

February 23, 2006

Charles R. Fulbruge III
Clerk

IN THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS
FOR THE FIFTH CIRCUIT

No. 05-40543
Conference Calendar

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff-Appellee,

versus

JOEL MENDEZ-GONZALEZ,

Defendant-Appellant.

Appeal from the United States District Court
for the Southern District of Texas
USDC No. 7:04-CR-820-ALL

Before GARZA, DENNIS, and PRADO, Circuit Judges.

PER CURIAM:*

Joel Mendez-Gonzalez (Mendez) appeals his guilty-plea conviction and sentence for illegal reentry following deportation. On appeal, Mendez argues that the "felony" and "aggravated felony" provisions of 8 U.S.C. § 1326(b) are unconstitutional in light of Apprendi v. New Jersey, 530 U.S. 466 (2000). Mendez's constitutional challenge is foreclosed by Almendarez-Torres v. United States, 523 U.S. 224, 235 (1998). Although Mendez contends that Almendarez-Torres was incorrectly

* Pursuant to 5TH CIR. R. 47.5, the court has determined that this opinion should not be published and is not precedent except under the limited circumstances set forth in 5TH CIR. R. 47.5.4.

decided and that a majority of the Supreme Court would overrule Almendarez-Torres in light of Apprendi, we have repeatedly rejected such arguments on the basis that Almendarez-Torres remains binding. See United States v. Garza-Lopez, 410 F.3d 268, 276 (5th Cir.), cert. denied, 126 S. Ct. 298 (2005). Mendez properly concedes that his argument is foreclosed in light of Almendarez-Torres and circuit precedent, but he raises it here to preserve it for further review.

The judgment of the district court is thus AFFIRMED.