

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY

Sandra Raquel Ramirez Valencia v. Pam Bondi, et al.

Ramirez Valencia v. Bondi · No. Civil Action No. 26-25 (JXN) · Decided January 28, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the District of New Jersey granted Sandra Raquel Ramirez Valencia’s petition for a writ of habeas corpus challenging her mandatory immigration detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2). Relying on its interpretation of the detention statutes, the Court ordered Respondents to treat her as detained under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) and provide an individualized bond hearing within seven days.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the District of New Jersey
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Julien Xavier Neals
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the District of New Jersey
DECIDED	January 28, 2026
DOCKET	Civil Action No. 26-25 (JXN)
DISPOSITION	granted
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Petition for a writ of habeas corpus under 28 U.S.C. § 2241 challenging continued immigration detention without an individualized bond hearing.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The Court interpreted the governing detention statutes and reviewed the habeas challenge to the legality of Petitioner’s detention; the opinion does not expressly identify a separately labeled standard of review.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unknown; district court memorandum and order with no reporter citation or stated precedential designation.
PARTIES	Sandra Raquel Ramirez Valencia v. Pam Bondi, et al.

TOPICS

- immigration detention
- removal proceedings
- statutory interpretation
- mandamus immigration
- immigration

PRACTICE AREAS

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether a noncitizen who entered the United States without inspection but was arrested within the interior may be held in mandatory detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2), rather than under the discretionary detention authority of § 1226(a).
2. Whether Petitioner was entitled to an individualized bond hearing before an immigration judge.

HOLDINGS

1. Petitioner’s detention was authorized by 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), not by the mandatory-detention provision in § 1225(b)(2).
2. Respondents were required to provide Petitioner with an individualized bond hearing before an immigration judge.
3. The Court was not required to defer to the BIA’s interpretation because statutory meaning is a judicial question.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“The line historically drawn between these two sections . . . is that section 1225 governs detention of non-citizens ‘seeking admission into the country,’ whereas section 1226 governs detention of non-citizens ‘already in the country.’”

“The issue of whether Petitioner is properly detained under § 1225(b) or § 1226(a) is similar to that of many cases in this District and around the country.”

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Petitioner, a native of Colombia, entered the United States without inspection. Immigration and Customs Enforcement arrested her, and she remained in ICE custody without an individualized bond hearing. Respondents maintained that she was subject to mandatory detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2), while the Court determined that the facts established detention authority under § 1226(a).

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Petitioner filed a § 2241 habeas petition challenging her detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2). The Court ordered Respondents to answer; Respondents submitted a letter response and Petitioner replied. Relying on its statutory interpretation in *Fuentes Velasquez v. Noem*, the Court granted the petition, ordered Respondents to treat Petitioner as detained under § 1226(a), and required an individualized bond hearing within seven days.

DISPOSITION

granted

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

Respondents shall treat Petitioner as detained under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) and provide her, as soon as practicable and no later than seven days from January 28, 2026, with an individualized bond hearing before an immigration judge. The immigration judge must assess whether Petitioner presents a flight risk or danger to the community. Respondents must file written notice of the hearing's outcome within three days after the hearing, and the Clerk was directed to close the case.

CASES CITED

- Fuentes Velasquez v. Noem, No. 25-16797 (JXN)
- Matter of Yajure Hurtado, 29 I&N Dec. 216 (BIA 2025)
- Martinez v. Hyde, No. 25-cv-11613, 2025 WL 2084238 (D. Mass. July 24, 2025)
- Jennings v. Rodriguez, 583 U.S. 281 (2018)
- Lopez-Campos v. Raycraft, 2025 WL 2496379 (E.D. Mich. Aug. 29, 2025)
- Lopez Benitez v. Francis, No. 25-cv-5937, 2025 WL 2371588 (S.D.N.Y. Aug. 13, 2025)
- Soto, 2025 WL 2976572
- Belsai D.S. v. Bondi, No. 25-cv-3682, 2025 WL 2802947 (D. Minn. Oct. 1, 2025)
- Zumba, 2025 WL 2753496
- Salazar v. Dedos, No. 25-cv-835, 2025 WL 2676729 (D.N.M. Sept. 17, 2025)
- Lepe v. Andrews, No. 25-cv-01163, 2025 WL 2716910 (E.D. Cal. Sept. 23, 2025)
- Roman v. Noem, No. 25-cv-01684, 2025 WL 2710211 (D. Nev. Sept. 23, 2025)
- Giron Reyes v. Lyons, No. 25-cv-4048, 2025 WL 2712427 (N.D. Iowa Sept. 23, 2025)
- Singh v. Lewis, No. 25-cv-0096, 2025 WL 2699219 (W.D. Ky. Sept. 22, 2025)
- Barrera v. Tindall, No. 25-cv-541, 2025 WL 2690565 (W.D. Ky. Sept. 19, 2025)
- Hasan v. Crawford, No. 25-cv-1408, 2025 WL 2682255 (E.D. Va. Sept. 19, 2025)
- Vazquez v. Feeley, No. 2:25-cv-01542, 2025 WL 2676082 (D. Nev. Sept. 17, 2025)
- Loper Bright Enterprises v. Raimondo, 603 U.S. 369 (2024)
- Decatur v. Paulding, 39 U.S. 497 (1840)