for bond, and has been detained by ICE for a relatively short period of time.

The Court concludes that Petitioner’s current detention under the mandatory detention framework set forth in § 1225(b)(2)(A) violates Petitioner’s Fifth Amendment due process rights for the reasons set forth in the Court’s constitutional analysis in each of the following cases: *Antele Cobix v. Raycraft*, No. 1:25-cv-1669, 2025 WL 3562651, at *6–8 (W.D. Mich. Dec.

12, 2025); *Candela Bastidas v. Noem*, No. 1:25-cv-1528, 2025 WL 3562638, at *7–8 (W.D. Mich. Dec. 12, 2025); *Acuna Sanchez v. Noem*, No. 1:25-cv-1442, 2025 WL 3562577, at *7–9 (W.D. Mich. Dec. 12, 2025); *Penagos Robles v. U.S. Dep’t of Homeland Sec.*, No. 1:25-cv-1578, 2025 WL 3558128, at *6–8 (W.D. Mich. Dec. 12, 2025). VI. Other Claims and Other Forms of Relief

Because the Court will conditionally grant Petitioner's § 2241 petition as set forth herein, the Court does not address other claims and other requested relief in Petitioner's § 2241 petition.

VII. Proper Respondents Respondents argue that the Detroit ICE Field Office Director is the only proper Respondent in this action, and they seek the dismissal of all of the other named Respondents. The Court concludes that the ICE Detroit Field Office Director is not the only proper Respondent for the reasons set forth in the Court's analysis of the same argument in each of the following cases: *Antele Cobix v. Raycraft*, No. 1:25-cv-1669, 2025 WL 3562651, at *8–9 (W.D.

Mich. Dec. 12, 2025); *Candela Bastidas v. Noem*, No. 1:25-cv-1528, 2025 WL 3562638, at *8–9 (W.D. Mich. Dec. 12, 2025); *Acuna Sanchez v. Noem*, No. 1:25-cv-1442, 2025 WL 3562577, at *9–10 (W.D. Mich. Dec. 12, 2025); *Penagos Robles v. U.S. Dep't of Homeland Sec.*, No. 1:25-cv-1578, 2025 WL 3558128, at *9–10 (W.D. Mich. Dec. 12, 2025).

To ensure that this Court's orders regarding a hearing or release will bind at least one Respondent with authority to act in the event that Petitioner is transferred out of the Western District of Michigan, the Court will retain the ICE Detroit Field Office Director and the Secretary for the Department of Homeland Security as Respondents.

The Court will dismiss the United States Department of Homeland Security, the United States Attorney General, and the Executive Office for Immigration Review as Respondents. Conclusion For the reasons discussed above, the Court will enter a judgment conditionally granting Petitioner's petition for a writ of habeas corpus pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2241. (ECF No. 1.)

The Court will order Respondents to provide Petitioner with a bond hearing under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) within five business days of the date of this Court's opinion and judgment or, in the alternative, immediately release Petitioner from custody.¹ The Court will also order Respondents to file a status report within six business days of the date of this Court's opinion and judgment to certify compliance with this opinion and the corresponding judgment.

The status report shall include if and when the bond hearing occurred, if bond was granted or denied, and if bond was granted, the conditions of the bond, or if bond was denied, the reasons for the denial. Further, the Court will dismiss the United States Department of Homeland Security, the United States Attorney General, and the Executive Office for Immigration Review as Respondents.

Dated: January 6, 2026 /s/ Robert J. Jonker Robert J. Jonker United States District Judge 1 This Court has adopted a standard practice of requiring such a hearing within five business days, even if the Petitioner requests a deadline that is shorter or longer.