

August 28, 2006

Charles R. Fulbruge III  
Clerk

IN THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS  
FOR THE FIFTH CIRCUIT

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No. 06-40127  
Conference Calendar

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff-Appellee,

versus

JOSE CONTRERAS-JIMENEZ,

Defendant-Appellant.

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Appeal from the United States District Court  
for the Southern District of Texas  
USDC No. 2:05-CR-587-ALL  
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Before DAVIS, SMITH, and WIENER, Circuit Judges.

PER CURIAM:\*

Jose Contreras-Jimenez (Contreras) appeals following his guilty-plea conviction on one count of illegally reentering the United States after deportation, in violation of 8 U.S.C. § 1326. Contreras argues that the district court misapplied the Sentencing Guidelines by characterizing his state felony conviction for possession of a controlled substance as an "aggravated felony" for purposes of U.S.S.G. § 2L1.2(b)(1)(C). Contreras's argument is unavailing in light of circuit precedent.

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 R. 47.5, the court has determined that this opinion should not be published and is not precedent except under the limited circumstances set forth in 5TH CIR.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

See United States v. Hinojosa-Lopez, 130 F.3d 691, 693-94 (5th Cir. 1997). Contreras argues that this circuit's precedent is inconsistent with Jerome v. United States, 318 U.S. 101 (1943). Having preceded Hinojosa-Lopez, Jerome is not "an intervening Supreme Court case explicitly or implicitly overruling that prior precedent." See United States v. Short, 181 F.3d 620, 624 (5th Cir. 1999).

For the first time on appeal, Contreras challenges the constitutionality of § 1326(b) in light of Apprendi v. New Jersey, 530 U.S. 466 (2000). Contreras's constitutional challenge is foreclosed by Almendarez-Torres v. United States, 523 U.S. 224, 235 (1998). Although Contreras contends that Almendarez-Torres was incorrectly 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). Contreras 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.

AFFIRMED.