

IN THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS
FOR THE FIFTH CIRCUIT

No. 01-11301
Conference Calendar

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff-Appellee,

versus

JOSE MARIA MARTINEZ-VARGAS,

Defendant-Appellant.

Appeal from the United States District Court
for the Northern District of Texas
USDC No. 5:01-CR-50-1-C

April 11, 2002

Before SMITH, DeMOSS, and PARKER, Circuit Judges.

PER CURIAM:*

Jose Maria Martinez-Vargas 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. Martinez-Vargas contends that 8 U.S.C. § 1326(a) and 8 U.S.C. § 1326(b)(2) define separate offenses. He argues that the aggravated felony conviction that resulted in his increased sentence is an element of the offense under 8 U.S.C. § 1326(b)(2) that should have been alleged in his indictment. Martinez-Vargas maintains that he pleaded guilty to an indictment which charged

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 R. 47.5, the court has determined that this opinion should not be published and is not precedent except under the limited circumstances set forth in 5TH CIR.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

only simple reentry under 8 U.S.C. § 1326(a). He argues that his sentence exceeds the two-year maximum term of imprisonment which may be imposed for that offense.

In Almendarez-Torres v. United States, 523 U.S. 224, 235 (1998), the Supreme Court held that the enhanced penalties in 8 U.S.C. § 1326(b) are sentencing provisions, not elements of separate offenses. The Court further held that the sentencing provisions do not violate the Due Process Clause. Id. at 239-47. Martinez-Vargas acknowledges that his argument is foreclosed by Almendarez-Torres, but 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), cert. denied, 531 U.S. 1202 (2001). 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.

In lieu of filing an appellee's brief, the Government has filed a motion to dismiss this appeal. The Government's motion to dismiss is DENIED. However, in light of our decision to affirm the district court's judgment, the Government need not file an appellee's brief.

AFFIRMED; MOTION TO DISMISS DENIED.