

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF
KENTUCKY, OWENSBORO DIVISION

Marie Anne Souffrance v. Jason Woosley, et al.

Souffrance · No. 4:26-cv-222-RGJ · Decided April 15, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Western District of Kentucky grants Marie Anne Souffrance’s petition for a writ of habeas corpus challenging her immigration detention. The court holds that 8 U.S.C. § 1226, rather than § 1225(b)(2), governs her detention and concludes that her continued detention without a bond hearing violates due process. The court orders her immediate release, subject to a neutral bond hearing before an immigration judge before any re-detention.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Western District of Kentucky, Owensboro Division
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Western District of Kentucky, Owensboro Division
DECIDED	April 15, 2026
DOCKET	4:26-cv-222-RGJ
DISPOSITION	writ_granted
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Petition for a writ of habeas corpus challenging immigration detention under 8 U.S.C. §§ 1225 and 1226 and alleging violation of the Fifth Amendment Due Process Clause.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court applied the three-part Mathews v. Eldridge balancing test to determine whether continued civil detention violated due process.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished
PARTIES	Marie Anne Souffrance v. Jason Woosley, et al., United States

TOPICS

- immigration detention
- removal proceedings
- procedural due process
- due process
- statutory interpretation

PRACTICE AREAS

- immigration
- immigration detention
- habeas corpus
- constitutional law
- civil procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Souffrance's detention was governed by 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)(A) or 8 U.S.C. § 1226.
2. Whether Souffrance's continued detention without an individualized merits bond hearing violated the Fifth Amendment Due Process Clause and the Immigration and Nationality Act.
3. Whether release followed by a bond hearing before a neutral immigration judge was the proper habeas remedy.

HOLDINGS

1. Section 1226, rather than § 1225(b)(2), governed Souffrance's detention because she had been present in the United States for approximately three years, was not seeking admission, was not designated as an arriving alien in her Notice to Appear, and was arrested under an I-200 warrant whose authority arose under § 1226.
2. Souffrance's continued detention violated the Fifth Amendment Due Process Clause and the INA because she had been detained under § 1226 without a merits bond hearing before a neutral immigration judge.
3. The proper remedy was immediate release from the unlawful detention followed by a bond hearing on the merits before a neutral immigration judge before any re-detention.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“The Due Process Clause extends to all persons regardless of status.” (Section II.B)

“Habeas has traditionally been a means to secure release from unlawful detention.” (Section III)

“The United States is directed to release Petitioner Souffrance immediately because of the unlawful detention in violation of her due process rights.” (Conclusion)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Marie Anne Souffrance, a Haitian citizen who had lived in the United States since March 2023, entered without inspection, was released on recognizance, and was placed in removal proceedings. After a March 2026 altercation with her partner, she was arrested locally and transferred to ICE custody, where ICE issued an I-200 arrest warrant and detained her at the Grayson County Jail. She had a pending asylum application, had previously applied for Temporary Protected Status, had three minor children, and had not received a merits bond hearing before an immigration judge.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Souffrance was detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement and filed a petition for a writ of habeas corpus. The United States responded and incorporated arguments from related Sixth Circuit appeals; Souffrance replied. The parties agreed that no evidentiary hearing was necessary. The district court granted the petition, ordered immediate release, and required a bond hearing before a neutral immigration judge before any re-detention.

DISPOSITION

writ_granted

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

The United States must immediately release Souffrance because of the unlawful detention, provide a bond hearing before a neutral immigration judge pursuant to § 1226 before any re-detention, and certify compliance on the docket by April 15, 2026.

CASES CITED

- Edahi v. Lewis, 2025 WL 3466682, at *2-3, *5-*13 (W.D. Ky. Nov. 27, 2025)
- Vicen v. Lewis, 2026 WL 541171, at *2-*9 (W.D. Ky. Feb. 26, 2026)
- Lopez-Campos v. Raycraft, Case No. 25-1965 (6th Cir. Oct. 27, 2025)
- Alvarez v. Noem, Case No. 25-1969 (6th Cir. Oct. 27, 2025)
- Contreras-Cervantes v. Raycraft, Case No. 25-1978 (6th Cir. Oct. 28, 2025)
- Pizarro Reyes v. Raycraft, Case No. 25-1982 (6th Cir. Oct. 29, 2025)
- Loper Bright Enters., 603 U.S. at 413
- A.A.R.P. v. Trump, 605 U.S. 91, 94 (2025)
- Mathews v. Eldridge, 424 U.S. 319, 335 (1976)
- Hamdi v. Rumsfeld, 542 U.S. 507, 529 (2004)
- Zadvydas v. Davis, 533 U.S. 678, 690 (2001)
- Munoz Materano, 2025 WL 2630826, at *15
- Sampiao, 2025 WL 2607924, at *12
- Hyppolite v. Noem, 2025 WL 2829511, at *15-*16 (E.D.N.Y. Oct. 6, 2025)
- Günaydin v. Trump, 2025 WL 1459154, at *10 (D. Minn. May 21, 2025)
- Thuraissigiam, 591 U.S. at 107
- Lopez-Arevelo v. Ripa, 2025 WL 2691828, at *12 (W.D. Tex. Sep. 22, 2025)
- Black v. Decker, 103 F.4th 133, 149-150 (2d Cir. 2024)
- Matter of Guerra, 24 I. & N. 37, 40 (BIA 2006)
- Maldonado, 2025 WL 2968042, at *9-10
- Morales-Martinez v. Raycraft, 2025 WL 3124695, at *7 (E.D. Mich. Nov. 7, 2025)

OPINION

Souffrance

PER CURIAM.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

WESTERN DISTRICT OF KENTUCKY

OWENSBORO DIVISION

MARIE ANNE SOUFFRANCE, Petitioner, v. Civil Action No. 4:26-cv-222-RGJ JASON WOOSLEY, et al., Respondents. * * * * *

MEMORANDUM OPINION AND ORDER

This matter is before the Court on Petitioner Marie Anne Souffrance's Writ of Habeas Corpus. [DE 1]. Respondents responded on April 10, 2026. [DE 9]. Petitioner replied on April 13, 2026. [DE 10]. The parties agree no evidentiary hearing is necessary. [DE 6; DE 7]. This matter is ripe for adjudication. For the reasons below, GRANTS the Petition for a Writ of Habeas Corpus. [DE 1]. I. Background Petitioner Marie Anne Souffrance ("Souffrance") is a 35-year-old native and citizen of Haiti. [DE 9-2 at 45]. Souffrance has been present in the United States since March 2023. [DE 1 at 4]. Souffrance entered the United States without inspection. [DE 1 at 4; DE 9 at 36-37].¹ Although entering without inspection, Souffrance encountered immigration officials shortly thereafter near Brownsville, Texas. [DE 9-1 at 42]. After further processing, Souffrance was released into the interior of the United States on an Order of Release on Recognizance with certain preconditions, such as routine check-ins with immigration officials. [DE 9-2 at 46]. She was also issued a Notice to Appear. [DE 9-1 at 42]. Since her arrival, Souffrance has resided in Indiana, where she resides with a long-term partner and has three minor children, two of who are U.S. citizens. [DE 1 at 4]. Souffrance also has a pending application for asylum and had previously applied for Temporary Protected Status while Haiti was a designated country. [Id.]. Souffrance has been in detention since March 23, 2026. [DE 1 at 4]. On March 20, 2026, Souffrance was involved in a physical altercation with her partner and called the local police. [Id.]. Local police arrested both Souffrance and her partner and transported them to the local jail. [DE 9-2 at 46]. With the next few days, Souffrance was transferred to the custody of Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("ICE") who transferred her to immigration detention at Grayson County Jail in the Western District of Kentucky. [Id.]. On the same day as her detention, ICE issued an I-200 Warrant for Arrest to Souffrance. [DE 9-3 at 48]. As stated, ICE had previously issued a Notice to Appear Form I-862. [DE 9-1 at 42]. The Notice to Appear marked Souffrance as an "alien present in the United States who has not been admitted or paroled." [Id.]. Souffrance is currently in removal proceedings pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1229a. [DE 1 at 4]. ICE contends that based on interim guidance from DHS, issued July 8, 2025, titled "Interim Guidance Regarding Detention Authority for Applicants for Admission," only those noncitizens who have already been admitted into the United States are eligible to be released during removal proceedings and all other noncitizens are subject to mandatory detention, under 8 U.S.C. § 1225 ("Section 1225"), not Section 1226. [DE 1 at 7-8]. This is a reversal of longstanding policy. [Id.]. Souffrance asserts that the United States illegally detained her under Section 1225 instead of Section 1226 in violation of the INA. [Id. at 13-15]. And that this prolonged detention is in violation of her Due Process Rights under the Fifth Amendment. [Id.]. Therefore, Souffrance seeks release from her detention, or in the alternative, to hold a bond hearing before a neutral IJ to determine whether she should remain in custody. [Id.]. In response, the United States "relies on and incorporate[s] by reference the legal arguments from

the briefs the government filed with the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals in the four §§ 1225-1226 appeals.” [DE 9 at 37-38].² Those cases are *Lopez-Campos v. Raycraft*, Case No. 25-1965 (6th Cir. Oct. 27, 2025); *Alvarez v. Noem*, Case No. 25-1969 (6th Cir. Oct. 27, 2025); *Contreras-Cervantes v. Raycraft*, Case No. 25-1978 (6th Cir. Oct. 28, 2025); *Pizarro Reyes v. Raycraft*, Case No. 25-1982 (6th Cir. Oct. 29, 2025). The United States concedes that the “relevant facts in all four matters on appeal” are “similar to the relevant facts in this matter” and the only “relevant legal question” is whether the Petitioner is detained under Section 1225(b)(2)(A) or Section 1226. [DE 9 at 38].

II. DISCUSSION³

A. Section 1225(b)(2) vs. Section 1226 While the relevant facts are undisputed by the parties, the United States argues Section 1225 applies to Souffrance’s detention, not Section 1226. The United States acknowledges that the Court has previously ruled on the substantive question regarding § 1225 mandatory detention, [DE 9 at 38], and, that the only relevant legal question is whether Souffrance is “detained under 8 U.S.C. § 1225 or § 1226?” [Id.]. As both parties acknowledge that the Court has previously ruled on this substantive issue, which is the only “relevant legal question,” the Court incorporates by reference its reasoning in *Edahi*, 2025 WL 3466682, at *5-*13 and *Vicen v. Lewis*, 2026 WL 2 The United States concedes that although Souffrance was originally detained under the Laken Riley Act, the current basis for her “detention is based upon [Section] 1225(b)(2)” because “Petitioner is an applicant for admission.” [DE 9 at 37].³ Neither party asserted any jurisdiction-related arguments. However, the Court has analyzed jurisdiction of remedies in similar circumstances, such as *Edahi v. Lewis*, 2025 WL 3466682, at *2-3 (W.D. Ky. Nov. 27, 2025) and incorporates its reasoning into this opinion. Neither party asserted any exhaustion-related arguments and no applicable statute or rule mandates exhaustion. However, because many decisions in similar cases by district courts within the Sixth Circuit discuss this principal, the Court incorporates its analysis on exhaustion of remedies from a previous case, *Edahi*, 2025 WL 3466682, at *3, and the Court 541171, *2-*9 (W.D. Ky. Feb. 26, 2026), holding that Section 1226 applies to the Petitioner based on the facts set forth above. i. Related Case Law The United States incorporated brief cites to several nonbinding district courts, and one BIA decision, to support their interpretation.⁴ However, the Court is not persuaded by these decisions for the reasons previously explained in *Edahi*, 2025 WL 3466682, at *9-*13 and *Vicen* 2026 WL 541171, at *2-*9, incorporated here by reference. * * * For the reasons above and incorporated, Souffrance, who has been present in the United States for approximately three years, is not “seeking admission” into the United States, a fact acknowledged in her Notice for Appearance by not marking her as an “arriving alien,” as well as her arrest pursuant to the I-200 Warrant which authority arises out of Section 1226. Section 1226, not Section 1225(b)(2), applies to her detention. B. Lawfulness of Current Detention As stated, Souffrance is detained under Section 1226. The United States contends that because Souffrance is properly detained under Section 1225(b)(2), not Section 1226, and she has not been “deprived of any due process.” [DE 9 at 40].

Otherwise, the United States does not respond to Souffrance's alleged violation of due process. Because the Court found that Souffrance's detention is guided by Section 1226, the Court must determine whether the continued detention pursuant to Section 1226 is in violation of her Due Process. 4 None of the cases cited by the United States are controlling authority within the Sixth Circuit. Further, the BIA is neither binding, nor should be viewed as persuasive authority, on any district court. See *Loper Bright Enter.*, 603 U.S. at 413 ("courts. . . may not defer to an agency interpretation of the law simply because a The Due Process Clause extends to all persons regardless of status. *A.A.R.P. v. Trump*, 605 U.S. 91, 94 (2025). This includes non-citizens. *Id.* To determine whether a civil detention violates a detainee's due process rights, courts apply the three-part balancing test set forth in *Mathews v. Eldridge*, 424 U.S. 319 (1976). The Court must weigh: (1) the private interest that will be affected by the official action; (2) the risk of an erroneous deprivation of such interest through the procedures used, and the probable value, if any, of additional or substitute procedural safeguards; and (3) the United States' interest, including the function involved and the fiscal and administrative burdens that the additional or substitute procedural requirement would entail. *Id.* at 335. The United States does not address the merits of her Due Process claim, but instead focuses solely on the legal argument of Section 1225(b)(2) versus Section 1226 as referenced above.

1. Private Interest

It is undisputed Souffrance has a significant private interest in not being detained. One of the "most elemental of liberty interests" is to be free from detention. *Hamdi v. Rumsfeld*, 542 U.S. 507, 529 (2004). "Freedom from imprisonment—from government custody, detention, or other forms of physical restraint—lies at the heart of the very liberty that [the Due Process Clause] protects." *Zadvydas v. Davis*, 533 U.S. 678, 690 (2001). Courts can also consider the detainee's condition of confinement. *Martinez v. Noem*, 2025 WL 2598379, at *2 (W.D. Tex. Sep. 8, 2025). This is to determine if the conditions are indistinguishable from criminal incarceration. *Id.* Souffrance is being detained at Grayson County Jail. [DE 1 at 2]. Souffrance previously lived in Indiana. [Id. at 4]. But because of her detention in a separate state, she is away and separated from her community and three minor children, two who are U.S. citizens. [Id.]. The detention is thus making it difficult for Souffrance to participate in her community, work, and care for her family. [Id.]. Souffrance also has a pending claim for asylum. [Id.]. As a result, the first *Mathews* factor favors Souffrance's position.

2. Risk of Error

The second factor concerns the risk of the erroneous deprivation of Souffrance's liberty. A re-detention, without any individualized assessment, leads to a high risk of erroneous deprivation of an individual's liberty interest. *Munoz Materano*, 2025 WL 2630826, at *15 (holding that "re-detention without any individualized assessment" establishes a "high risk of erroneous deprivation" of a protected liberty interest). As of today, Souffrance has not had a merits bond hearing, with counsel and evidence. *Munoz Materano*, 2025 WL 2630826, at *15 (holding that

Due process requires at a minimum the opportunity for the petitioner to submit evidence and be heard). Respondents have not demonstrated that Souffrance is a flight risk or a danger to the community, nor is it likely they can. Souffrance has no criminal convictions. [DE 1 at 4]. Therefore, it would appear to the Court the only material change within the past year, with respect to Souffrance, is the United States' interpretation of Section 1225 and Section 1226. Thus, because of a high, if not already evident, risk of erroneous deprivation of Souffrance's liberty interest, the second Matthews factor favors Souffrance.

3. United States' Interest

The final Matthews factor concerns the United States' interest in the procedure, as well as any financial or administrative burdens associated with permissible alternatives. *Matthews*, 424 U.S. at 335. The Court recognizes that the United States does have a strong interest in ensuring noncitizens do not harm their community and that they appear for future immigration proceedings. *Sampiao*, 2025 WL 2607924, at *12. However, a "routine bond hearing" before an IJ presently "minimal" burdens to the United States." *Hyppolite v. Noem*, 2025 WL 2829511, at *15 (E.D. N.Y. Oct. 6, 2025). These procedures are also already in place. *Id.* Therefore, "existing statutory and regulatory safeguards adequately serve the governmental interest in promoting public safety." *Günaydin v. Trump*, 2025 WL 1459154, at *10 (D. Minn. May 21, 2025). Because of that, the Court finds that the third Matthews factor also favors Souffrance. Therefore, the Court finds that all three Matthews factors favor Souffrance. The current detention of Souffrance is in violation of the Due Process Clause and the INA. III. Remedy Numerous courts across the country have ordered the release of individuals stemming from ICE's illegal detention. *Patel*, 2025 WL 2823607, at *6; *Beltran Barrera*, 2025 WL 2690565, at *7; *Roble v. Bondi*, 2025 WL 2443453, at *5 (D. Minn. Aug. 25, 2025) (ordering petitioner's "release from custody as a remedy for ICE's illegal re-detention"). The Supreme Court has also recognized that "Habeas has traditionally been a means to secure release from unlawful detention." *Thuraissigiam*, 591 U.S. at 107 (emphasis in original). This Court is releasing Souffrance because of the "unlawful detention" by ICE and the United States for the reasons stated above. Souffrance is not being released because she is detained pursuant to Section 1226. But instead, the Court is ordering her release because of the United States' illegal actions it undertook in Souffrance's detention. *Hyppolite*, 2025 WL 2829511 *16 (holding that the United States cannot "detain [Petitioner] without first conducting a hearing before an IJ" because of the unlawful detention of Petitioner). As a result of her release stemming from the "unlawful detention" in violation of her due process rights, and further pursuant to Section 1226 and its supporting regulations, Petitioner must be provided with a bond hearing on the merits before a neutral IJ prior to any re-detention. See 8 C.F.R. §§ 1236.1(c)(8), (d)(1). The IJ may consider the non-exhaustive list of factors set out in *Matter of Guerra* 24 I. & N. 37, 40 (BIA 2006). Courts across the country have routinely held this procedure proper. *Alonso*, 2025 WL 3083920, at *9; *Lopez-Campos*, F.Supp. 3d at 785-86; *Mboup v. Field Office Director of N.J.*, 2025 WL 3062791, at *2 (D.N.J.

Nov. 3, 2025); Espinoza, 2025 WL 2675785, at *11; Ramirez Clavijo, 2025 WL 2419263, at *6; Munoz Materano, 2025 WL 2630826, at *20. Souffrance’s procedural due process rights are not violated by the fact she is detained. “Rather, [Petitioner’s rights] are violated because she has been detained without a hearing that accords with due process.” *Lopez-Arevelo v. Ripa*, 2025 WL 2691828, *12 (W.D. Tex. Sep. 22, 2025) (citing to *Black v. Decker*, 103 F.4th 133, 149-150 (2d Cir. 2024)). Therefore, “the proper remedy” is the “full process due under [Section 1226] which includes a bond hearing before an [IJ].” *Maldonado*, 2025 WL 2968042, at *9-10; *Morales-Martinez v. Raycraft*, 2025 WL 3124695, at *7 (E.D. Mich. Nov. 7, 2025) (holding that because Petitioner had been detained “without a... hearing, he is in federal custody in violation of federal law.”) Because Souffrance is being detained pursuant to Section 1226, relevant regulations entitle her to a neutral bond hearing. See 8 C.F.R. §§ 1236.1(c)(8), (d)(1). Therefore, to afford Souffrance with the “full [due] process” under Section 1226, the United States must provide Souffrance with a neutral bond hearing before an IJ. *Maldonado*, 2025 WL 2968042, at *9-10. VI. Conclusion For the reasons stated above, the United States has violated Souffrance’s due process rights. The Court GRANTS Souffrance’s Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus [DE 1] and orders the following: I. The United States is directed to release Petitioner Souffrance immediately because of the unlawful detention in violation of her due process rights. II. The United States must provide her with a bond hearing before a neutral IJ pursuant to Section 1226. IH. The United States must certify compliance with the Court’s order by a filing on the docket by April 15, 2026.