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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON  
AT SEATTLE

J.E.F.M., et al.,

Plaintiffs,

v.

ERIC H. HOLDER, et al.,

Defendants.

C14-1026 TSZ

ORDER

THIS MATTER comes before the Court on defendants’ motion to dismiss, docket no. 80, based on lack of jurisdiction and failure to state a claim. Having considered all of the materials filed in support of, and in opposition to, the motion, and the oral arguments of counsel, the Court enters the following order.

**Background**

In this action, nine juveniles ranging in age from 3 to 17, on behalf of themselves and others similarly situated,<sup>1</sup> assert both a statutory and a constitutional claim that they

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<sup>1</sup> According to a report cited by defendants, which was prepared by the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (“TRAC”) at Syracuse University, the number of juvenile cases in immigration courts increased dramatically over the last few years, jumping from 6,425 in 2011, to 11,411 in 2012, and 21,351 in 2013. *See* Surreply at 2 n.1 (docket no. 70) (citing <http://trac.syr.edu/immigration/reports/359/>). In a different report, TRAC indicates that 59,394 immigration cases involving minors were filed in 2014. *See* <http://trac.syr.edu/phptools/immigration/juvenile/>.

1 are entitled to have attorneys appointed to represent them at government expense in  
2 connection with their removal proceedings.<sup>2</sup> They assert the statutory claim under § 240  
3 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (“INA”), 8 U.S.C. § 1229a, and they bring the  
4 constitutional claim under the Due Process Clause of the Fifth Amendment. As to five of  
5 the nine plaintiffs, three of whom are siblings, removal proceedings are ongoing. *See* 2d  
6 Am. Compl. ¶¶ 13-16, 18, & 85 (docket no. 95). As to the other four plaintiffs, however,  
7 removal proceedings are not currently pending.<sup>3</sup>

8 Under the INA, as amended by the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant  
9 Responsibility Act of 1996 (“IIRIRA”), an alien is “removable” if (i) he or she was not  
10 admitted to the United States and is “inadmissible” under 8 U.S.C. § 1182, or (ii) he or  
11 she was admitted to the United States and is “deportable” under 8 U.S.C. § 1227. *See*  
12 8 U.S.C. § 1229a(e)(2). Before the enactment of IIRIRA, a distinction had been drawn  
13 between “exclusion” and “deportation” of individuals. *See Dormescar v. U.S. Att’y Gen.*,  
14 690 F.3d 1258, 1260 (11th Cir. 2012); *see also U.S. ex rel. Knauff v. Shaughnessy*, 338

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16 <sup>2</sup> The parties agree that no Sixth Amendment right to counsel exists in removal proceedings, which are  
17 civil in nature. *See United States v. Gasca-Kraft*, 522 F.2d 149, 152 (9th Cir. 1975); *see also Dearing*  
*ex rel. Volkova v. Reno*, 232 F.3d 1042, 1045 (9th Cir. 2000); *Michelson v. INS*, 897 F.2d 465, 467 (10th  
18 Cir. 1990); *United States v. Saucedo-Velasquez*, 843 F.2d 832, 834 n.2 (5th Cir. 1988).

19 <sup>3</sup> With respect to G.D.S., who is currently in a juvenile rehabilitation facility, and A.E.G.E., who is 3  
20 years old and living in Los Angeles with his mother, a permanent resident, plaintiffs do not allege that  
21 removal proceedings have commenced. *See* 2d Am. Compl. ¶¶ 79 & 100-101. At the hearing held on  
22 March 6, 2015, plaintiffs’ counsel suggested that a charging document has been filed against A.E.G.E.,  
23 but defendants’ attorney was adamant that removal proceedings are not pending as to A.E.G.E. On the  
other end of the spectrum, plaintiffs indicate that G.J.C.P. and J.E.V.G. have already been ordered  
removed in absentia. 2d Am. Compl. ¶¶ 22 & 23. A motion to reopen J.E.V.G.’s removal proceedings  
was filed by the government, *see* Defs.’ Supp. Br. at 10 n.6 (docket no. 97), and defendants’ attorney  
represented during oral argument that a hearing concerning J.E.V.G. is currently scheduled in May 2015,  
but neither the anticipated nature of such hearing nor the exact status of J.E.V.G.’s removal proceedings  
are reflected in any pleading that has been filed in this action.

1 U.S. 537, 543 (1950). “Excludable” aliens, meaning those who sought but had not yet  
2 achieved admission, were treated as though they were detained at the border, even if they  
3 were physically present within the United States, *Dormescar*, 690 F.3d at 1260, and  
4 “excludable” aliens were entitled to fewer procedural protections than “deportable”  
5 aliens, *Mariscal-Sandoval v. Ashcroft*, 370 F.3d 851, 854 (9th Cir. 2004). When IIRIRA  
6 became effective on April 1, 1997, *see* Pub. L. No. 104-208, § 309(a), 110 Stat. 3009  
7 (1996), exclusion and deportation proceedings were merged into the broader category of  
8 “removal” proceedings. *Mariscal-Sandoval*, 370 F.3d at 854 n.6.

9 Removal proceedings are conducted before an immigration judge, and such  
10 proceedings are “the sole and exclusive” means for determining whether an alien may be  
11 admitted to or removed from the United States. 8 U.S.C. §§ 1229a(a)(1) & (3). Pursuant  
12 to INA § 240(b), an alien in a removal proceeding may offer evidence on his or her own  
13 behalf and may review the evidence and cross-examine the witnesses presented by the  
14 Government. 8 U.S.C. § 1229a(b)(4)(B). An alien also has the statutory “privilege of  
15 being represented, at no expense to the Government, by counsel of the alien’s choosing”  
16 in both “removal proceedings before an immigration judge” and “appeal proceedings  
17 before the Attorney General.” 8 U.S.C. §§ 1229a(b)(4)(A) & 1362. In this case,  
18 plaintiffs contend that, because they are unable to retain counsel, for either financial or  
19 other reasons, they cannot exercise their statutory right to present evidence and cross-  
20 examine witnesses and are being denied their constitutional right to due process of law.

1 **Discussion**

2 Defendants move to dismiss for lack of subject-matter jurisdiction and for failure  
3 to state a claim. Defendants' motion to dismiss was filed before the Court entered its  
4 order denying plaintiffs' earlier motion for a preliminary injunction, *see* Order (docket  
5 no. 81), and before plaintiffs sought and were granted leave to file their Second Amended  
6 Complaint.<sup>4</sup> Although jurisdiction was addressed in the Court's prior order, additional  
7 plaintiffs have now been named and the jurisdictional issues more squarely concern the  
8 right-to-counsel claim, as opposed to the continuances or stays plaintiffs sought in their  
9 motion for a preliminary injunction. The Court will therefore consider defendants'  
10 jurisdictional arguments anew.

11 **A. Jurisdiction**

12 Defendants assert three overlapping reasons for dismissing this action for lack of  
13 jurisdiction:<sup>5</sup> (i) lack of ripeness; (ii) the jurisdiction-stripping and channeling provisions  
14 of IIRIRA, as amended by the REAL ID Act of 2005; and (iii) sovereign immunity.

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16 <sup>4</sup> After joining three more juveniles in the Second Amended Complaint, plaintiffs voluntarily dismissed  
17 two of the original eight minors, namely G.M.G.C. and S.R.I.C. *See* Notice (docket no. 107). Plaintiffs  
provided no explanation for the voluntary dismissal. According to defendants, however, S.R.I.C., who  
turned 18 in January, is now being represented by counsel. *See* Reply at 2 n.2 (docket no. 104). During  
the hearing on March 6, 2015, defendants' attorney indicated that G.M.G.C. also now has a lawyer.

18 <sup>5</sup> In their Rule 12(b)(1) motion, defendants present a facial, rather than a factual, jurisdictional challenge.  
19 A facial attack asserts that the allegations of the complaint are insufficient on their face to invoke federal  
20 jurisdiction, while a factual challenge disputes the truth of the allegations in the complaint, which would  
otherwise support subject-matter jurisdiction. *See Safe Air for Everyone v. Meyer*, 373 F.3d 1035, 1038  
21 (9th Cir. 2004). With respect to a facial challenge under Rule 12(b)(1), a plaintiff is entitled to the same  
22 safeguards that apply to a Rule 12(b)(6) motion to dismiss for failure to state a claim. *See Friends of*  
*Roeding Park v. City of Fresno*, 848 F. Supp. 2d 1152, 1159 (E.D. Cal. 2012). The allegations of the  
23 complaint are presumed to be true, *id.*, and the Court may not consider matters outside the pleading  
without converting the motion into one for summary judgment, *see White v. Lee*, 227 F.3d 1214, 1242  
(9th Cir. 2000).

1 Defendants' arguments can be distilled into one basic premise, namely that plaintiffs can  
2 and should be required to raise their right-to-counsel claim in their removal proceedings  
3 and then seek review of the predictably unfavorable result by the Board of Immigration  
4 Appeals ("BIA") and the appropriate court of appeals.

5 Plaintiffs appear to view defendants' analysis as stating a form of Catch-22.<sup>6</sup>  
6 Plaintiffs contend that, as children, they lack the capacity to request an attorney in the  
7 midst of a removal proceeding, to appeal to the BIA, or to petition for review by a court  
8 of appeals, and that they cannot be assisted in any of these endeavors by a lawyer without  
9 thereby forfeiting their claim to appointment of counsel. In other words, according to  
10 plaintiffs, they cannot feasibly ask for an attorney without the help of an attorney, but if  
11 they receive the help of an attorney, then they cannot ask for an attorney at government  
12 expense.

13 This alleged paradox presupposes cognitive limitations on the part of all alien  
14 juveniles that the Court is not ready to accept.<sup>7</sup> The Court is persuaded, however, that the  
15 jurisdictional hurdles defendants seek to erect would create a different unfair result.

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17 <sup>6</sup> Since being coined by Joseph Heller in 1961, the term "Catch-22" has appeared in over two thousand  
18 opinions or orders issued by federal courts. The term is a shorthand way of referring to a "paradox in  
19 which seeming alternatives actually cancel each other out, leaving no means of escape from a dilemma."  
20 WEBSTER'S II NEW RIVERSIDE UNIV. DICTIONARY 237 (1984); *see* THE RANDOM HOUSE DICTIONARY  
21 OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE 327 (2d ed. 1987) ("a frustrating situation in which one is trapped by  
22 contradictory regulations or conditions" or "any illogical or paradoxical problem or situation; dilemma").

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24 <sup>7</sup> The Court does not agree that requesting an attorney requires the skills of a "Doogie Howser," the  
25 fictional character mentioned by plaintiffs' counsel during oral argument, from a television series popular  
26 in the early 1990s, about a genius teenager with a medical degree, who is a surgeon at a Los Angeles  
27 hospital. The Court is satisfied that many, if not most, youngsters are capable of uttering, in their native  
28 language if not in English, the words "I want a lawyer," and of inscribing that phrase on a notice of appeal  
29 or petition for review.

1 Assuming an alien minor, acting pro se, successfully navigated the immigration labyrinth  
2 all the way to the appropriate court of appeals, he or she would arrive there without the  
3 record necessary to conduct the balancing of interests required by *Mathews v. Eldridge*,  
4 424 U.S. 319 (1976), in connection with a due process right-to-counsel claim.<sup>8</sup> An  
5 immigration judge, who has no authority to appoint an attorney at government expense,  
6 would have no reason to hold an evidentiary hearing or engage in the *Mathews* analysis.  
7 Absent an endeavor by an immigration judge to weigh the *Mathews* factors with regard to  
8 a right-to-counsel claim, neither the BIA nor a court of appeals would have anything to  
9 review. Meanwhile, the petitioner would likely have turned 18 while the appeal was  
10 pending, meaning that remand to develop a record would not be a viable option and the  
11 claim of a right to counsel for alien juveniles would remain unresolved. A different  
12 youth might later take up the cause and run the same gauntlet, but with probably the same  
13 result.

14 The Court is of the opinion that the due process question plaintiffs have raised in  
15 this case is far too important to consign it, as defendants propose, to the perhaps perpetual  
16 loop of the administrative and judicial review process. A fundamental precept of due  
17 process is that individuals have a right “to be heard ‘at a meaningful time and in a  
18 meaningful manner’” before “being condemned to suffer grievous loss of any kind, even

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20 <sup>8</sup> Under *Mathews*, in evaluating whether due process has been satisfied, the following factors must be  
21 weighed: (i) the nature of the private interest affected by the government action; (ii) the risk of erroneous  
22 deprivation of such interest through the procedures used, as well as the probable value of additional or  
23 substitute safeguards; and (iii) the interest of the government, including the fiscal or administrative  
burdens that additional or different procedural requirements would entail. 424 U.S. at 335. In *Turner v.*  
*Rogers*, 131 S. Ct. 2507 (2011), the Supreme Court indicated that the *Mathews* factors are “useful” in  
determining whether due process requires the appointment of counsel in a civil proceeding. *Id.* at 2517.

1 though it may not involve the stigma and hardships of a criminal conviction.” *Mathews*,  
2 424 U.S. at 333. Unlike some other legal doctrines, due process is “not a technical  
3 conception with a fixed content unrelated to time, place and circumstances,” but rather is  
4 “flexible and calls for such procedural protections as the particular situation demands.”  
5 *Id.* at 334 (quoting *Cafeteria & Rest. Workers Union, Local 473 v. McElroy*, 367 U.S.  
6 886, 895 (1961), and *Morrissey v. Brewer*, 408 U.S. 471, 481 (1972)). Whether  
7 plaintiffs’ constitutional due process right-to-counsel claim has merit cannot yet be  
8 determined, but plaintiffs deserve, and the Court concludes that it has jurisdiction (at least  
9 with respect to juveniles currently in removal proceedings) to eventually provide an  
10 answer. With respect to plaintiffs’ statutory claim, however, the Court lacks jurisdiction.

### 11 **1. Ripeness**

12 Defendants contend that plaintiffs’ right-to-counsel claim is not ripe because no  
13 named plaintiff has yet, during the course of removal proceedings, requested and been  
14 refused an attorney at government expense. Defendants’ argument has merit with respect  
15 to minors against whom removal proceedings have not yet been initiated. A claim “is not  
16 ripe for adjudication if it rests upon ‘contingent future events that may not occur as  
17 anticipated, or indeed may not occur at all.’” *Texas v. United States*, 523 U.S. 296, 300  
18 (1998) (quoting *Thomas v. Union Carbide Agric. Prods. Co.*, 473 U.S. 568, 580-81  
19 (1985)). Removal proceedings might never be commenced with respect to G.D.S. and  
20 A.E.G.E., and their claims asserting a constitutional or statutory right to the appointment  
21 of an attorney to represent them in removal proceedings are premature. Thus, as to these  
22 two juveniles, the Court currently lacks jurisdiction, and defendants’ Rule 12(b)(1)  
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1 motion to dismiss is GRANTED in part. The claims of G.D.S. and A.E.G.E. are  
2 DISMISSED without prejudice.

3 Defendants' ripeness challenge otherwise fails. Exhaustion is not required to  
4 make a claim ripe when the agency lacks authority to grant relief. *See Xiao v. Barr*, 979  
5 F.2d 151, 154 (9th Cir. 1992); *El Rescate Legal Servs., Inc. v. Exec. Office of*  
6 *Immigration Review*, 959 F.2d 742, 746-47 (9th Cir. 1991); *see also Am.-Arab Anti-*  
7 *Discrimination Comm. v. Reno ("AAADC I")*, 70 F.3d 1045, 1058 (9th Cir. 1995) ("[W]e  
8 customarily decline to apply the prudential ripeness doctrine when exhaustion would be a  
9 futile attempt to challenge a fixed agency position."). Defendants concede that neither an  
10 immigration judge nor the BIA "has the authority to appoint counsel" for an alien minor  
11 or "to declare that 8 U.S.C. § 1362 is unconstitutional as applied to all minors." Defs.'  
12 Supp. Br. at 7 (docket no. 97). Thus, any attempt by plaintiffs to secure from an  
13 immigration judge or the BIA a government-compensated lawyer to assist them with  
14 removal proceedings would be futile.

15 In *El Rescate*, the plaintiffs faced a similar issue of futility in challenging certain  
16 practices of the Executive Office of Immigration Review ("EOIR"), namely the use of  
17 incompetent translators and the failure to interpret many portions of immigration court  
18 hearings. 959 F.2d at 745. The district court granted summary judgment in favor of the  
19 plaintiffs, and the EOIR appealed, arguing that the district court lacked jurisdiction  
20 because the plaintiffs did not exhaust their administrative remedies. *Id.* at 745-46. In  
21 holding that exhaustion was not required, the Ninth Circuit focused on the distinction  
22 between claims attacking the validity of an individual order of deportation or exclusion  
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1 (now known collectively as removal) and claims predicated on “an alleged pattern and  
2 practice of constitutional or statutory violations.” *Id.* at 746. With regard to the latter,  
3 the Ninth Circuit held that exhaustion is unnecessary when “the agency’s position on the  
4 question at issue ‘appears already set,’” and resort to administrative remedies is “very  
5 likely” to produce an unfavorable result or be futile. *Id.* at 747; *see also AAADC I*, 70  
6 F.3d at 1058 (observing that exhaustion is futile when no “genuine doubt” exists as to  
7 “what is going to happen in the administrative process” (quoting *Rafeedie v. INS*, 880  
8 F.2d 506, 514 (D.C. Cir. 1989))). In this case, as in *El Rescate*, the remaining plaintiffs  
9 present a “pattern and practice” claim as to which recourse to the administrative process  
10 is guaranteed to fail. Thus, defendants’ attack on the ripeness of plaintiffs’ claim lacks  
11 merit.

## 12 **2. IIRIRA and the REAL ID Act**

13 Ripeness is not, however, the only obstacle that the remaining plaintiffs’ statutory  
14 and constitutional right-to-counsel claims must overcome. As explained in more detail  
15 below, IIRIRA’s jurisdiction-stripping provision, as amended by the REAL ID Act,  
16 8 U.S.C. § 1252(g), requires the Court to dismiss at least G.J.C.P.’s claim because it  
17 seeks to collaterally attack an order of removal entered in absentia. In addition, the  
18 REAL ID Act’s and IIRIRA’s channeling mechanism, 8 U.S.C. §§ 1252(a)(5) and (b)(9),  
19 removes plaintiffs’ first cause of action for violation of INA § 240 from the purview of  
20 this Court. As to the second cause of action, however, brought under the Due Process  
21 Clause of the Fifth Amendment, the Court concludes that neither IIRIRA’s jurisdiction-

1 stripping provision nor the Real ID Act's and IIRIRA's channeling mechanism compel  
2 dismissal.

3           **a.     Section 1252(g)**

4           Section 1252(g) provides:

5           Except as provided in this section and notwithstanding any other provision  
6           of law (statutory or nonstatutory), including section 2241 of Title 28, or any  
7           other habeas corpus provision, and sections 1361 and 1651 of such title, no  
8           court shall have jurisdiction to hear any cause or claim by or on behalf of  
          any alien arising from the decision or action by the Attorney General to  
          commence proceedings, adjudicate cases, or execute removal orders against  
          any alien under this chapter.

9           8 U.S.C. § 1252(g). Section 1252(g) is narrow and “applies only to three discrete  
10          actions” that the Attorney General might take, namely to “commence proceedings,  
11          adjudicate cases, or execute removal orders.” Reno v. Am.-Arab Anti-Discrimination  
12          Comm. (“AAADC II”), 525 U.S. 471, 482 (1999) (emphasis in original) (quoting  
13          8 U.S.C. § 1252(g)). Section 1252(g) is aimed solely “at preserving prosecutorial  
14          discretion.” Barahona-Gomez v. Reno, 236 F.3d 1115, 1119 (9th Cir. 1999). Because  
15          immigration courts may not decline to hear cases, after a removal proceeding has been  
16          initiated, discretion no longer plays a role. Id. at 1120. Thus, § 1252(g) does not deprive  
17          federal courts of jurisdiction to hear constitutional challenges to the manner in which  
18          removal proceedings are conducted. Id. at 1119-21; Walters v. Reno, 145 F.3d 1032,  
19          1052 (9th Cir. 1998); see also Franco-Gonzales v. Holder, 767 F. Supp. 2d 1034, 1049  
20          (C.D. Cal. 2010).

21                 With regard to J.E.F.M., J.F.M., D.G.F.M., F.L.B., and M.A.M., who are subject  
22          to ongoing removal proceedings, as well as J.E.V.G., whose removal proceeding will be  
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1 or has been reopened, the right-to-counsel claim does not implicate the Attorney  
2 General's discretion to commence proceedings, adjudicate cases, or execute removal  
3 orders. Thus, as to these six plaintiffs, § 1252(g) does not operate as a bar to the Court's  
4 jurisdiction.

5 The same is not true for G.J.C.P., who has already been ordered removed in  
6 absentia. An order of removal issued in absentia may be rescinded only upon an  
7 immigration judge's grant of a motion to reopen filed within the time limits set forth in  
8 8 U.S.C. § 1229a(b)(5)(C).<sup>9</sup> Absent such reopening, any review by a court of appeals  
9 must be confined to the validity of the notice of the hearing, the reasons for failing to  
10 appear, and the removability of the alien. 8 U.S.C. § 1229a(b)(5)(D). In asserting her  
11 right-to-counsel claim, G.J.C.P. is attempting to circumvent the statutory restrictions on  
12 challenging a removal order issued in absentia, and she seeks relief that would hamper  
13 the Attorney General's discretion to execute such removal order, *i.e.*, relief that § 1252(g)  
14 prohibits the Court from granting. Thus, defendants' Rule 12(b)(1) motion to dismiss is  
15 GRANTED in part, and G.J.C.P.'s claims are DISMISSED without prejudice.

16 **b. Sections 1252(a)(5) and (b)(9)**

17 In "stark contrast" to § 1252(g), which categorically excludes from judicial review  
18 only "certain specified decisions and actions," *AAADC II*, 525 U.S. at 482-83, the REAL

19 \_\_\_\_\_  
20 <sup>9</sup> A motion to reopen must be filed within 180 days of the date of the removal order if the motion asserts  
21 that the failure to appear was caused by "exceptional circumstances." 8 U.S.C. § 1229a(b)(5)(C). If the  
22 motion to reopen is, however, based on a lack of notice of the hearing or on confinement in federal or  
23 state custody at the time of the hearing, then the motion may be filed "at any time." *Id.* The filing of a  
motion to reopen automatically stays the removal of the alien pending disposition of the motion by an  
immigration judge. *Id.*

1 ID Act's and IIRIRA's channeling mechanism, §§ 1252(a)(5) and (b)(9), is broad in  
2 scope. Section 1252(a)(5) indicates in relevant part:

3 Notwithstanding any other provision of law (statutory or nonstatutory),  
4 including section 2241 of Title 28, or any other habeas corpus provision,  
5 and sections 1361 and 1651 of such title, a petition for review filed with an  
6 appropriate court of appeals in accordance with this section shall be the sole  
7 and exclusive means for judicial review of an order of removal entered or  
8 issued under any provision of this chapter . . . .

9 8 U.S.C. § 1252(a)(5). Section 1252(b)(9) reads:

10 Judicial review of all questions of law and fact, including interpretation and  
11 application of constitutional and statutory provisions, arising from any  
12 action taken or proceeding brought to remove an alien from the United  
13 States under this subchapter shall be available only in judicial review of a  
14 final order under this section. Except as otherwise provided in this section,  
15 no court shall have jurisdiction, by habeas corpus under section 2241 of  
16 Title 28 or any other habeas corpus provision, by section 1361 or 1651 of  
17 such title, or by any other provision of law (statutory or nonstatutory), to  
18 review such an order of such questions of law or fact.

19 8 U.S.C. § 1252(b)(9). The Supreme Court has characterized § 1252(b)(9) as an  
20 “unmistakable ‘zipper’ clause,” *see AAADC II*, 525 U.S. at 483, while the First Circuit  
21 has described the expanse of § 1252(b)(9) as “breathtaking,” *Aguilar v. U.S. Immigration*  
22 *& Customs Enforcement Div. of the Dep't of Homeland Sec.*, 510 F.3d 1, 9 (1st Cir.  
23 2007).

Sections 1252(a)(5) and (b)(9) were “designed to consolidate and channel review  
of all legal and factual questions that arise from the removal of an alien into the  
administrative process, with judicial review of those decisions vested exclusively in the  
courts of appeal.” *Aguilar*, 510 F.3d at 9 (emphasis in original); *see also, e.g., Iasu v.*  
*Smith*, 511 F.3d 881, 886-87 (9th Cir. 2007). The purpose was to “put an end to the

1 scattershot and piecemeal nature of the review process that previously had held sway in  
2 regard to removal proceedings.” *Aguilar*, 510 F.3d at 9 (citing H.R. Rep. No. 109-72,  
3 at 174 (2005), *reprinted in* 2005 U.S.C.C.A.N. 240, 299); *see also Iasu*, 511 F.3d at 887  
4 (Congress’s “explicit intent [was] to give ‘every alien one day in the court of appeals’”).  
5 In *Aguilar*, however, the First Circuit recognized that certain denial-of-due-process  
6 claims “are beyond the authority of the agency to adjudicate,” 510 F.3d at 18 n.4, and in  
7 those rare circumstances, any exhaustion requirements may be excused if the claims  
8 satisfy the standards articulated in *McNary v. Haitian Refugee Ctr., Inc.*, 498 U.S. 479  
9 (1991), and its progeny.

10 In *McNary*, the plaintiffs sought relief on behalf of a class of undocumented aliens  
11 who had applied for special agricultural worker (“SAW”) status under amnesty programs  
12 enacted in 1986. *Id.* at 482-87. They alleged that the Immigration and Naturalization  
13 Service (“INS”) had adopted unlawful practices and policies for administering the SAW  
14 program, including denying applicants an opportunity to challenge adverse evidence on  
15 which denials were based, failing to provide competent interpreters, and interviewing  
16 applicants in an arbitrary fashion without making a verbatim recording and thereby  
17 inhibiting meaningful administrative review. *Id.* at 487-88. A provision of the amnesty  
18 statute prohibited judicial review of a denial of SAW status, except in an appeal from an  
19 order of exclusion or deportation. *Id.* at 485-86 (citing 8 U.S.C. § 1160(e)).

20 The *McNary* Court held that the statutory restriction on jurisdiction applied only to  
21 “direct review of individual denials of SAW status,” and not to “collateral challenges to  
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1 unconstitutional practices and policies used by the agency in processing applications.”

2 *Id.* at 492. The Supreme Court reasoned:

3 To establish the unfairness of the INS practices, respondents in this case  
4 adduced a substantial amount of evidence, most of which would have been  
5 irrelevant in the processing of a particular individual application. Not only  
6 would a court of appeals reviewing an individual SAW determination  
7 therefore most likely not have an adequate record as to the pattern of INS’  
8 allegedly unconstitutional practices, but it also would lack the factfinding  
9 and record-developing capabilities of a federal district court.

7 *Id.* at 497. The *McNary* Court therefore refused to apply the statutory restriction on  
8 challenges to the denial of SAW status because doing so would have been “the practical  
9 equivalent of a total denial of judicial review of generic constitutional and statutory  
10 claims.” *Id.*

11 The Ninth Circuit has “distilled two ‘guiding principles’” from *McNary* and  
12 related decisions. *See City of Rialto v. W. Coast Loading Corp.*, 581 F.3d 865, 874 (9th  
13 Cir. 2009). First, to avoid a channeling mechanism, the claim at issue must challenge “a  
14 ‘procedure or policy that is collateral to an alien’s substantive eligibility,’ for which ‘the  
15 administrative record is insufficient to provide a basis for meaningful judicial review.’”  
16 *Id.* (quoting *Proyecto San Pablo v. INS*, 189 F.3d 1130, 1138 (9th Cir. 1999) (quoting  
17 *Ortiz v. Meissner*, 179 F.3d 718, 722 (9th Cir. 1999))). Second, the plaintiffs’ claim must  
18 be ripe, meaning that the plaintiffs have “taken ‘the affirmative steps that [they] could  
19 take before the INS blocked [their] path.’” *Id.* (alterations in original). This second  
20 requirement is derived from *Reno v. Catholic Soc. Servs., Inc.*, 509 U.S. 43 (1993), which  
21 observed that injunctive and declaratory judgment remedies are “discretionary, and courts

1 traditionally have been reluctant to apply them to administrative determinations unless  
2 these arise in the context of a controversy ‘ripe’ for judicial resolution.” 509 U.S. at 57.

3 In conducting the *McNary* analysis, the Ninth Circuit has focused on whether the  
4 claim at issue would become moot if subjected to the administrative and judicial review  
5 process. For example, in *Ortiz*, the plaintiffs filed suit to enforce a statutory provision  
6 that allowed persons who had filed non-frivolous applications under an amnesty program  
7 promulgated in 1986 to receive authorization to work in the United States pending the  
8 “final determination” on their applications. 179 F.3d at 719. In concluding, despite the  
9 channeling provision of the amnesty program, that the district court had properly  
10 exercised jurisdiction over the plaintiffs’ interim-status claim, the Ninth Circuit reasoned:

11 Plaintiffs, according to the government, must wait until they have been  
12 ordered deported to seek interim work authorization in a court of appeals  
13 review of the deportation proceeding. Yet by that time, the period in which  
14 plaintiffs claim they are entitled to work authorization would already have  
15 passed. The legal issue would be moot.

16 *Id.* at 722.

17 The Ninth Circuit reached a similar result in *Proyecto*. In *Proyecto*, the plaintiffs  
18 sought access to their prior deportation files, the contents of which were considered by  
19 the INS in denying their applications for legalization under the amnesty scheme  
20 implemented in 1986. 189 F.3d at 1134, 1137-38. Under the *McNary* doctrine, the Ninth  
21 Circuit held that the district court had jurisdiction to consider the plaintiffs’ challenge to  
22 the procedures for obtaining prior deportation files, observing that any judicial review of  
23 a denial of a legalization application would be limited to the administrative record, and

1 thus, prior deportation files received by the plaintiffs after the INS issued a final order  
2 would be “of no use.” *Id.* at 1138.

3 With respect to the *McNary* inquiries and the mootness concerns expressed in  
4 *Ortiz* and *Proyecto*, plaintiffs’ constitutional right-to-counsel claim differs from their  
5 statutory claim alleging violation of INA § 240. With respect to the constitutional claim,  
6 both prongs of the *McNary* standard are satisfied. First, the alleged right to counsel  
7 involves a “procedure or policy” (or perhaps, the absence of one) that is collateral to the  
8 substance of the underlying removal proceedings and, because an immigration judge is  
9 unlikely to conduct the requisite *Mathews* balancing, the administrative record would be  
10 insufficient to provide a basis for meaningful judicial review.<sup>10</sup> Second, although no  
11 named plaintiff has yet asked an immigration judge to appoint counsel, the constitutional  
12 right-to-counsel claim is ripe because such request would be futile in light of the current  
13 immigration laws and regulations.

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17 <sup>10</sup> In a pre-IIRIRA case, the Fifth Circuit held that, by pressing forward in removal proceedings without  
18 an attorney, the plaintiff waived any right to counsel. *Barthold v. INS*, 517 F.2d 689 (5th Cir. 1975). The  
19 plaintiff in *Barthold* was advised by the immigration judge that the proceedings could be adjourned so  
20 that he could contact “Legal Services” to “see whether or not they will provide an attorney” for him. *Id.*  
21 at 691. The Fifth Circuit reasoned that the plaintiff was thereby offered the opportunity to obtain free  
22 legal services, and it concluded that the record did not support the plaintiff’s appellate attorney’s  
23 suggestion that the plaintiff, who had been assisted by an interpreter, did not understand “Legal Services”  
operated pro bono. *Id.* The potential, in light of the analysis used in *Barthold*, for a juvenile to be  
deemed to have waived the right-to-counsel claim by undergoing removal proceedings without an  
attorney or by failing to persuade an immigration judge to hold an evidentiary hearing on the *Mathews*  
factors also argues in favor of the conclusion that plaintiffs should be excused from exhaustion, under the  
*McNary* doctrine, with respect to their due process claim.



1 In addition, because plaintiffs base their constitutional right-to-counsel claim on  
 2 their particular interests, and the risks of erroneous deprivation they face, as juveniles,<sup>11</sup>  
 3 they are confronted with the type of mootness dilemma that Ortiz and Proyecto employed  
 4 McNary to solve. Plaintiffs will not remain minors for long. Four of the six remaining  
 5 named plaintiffs are already 16, and they are likely to become adults before having the  
 6 opportunity to present their right-to-counsel claim to an appropriate court of appeals.

7 Moreover, even if these four plaintiffs were to reach the court of appeals before  
 8 turning 18, chances are high that the clock would still wind down on their due process  
 9 right-to-counsel claim. Assuming that no Mathews balancing occurred during the  
 10 removal proceedings, the court of appeals would not have an adequate record, and

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 12 <sup>11</sup> In asserting that minors have interests different from those of adults, plaintiffs rely heavily on In re  
 13 Gault, 387 U.S. 1 (1967). Gault concerned juvenile delinquency proceedings, which were considered  
 14 civil, but were punitive in their effect. In Gault, the juvenile was alleged to have engaged in lewd  
 15 telephone calls, which might have subjected an adult to a maximum penalty of \$50 and imprisonment for  
 16 two months, but the juvenile was committed to the “State Industrial School” for the next six years, until  
 17 he reached the age of 21. Id. at 4, 7-9. Contrary to plaintiffs’ suggestion, Gault does not stand for the  
 18 proposition that minors are entitled to special treatment in the due process arena; rather Gault supports the  
 converse concept that juveniles should have the safeguards available to adults when they face similar  
 penal consequences. See id. at 29. Reference to Gault was equally unpersuasive in Machado v. Ashcroft,  
 E.D. Wash. Case No. 2:02-cv-66-FVS. See Order at 18-21, copy attached as Ex. A to Resp. to Mot. for  
 Prelim. Inj. (docket no. 51-1). In Machado, having considered Gault and similar authorities, Judge Van  
 Sickle reasoned that the juvenile plaintiff had not sufficiently distinguished between children and adults to  
 justify disregarding Ninth Circuit precedent holding that adults have no due process right to counsel in  
 removal proceedings. Id. He left open the possibility, however, that a different result might be reached  
 under Mathews:

19 If the Court had concluded that it was appropriate to examine whether due process  
 20 required that counsel be appointed under the factors elucidated in Mathews . . . , these  
 21 features may have proven determinative. However, the Court does not reach that  
 analysis. The Court is bound by the Ninth Circuit’s precedent on this issue, and the  
 plaintiff has failed to demonstrate that this precedent should be ignored even under the  
 most compelling of facts.

22 Id. at 23. When Judge Van Sickle issued this decision, he did not have the benefit of the Supreme Court’s  
 23 guidance in Turner. See supra note 8.

1 lacking the necessary “factfinding and record-developing capabilities,” *McNary*, 498 U.S.  
2 at 497, the court of appeals would need to remand for an immigration judge to conduct  
3 the requisite hearing. As a result, prior to or during the course of any proceedings on  
4 remand, most, if not all, of the remaining plaintiffs would cease to be juveniles. Thus,  
5 channeling plaintiffs’ right-to-counsel claim to the court of appeals would be “the  
6 practical equivalent of a total denial of judicial review.” *See id.* The Court therefore  
7 holds that, pursuant to the *McNary* doctrine, plaintiffs are not required by §§ 1252(a)(5)  
8 and (b)(9) to administratively exhaust their due process claim to appointment of counsel  
9 at government expense.

10 The Court, however, reaches the opposite conclusion with respect to plaintiffs’  
11 statutory claim that, absent an appointed attorney, they cannot take advantage of their  
12 rights under INA § 240(b) to present evidence and cross-examine witnesses. Although  
13 this claim involves a “procedure or policy” collateral to plaintiffs’ substantive eligibility,  
14 it does not meet the other *McNary* criteria. Because the claim is predicated on statutory  
15 rather than due process rights, the *Mathews* balancing standard does not apply and, as a  
16 result, concerns about the adequacy of the administrative record are not warranted. In  
17 addition, because the claim involves statutory rights, which an immigration judge must  
18 and has authority to honor, plaintiffs cannot show ripeness by establishing the requisite  
19 futility.

20 The conclusion that the Court lacks jurisdiction over plaintiffs’ statutory claim is  
21 supported by *Ching v. Mayorkas*, 725 F.3d 1149 (9th Cir. 2013). In *Ching*, the plaintiffs  
22 were a U.S. citizen and his wife, on whose behalf the husband sought an I-130 visa. *Id.*  
23

1 at 1153. The wife had lawfully entered the United States as a nonimmigrant visitor and  
2 then dated, married, and divorced another U.S. citizen. *Id.* During an investigation,  
3 United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (“USCIS”) officers obtained a sworn  
4 statement from the first husband indicating that the first marriage was a sham, and the  
5 second husband’s I-130 visa petition was denied. *Id.* The plaintiffs sued, alleging that  
6 USCIS had violated INA § 240(b) by not affording the plaintiffs an opportunity to cross-  
7 examine the first husband about his sworn statement. *Id.* at 1154. The Ninth Circuit held  
8 that, to the extent the plaintiffs claimed USCIS violated INA § 240(b), the district court  
9 properly granted summary judgment because it lacked jurisdiction to consider the claim,  
10 a petition for review to the court of appeals being the “sole and exclusive means” for  
11 judicial review. *Id.* (citing 8 U.S.C. § 1252(a)(5)). *Ching* requires that plaintiffs’  
12 statutory claim, which likewise asserts a violation of INA § 240(b), be channeled via  
13 § 1252(a)(5) to the appropriate court of appeals.

14 *Ching* also supports the distinction being drawn here between plaintiffs’ statutory  
15 and constitutional claims. In *Ching*, in addition to their assertion that USCIS violated  
16 INA § 240(b), the plaintiffs alleged that their due process rights were infringed when they  
17 were not permitted to cross-examine the first husband or the USCIS officer who took his  
18 statement. The district court granted summary judgment against the plaintiffs, finding  
19 that the opportunity to respond in writing to the first husband’s statement was sufficient  
20 for due process. *Id.* at 1154. The Ninth Circuit employed the three-part balancing test  
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22  
23

1 articulated in Mathews<sup>12</sup> to reverse the district court's decision on the due process claim.  
2 Id. at 1157-59. In other words, in Ching, although the statutory and constitutional claims  
3 sought identical relief, the channeling of the statutory claim to the court of appeals did  
4 not affect the constitutional claim.<sup>13</sup> The Court is persuaded that, in this case, the same  
5 result is appropriate.

6 Channeling the statutory claim but not the constitutional claim is also consistent  
7 with the First Circuit's decision in Aguilar. Unlike plaintiffs in this case, the plaintiffs in  
8 Aguilar did not seek counsel at government expense. Rather, the plaintiffs in Aguilar,  
9 who were detained following a raid of a government contractor's factory, alleged that the  
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12 <sup>12</sup> With regard to the first Mathews factor concerning the plaintiffs' interests in Ching, the Ninth Circuit  
13 observed that the right "to live with and not be separated from one's immediate family is 'a right that  
14 ranks high among the interests of the individual' and that cannot be taken away without procedural due  
15 process." 725 F.3d at 1157. As to the second prong of the Mathews analysis, the Ninth Circuit concluded  
16 that the risk of erroneously finding a prior marriage fraudulent is "high" when the only evidence of fraud  
is a six-sentence written statement of an ex-spouse, who might be motivated by malice, vindictiveness, or  
jealously, and/or who might have been intimidated by an unexpected visit from government officers. Id.  
at 1157-58. Finally, in assessing the third Mathews component, the Ninth Circuit considered the fact that  
the process sought by plaintiffs, namely to cross-examine witnesses presented by the government, was  
already statutorily guaranteed to aliens in removal proceedings, and thus, in the different context of  
adjudicating an I-130 visa petition, such process would not likely pose "practical problems" or entail  
significant financial or administrative burdens. Id. at 1158-59.

17 <sup>13</sup> Indeed, because the district court in Ching addressed the merits of the plaintiffs' due process claim, the  
18 Ninth Circuit had an adequate record for engaging in the Mathews balancing. In Ching, however, the  
19 Mathews analysis was relatively straightforward, involving primarily the events leading to USCIS's  
20 procurement of the first husband's statement, evidence proffered by the plaintiffs to rebut the allegation  
21 that the previous marriage was a sham, and inferences about the manner in which an ex-spouse might  
22 behave, particularly if the prior relationship was bona fide and intimate. See 725 F.3d at 1158. In  
23 contrast, in this case, the Mathews inquiry is anticipated to be complex, perhaps requiring statistical  
comparisons and expert testimony. Unlike the husband and wife in Ching, plaintiffs in this case seek  
process that is not already available or statutorily authorized, and the evaluation of financial and  
administrative burdens associated with the additional or alternative procedural safeguards proposed in this  
case might necessitate far more factfinding than transpired in Ching. The intricacies of applying Mathews  
in this case precisely illustrate the point made in McNary about a district court, rather than a court of  
appeals, constituting the appropriate forum for developing the requisite record. See 498 U.S. at 497.

1 government infringed their statutory rights by “barring their access to lawyers, interfering  
2 with preexisting attorney-client relationships, and making it difficult to secure counsel of  
3 their choosing.” 510 F.3d at 13. The First Circuit viewed the statutory right-to-counsel  
4 claims as “commonplace,” frequently featured in petitions for judicial review of removal  
5 orders, and thus not “sufficiently separate from removal proceedings to be considered  
6 either ‘independent’ or ‘collateral.’” *Id.* In the First Circuit’s view, aliens “can receive  
7 effective relief for their alleged violations of the right to counsel simply by navigating the  
8 channels deliberately dredged by Congress,” as evidenced by the experiences of the  
9 plaintiffs in *Aguilar*, who received continuances when requested for the purpose of  
10 retaining counsel, and who generally secured changes in venue back to Massachusetts,  
11 where they had been working and residing. *Id.* at 14. These same or similar methods  
12 might be equally effective in ensuring that the statutory rights of plaintiffs in this case, to  
13 present evidence and cross-examine witnesses during the course of removal proceedings,  
14 are protected. Because continuances, changes of venue, and the like might enable at least  
15 some alien minors to gather the relevant materials and prepare to adequately confront the  
16 government’s evidence, including any witnesses, the Court concludes that § 1252(b)(9)  
17 requires plaintiffs to exhaust these avenues of possible relief.

18 In rejecting the contention that *McNary* allowed the plaintiffs in *Aguilar* to  
19 circumvent the channeling mechanism of § 1252(b)(9), the First Circuit observed:

20 As the Supreme Court suggested in *McNary*, requiring exhaustion of  
21 certain pattern and practice claims might result in a total denial of  
22 meaningful judicial review. The trick is to distinguish wheat from chaff,  
23 that is, to distinguish what must be exhausted from what need not be  
exhausted. In that endeavor, the most salient questions involve whether the

1 underlying claims are cognizable within the review process established by  
2 Congress, and if so, whether enforcement of the exhaustion requirement  
will allow meaningful judicial review without inviting an irreparable injury.

3 510 F.3d at 17 (citations omitted). The First Circuit distinguished, as does this Court,  
4 between statutory claims that an immigration judge can adequately address during the  
5 course of removal proceedings and the “rare” denial-of-due-process claims “that are  
6 beyond the authority of the agency to adjudicate.” *Id.* at 18 n.4. With regard to the  
7 former “commonplace” claims, the “vise-like grip of § 1252(b)(9)” cannot be avoided.  
8 *Id.* at 9. As to the latter claims, which, if they exist at all, must include the constitutional  
9 right-to-counsel claim asserted in this case, *McNary* preserves the “strong presumption in  
10 favor of judicial review of administrative action.” *See* 498 U.S. at 498. Having thus  
11 separated the proverbial wheat from chaff, the Court GRANTS in part defendants’  
12 Rule 12(b)(1) motion and DISMISSES for lack of jurisdiction plaintiffs’ first claim for  
13 violation of INA § 240.<sup>14</sup> The Court further HOLDS that §§ 1252(a)(5) and (b)(9) do not  
14 bar plaintiffs’ second claim under the Due Process Clause of the Fifth Amendment, and  
15 now turns its attention to the issue of sovereign immunity.

### 16 **3. Sovereign Immunity**

17 The United States, as sovereign, is immune from suit “save as it consents to be  
18 sued,” and any waiver of sovereign immunity must be “unequivocally expressed.”  
19 *United States v. Testan*, 424 U.S. 392, 399 (1976). An action seeking injunctive relief

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21 <sup>14</sup> The Court need not address the parties’ arguments concerning the Criminal Justice Act (“CJA”) because plaintiffs “nowhere allege that the CJA creates a freestanding right to appointed counsel.” *See*  
22 *Plas.*’ Supp. Br. at 12-13 (docket no. 98).

1 against a federal officer in his or her official capacity is equivalent to an action against  
2 the United States. Stimac v. Haag, 2010 WL 3835719 at \*2 (N.D. Cal. Sep. 29, 2010)  
3 (citing Larson v. Domestic & Foreign Commerce Corp., 337 U.S. 682, 687-88 (1949)).  
4 In this case, defendants are each sued in their official capacity. See 2d Am. Compl.  
5 ¶¶ 24-31 (docket no. 95). Plaintiffs therefore bear the burden of establishing the  
6 existence of an unequivocal waiver of sovereign immunity. See, e.g., Baker v. United  
7 States, 817 F.2d 560, 562 (9th Cir. 1987).

8 The only basis for jurisdiction pleaded by plaintiffs that might serve as a waiver  
9 of sovereign immunity<sup>15</sup> is a provision of the Administrative Procedures Act (“APA”),  
10 namely 5 U.S.C. § 702, which reads in relevant part:

11 An action in a court of the United States seeking relief other than money  
12 damages and stating a claim that an agency or an officer or employee  
13 thereof acted or failed to act in an official capacity or under color of legal  
14 authority shall not be dismissed nor relief therein be denied on the ground  
15 that it is against the United States or that the United States is an  
16 indispensable party.

17 The case on which plaintiffs principally rely, The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) v. United  
18 States, 870 F.2d 518 (9th Cir. 1989), predates IIRIRA and the REAL ID Act, but more  
19 recent authorities support plaintiffs’ position that sovereign immunity has been waived.

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18 <sup>15</sup> Plaintiffs have also pleaded that jurisdiction exists under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331, 1651, & 2241, see 2d Am.  
19 Compl. ¶ 8 (docket no. 95), but none of these statutes operates as a waiver of sovereign immunity. See  
20 Holloman v. Watt, 708 F.2d 1399, 1401 (9th Cir. 1983) (“Section 1331 does not waive the government’s  
21 sovereign immunity from suit.”); Stimac, 2010 WL 3835719 at \*2 (Section 1651 “does not constitute a  
22 waiver of sovereign immunity.”); see also Rumsfeld v. Padilla, 542 U.S. 426, 447 (2004) (holding that the  
23 proper respondent in a matter brought under § 2241 is the warden who has physical custody over the  
habeas petitioner); O’Brien v. Moore, 395 F.3d 499, 508 (4th Cir. 2005) (Equal Access to Justice Act’s  
“waiver of sovereign immunity for awards of attorneys fees does not extend to habeas corpus  
proceedings”).



1 Historically, courts relied on the “fiction” articulated in *Ex parte Young*, 209 U.S.  
2 123 (1908), to permit claims for prospective injunctive relief against government officials  
3 despite sovereign immunity. *EEOC v. Peabody W. Coal Co.*, 610 F.3d 1070, 1085 (9th  
4 Cir. 2010). Since 1976, however, courts have looked to § 702 of the APA to serve the  
5 purposes of the *Ex parte Young* fiction in suits against federal officers; section 702 is  
6 viewed as the requisite waiver of sovereign immunity for equitable actions brought under  
7 28 U.S.C. § 1331. *See id.* at 1085-86; *Gallo Cattle Co. v. U.S. Dep’t of Agric.*, 159 F.3d  
8 1194, 1198 (9th Cir. 1998); *see also Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish Band of Pottawatomie*  
9 *Indians v. Patchak*, 132 S. Ct. 2199, 2204 (2012); *Pullman Constr. Indus., Inc. v. United*  
10 *States*, 23 F.3d 1166, 1168 (7th Cir. 1994) (observing that “the United States is no  
11 stranger to litigation in its own courts” and that “Congress has consented to litigation in  
12 federal courts seeking equitable relief from the United States” (citing 5 U.S.C. § 702 and  
13 *Bowen v. Mass.*, 487 U.S. 879 (1988))); *Shanti, Inc. v. Reno*, 36 F. Supp. 2d 1151, 1159-  
14 60 (D. Minn. 1999).

15 The APA contains explicit exceptions to, and thereby limits, its waiver of  
16 sovereign immunity. *See Gallo*, 159 F.3d at 1198; *see also Patchak*, 132 S. Ct. at 2204-  
17 05. Section 702’s waiver of sovereign immunity does not extend to (i) claims as to which  
18 a statute precludes judicial review, (ii) claims that challenge an action committed by law  
19 to agency discretion, or (iii) claims that seek review of a decision that is not final within  
20 the meaning of the APA. *See* 5 U.S.C. § 701(a) (“This chapter applies, according to the  
21 provisions thereof, except to the extent that-- (1) statutes preclude judicial review; or  
22 (2) agency action is committed to agency discretion by law.”); 5 U.S.C. § 704 (“Agency  
23



1 action made reviewable by statute and final agency action for which there is no other  
2 adequate remedy in a court are subject to judicial review.”); *see also Patchak*, 132 S. Ct.  
3 at 2204-05; *Gallo*, 159 F.3d at 1198; *Shanti*, 36 F. Supp. 2d at 1160. An action is final if  
4 it “mark[s] the consummation of the agency’s decision making process,” is not “merely  
5 tentative or interlocutory” in nature, and is “one by which rights or obligations have been  
6 determined, or from which legal consequences will flow.” *Gallo*, 159 F.3d at 1198-99.

7       The Court is satisfied that the exceptions to § 702’s waiver of sovereign immunity  
8 do not apply with regard to plaintiffs’ constitutional right-to-counsel claim. Having  
9 performed the *McNary* analysis, the Court concludes that no statute precludes judicial  
10 review of such claim, and thus § 701(a)(1) is no obstacle. Moreover, the issue of whether  
11 plaintiffs are entitled to an attorney at government expense is undisputedly not committed  
12 to agency discretion by law and, as a result, § 701(a)(2) has no relevance. Finally, the  
13 matter comports with § 704’s finality requirement because neither immigration judges  
14 nor the BIA have the authority to grant plaintiffs the relief they seek. In essence, as noted  
15 by plaintiffs’ counsel during oral argument, the answer to the sovereign immunity  
16 question tracks the result of the *McNary* inquiry; because §§ 1252(a)(5) and (b)(9) do not  
17 channel plaintiffs’ constitutional right-to-counsel claim away from this Court, sovereign  
18 immunity is waived. *Cf. Morrison-Knudsen Co. v. CHG Int’l, Inc.*, 811 F.2d 1209, 1214  
19 (9th Cir. 1987) (“[The Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corporation’s] effort to  
20 recharacterize its essential argument as a sovereign immunity claim is disingenuous. If  
21 the pertinent statutes indeed confer upon FSLIC exclusive jurisdiction over the matters at  
22 issue, then the sovereign immunity issue does not arise. If they do not, then the immunity  
23

1 contention is unavailing. The sovereign immunity terminology . . . adds nothing to  
2 FSLIC’s argument.”).

3 The finding of sovereign-immunity waiver in this case is consistent with other  
4 decisions. For example, with regard to the claims of a minor, who was an American  
5 citizen seeking to prevent the removal of his undocumented alien mother on the ground  
6 that his mother’s removal would violate his own constitutional rights, the Sixth Circuit  
7 held that the district court had subject-matter jurisdiction pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1331,  
8 and that the APA operated to waive sovereign immunity. *See Hamdi ex rel. Hamdi v.*  
9 *Napolitano*, 620 F.3d 615 (6th Cir. 2010). Like remaining plaintiffs in this case, the  
10 plaintiff in *Hamdi* had no other avenue for presenting his constitutional claims; he could  
11 not have raised them in either his mother’s removal proceedings or on judicial review.  
12 *See id.* at 620-24.

13 Neither *Ardestani v. INS*, 502 U.S. 129 (1991),<sup>16</sup> which was cited by the Sixth  
14 Circuit in *Hamdi*, nor *Al-Nashiri v. MacDonald*, 2012 WL 1642306 (W.D. Wash.  
15 May 10, 2012),<sup>17</sup> require a different result. Although both *Ardestani* and *Al-Nashiri* rely

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18 <sup>16</sup> In *Ardestani*, the petitioner successfully sought asylum during the course of deportation proceedings  
19 and was awarded attorney fees by the immigration judge pursuant to the Equal Access to Justice Act  
20 (“EAJA”) on the ground that she was the prevailing party and the INS’s position had not been  
21 “substantially justified.” 502 U.S. at 131. The Supreme Court concluded that EAJA, which operates as a  
22 waiver of sovereign immunity, did not extend to administrative deportation proceedings. *Id.* at 132-34,  
23 137-38. In reaching this decision, the *Ardestani* Court reiterated that the INA “expressly supersedes” the  
APA. *Id.* at 133.

21 <sup>17</sup> In *Al-Nashiri*, the plaintiff argued that the APA waived sovereign immunity as to his claim that the  
22 official who convened a military commission against him, relating to his alleged role in al Qaeda terrorist  
23 attacks, acted in an unconstitutional manner. 2012 WL 1642306 at \*1, \*4, & \*8. The district court ruled  
that 28 U.S.C. § 2241(e)(2), which relates to certain claims of an alien “enemy combatant,” constituted a

1 on jurisdiction-stripping or channeling provisions to reject assertions of a waiver of  
2 sovereign immunity, the cases are distinguishable because neither case involved a claim,  
3 like the one at issue here, that is eligible for *McNary* treatment. Moreover, neither case  
4 concerned IIRIRA or the REAL ID Act, *Ardestani* having been decided before those  
5 statutes were enacted and *Al-Nashiri* dealing exclusively with the Military Commissions  
6 Act of 2006. Thus, with respect to remaining plaintiffs' constitutional claim, the Court is  
7 persuaded that sovereign immunity has been unequivocally waived, and to the extent  
8 defendants' Rule 12(b)(1) motion to dismiss is premised on sovereign immunity, it is  
9 DENIED.

10 **B. Failure to State a Claim**

11 Without conceding that the *Mathews* balancing standard applies to plaintiffs' due  
12 process claim, defendants contend that plaintiffs do not state a "plausible" basis for relief  
13 under *Mathews*.<sup>18</sup> Defendants' Rule 12(b)(6) motion, however, ignores the allegations of  
14 the Second Amended Complaint, relies on facts outside the pleadings, and invites the  
15 Court to engage in the type of analysis more appropriately reserved for summary

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16  
17 statute precluding judicial review that thwarted the plaintiff's invocation of APA § 702. *Id.* at \*8 (citing  
18 APA § 701(a)(1)).

19 <sup>18</sup> A complaint must offer "more than labels and conclusions," contain more than a "formulaic recitation  
20 of the elements of a cause of action," and indicate more than mere speculation of a right to relief. *Bell*  
21 *Atl. Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544, 555 (2007). A complaint may be lacking for one of two reasons:  
22 (i) absence of a cognizable legal theory, or (ii) insufficient facts under a cognizable legal claim. *See*  
23 *Robertson v. Dean Witter Reynolds, Inc.*, 749 F.2d 530, 534 (9th Cir. 1984). In ruling on a motion to  
dismiss, the Court must assume the truth of the plaintiff's allegations and draw all reasonable inferences  
in the plaintiff's favor. *Usher v. City of Los Angeles*, 828 F.2d 556, 561 (9th Cir. 1987). The question for  
the Court is whether the facts in the complaint sufficiently state a "plausible" claim. *Twombly*, 550 U.S.  
at 570 ("we do not require heightened fact pleading of specifics, but only enough facts to state a claim to  
relief that is plausible on its face").

1 judgment or trial. The Court declines to prematurely evaluate the merits of plaintiffs’  
2 constitutional claim and, for the reasons discussed below, DENIES defendants’  
3 Rule 12(b)(6) motion.

4 Historically, right-to-counsel claims under the Due Process Clause of the Fifth  
5 Amendment in the immigration context were analyzed under a two-part standard:  
6 (i) whether the proceedings were rendered “fundamentally unfair,” and (ii) whether the  
7 alien was thereby prejudiced. *See, e.g., Lin v. Ashcroft*, 377 F.3d 1014, 1023-24 (9th Cir.  
8 2004); *Dearinger ex rel. Volkova v. Reno*, 232 F.3d 1042, 1045 (9th Cir. 2000). The  
9 procedural postures of previous right-to-counsel cases, however, differ from that of the  
10 one before the Court. Those cases all involved either direct review of a removal or other  
11 BIA order or collateral attack of a removal order being used as evidence in a prosecution  
12 for illegal reentry.<sup>19</sup>

13 Cases more procedurally analogous to the matter before the Court indicate that  
14 *Mathews* sets forth the appropriate test. *See Walters v. Reno*, 145 F.3d 1032, 1043-44  
15 (9th Cir. 1998); *see also Ching v. Mayorkas*, 725 F.3d 1149, 1157-59 (9th Cir. 2013). At  
16 oral argument, counsel for defendants seemed to suggest that *Mathews* would apply with  
17 respect to “deportable” aliens, but not as to “inadmissible” aliens. Defendants, however,  
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19 <sup>19</sup> *See Mohammed v. Gonzales*, 400 F.3d 785 (9th Cir. 2005) (review of BIA decisions); *Lin*, 377 F.3d at  
20 1019 (review of BIA decision); *United States v. Gasca-Kraft*, 522 F.2d 149, 150 (9th Cir. 1975) (appeal  
21 from conviction for illegal reentry); *Murgia-Melendrez v. INS*, 407 F.2d 207 (9th Cir. 1969) (review of  
22 BIA decision); *see Michelson v. INS*, 897 F.2d 465, 466 (10th Cir. 1990) (review of deportation order);  
23 *United States v. Saucedo-Velasquez*, 843 F.2d 832, 833 (5th Cir. 1988) (appeal from conviction for illegal  
reentry); *Aguilera-Enriquez v. INS*, 516 F.2d 565 (6th Cir. 1975) (review of deportation order); *see also*  
*Dearinger*, 232 F.3d at 1043-44 (habeas review of denial of asylum); *United States v. Segundo*, 2010 WL  
4791280 (S.D. Tex. Nov. 16, 2010) (dismissal of indictment charging illegal reentry).

1 have cited no authority to support the proposition that such distinction can now be drawn,  
2 in the context of analyzing what process is due to such individuals, in light of IIRIRA's  
3 merger of matters involving inadmissible and deportable aliens into one proceeding  
4 known as "removal." The Court is satisfied that plaintiffs' due process right-to-counsel  
5 claim requires a weighing of the three factors articulated in *Mathews*, namely, the nature  
6 of plaintiffs' interest, the risk of erroneous deprivation, and the fiscal or administrative  
7 burdens on the government associated with additional or substitute safeguards. *See* 424  
8 U.S. at 335; *see also Turner v. Rogers*, 131 S. Ct. 2507, 2517-18 (2011).

9 In *Turner*, in which the Supreme Court employed *Mathews*, a noncustodial parent,  
10 who was incarcerated until he "purged" himself of contempt by making the requisite  
11 child support payments, asserted that his due process rights had been violated by South  
12 Carolina's failure to appoint counsel to represent him. 131 S. Ct. at 2512-13, 2515-16.  
13 In concluding that due process "does not *automatically* require the provision of counsel at  
14 civil contempt proceedings . . . even if [the indigent] individual faces incarceration," *id.*  
15 at 2520 (emphasis in original), the *Turner* Court was persuaded that a substitute set of  
16 safeguards<sup>20</sup> would sufficiently reduce the risk of erroneous deprivation, and that,  
17 because the opposing party (the custodial parent) was likewise unrepresented by counsel,  
18 the playing field was appropriately level, *id.* at 2519. The Supreme Court expressed  
19 concern that requiring South Carolina to provide counsel to noncustodial parents would

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21 <sup>20</sup> The alternatives to the appointment of counsel included (i) providing notice to the noncustodial parent  
22 that "ability to pay" constitutes a critical issue, (ii) using a form to elicit relevant financial information,  
23 (iii) allowing the noncustodial parent to be heard about his or her financial status, and (iv) requiring the  
court to enter findings about the "ability to pay." 131 S. Ct. at 2519.

1 “create an asymmetry” unfavorable to the custodial parent to whom child support  
2 payments are owed. *Id.*

3 In *Turner*, the Supreme Court left open the issue of whether, when the government  
4 has “counsel or some other competent representative” in the proceeding, the individual  
5 involved is owed more process than the privilege of retaining an attorney. *See id.* at  
6 2520. The *Turner* Court similarly reserved ruling on “what due process requires in an  
7 unusually complex case” when the individual “can fairly be represented only by a trained  
8 advocate.” *Id.* The right-to-counsel claim asserted by plaintiffs in this case falls squarely  
9 within the intersection of the questions unanswered in *Turner*. The removal proceedings  
10 at issue in this case pit juveniles against the full force of the federal government – the  
11 government initiates the proceedings, it is represented in them, and its discretion in  
12 executing removal orders is insulated from judicial review.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, courts have  
13 repeatedly recognized “[w]ith only a small degree of hyperbole” that the immigration  
14 laws are “second only to the Internal Revenue Code in complexity.”<sup>22</sup> *Baltazar-Alcazar*

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16 <sup>21</sup> Prior to the passage of IIRIRA, an alien who appealed a decision of the BIA was automatically entitled  
17 to a stay of removal; IIRIRA eliminated this statutory provision. *Andreu v. Ashcroft*, 253 F.3d 477, 479-  
18 80 (9th Cir. 2001). A stay of removal must now be obtained from a court of appeals; in the Ninth Circuit,  
19 the standard for obtaining such stay is a showing of either (i) probable success on the merits and the  
20 possibility of irreparable injury or (ii) serious legal questions on the merits and a balance of hardships  
21 tipping sharply in the movant’s favor. *Id.* at 480-84; *see also Nken v. Holder*, 556 U.S. 418 (2009).

22 <sup>22</sup> For example, navigating just through the provisions relating specifically to juveniles is itself difficult.  
23 In defining “inadmissible” aliens as those “present without admission or parole,” Congress included an  
exception for certain battered women and children, which applies when (i) the alien is a petitioner under  
the Violence Against Women Act of 1994, (ii) the alien or the alien’s child has been “battered or  
subjected to extreme cruelty” by an enumerated household member, and (iii) a “substantial connection”  
exists between such battery or extreme cruelty and the alien’s unlawful entry into the United States.  
8 U.S.C. § 1182(a)(6)(A)(ii); *see* 8 U.S.C. § 1229b(b)(2)(A) (allowing the Attorney General to “cancel  
removal of, and adjust to the status of an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence” an alien

1 v. INS, 386 F.3d 940, 948 (9th Cir. 2004). With this perspective in mind, the Court turns  
2 to the Mathews factors.

3 **1. First Mathews Factor: Nature of Interest**

4 In their motion to dismiss, defendants contend that the requisite liberty interest is  
5 not at stake, stating that “deportation is not punishment.” Defs.’ Mot. at 21 (docket  
6 no. 80). Defendants’ assertion misses the mark. Deportation has been described as “a  
7 drastic measure and at times the equivalent of banishment or exile” – it is a “forfeiture for  
8 misconduct” and “a penalty.” INS v. Errico, 385 U.S. 214, 225 (1966). In contrast,  
9 “exclusion” requires no showing of wrongdoing, only a finding of inadmissibility. See  
10 Dormescar, 690 F.3d at 1260; see also 8 U.S.C. § 1229a(e)(2)(A). The terms  
11 “deportation” and “exclusion,” however, no longer play their historical roles because of  
12 the changes wrought by IIRIRA, and plaintiffs in this case are facing “removal.”  
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15 qualifying as a battered spouse or child); see also Lopez-Birrueta v. Holder, 633 F.3d 1211, 1216 (9th  
16 Cir. 2011) (differentiating between “battery,” which involves an act or threatened act of violence, and  
17 “extreme cruelty,” which connotes “something other than physical assault, presumably actions in some  
18 way involving mental or psychological cruelty”). Congress has also provided a mechanism for certain  
19 juveniles to obtain “special immigrant” status and thereby apply for permanent residency. See Perez-  
20 Olano v. Gonzalez, 248 F.R.D. 248, 252 (C.D. Cal. 2008). For a minor to be eligible for “special  
21 immigrant” status, (i) the minor must be dependent on a juvenile court or state agency and qualify for  
22 long-term foster care because of abuse, neglect, or abandonment, (ii) an administrative or judicial  
23 determination must be made that the minor’s best interest would not be served by return to his or her  
home country, and (iii) the Secretary of Homeland Security must consent. Id. at 253; see 8 U.S.C.  
§ 1101(a)(27)(J); see also 8 C.F.R. § 204.11(c). A minor granted “special immigrant” status may apply  
for adjustment to permanent residence status pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1255; however, once a minor is in  
removal proceedings, he or she may seek an adjustment of status only from the immigration judge or  
BIA. 8 C.F.R. §§ 245.2(a)(1) & 1245.2(a)(1)(i). In addition, Congress has crafted special rules for  
children from contiguous countries who are unaccompanied and (i) have been victims of trafficking in  
persons, (ii) have credible fear of persecution if returned to their country of nationality or last residence,  
or (iii) are unable to make independent decisions to withdraw applications for admission to the United  
States. 8 U.S.C. § 1232; see infra note 27.



1 In discounting the nature of plaintiffs' interest, defendants rely on *Turner*, in  
2 which the Supreme Court observed that, in the civil context, incarceration has been  
3 deemed a necessary, but not sufficient, prerequisite to finding a right to counsel under the  
4 Due Process Clause. *See* 131 S. Ct. at 2517. Defendants, however, cite no authority for  
5 the proposition that the Court must focus on the "administrative act" of removal itself,  
6 *see* Defs.' Mot. at 21, and ignore the potential effect of removal, which might be the same  
7 or worse than incarceration for some minor aliens.<sup>23</sup> Thus, for purposes of ruling on  
8 defendants' motion to dismiss, the allegations in the Second Amended Complaint, which  
9 the Court must accept as true, support the likely consequences of plaintiffs returning to  
10 their homelands.<sup>24</sup>

## 11 **2. Second Mathews Factor: Risk of Erroneous Deprivation**

12 Defendants offer three reasons why plaintiffs cannot establish the requisite risk of  
13 erroneous deprivation: (i) the risk of error in removal decisions is the same for juveniles

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15 <sup>23</sup> Indeed, defendants do not, and cannot on a Rule 12(b)(6) motion, contest the allegations of the Second  
16 Amended Complaint. The operative pleading indicates that the three siblings, J.E.F.M., J.F.M., and  
17 D.G.F.M., fled El Salvador because they had become targets of a gang, which had murdered their father  
18 in front of them. 2d Am. Compl. ¶¶ 66-73 (docket no. 95). Their parents, both pastors, had been working  
19 to encourage youth to leave gangs, and after their father was killed, their mother fled the country, leaving  
20 them in the care of their grandmother. *Id.* at ¶ 66. They were threatened with harm if they did not join  
21 the gang; at the time, the youngest sibling was only nine years old. *Id.* at ¶¶ 67, 70, & 72. J.E.V.G.  
22 similarly alleges that he left El Salvador because he feared gang violence. *Id.* at ¶ 109. F.L.B. indicates  
23 that he was a victim of abuse at the hands of his alcoholic father in Guatemala, *id.* at ¶ 74, and M.A.M.  
expresses concern about his inability to adapt to his country of origin in light of the tender age at which he  
left and about the absence of a caretaker in his native land, *id.* at ¶¶ 81-86 (indicating that, shortly before  
M.A.M. turned eight, his father was attacked with a machete and became, as a result, profoundly disabled;  
his grandmother having grown elderly and ill, and having no one else in Honduras to care for him,  
M.A.M. came to the United States to be reunited with his mother).

21 <sup>24</sup> Defendants' argument that the interests of the named plaintiffs are not typical of those of the members  
22 of the putative class does not negate the dire predictions of harm, and is more appropriately addressed in  
23 connection with a motion to certify a class, *see* Fed. R. Civ. P. 23(a), or at a later stage of this litigation.



1 as it is for adults; (ii) children already receive additional process designed to reduce the  
2 risk of erroneous removal decisions; and (iii) the availability of appellate and judicial  
3 review is a sufficient substitute for the assistance of counsel in removal proceedings. The  
4 first two arguments require evidentiary support<sup>25</sup> and are not properly before the Court on  
5 a Rule 12(b)(6) motion.<sup>26</sup> The third contention runs contrary to common sense. Under  
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7  
8 <sup>25</sup> In response to defendants' arguments, plaintiffs have submitted five declarations, three from attorneys,  
9 one from a law student, and one from a volunteer for a faith-based organization, concerning the manner in  
10 which particular immigration judges handle removal proceedings. *See* Dubale Decl. (docket no. 99);  
11 Flores Decl. (docket no. 100); Gaughan Decl. (docket no. 101); Pollman Decl. (docket no. 102); Scholtz  
12 Decl. (docket no. 103). The Court DECLINES to consider these declarations because doing so would  
13 convert the pending motion to dismiss into one for summary judgment. *See* Fed. R. Civ. P. 12(d).

14 <sup>26</sup> In addition, defendants' assertion of equivalent risk among minors and adults is inconsistent with their  
15 representation that special treatment is afforded to children in removal proceedings. If the risk was in fact  
16 comparable for the two populations, then presumably no additional procedural protections would exist for  
17 juveniles. Youth, however, generally correlates with a lack of proficiency in reading and comprehension,  
18 even in a native language. For those whose school-age years were stained by violence, poverty, parental  
19 neglect, or similar hardships, literacy might be an as-yet unachieved goal. Even if minors are, however,  
20 able to understand the notices to appear and other documents related to removal proceedings, they are not  
21 necessarily the household members who retrieve or sort the mail, and the presumptions usually made  
22 when materials are properly addressed to adults might not be appropriate. Moreover, even assuming  
23 children receive hearing notices and grasp their meaning, they might lack the ability to travel to and  
attend such hearings, particularly if they are of an age rendering them ineligible to drive or to travel  
unaccompanied by air. Finally, even when juveniles successfully navigate themselves to removal  
proceedings, age might still play a role in increasing their risk of receiving an erroneous ruling. *See* 2d  
Am. Compl. ¶ 42 (suggesting that children are taught not to challenge adult authority and are more  
susceptible to leading questions and other forms of adult influence). The question that must be addressed  
in this case is whether the appointment of counsel at government expense is the only effective means of  
reducing the risk of erroneous removal decisions for minors. Defendants' contention that the special rules  
governing "juvenile dockets" serve as an effective substitute for the appointment of counsel currently  
lacks statistical support. In opposing plaintiffs' earlier motion for a preliminary injunction, defendants  
cited a report indicating that, in the first half of 2014, 42% of children having no attorney were permitted  
to remain in the United States. *See* <http://trac.syr.edu/immigration/reports/359/>. Defendants argued these  
statistics show that not every minor lacking legal representation will suffer a due process violation. The  
same report, however, revealed that, over the same period, juveniles having counsel received a favorable  
ruling 66% of the time. *Id.* In focusing on the percentage of unrepresented minors who avoided removal,  
defendants ignored the disparity in outcomes between those who have counsel and those who do not.  
When the statistics for the years 2005 through 2014 are considered, the gap is even wider, *i.e.*, 10%  
versus 47% success rates for unrepresented and represented juveniles, respectively. *Id.* If counsel was  
indeed unnecessary, the percentages would presumably be more comparable.

1 this theory, counsel would be unnecessary even in a criminal proceeding because the  
2 accused, if convicted, could always appeal. Moreover, the argument ignores the fact that  
3 review is generally limited to the administrative record, *see* 8 U.S.C. § 1252(b)(4)(A),  
4 and that the absence of counsel in the underlying proceeding is likely to affect the shape  
5 and scope of such record. The Court also observes that, despite the safeguards touted by  
6 defendants, at least one named plaintiff, J.E.V.G., was improperly ordered removed in  
7 absentia. Defendants' concession in this regard supports a "plausible" claim that the  
8 current procedures available to juveniles<sup>27</sup> are not an adequate substitute for the  
9 appointment of counsel at government expense. Whether plaintiffs can ultimately prevail  
10 on this issue is a question for another day.

11 **3. Third Mathews Factor: Fiscal and Administrative Burdens**

12 Although plaintiffs' right-to-counsel claim poses significant questions about  
13 feasibility and cost, the Court cannot resolve those issues in the context of defendants'  
14 Rule 12(b)(6) motion. The parties have not indicated either the percentage of cases  
15 involving unaccompanied minors or the percentage of cases in which an attorney was  
16 retained, secured from a pro bono panel, or provided under either HHS's or the justice

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18 <sup>27</sup> Pursuant to the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008  
19 ("TVPRA"), the Secretary of Health and Human Services ("HHS") is "authorized to appoint independent  
20 child advocates for child trafficking victims and other vulnerable unaccompanied alien children."  
21 8 U.S.C. § 1232(b)(6)(A); *see also* 6 U.S.C. § 279(g)(2) (an "unaccompanied alien child" is an individual  
22 who "has no lawful immigration status" in the United States, has not attained the age of 18, and has no  
23 parent or legal guardian in the United States available to "provide care and physical custody"). Child  
24 advocates have historically been sited only in Chicago, Illinois and Harlingen, Texas, but in 2013,  
25 Congress required that, within two years, the Secretary of HHS appoint child advocates at three new  
26 detention locations, and that, within three years, child advocates be available at yet another three sites.  
27 8 U.S.C. § 1232(c)(6)(B)(i)&(ii). Defendants' Rule 12(b)(6) motion is not the appropriate vehicle for  
28 considering whether child advocates can sufficiently reduce the risk of error in removal proceedings.

1 AmeriCorps program. Moreover, no estimates have been provided concerning either the  
2 amount of funding necessary to appoint counsel for each juvenile desiring an attorney but  
3 lacking the means to retain one<sup>28</sup> or the financial burden that might be associated with  
4 less expansive schemes.<sup>29</sup>

5         Rather than attempting to quantify the financial and administrative burdens  
6 associated with plaintiffs' requested relief or possible alternatives, defendants speak  
7 broadly in "slippery slope" terms. They express concern about the wheels of removal  
8 proceedings involving minors grinding to a halt if the government is required to provide  
9 counsel for every juvenile in a removal proceeding. Defendants assert that the effect of a  
10 ruling favorable to plaintiffs would be to encourage even more youngsters to journey  
11 illegally to the United States. They also seem to fear that the Court will inadvertently

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13 <sup>28</sup> The TVPRA requires the Secretary of HHS to "ensure, to the greatest extent practicable and consistent  
14 with" INA § 292 (8 U.S.C. § 1362) that all unaccompanied minors "have counsel to represent them in  
15 legal proceedings or matters and protect them from mistreatment, exploitation, and trafficking." 8 U.S.C.  
16 § 1232(c)(5). Defendants represent that \$9 million has been allocated to perform this mandate and  
17 provide attorneys to 2,600 unaccompanied minors. *See* Reply at 2 n.2 (docket no. 104). Defendants have  
18 also indicated that, in the fall of 2014, the Department of Justice and the Corporation for National and  
19 Community Service implemented a program known as "justice AmeriCorps," which will enroll  
20 approximately 100 lawyers and paralegals to provide services to "certain children who have crossed the  
21 U.S. Border without a parent or legal guardian." *See* [http://www.nationalservice.gov/newsroom/press-  
22 releases/2014/justice-department-and-cnscs-announce-new-partnership-enhance](http://www.nationalservice.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2014/justice-department-and-cnscs-announce-new-partnership-enhance). Defendants have offered  
23 no projections concerning the anticipated number of indigent juveniles who are not eligible for either the  
HHS or justiceAmeriCorps program or the amount needed to provide attorneys to all such youngsters.

24 <sup>29</sup> For example, an alternative might be to employ, for the purposes of assisting minors demonstrating  
25 financial need, one attorney for each site at which removal proceedings are conducted. Such safeguard  
26 would presumably entail much less cost than the remedy plaintiffs seek, but it might provide equally  
27 effective relief. Another possibility would be to appoint counsel only during administrative appeals  
28 and/or for purpose of judicial review. If a lawyer concluded that no colorable argument could be made  
29 before the BIA and/or a court of appeals, then he or she could simply file a statement to that effect, in the  
30 same manner that appointed counsel in criminal cases handle frivolous appeals. Under this scheme,  
31 juveniles whose claims could be quickly and favorably adjudicated would not be unnecessarily provided  
32 an attorney, and cases involving youngsters having no legitimate basis for remaining in the United States  
33 would be efficiently handled.

1 create a loophole through which parents, guardians, or other adult aliens might receive  
2 the services of an appointed attorney. *Cf.* 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(27)(J)(iii)(II) (explicitly  
3 addressing a similar concern: “no natural parent or prior adoptive parent of any alien  
4 provided special immigrant status . . . shall thereafter, by virtue of such parentage, be  
5 accorded any right, privilege, or status under this chapter”). Although the financial  
6 constraints and border-policing concerns raised by defendants must play a role in any  
7 analysis concerning plaintiffs’ assertion of a right to appointed counsel under the Due  
8 Process Clause of the Fifth Amendment, at this juncture, they are not sufficiently  
9 quantified or developed to allow the Court to engage in the balancing required by  
10 *Mathews*.

11 **C. Classwide Relief**

12 In their supplemental brief in support of their motion to dismiss, defendants ask  
13 the Court to strike plaintiffs’ request for injunctive relief on behalf of the putative class.  
14 The INA makes clear that the Court lacks jurisdiction to grant classwide injunctive relief.  
15 *See Rodriguez v. Hayes*, 591 F.3d 1105, 1119 (9th Cir. 2009) (quoting *AAADC II*, 525  
16 U.S. at 481-82). The Court may, however, enter a classwide declaratory judgment. *Id.*  
17 In *Rodriguez*, the Ninth Circuit interpreted 8 U.S.C. 1252(f)(1), which provides:

18       Regardless of the nature of the action or claim or of the identity of the party  
19       or parties bringing the action, no court (other than the Supreme Court) shall  
20       have jurisdiction or authority to enjoin or restrain the operation of the  
21       provisions of part IV of this subchapter [8 U.S.C. §§ 1221-1232], as  
22       amended by the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility  
23       Act of 1996, other than with respect to the application of such provisions to  
      an individual alien against whom proceedings under such part have been  
      initiated.

1 8 U.S.C. § 1252(f)(1). The Ninth Circuit concluded that the terms “enjoin” and  
2 “restrain,” as used in § 1252(f)(1), have different meanings, and that neither encompasses  
3 declaratory relief. 591 F.3d at 1119. Enjoin refers to permanent injunctions, while  
4 restrain connotes temporary or preliminary injunctive relief. *Id.* (citing *Arevalo v.*  
5 *Ashcroft*, 344 F.3d 1, 7 (1st Cir. 2003)). Unlike provisions relating to state taxes<sup>30</sup> and  
6 state public utility rates,<sup>31</sup> § 1252(f)(1) does not also include the word “suspend,” which  
7 has been interpreted to cover declaratory relief, and the Ninth Circuit reasoned that  
8 Congress knew it was leaving open the possibility of classwide declaratory relief when it  
9 omitted the term “suspend” from § 1252(f)(1). *Id.* (citing *Cal. v. Grace Brethren Church*,  
10 457 U.S. 393, 408 (1982)).

11 The Third Circuit has reached a similar result. *See Alli v. Decker*, 650 F.3d 1007,  
12 1014-15 (3d Cir. 2011) (“declaratory relief will not always be the functional equivalent of  
13 injunctive relief” and the “distinct purpose and effect of a declaration, as compared to an  
14 injunction, presents an entirely plausible basis upon which Congress might choose to bar  
15 one form of relief but not the other”). In *Alli*, the Third Circuit explained that, although  
16 the district court could enter declaratory judgment in favor of the class, such declaration

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18 <sup>30</sup> 28 U.S.C. § 1341 (“The district courts shall not enjoin, suspend or restrain the assessment, levy or  
19 collection of any tax under State law where a plain, speedy and efficient remedy may be had in the courts  
of such State.”).

20 <sup>31</sup> 28 U.S.C. § 1342 (“The district courts shall not enjoin, suspend or restrain the operation of, or  
21 compliance with, any order affecting rates chargeable by a public utility and made by a State  
22 administrative agency or a rate-making body of a State political subdivision, where: (1) Jurisdiction is  
based solely on diversity of citizenship or repugnance of the order to the Federal Constitution; and,  
23 (2) The order does not interfere with interstate commerce; and, (3) The order has been made after  
reasonable notice and hearing; and, (4) A plain, speedy and efficient remedy may be had in the courts of  
such State.”).

1 “would not – indeed, by the plain terms of the statute, could not – form the basis for  
2 classwide injunctive relief.” *Id.* at 1015. Rather, after securing a declaratory judgment,  
3 each individual class member would have to separately invoke it as a ground for  
4 individual injunctive relief, which “is expressly permitted under § 1252(f)(1).” *Id.*; *see*  
5 *also id.* at 1015 n.13 (observing that, although “the judiciary has ‘long presumed that  
6 officials of the Executive Branch will adhere to the law as declared by the court’” the  
7 recent position of the Department of Justice is that, “at least under certain circumstances,  
8 this presumption applies only after appellate review is exhausted”).

9 In sum, § 1252(f)(1) does not preclude the Court from granting a preliminary or  
10 permanent injunction as to “an individual alien against whom proceedings . . . have been  
11 initiated.” Section 1252(f)(1), however, deprives the Court of jurisdiction to provide  
12 injunctive relief to a class. If appropriate, the Court could enter a classwide declaratory  
13 judgment, but the enforcement of such decision would have to be on a case-by-case basis.  
14 The Court therefore GRANTS in part defendants’ Rule 12(b)(6) motion to dismiss, and  
15 STRIKES plaintiffs’ request for classwide injunctive relief.

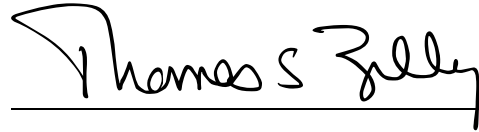
## 16 **Conclusion**

17 For the foregoing reasons, defendants’ motion to dismiss pursuant to Federal  
18 Rules of Civil Procedure 12(b)(1) and 12(b)(6), docket no. 80, is GRANTED in part and  
19 DENIED in part. The claims of G.D.S., A.E.G.E., and G.J.C.P. are DISMISSED without  
20 prejudice. Plaintiffs’ first claim for violation of INA § 240 is DISMISSED for lack of  
21 jurisdiction pursuant to 8 U.S.C. §§ 1252(a)(5) and (b)(9). Plaintiffs’ request for  
22 classwide injunctive relief is STRICKEN pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1252(f)(1), but  
23

1 plaintiffs' prayer for a classwide declaratory judgment and individual injunctive relief  
2 will remain in the case. Defendants' motion to dismiss is otherwise DENIED.

3 IT IS SO ORDERED.

4 Dated this 13th day of April, 2015.

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7 Thomas S. Zilly  
8 United States District Judge  
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