

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY

Jose Enrique Perez Mejia v. Pamela Bondi, et al.

Civil Action No. 26-1592 (D.N.J. Mar. 16, 2026) · No. 1:26-cv-01592 · Decided March 17, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the District of New Jersey granted Jose Enrique Perez Mejia’s petition for a writ of habeas corpus under 28 U.S.C. § 2241, holding that his immigration bond hearing failed to provide due process or an individualized custody determination under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a). The court found the hearing record inadequate, the flight-risk determination insufficiently individualized, and the immigration judge’s order lacking meaningful consideration of evidence and alternatives to detention. The court ordered Petitioner’s immediate release subject to reasonable supervision conditions.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the District of New Jersey
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Karen M. Williams
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the District of New Jersey
DECIDED	March 17, 2026
DOCKET	1:26-cv-01592
DISPOSITION	writ_granted
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Petitioner sought habeas relief under 28 U.S.C. § 2241 from continued immigration detention after an immigration judge denied bond. The district court reviewed whether the bond proceeding satisfied constitutional and statutory requirements.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The district court reviewed constitutional and legal challenges to the bond proceeding under habeas jurisdiction but did not reweigh the immigration judge's factual determinations.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished and not for publication

TOPICS

- immigration detention
- federal habeas corpus
- procedural due process
- due process
- remedies

PRACTICE AREAS

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether 8 U.S.C. § 1226(e) deprived the district court of jurisdiction to review the constitutional adequacy of Petitioner's immigration bond hearing.
2. Whether the February 27, 2026 bond hearing satisfied due process and the individualized custody-determination requirement of 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a).
3. Whether immediate release, rather than another bond hearing, was an appropriate habeas remedy.

HOLDINGS

1. Section 1226(e) does not bar federal habeas review of constitutional claims and questions of law concerning the fairness and legality of an immigration detention proceeding, although the court may not reweigh the immigration judge's factual determinations.
2. A constitutionally adequate immigration bond hearing requires a meaningful, individualized custody determination based on a disclosed evidentiary record, an opportunity for the detainee to make arguments, and consideration of whether continued detention is justified by danger or flight risk.
3. The February 27, 2026 bond hearing was constitutionally deficient because it lacked a meaningful reviewable record, failed to provide a reasoned individualized assessment, did not meaningfully address evidence favoring release, and did not consider conditions short of detention.
4. Immediate release was appropriate rather than another bond hearing because Respondents had already been given an opportunity to provide a constitutionally adequate hearing, the resulting proceeding was fundamentally deficient, and the record did not demonstrate lawful justification for continued detention.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“A process that produces no reviewable record is fundamentally incompatible with the procedural protections required by due process.”

“Because the bond proceedings failed to provide the fundamentally fair custody determination required by the Due Process Clause and the statutory framework governing detention under 8 § 1226(a), Petitioner’s continued detention cannot stand.” (10)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Petitioner had been detained during immigration proceedings and asserted that he had no criminal history, had lived in the United States for several years, had steady employment, paid taxes, and lived with family in New Jersey. The court previously ordered an individualized bond hearing under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), but the immigration judge denied release in a brief written order stating only that Petitioner was a flight risk. No recording or transcript of the hearing was available, and the order did not explain the evidence, custody factors, or consideration of alternatives to detention. During the case, Petitioner's asylum application was pretermitted and he was granted voluntary departure.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Petitioner filed the § 2241 petition on February 18, 2026. On February 19, the court determined that his detention was governed by 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) and ordered an individualized bond hearing addressing danger and flight risk. After the immigration judge denied release at a February 27 hearing, the parties briefed whether the proceeding was fundamentally fair. The district court granted the petition, ordered immediate release subject to reasonable supervision conditions, permanently enjoined detention under § 1225, and closed the case while retaining jurisdiction over any later detention.

DISPOSITION

writ_granted

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

No remand. Respondents were ordered to immediately release Petitioner subject to reasonable conditions of supervision, file a docket letter confirming the release date and time, and refrain from rearresting or detaining Petitioner under § 1225. The court retained jurisdiction over any later detention and closed the case.

CASES CITED

- Demore v. Kim, 538 U.S. 510, 517 (2003)
- Sylvain v. Attorney General, 714 F.3d 150, 155 (3d Cir. 2013)
- Ghanem v. Warden Essex County Correctional Facility, 2022 WL 574624, at *2 (3d Cir. Feb. 25, 2022)
- Zadvydas v. Davis, 533 U.S. 678, 679, 687-88, 690 (2001)
- Diop v. ICE/Homeland Security, 656 F.3d 221, 233 (3d Cir. 2011)
- Chavez-Alvarez v. Warden York County Prison, 783 F.3d 469, 474-78 (3d Cir. 2015)
- German Santos v. Warden Pike County Correctional Facility, 965 F.3d 203, 209-11 (3d Cir. 2020)
- Guerrero-Sanchez v. Warden York County Prison, 905 F.3d 208, 212, 222 (3d Cir. 2018)
- Rodriguez v. Rokosky, No. 25-17419, 2025 WL 3485628, at *3 (D.N.J. Dec. 3, 2025)
- Zumba v. Bondi, No. 25-14626, 2025 WL 2753496 (D.N.J. Sept. 26, 2025)

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