

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

Gabriel Marcelo Acosta-Mendez v. Angela Dunbar et al.

Acosta-Mendez · No. 1:25-cv-1653 · Decided December 18, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Western District of Michigan conditionally granted Gabriel Marcelo Acosta-Mendez’s petition for a writ of habeas corpus under 28 U.S.C. § 2241. The court held that detention was governed by 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), rather than the mandatory-detention provision in § 1225(b)(2)(A), and that the existing detention framework violated the Fifth Amendment. Respondents were ordered to provide a bond hearing within five business days or release the petitioner, and certain respondents were 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	December 18, 2025
DOCKET	1:25-cv-1653
DISPOSITION	writ_granted
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Petitioner filed a counseled petition for a writ of habeas corpus under 28 U.S.C. § 2241 challenging his immigration detention. After ordering Respondents to show cause, the court conditionally granted the petition and ordered a bond hearing or release.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court reviewed the legality of Petitioner's immigration detention under 28 U.S.C. § 2241 and the Constitution. The opinion does not state a separate formal standard of review.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unknown; district court opinion with no reported citation.
PARTIES	Gabriel Marcelo Acosta-Mendez v. Angela Dunbar et al.

TOPICS

immigration detention

removal proceedings

procedural due process

statutory interpretation

civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

immigration law

habeas corpus

constitutional law

civil procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the court should enforce prudential exhaustion of administrative remedies before considering Petitioner's § 2241 challenge to immigration detention.
2. Whether 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) or 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 of § 1225(b)(2)(A) violates the Fifth Amendment Due Process Clause.
4. Whether the Detroit ICE Field Office Director is the only proper Respondent in a habeas action challenging immigration detention.

HOLDINGS

1. The court declined to enforce prudential exhaustion against Petitioner and held in the alternative that waiver of exhaustion was appropriate.
2. Section 1226(a), rather than 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2)(A), governs detention of a noncitizen who had resided in the United States and was already present in the country when apprehended and arrested.
3. Petitioner's current detention under the mandatory-detention framework of § 1225(b)(2)(A) violates the Fifth Amendment Due Process Clause.
4. The Detroit ICE Field Office Director is not the only proper Respondent. The court retained the ICE Detroit Field Office Director and the Secretary of Homeland Security and dismissed the Warden of North Lake Processing Center, the Department of Homeland Security, the Attorney General, and the Executive Office for Immigration Review.

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 is a Venezuelan citizen who entered the United States in May 2023 without being admitted or paroled and was released after being charged with inadmissibility under INA § 212(a)(6)(A)(i). His removal proceedings were terminated on June 30, 2025, because the government failed to prosecute. ICE arrested him on October 10, 2025, during Operation Midway Blitz, and DHS issued a new notice to appear charging the same inadmissibility

ground. Before detention, Petitioner lived in Chicago, possessed valid work authorization, and supported and cared for his ill mother.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Acosta-Mendez initiated the action on December 4, 2025. The court issued a show-cause order on December 8, and Respondents filed a response on December 11. The court declined to enforce prudential exhaustion, alternatively waived exhaustion, reached the merits, conditionally granted habeas relief, and dismissed several named Respondents.

DISPOSITION

writ_granted

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

Respondents must provide Petitioner a bond hearing under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a) within five business days of the opinion and judgment or immediately release him. Respondents must 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)
- Antele 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 _____ GABRIEL MARCELO ACOSTA- MENDEZ, Case No. 1:25-cv-1653 Petitioner, Honorable Robert J. Jonker v. ANGELA DUNBAR 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 4, 2025, by filing a counseled petition for writ of habeas corpus pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2241.

(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.20.) In an order entered on December 8, 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. 4.) Respondents filed their response on December 11, 2025, (ECF No. 5.) II. Factual Background Petitioner is a citizen of Venezuela who entered the United States in May 2023 without being admitted or paroled after inspection.

(Pet., ECF No. 1, PageID.5; Notice to Appear (NTA), ECF No. 2-4, PageID.51–53.) Petitioner holds a valid work authorization. (Pet., ECF No. 1, PageID.7.) Prior to his detention, Petitioner resided in Chicago, Illinois, and served as the primary caretaker and financial support for his mother, who is ill. (Pet., ECF No. 1, PageID.6.)

On May 10, 2023, after his entry into the United States, Petitioner was encountered and arrested by United States Customs and Border Patrol. (Id.) He was charged with inadmissibility under § 212(a)(6)(A)(i) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), and was released on his own recognizance. (Id.)

On June 30, 2025, an immigration judge terminated Petitioner's removal proceedings due to the government's failure to prosecute. (Id.) On October 10, 2025, ICE agents encountered and arrested Petitioner during an enforcement operation known as "Operation Midway Blitz." (Id.)

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) issued Petitioner an NTA, charging Petitioner with inadmissibility under § 212(a)(6)(A)(i) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (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. 2-4, PageID.51.)

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 only a short period 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 Warden of North Lake Processing Center, the United States Department of Homeland Security, the United States Attorney General, and the Executive Office of 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 Warden of North Lake Processing Center, the United

States Department of Homeland Security, the United States Attorney General, and the Executive Office of Immigration Review as Respondents.

Dated: December 18, 2025 /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.