

**June 20, 2006**

Charles R. Fulbruge III  
Clerk

IN THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS  
FOR THE FIFTH CIRCUIT

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No. 05-41308  
Conference Calendar

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff-Appellee,

versus

SERVANDO RODRIGUEZ-CUELLAR,

Defendant-Appellant.

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Appeal from the United States District Court  
for the Southern District of Texas  
USDC No. 1:05-CR-328-ALL  
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Before STEWART, DENNIS, and OWEN, Circuit Judges.

PER CURIAM:\*

Servando Rodriguez-Cuellar pleaded guilty to an indictment charging him with being an alien unlawfully found in the United States after deportation following an aggravated-felony conviction. Rodriguez-Cuellar was sentenced to 46 months in prison. He gave timely notice of appeal.

Rodriguez-Cuellar challenges the constitutionality of 8 U.S.C. § 1326(b)'s treatment of prior felony and aggravated felony convictions as sentencing factors rather than elements of

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 R. 47.5, the court has determined that this opinion should not be published and is not precedent except under the limited circumstances set forth in 5TH CIR.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

the offense that must be found by a jury in light of Apprendi v. New Jersey, 530 U.S. 466 (2000). The Government argues that the waiver provision in Rodriguez-Cuellar's plea agreement precludes his attack on the constitutionality of § 1326(b) and that, as a result of the waiver, Rodriguez-Cuellar lacks standing to challenge the constitutionality of § 1326(b). We assume, arguendo only, that the waiver does not bar the instant appeal.

Rodriguez-Cuellar's constitutional challenge to § 1326(b), however, is foreclosed by Almendarez-Torres v. United States, 523 U.S. 224, 235 (1998). Although Rodriguez-Cuellar 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). Rodriguez-Cuellar 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 AFFIRMED.