

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF
FLORIDA

Brayan Alexis Gramajo-Zabaleta v. Todd Blanche, Acting Attorney
General of the United States, et al.

Gramajo-Zabaleta v. Blanche, No. 1:26-cv-22617-GAYLES (S.D. Fla. Apr. 27, 2026) · No. 1:26-cv-22617-
GAYLES · Decided April 27, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Southern District of Florida grants in part a habeas petition challenging the detention of Brayan Alexis Gramajo-Zabaleta without an individualized bond hearing. The Court holds that the petitioner, who had lived in the United States since 2016, is detained under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), rather than § 1225(b)(2), and orders an individualized bond hearing or release. The Court declines to reach the merits of the remaining due process and Administrative Procedure Act claims and excuses exhaustion as futile.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Southern District of Florida
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Southern District of Florida
DECIDED	April 27, 2026
DOCKET	1:26-cv-22617-GAYLES
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Petitioner sought habeas and declaratory and injunctive relief under 28 U.S.C. § 2241, challenging her immigration detention without an individualized bond determination. The district court granted the petition in part, held that petitioner was detained under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), ordered an individualized bond hearing or release, and declined to reach the merits of the remaining claims.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court reviewed the legality of petitioner's executive detention through habeas corpus and interpreted the statutory detention framework. It also considered whether prudential exhaustion should be excused as futile.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished district court order; precedential status unknown
PARTIES	Brayan Alexis Gramajo-Zabaleta v. Todd Blanche, Acting Attorney General of the United States, Markwayne Mullin, Secretary of the

TOPICS

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QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether petitioner, who had lived in the United States for years after entering without inspection, was detained under the mandatory-detention provisions of 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2) or the discretionary detention provisions of § 1226(a).
2. Whether petitioner was entitled to an individualized bond hearing under § 1226(a).
3. Whether exhaustion of administrative remedies should be excused as futile.
4. Whether the court needed to reach petitioner's due process and Administrative Procedure Act claims after granting relief under the Immigration and Nationality Act.

HOLDINGS

1. A noncitizen who has lived in the United States for years and was already present when apprehended is governed by the discretionary detention framework of § 1226(a), rather than the mandatory detention framework of § 1225(b)(2), when the noncitizen was not seeking admission.
2. Because § 1226(a) governed petitioner's detention, petitioner was entitled to an individualized bond hearing under that provision.
3. Prudential exhaustion was excused because a subsequent bond appeal to the Board of Immigration Appeals would have been futile in light of *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Habeas is at its core a remedy for unlawful executive detention.” (II)

“The Court agrees that the plain reading of the statute supports a finding that Petitioner, who has been living in the United States since 2016, is governed by § 1226(a) and not § 1252(b)(2).” (III.A)

“Importantly, the exhaustion requirement under 8 U.S.C. § 1252(d)(1) is prudential, “not jurisdictional.”” (III.B)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Petitioner, a Guatemalan national, entered the United States without inspection in December 2016 and remained in the country for years, developing community ties and obtaining work authorization. She had no criminal history. After her arrest in February 2026 and transfer among several detention facilities, an immigration judge

denied her request for a bond hearing on the ground that mandatory detention under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2) applied.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Petitioner was arrested in February 2026 and detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement after an immigration judge denied her request for a bond hearing under 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)(2). She filed this action on April 15, 2026, asserting due process, Administrative Procedure Act, and Immigration and Nationality Act claims. Respondents opposed the petition, arguing that detention was governed by § 1225(b)(2), and the court granted relief in part.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- *Munaf v. Geren*, 553 U.S. 674, 693 (2008)
- *Puga v. Assistant Field Off. Dir., Krome N. Serv. Processing Ctr.*, No. 25-24535-CIV, 2025 WL 2938369 (S.D. Fla. Oct. 15, 2025)
- *Nguyen v. Parra*, No. 25-CV-25325-JB, 2025 WL 3451649 (S.D. Fla. Dec. 1, 2025)
- *Jennings v. Rodriguez*, 583 U.S. 281, 289, 306 (2018)
- *Gomes v. Hyde*, No. 25-cv-11571, 2025 WL 1869299, at *2, *8 (D. Mass. July 7, 2025)
- *Merino*, 2025 WL 2941609, at *3
- *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, 29 I&N Dec. 216 (BIA 2025)
- *Buenrostro-Mendez v. Bondi*, 166 F.4th 494 (5th Cir. 2026)
- *Avila v. Bondi*, 170 F.4th 1128 (8th Cir. 2026)
- *Lobovillalobos v. Hardin*, No. 2:26-cv-00446, 2026 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 45140, at *2 n.1 (M.D. Fla. Mar. 5, 2026)
- *Ardon-Quiroz v. Assistant Field Dir.*, No. 25-CV-25290-JB, 2025 WL 3451645, at *5 (S.D. Fla. Dec. 1, 2025)
- *Babilla v. Allstate Ins. Co.*, No. 20-cv-1434, 2020 WL 6870610, at *1 (M.D. Fla. Aug. 27, 2020)
- *Von Hoffberg v. Alexander*, 615 F.2d 633, 638 (5th Cir. 1980)

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