

August 25, 2006

Charles R. Fulbruge III
Clerk

IN THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS
FOR THE FIFTH CIRCUIT

No. 05-20443
Conference Calendar

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff-Appellee,

versus

JULIO CESAR VELASQUEZ-CRUZ, also known as Julio Velasquez,
also known as Homero Vasquez,

Defendant-Appellant.

Appeal from the United States District Court
for the Southern District of Texas
USDC No. 4:04-CR-344-ALL

Before DAVIS, SMITH, and WIENER, Circuit Judges.

PER CURIAM:*

Julio Cesar Velasquez-Cruz appeals his guilty-plea conviction and sentence for illegal reentry into the United States after a previous deportation. He argues that the "felony" and "aggravated felony" provisions of 8 U.S.C. § 1326(b)(1) and (b)(2) are unconstitutional in light of Apprendi v. New Jersey, 530 U.S. 466 (2000).

Velasquez-Cruz's constitutional challenge is foreclosed by Almendarez-Torres v. United States, 523 U.S. 224, 235 (1998).

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 R. 47.5, the court has determined that this opinion should not be published and is not precedent except under the limited circumstances set forth in 5TH CIR.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

Although Velasquez-Cruz 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). Velasquez-Cruz 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.