

No. 23-341

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**In the Supreme Court of the United States**

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BOBBY LEE INGRAM, PETITIONER

*v.*

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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*ON PETITION FOR A WRIT OF CERTIORARI  
TO THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS  
FOR THE ELEVENTH CIRCUIT*

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**MEMORANDUM FOR THE UNITED STATES  
IN OPPOSITION**

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Petitioner contends (Pet. 17-22, 26-30) that the lower courts erred in treating a prior judicial finding of drug quantity as binding in denying his motion for a sentence reduction pursuant to Section 404 of the First Step Act of 2018, Pub. L. No. 115-391, 132 Stat. 5222. For the reasons set forth in the government’s brief in opposition in *Harper v. United States*, No. 23-27 (filed Nov. 9, 2023), the government agrees with petitioner that when authorizing district courts to “impose a reduced sentence,” § 404(b), 132 Stat. 5222, Congress envisioned that courts would do so in a manner consistent with *Apprendi v. New Jersey*, 530 U.S. 466 (2000), which allows an increase in a defendant’s statutory sentencing range only when a jury has found the conditions for that

increase (other than the fact of a prior conviction) beyond a reasonable doubt.<sup>1</sup>

As further explained in that brief, however, that issue does not warrant this Court's review. See *Harper Br. in Opp.* at 12-14. Petitioner identifies no other court of appeals that has adopted the Eleventh Circuit's outlier interpretation; the circuit conflict on the question presented is lopsided and of limited practical significance; and the question presented is of declining prospective importance, in light of the diminishing set of potential Section 404 movants whose motions would implicate it. See *ibid.*

In any event, this case is an unsuitable vehicle in which to review the question presented because petitioner would be a poor candidate for Section 404 relief in any circuit. As explained in the government's brief in *Harper*, all courts of appeals at least allow district courts adjudicating Section 404 motions to consider judge-found drug quantities when deciding whether to exercise their discretion to reduce a defendant's sentence. *Harper Br. in Opp.* at 12-13; see, e.g., *United States v. Robinson*, 9 F.4th 954, 959 (8th Cir. 2021) (per curiam). Here, the sentencing court found petitioner responsible for 4167 grams of crack cocaine (99.23 grams per week for 42 weeks), see Pet. App. 7a; Presentence Investigation Report (PSR) ¶ 9—a very large

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<sup>1</sup> The government has served petitioner with a copy of the government's brief in opposition in *Harper*. A similar question is presented in the pending petitions for writs of certiorari to review decisions of the Eleventh Circuit in *Jackson v. United States*, No. 22-7728 (filed June 5, 2023); *Clowers v. United States*, No. 22-7783 (filed June 12, 2023); *Perez v. United States*, No. 22-7794 (filed June 12, 2023); and *Williams v. United States*, No. 23-5014 (filed June 20, 2023).

quantity that substantially exceeds the 280-gram threshold for a potential life sentence under the Fair Sentencing Act of 2010, Pub. L. No. 111-220, 124 Stat. 2372. See *Terry v. United States*, 141 S. Ct. 1858, 1863 (2021). And petitioner had also been previously convicted of multiple prior drug felonies, which had led to his qualification as a career offender under the Sentencing Guidelines and yielded a Guidelines range of 360 months to life imprisonment. PSR ¶¶ 32, 54. District courts in any circuit could account for those facts. Because the question presented is thus unlikely to be outcome-determinative, this case presents an inapposite vehicle for considering it.

The petition for a writ of certiorari should be denied.<sup>2</sup>

Respectfully submitted.

ELIZABETH B. PRELOGAR  
*Solicitor General*

DECEMBER 2023

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<sup>2</sup> The government waives any further response to the petition unless this Court requests otherwise.