

*This opinion is nonprecedential except as provided by
Minn. R. Civ. App. P. 136.01, subd. 1(c).*

**STATE OF MINNESOTA
IN COURT OF APPEALS
A24-0461**

State of Minnesota,
Respondent,

vs.

Daniel Joseph Rice,
Appellant.

**Filed February 10, 2025
Affirmed
Johnson, Judge**

Ramsey County District Court
File No. 62-CR-20-7608

Keith Ellison, Attorney General, St. Paul, Minnesota; and

John J. Choi, Ramsey County Attorney, Anna R. Light, Assistant County Attorney, St. Paul, Minnesota (for respondent)

Cathryn Middlebrook, Chief Appellate Public Defender, Roy G. Spurbeck, Assistant Public Defender, St. Paul, Minnesota (for appellant)

Considered and decided by Bjorkman, Presiding Judge; Johnson, Judge; and
Klaphake, Judge.*

* Retired judge of the Minnesota Court of Appeals, serving by appointment pursuant to Minn. Const. art. VI, § 10.

NONPRECEDENTIAL OPINION

JOHNSON, Judge

Daniel Joseph Rice was charged with two crimes in Ramsey County while he was in prison for a prior conviction. Rice used a prison form to request a final disposition of the charges pending in Ramsey County within six months, consistent with the Uniform Mandatory Disposition of Detainers Act (the UMDDA). But prison officials failed to send Rice's request to the district court and the prosecutor. More than six months later, Rice moved to dismiss the pending charges. The district court denied the motion. We conclude that Rice is not entitled to dismissal of the charges because the applicable statute does not specify a remedy if a prosecutor does not receive a defendant's request for a final disposition of pending charges. Therefore, we affirm.

FACTS

On December 9, 2020, the state charged Rice in Ramsey County with possession of a firearm by an ineligible person and possession of ammunition by an ineligible person, in violation of Minn. Stat. § 624.713, subd. 1(2) (2020). The state alleged in the complaint that, approximately three months earlier, while Rice was on supervised release, he possessed a loaded pistol in his home.

When the Ramsey County charges were filed, Rice was confined at the Minnesota Correctional Facility in Faribault. On December 10, 2020, prison officials informed Rice of the new charges in Ramsey County and of his right to request a final disposition of the charges under the UMDDA. Prison officials provided Rice with a form that he could use to make such a request. On December 11, 2020, Rice completed and signed the form and

returned it to the prison's records office. On December 14, 2020, Rice's form was uploaded to an electronic records system so that it could be printed and mailed to the Ramsey County District Court and the Ramsey County Attorney's Office. But, for reasons that are not fully described in the record, Rice's form was inadvertently deleted or otherwise removed from the electronic records system and, thus, was *not* mailed to the Ramsey County District Court or the Ramsey County Attorney's Office.

Approximately seven months later, on July 12, 2021, Rice—apparently unaware that his final-disposition request had not been mailed to the district court or the county attorney's office—sent a letter to the district court administrator, requesting that the pending charges be dismissed because they had not been resolved within six months of his request. On August 22, 2021, Rice sent a second letter to the district court administrator and filed a *pro se* motion to dismiss the charges pursuant to the UMDDA.

The district court administrator forwarded Rice's second letter and his motion to the county attorney's office. The county attorney's office informed the district court administrator by letter that Rice's motion was received by that office on August 25, 2021. The letter states that Rice's motion is based on a "previously unserved/unfiled request for final disposition." The letter writer requested that the district court administrator schedule a first appearance within 30 days and a trial within six months of August 25, 2021. In October 2021, an assistant county attorney filed a memorandum in response to Rice's motion to dismiss, arguing that the motion should be denied because the county attorney's office did not receive Rice's final-disposition request until August 25, 2021.

The district court conducted a hearing on Rice’s motion in January 2022. The district court denied Rice’s motion from the bench on the ground that the UMDDA does not provide a remedy if prison officials fail to send a prisoner’s final-disposition request to the district court and the prosecuting attorney.

In November 2023, Rice and the state entered into a plea agreement in which Rice agreed to plead guilty to the second charge and the state agreed to dismiss the first charge. Before sentencing, Rice moved for reconsideration of the district court’s denial of his motion to dismiss. At a sentencing hearing in December 2023, the district court denied Rice’s motion for reconsideration on the grounds that the issue already had been resolved and that the UMDDA does not provide a remedy in these circumstances. The district court imposed a sentence of 60 months of imprisonment. Rice appeals.

DECISION

Rice argues that the district court erred by denying his motion to dismiss. He contends that he is entitled to dismissal of the charges because he properly requested a final disposition and the charges were not resolved within six months. He asserts that he “did everything he could to demand disposition” yet “the UMDDA was not followed.”

A.

“The UMDDA is designed to provide a speedy trial for prisoners who face additional criminal charges.” *State v. Vonbehren*, 777 N.W.2d 48, 50 (Minn. App. 2010), *rev. denied* (Minn. Mar. 16, 2010). To that end, the UMDDA provides, “Any person who is imprisoned in a penal or correctional institution or other facility in the Department of Corrections of this state may request final disposition of any untried indictment or

complaint pending against the person in this state.” Minn. Stat. § 629.292, subd. 1(a) (2020). The UMDDA also provides a means by which a prisoner may be made aware of a pending indictment or complaint:

The commissioner of corrections or other official designated by the commissioner having custody of prisoners shall promptly inform each prisoner in writing of the source and nature of any untried indictment or complaint against the prisoner of which the commissioner of corrections or such official had knowledge or notice and of the prisoner’s right to make a request for final disposition thereof.

Id., subd. 1(b). If the commissioner or commissioner’s designee fails to inform a prisoner of new charges within one year, the prisoner shall be entitled to “a final dismissal of the indictment or complaint with prejudice.” *Id.*, subd. 1(c).

In addition, the UMDDA provides that a prisoner’s request for a final disposition of pending charges “shall be in writing addressed to the court in which the indictment or complaint is pending and to the prosecuting attorney charged with the duty of prosecuting it, and shall set forth the place of imprisonment.” *Id.*, subd. 1(a). “The request shall be delivered to the commissioner of corrections or other official designated by the commissioner having custody of the prisoner” *Id.*, subd. 2. Upon such delivery of a prisoner’s request, the commissioner or the commissioner’s designee “shall forthwith . . . send by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, one copy of the request and certificate to the court and one copy to the prosecuting attorney to whom it is addressed.” *Id.*, subd. 2, 2(b).¹

¹Since the relevant events in this case, the legislature has amended this provision to give the commissioner or commissioner’s designee the option of sending the prisoner’s

Furthermore, the UMDDA specifies what must happen after the commissioner or the commissioner’s designee sends a prisoner’s request to the district court and the prosecuting attorney: “Within six months *after the receipt* of the request and certificate by the court and prosecuting attorney, . . . the indictment or information shall be brought to trial,” unless the parties stipulate for a continuance or the district court grants a continuance for good cause. *Id.*, subd. 3 (emphasis added); *see also State v. Letourneau*, 6 N.W.3d 73, 78-79 (Minn. 2024) (affirming district court’s grant of continuance for good cause).

Lastly, the UMDDA provides for consequences in the event that the prisoner is not brought to trial within six months: “If, after such a request, the indictment or information is not brought to trial within that period, no court of this state shall any longer have jurisdiction thereof, nor shall the untried indictment or information be of any further force or effect, and the court shall dismiss it with prejudice.” Minn. Stat. § 629.292, subd. 3.

B.

Both Rice and the state have cited and discussed this court’s opinion in *Resendiz v. State*, 832 N.W.2d 860 (Minn. App. 2013), *rev. denied* (Minn. Aug. 20, 2013). In that case, after a prisoner requested final disposition of pending charges, prison officials mistakenly mailed the prisoner’s request to the wrong prosecuting attorney. *Id.* at 861-62. As a result, the attorney actually prosecuting the pending charges was unaware of the prisoner’s request until after the six-month period expired. *Id.* at 862. After being convicted, Resendiz

request to the district court and the prosecuting attorney “by e-filing and e-serving the paperwork.” *See* 2023 Minn. Laws. ch. 52, art. 11, § 27, at 1009; 2024 Minn. Laws. ch. 123, art. 8, § 26, at 2321-22; *see also* Minn. Stat. § 629.292, subd. 2(2) (2024).

petitioned for postconviction relief and argued that his rights under the UMDDA had been violated. *Id.* The postconviction court denied the petition. *Id.*

On appeal, this court considered whether the UMDDA “provides a remedy” for a prison official’s failure to send a prisoner’s final-disposition request to the prosecuting attorney and “what consequences flow from failure to perform those duties.” *Id.* at 862, 863. We noted that the UMDDA “explicitly provides a remedy—dismissal of the complaint—in only two circumstances”: if prison officials fail to inform a prisoner of pending charges and the right to request final disposition or if “a prisoner is not brought to trial within six months after the court and prosecuting authority receive the request.” *Id.* at 865 (citing Minn. Stat. § 629.292, subds. 1(c), 3 (2012)). We also noted that the UMDDA “is silent regarding a remedy for failure of the prison official to comply with the duty to send Resendiz’s disposition request to the district court and to the prosecuting authority to whom the request was addressed.” *Id.* at 864. We cited caselaw stating that, despite the unfairness to a prisoner whose final-disposition request was not communicated due to the negligence of prison officials, it would be “a significantly worse result if ‘the prosecution will be precluded before the prosecutor even knows it has been requested.’” *Id.* at 866 (quoting *State v. Burks*, 631 N.W.2d 411, 413 (Minn. App. 2001) (applying Interstate Agreement on Detainers Act) (quoting *Fex v. Michigan*, 507 U.S. 43, 50 (1993))). Given the absence of a statutory remedy, we reasoned that “we cannot supply that which the legislature has not,” *id.* at 867, and we added that “[t]he answer to [the] question lies . . . with the legislature and not with our court,” *id.* at 867-68. We concluded that Resendiz

was not entitled to postconviction relief. *Id.* at 868. The *Resendiz* opinion governs this appeal and justifies the district court’s decision to deny Rice’s motion to dismiss.

C.

Rice acknowledges the *Resendiz* opinion but contends that it is distinguishable for two reasons.

First, Rice contends that the prison officials in this case *completely* failed to send his final-disposition request to anyone, unlike the prison officials in *Resendiz*, who *partially* complied with the UMDDA by sending the prisoner’s request to the district court and to *a* prosecutor’s office, albeit the wrong prosecutor’s office. This difference between the two cases is irrelevant in light of the plain language of the statute, which states that pending charges must be brought to trial within six months after “the receipt” of the prisoner’s request by both “the court and prosecuting attorney.” Minn. Stat. § 629.292, subd. 3. A failure to send a prisoner’s request to one of the two intended recipients is as much of a statutory violation as a failure to send the request to both intended recipients. In either situation, there is no “receipt of the request . . . by the court and prosecuting attorney,” which means that the obligation to bring a prisoner’s case to trial within six months is not triggered. *Id.*

Second, Rice contends that he was prejudiced in this case because his 60-month sentence will extend his release date, unlike the defendant in *Resendiz*, who was *not* prejudiced because he received a concurrent sentence that was shorter than his pre-existing sentence. Again, the statutory obligation to bring a prisoner’s pending charges to trial within six months is triggered only by the receipt of a prisoner’s final-disposition request

by both the district court and the prosecuting attorney. *Id.* Nothing in the UMDDA indicates that the operation of the statute depends on the length of the sentence that might be imposed following a conviction on the pending charges.

We are mindful that, in *Resendiz*, this court reasoned that the facts of *Resendiz* were distinguishable from the facts of *People v. Trancoso*, 776 P.2d 374 (Colo. 1989), for reasons that correspond to Rice’s contentions. *See Resendiz*, 832 N.W.2d at 864-65. The facts of *Trancoso* are somewhat similar to the facts of this case inasmuch as Trancoso sent a final-disposition request to the prison superintendent but prison officials failed to send the request to the trial court and the prosecuting attorney. *See Trancoso*, 776 P.2d at 376. Nonetheless, we read the *Resendiz* opinion as having decided the appeal on the ground that the UMDDA does not provide a remedy for the failure of prison officials to send a prisoner’s request to the district court and the prosecuting attorney. *See* 832 N.W.2d at 862-65. The *Resendiz* court’s discussion about partial compliance and lack of prejudice may have supplied additional reasons to deny postconviction relief, but those additional reasons were not essential to the decision. *See id.* at 864-65. This court cannot distinguish *Resendiz* for the reasons urged by Rice without contradicting the primary holding of *Resendiz*.

D.

Rice last argues, in the alternative, that this court should reconsider the *Resendiz* opinion and choose to “not follow” it.

We start with the fundamental principle of *stare decisis* and the fact that *Resendiz* is a precedential opinion, which means that we are bound by it. *See State v. Chauvin*, 955

N.W.2d 684, 689 (Minn. App. 2021), *rev. denied* (Minn. Mar. 10, 2021); *State v. Peter*, 825 N.W.2d 126, 129 (Minn. App. 2012), *rev. denied* (Minn. Feb. 27, 2013); *State v. M.L.A.*, 785 N.W.2d 763, 767 (Minn. App. 2010), *rev. denied* (Minn. Sept. 21, 2010).

Furthermore, “the doctrine of stare decisis has special force in the area of statutory interpretation because the Legislature is free to alter what we have done.” *Koehnen v. Flagship Marine Co.*, 947 N.W.2d 448, 453 (Minn. 2020) (quotation omitted). If “a judicial interpretation of a statute has remained undisturbed, it becomes part of the terms of the statute itself.” *Else v. Auto-Owners Ins. Co.*, 980 N.W.2d 319, 329 (Minn. 2022) (quoting *Wynkoop v. Carpenter*, 574 N.W.2d 422, 426 (Minn. 1998) (citing *Roos v. City of Mankato*, 271 N.W. 582, 584 (Minn. 1937))). In *Resendiz*, we conspicuously stated, “The answer to [the] question lies . . . with the legislature and not with our court.” 832 N.W.2d at 868. In the twelve years since *Resendiz*, the legislature has made two amendments to the UMDDA to allow for electronic communications in lieu of registered or certified mail, as mentioned above. *See supra* 5-6 n.1. But the legislature has not amended the UMDDA to provide a remedy for the situation in which prison officials fail to send a prisoner’s final-disposition request to both the district court and the prosecuting attorney. The legislature’s inaction since *Resendiz* is an additional reason why this court should adhere to *Resendiz*.

In urging this court to not apply *Resendiz*, Rice cites a subsequent supreme court opinion for the general principle that, if the UMDDA is silent or ambiguous on a particular issue, the statute should be interpreted according to its purpose. *See State v. Mikell*, 960 N.W.2d 230, 242 (Minn. 2021). The specific issue before the *Mikell* court was whether

the state violated the UMDDA by refiling charges that the state had voluntarily dismissed after the prisoner had requested a final disposition. *Id.* at 239. Unsurprisingly, the *Mikell* opinion does not cite the *Resendiz* opinion. *Id.* at 236-57. The issue in *Mikell* is not sufficiently related to the issue in *Resendiz* to allow this court to conclude that *Resendiz* was implicitly overruled by *Mikell*.

Lastly, we note that, in urging this court to not apply *Resendiz*, Rice cites two opinions from other states: the *Trancoso* opinion from Colorado, which is mentioned above, and *State v. Taylor*, 538 P.2d 310 (Utah 1975). Both *Trancoso* and *Taylor* were issued before *Resendiz*, and the *Trancoso* opinion was thoroughly discussed in the *Resendiz* opinion. *See Resendiz*, 832 N.W.2d at 864-65. Furthermore, our research reveals that, to date, neither *Trancoso* nor *Taylor* has been cited by courts outside the states of Colorado and Utah. Accordingly, we decline to reconsider whether this court should adopt the reasoning in *Trancoso* and *Taylor*.

Thus, the district court did not err by denying Rice's motion to dismiss.

Affirmed.