

**FILED**

February 24, 2006

Charles R. Fulbruge III  
Clerk

IN THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS  
FOR THE FIFTH CIRCUIT

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No. 05-40733  
Conference Calendar

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff-Appellee,

versus

RIGOBERTO AVALOS-CORTEZ, also known as Rigoberto  
Cortez-Avalos,

Defendant-Appellant.

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Appeal from the United States District Court  
for the Southern District of Texas  
USDC No. 7:05-CR-38-ALL  
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Before GARZA, DENNIS, and PRADO, Circuit Judges.

PER CURIAM:\*

Rigoberto Avalos-Cortez appeals his conviction and sentence for illegal reentry after a previous deportation. Avalos-Cortez's constitutional challenge to 8 U.S.C. § 1326(b) is foreclosed by Almendarez-Torres v. United States, 523 U.S. 224, 235 (1998). Although Avalos-Cortez contends that Almendarez-Torres was incorrectly decided and that a majority of the Supreme Court would overrule Almendarez-Torres in light of Apprendi v. New Jersey, 530 U.S. 466 (2000), we have repeatedly

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 R. 47.5, the court has determined that this opinion should not be published and is not precedent except under the limited circumstances set forth in 5TH CIR.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

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). Avalos-Cortez 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.