

The J Group's
EDLA SENTENCING NEWSLETTER



WEEK OF
JUN 28 TO JUL 4

JULY 8, 2026 ISSUE

Illegal Reentry...

.... see what happened this past week in the Eastern District of Louisiana

CASE SPOTLIGHT

United States v. Moradel-Velasquez (EDLA 26-cr-005)

What's the Basis?: According to the factual basis, **Border Patrol agents conducting highway interdiction operations along Interstate 12 in Slidell received intelligence regarding a vehicle registered to an individual previously identified as unlawfully present in the United States.** After confirming through immigration databases that the registered owner had been removed from the United States in 2016, agents conducted a traffic stop. The driver identified himself with a Honduran identification card, and **agents confirmed he was the same individual previously removed to Honduras following an expedited removal proceeding.** Additional database checks established that **he had not received permission from either the Attorney General or the Secretary of Homeland Security to lawfully reenter the United States.**

What's the Violation?: Moradel-Velazquez pled guilty to ***Illegal Reentry after Removal***, in violation of **8 U.S.C. § 1326(a).**

What's the Sentence?: Judge Carl J. Barbier sentenced **Moradel-Velazquez to TIME SERVED.**

DID YOU KNOW?

Recent immigration enforcement initiatives have increased the visibility of these prosecutions in federal courts nationwide. **Although immigration enforcement is often associated with activity along the southwest border, many federal illegal reentry prosecutions begin hundreds of miles away from it. Defendants are frequently encountered during routine traffic stops, workplace investigations, local law enforcement encounters, or targeted database checks.**

Current enforcement data also reflect changing migration patterns. **Although Mexican nationals continue to account for the largest number of immigration removals and illegal reentry prosecutions nationally, recent years have seen substantial increases involving nationals from Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador.** Honduran nationals, like the individual in today's Case Spotlight, have consistently ranked among the largest groups removed by federal immigration authorities during recent enforcement initiatives.

From a sentencing standpoint, **although illegal reentry under 8 U.S.C. § 1326(a) carries a statutory maximum sentence of two years' imprisonment (absent aggravating factors), many cases result in modest advisory guideline ranges,** particularly when the defendant's criminal history is limited. In such cases, **courts frequently impose sentences of time served** or short custodial terms when the primary objective is facilitating removal.

WHAT'S THAT STATUTE?

**CLICK ON THE LINKS BELOW FOR MORE
DETAILS ON THE VIOLATIONS INCLUDED IN
THIS WEEKS' EDITION**

- [8 U.S.C. § 1326](#)



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