

IN THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS  
FOR THE FIFTH CIRCUIT

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No. 02-20449  
Conference Calendar

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff-Appellee,

versus

RUBEN MENDOZA-MARTINEZ,

Defendant-Appellant.

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Appeal from the United States District Court  
for the Southern District of Texas  
USDC No. H-01-CR-497-ALL  
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February 20, 2003

Before WIENER, EMILIO M. GARZA, and CLEMENT, Circuit Judges.

PER CURIAM:\*

Ruben Mendoza-Martinez appeals the sentence imposed following his guilty plea conviction of being found in the United States after deportation in violation of 8 U.S.C. § 1326. Mendoza argues that the "felony" and "aggravated felony" provisions of 8 U.S.C. § 1326(b)(1) and (2) are unconstitutional.

Mendoza acknowledges that his argument is foreclosed by Almendarez-Torres v. United States, 523 U.S. 224, 235 (1998), but

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 R. 47.5, the court has determined that this opinion should not be published and is not precedent except under the limited circumstances set forth in 5TH CIR.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

asserts that the decision has been cast into doubt by Apprendi v. New Jersey, 530 U.S. 466, 490 (2000). He seeks to preserve his argument for further review.

Apprendi did not overrule Almendarez-Torres. See Apprendi, 530 U.S. at 489-90; United States v. Dabeit, 231 F.3d 979, 984 (5th Cir. 2000). This court must follow Almendarez-Torres "unless and until the Supreme Court itself determines to overrule it." Dabeit, 231 F.3d at 984 (internal quotation marks and citation omitted). The judgment of the district court is AFFIRMED.