

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF
FLORIDA, FORT MYERS DIVISION

Antonio Dejes Martinez Chavez v. Garrett Ripa, Field Office
Director of Enforcement and Removal Operations, Miami, Field
Office, Immigration and Customs Enforcement; Secretary Kristi
Noem, Secretary, U.S. Department of Homeland Security; Pamela Jo
Bondi, U.S. Attorney General; and Warden Matthew Mordant,
Warden of South Florida Detention Center

Martinez Chavez v. Ripa · No. 2:25-cv-1088-KCD-DNF · Decided December 15, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Middle District of Florida held that Antonio Dejes Martinez Chavez's detention was governed by 8 U.S.C. § 1226 rather than § 1225 because he had been present in the United States for years. The court granted habeas relief in part and ordered the defendants to provide Chavez with the statutory process required under § 1226, including a bond hearing, but denied his request for immediate release. The court declined to reach his Fifth Amendment claim and closed the case.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Middle District of Florida, Fort Myers Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Kyle C. Dudek
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Middle District of Florida, Fort Myers Division
DECIDED	December 15, 2025
DOCKET	2:25-cv-1088-KCD-DNF
DISPOSITION	remanded
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Petition for a writ of habeas corpus challenging immigration detention and the denial of a bond hearing.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court applied de novo statutory interpretation to determine whether Chavez's detention was governed by 8 U.S.C. § 1225 or §

	1226. The habeas relief and party-status issues were resolved on the pleadings and the undisputed detention facts.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unpublished district-court order; precedential status unknown
PARTIES	Antonio Dejes Martinez Chavez v. Garrett Ripa, Secretary Kristi Noem, Pamela Jo Bondi, Warden Matthew Mordant

TOPICS

immigration detention

removal proceedings

statutory interpretation

immigration

due process

PRACTICE AREAS

immigration law

habeas corpus

federal civil procedure

constitutional law

statutory interpretation

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Chavez's detention was governed by the mandatory-detention provisions of 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2) or the discretionary detention provisions of § 1226(a).
2. Whether Chavez was entitled to a bond hearing under § 1226(a).
3. Whether the named defendants were proper parties to the habeas action.
4. Whether Chavez was entitled to immediate release from custody.
5. Whether the court needed to decide Chavez's Fifth Amendment challenge to detention without a bond hearing.

HOLDINGS

1. Because Chavez had been present in the United States for years, his detention was governed by 8 U.S.C. § 1226 rather than § 1225.
2. As a noncitizen detained under § 1226(a), Chavez was entitled to a bond hearing and the statutory process required by § 1226.
3. The court rejected the defendants' argument that several of them were not proper parties to the habeas action.
4. Chavez was not entitled to immediate release; the court could require a bond hearing but could not order release because § 1226(a)(1) leaves the detention-or-release determination to the executive branch.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“[Sections] 1225(b)(1) and (b)(2) thus mandate detention of applicants for admission until certain proceedings have concluded.”

“Federal regulations provide that aliens detained under § 1226(a) receive bond hearings at the outset of detention.”

“[Section] 1226(a)(1) grants the executive branch discretion to determine whether to detain or release a noncitizen who is facing removal proceedings.”

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Chavez illegally entered the United States more than twenty years before the opinion and had no lawful immigration status. ICE detained him at the Alligator Alcatraz detention facility in the Middle District of Florida while removal proceedings were pending. The Government held him under 8 U.S.C. § 1225, and he challenged the absence of a bond hearing.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Chavez filed a habeas corpus petition under 28 U.S.C. § 2241 challenging his detention by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement under 8 U.S.C. § 1225 and asserting that detention without a bond hearing violated the Immigration and Nationality Act and the Fifth Amendment. Defendants responded and argued, among other things, that several defendants were not proper parties. The court granted the petition in part and denied it in part, ordering a bond hearing and the statutory process required under § 1226, while denying immediate release and declining to reach the Fifth Amendment claim.

DISPOSITION

remanded

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

Defendants must provide Chavez with the statutory process required under 8 U.S.C. § 1226, including a bond hearing. Immediate release and all other relief were denied; the case was closed.

CASES CITED

- Jennings v. Rodriguez, 583 U.S. 281, 297 (2018)
- Jennings v. Rodriguez, 583 U.S. 281, 306 (2018)
- Hernandez-Lopez v. Hardin, No. 2:25-CV-830-KCD-NPM, 2025 WL 3022245 (M.D. Fla. Oct. 29, 2025)
- Garcia v. Noem, No. 2:25-CV-00879-SPC-NPM, 2025 WL 3041895, at *6 (M.D. Fla. Oct. 31, 2025)
- Sanchez-Penunuri v. Longshore, 7 F. Supp. 3d 1136, 1150 (D. Colo. 2013)
- Masingene v. Martin, 424 F. Supp. 3d 1298, 1302 (S.D. Fla. 2020)
- Hulke v. Schmidt, 572 F. Supp. 3d 593, 596 (E.D. Wis. 2021)
- Lopez-Arevelo v. [not provided], No. EP-25-CV-337-KC, 2025 WL 2691828, at *12 (W.D. Tex. Sept. 22, 2025)
- Pizarro Reyes v. Raycraft, No. 25-cv-12546, 2025 WL 2609425, at *8 (E.D. Mich. Sept. 9, 2025)
- Bautista v. Santacruz, No. 5:25-CV-01873-SSS-BFM, 2025 WL 3288403 (C.D. Cal. Nov. 25, 2025)
- Alli v. Decker, 650 F.3d 1007, 1015 (3d Cir. 2011)
- J.E.F.M. v. Holder, 107 F. Supp. 3d 1119, 1144 (W.D. Wash. 2015)

OPINION

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT MIDDLE DISTRICT OF FLORIDA FORT MYERS DIVISION ANTONIO DEJES MARTINEZ CHAVEZ, Case No. 2:25-cv-1088-KCD-DNF Plaintiff, v. GARRETT RIPA, FIELD OFFICE DIRECTOR OF ENFORCEMENT AND REMOVAL OPERATIONS, MIAMI, FIELD OFFICE, IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT; SECRETARY KRISTI NOEM, SECRETARY, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY; PAMELA JO BONDI, U.S. ATTORNEY GENERAL; AND WARDEN MATTHEW MORDANT, WARDEN OF SOUTH FLORIDA DETENTION CENTER, Defendants. / ORDER Plaintiff Antonio Dejes Martinez Chavez has filed a habeas corpus petition challenging his detention by U.S. Immigration & Customs Enforcement.

(Doc. 1.)¹ He claims that the Attorney General is holding him without a bond hearing in violation of the Immigration and Nationality Act 1 Unless otherwise indicated, all internal quotation marks, citations, case history, and alterations have been omitted in this and later citations. (“INA”), and his continued detention without a hearing contravenes the Fifth Amendment.

(Id. at 22-24.) Defendants responded. (Doc. 9.) For the reasons below, the petition is GRANTED IN PART AND DENIED IN PART. Chavez illegally entered the United States over 20 years ago. (Doc. 1 ¶ 55.) He was recently detained by ICE and is now held at Alligator Alcatraz in the Middle District of Florida. (Id. ¶ 8.) ICE is holding Chavez under 8 U.S.C. § 1225.

(Id. ¶ 64.) This matters because aliens detained through § 1225(b)(2) must remain in custody throughout their removal proceedings. See *Jennings v. Rodriguez*, 583 U.S. 281, 297 (2018) (“[Sections] 1225(b)(1) and (b)(2) thus mandate detention of applicants for admission until certain proceedings have concluded.”). Removal proceedings are underway against Chavez, and he is being accused of unlawfully entering the United States.

(See Doc. 1 ¶ 5.) The heart of this case is a question of statutory interpretation involving the interplay between 8 U.S.C. §§ 1225 and 1226. According to Chavez, the Attorney General is unlawfully holding him under § 1225(b)(2), which mandates his detention, instead of under § 1226(a)’s discretionary detention scheme, where he could be eligible for release.

As a result, his continued detention without a bond hearing is unconstitutional. As the Government concedes, the Court has already covered this ground and addressed the issues raised by Chavez. See *Hernandez-Lopez v. Hardin, et al.*, No. 2:25-CV-830-KCD-NPM, 2025 WL 3022245 (M.D. Fla. Oct. 29, 2025); *Garcia v. Noem*, No. 2:25-CV-00879-SPC-NPM, 2025 WL 3041895, at *6 (M.D.

Fla. Oct. 31, 2025). There, the Court was satisfied of its jurisdiction and found that petitioners were being held in violation of their rights under the INA, entitling them to habeas relief. The same result applies here. It is undisputed that Chavez has been in the United States for years. His

detention is thus governed by § 1226. And as a noncitizen detained under § 1226, Chavez is entitled to a bond hearing.

See *Jennings*, 583 U.S. at 306 (“Federal regulations provide that aliens detained under § 1226(a) receive bond hearings at the outset of detention.”). Finally, several defendants raise an argument that they are not proper parties, which the Court now rejects as well. See *Sanchez- Penunuri v. Longshore*, 7 F. Supp. 3d 1136, 1150 (D. Colo. 2013); *Masingene v. Martin*, 424 F. Supp. 3d 1298, 1302 (S.D.

Fla. 2020). Chavez seeks a writ of habeas corpus ordering his immediate release from custody. (Doc. 1 at 25.) But that is not something the Court can do. “[Section] 1226(a)(1) grants the executive branch discretion to determine whether to detain or release a noncitizen who is facing removal proceedings.” *Hulke v. Schmidt*, 572 F. Supp. 3d 593, 596 (E.D. Wis. 2021).

Chavez is an alien without lawful status. So he is entitled to a bond hearing under § 1226(a), not immediate release. See, e.g., *Lopez-Arevelo*, No. EP-25-CV-337-KC, 2025 WL 2691828, at *12 (W.D. Tex. Sept. 22, 2025). Consistent with the “comfortable majority position,” the Court will instead require Defendants to provide Chavez with the statutory process required under § 1226(a), which includes a bond hearing.

Id. One last issue. Chavez’s petition also challenges his detention under the Fifth Amendment. This claim is not addressed “given that the Court [is granting] the relief [Chavez is entitled to] based on its interpretation of the applicability of § 1226(a).” *Pizarro Reyes v. Raycraft*, No. 25-cv-12546, 2025 WL 2609425, at *8 (E.D. Mich. Sept. 9, 2025). If Defendants do not provide Chavez with a bond hearing as ordered, he can renew his Fifth Amendment claim in a subsequent complaint.

For the reasons given, Chavez’s Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus (Doc. 1) is GRANTED IN PART AND DENIED IN PART. The Court orders Defendants to provide Chavez with the statutory process required under § 1226, which includes a bond hearing. All other relief is DENIED.

The Clerk is directed to terminate any pending motions and deadlines and close the case.^{2 2} The Court is aware of a pending California case that certified a class action of aliens who, like Chavez, are in immigration detention and being denied access to a bond hearing. See *Bautista v. Santacruz*, No. 5:25-CV-01873-SSS-BFM, 2025 WL 3288403 (C.D. Cal. Nov. 25, 2025).

But no final judgment has been issued in *Bautista* to bind the parties here. And the Court finds no prudential reason to dismiss or stay this case in the meantime because Chavez will seemingly need to return to this jurisdiction to obtain the habeas relief sought. See, e.g., *Alli v. Decker*, 650 F.3d 1007, 1015 (3d Cir. 2011); *J.E.F.M. v. Holder*, 107 F. Supp. 3d 1119, 1144 (W.D.

Wash. 2015). ORDERED in Fort Myers, Florida on December 15, 2025. Kyle C. Dudek United States District Judge

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