

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF
KENTUCKY

Lori G. v. Frank Bisignano, Commissioner of Social Security

Lori G. v. Bisignano · No. 1:25-cv-19-LLK · Decided March 31, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Western District of Kentucky reviewed the Commissioner of Social Security’s denial of the plaintiff’s claim for Disability Insurance Benefits under 42 U.S.C. § 405(g). The court held that the Administrative Law Judge properly evaluated the plaintiff’s physical and mental impairments, residual functional capacity, and ability to perform past relevant work, and that the decision was supported by substantial evidence. The court affirmed the Commissioner’s final decision and dismissed the complaint.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Western District of Kentucky
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Lanny King
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Western District of Kentucky
DECIDED	March 31, 2026
DOCKET	1:25-cv-19-LLK
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff sought review under 42 U.S.C. § 405(g) of the Commissioner of Social Security's final decision denying her claim for Disability Insurance Benefits. The parties consented to magistrate-judge jurisdiction.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court reviews whether the ALJ applied the correct legal standards and whether the decision is supported by substantial evidence. The court may not reweigh the evidence, resolve evidentiary conflicts, decide credibility questions de novo, or substitute its judgment for that of the Commissioner.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished district court memorandum opinion; nonprecedential
PARTIES	Lori G. v. Frank Bisignano, Commissioner of Social Security

TOPICS

PRACTICE AREAS

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the ALJ reversibly erred by finding Plaintiff's anxiety, depression, PTSD, and other mental impairments nonsevere at step two and by failing to include additional mental limitations in the RFC.
2. Whether the ALJ reversibly erred by failing to classify Plaintiff's hip impairment as severe and by failing to include additional hip-related limitations in the RFC.
3. Whether the Commissioner's final decision was supported by substantial evidence and made pursuant to proper legal standards.

HOLDINGS

1. Any error in failing to classify PTSD or major depressive disorder as severe, or in more specifically addressing the paragraph-B criteria, was harmless because the ALJ found other severe impairments and the court determined that the step-two findings were supported by substantial evidence.
2. The ALJ was not required to incorporate Plaintiff's mild paragraph-B limitations into the RFC because the record did not establish work-related mental limitations beyond those reflected in the ALJ's assessment.
3. The ALJ did not commit reversible error by finding Plaintiff's mild hip arthritis and decreased hip joint space nonsevere or by declining to impose additional hip-related RFC restrictions.
4. The Commissioner's final decision denying Plaintiff's Disability Insurance Benefits was supported by substantial evidence and comported with applicable law.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"The Court's task in reviewing the ALJ's findings is limited to determining whether they are supported by substantial evidence and made pursuant to proper legal standards."

"As long as substantial evidence supports the Commissioner's decision, we must defer to it, even if there is substantial evidence in the record that would have supported an opposite conclusion."

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Lori G. alleged disability based on back and neck pain, radiculopathy, migraines, asthma-related limitations, upper- and lower-extremity problems, and mental-health conditions including anxiety, depression, and PTSD. The ALJ found several severe physical impairments but found the mental impairments nonsevere, with only mild limitations in the four paragraph-B functional areas. The ALJ determined that Plaintiff retained the residual functional capacity for a restricted range of sedentary work and could perform her past work as a customer complaint clerk.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff applied for Disability Insurance Benefits on April 4, 2022, alleging disability beginning August 15, 2020. The claim was denied initially and on reconsideration. After a September 14, 2023 hearing, the ALJ issued an unfavorable decision on December 13, 2023. The Appeals Council denied review on December 5, 2024, making the ALJ's decision the Commissioner's final decision. The district court affirmed the Commissioner's decision and dismissed the complaint.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- Rogers v. Commissioner of Social Security, 486 F.3d 234, 241 (6th Cir. 2007)
- McGlothlin v. Commissioner of Social Security, 299 F. App'x 516, 522 (6th Cir. 2008)
- White v. Commissioner of Social Security, 572 F.3d 272, 281 (6th Cir. 2009)
- Cutlip v. Secretary of Health & Human Services, 25 F.3d 284, 296 (6th Cir. 1994)
- Blakley v. Commissioner of Social Security, 581 F.3d 399, 405 (6th Cir. 2009)
- Heston v. Commissioner of Social Security, 245 F.3d 528, 535 (6th Cir. 2001)
- Sallaz v. Commissioner of Social Security, No. 23-3825, 2024 WL 2955645, at *6 (6th Cir. June 12, 2024)
- Anthony v. Commissioner of Social Security, 266 F. App'x 451, 457 (6th Cir. 2008)
- Rabbers v. Commissioner of Social Security, 582 F.3d 647, 657-658 (6th Cir. 2009)
- Higgs v. Bowen, 880 F.2d 860, 862 (6th Cir. 1989)
- Pompa v. Commissioner of Social Security, 73 F. App'x 801, 803 (6th Cir. 2003)
- Maziarz v. Secretary of Health and Human Services, 837 F.2d 240, 244 (6th Cir. 1987)
- Dyson v. Commissioner of Social Security, 786 F. App'x 586, 589 (6th Cir. 2019)
- Griffeth v. Commissioner of Social Security, 217 F. App'x 425, 429 (6th Cir. 2007)
- Emard v. Commissioner of Social Security, 953 F.3d 844, 852 (6th Cir. 2020)
- Warner v. Commissioner of Social Security, 375 F.3d 387, 390 (6th Cir. 2004)

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