

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

Yvonne N. D. v. Commissioner of Social Security

Downs · No. 1:23-cv-00559 (JJM) · Decided March 30, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Western District of New York reviewed the Commissioner of Social Security’s denial of the plaintiff’s applications for disability insurance and supplemental security income benefits. The court held that the administrative law judge adequately developed the record following an earlier remand and that the residual functional capacity assessment was supported by substantial evidence. The Commissioner’s motion for judgment on the pleadings was granted, and the plaintiff’s motion was denied.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Western District of New York
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Jeremiah J. McCarthy
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Western District of New York
DECIDED	March 30, 2026
DOCKET	1:23-cv-00559 (JJM)
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Action under 42 U.S.C. §§ 405(g) and 1383(c)(3) seeking review of the Commissioner's final denial of disability insurance and supplemental security income benefits. The parties filed cross-motions for judgment on the pleadings.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court may set aside the Commissioner's determination only if the factual findings are not supported by substantial evidence or the decision is based on legal error. Substantial evidence is evidence that a reasonable mind might accept as adequate to support a conclusion.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished and nonprecedential
PARTIES	Yvonne N. D. v. Commissioner of Social Security

TOPICS

- judicial review of agency action
- agency adjudication
- administrative law
- disability definition

PRACTICE AREAS

Social Security disability

administrative law

judicial review of agency action

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the ALJ complied with the prior remand order and adequately developed the administrative record concerning plaintiff's fibromyalgia and mental impairments.
2. Whether substantial evidence supported the ALJ's assessment of plaintiff's ability to interact with supervisors, coworkers, and the public.
3. Whether substantial evidence supported the ALJ's assessment of plaintiff's physical limitations, including the limitation to light work, based on the evidence concerning fibromyalgia and spinal impairments.

HOLDINGS

1. The ALJ did not violate the prior remand order or a duty to further develop the record because the consolidated administrative record contained subsequent opinions from the same consultative examiners that addressed the specific deficiencies previously identified by the court.
2. Substantial evidence supported the ALJ's determination that plaintiff could occasionally interact with supervisors and coworkers but could never interact with the public.
3. Substantial evidence supported the ALJ's limitation of plaintiff to light work with additional physical restrictions because Dr. Dave's 2020 opinion clarified the functional limitations associated with plaintiff's spinal pain and fibromyalgia, and plaintiff identified no medical opinion requiring greater restrictions.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Dr. Ransom’s 2020 opinion is therefore substantial evidence that plaintiff had limitations interacting with each group of people.” (at 15)

“Ultimately it is [p]laintiff’s burden to prove a more restrictive RFC than the RFC assessed by the ALJ.” (at 17)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff applied for DIB and SSI, alleging disability based in part on spinal injuries, fibromyalgia, mental-health conditions, and other physical impairments. After an earlier remand for inadequate evidentiary support concerning fibromyalgia and limitations in interacting with others, the administrative record was supplemented with 2020 consultative opinions and additional treatment records. ALJ Kim found severe fibromyalgia and several mental impairments but determined that plaintiff retained the capacity for light work with physical, environmental, postural, sit/stand, and mental limitations, including occasional interaction with supervisors and coworkers and no interaction with the public.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff's claims were previously remanded by the district court because the prior ALJ's residual-functional-capacity findings were not supported by substantial evidence concerning fibromyalgia and mental impairments. On remand, the Appeals Council consolidated plaintiff's later SSI claim with the earlier claims and directed further proceedings. After a hearing, ALJ Theodore Kim again found plaintiff not disabled. The court granted the Commissioner's motion for judgment on the pleadings and denied plaintiff's motion.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Shaw v. Chater, 221 F.3d 126, 131-32 (2d Cir. 2000)
- Consolidated Edison Co. of New York, Inc. v. NLRB, 305 U.S. 197, 229 (1938)
- Cheatham v. Commissioner, 2018 WL 5809937, *9 (W.D.N.Y. 2018)
- Brault v. Commissioner, 683 F.3d 442, 448 (2d Cir. 2012)
- Talavera v. Astrue, 697 F.3d 145, 151 (2d Cir. 2012)
- Martin v. Colvin, 2017 WL 370809, *3-*4 (W.D.N.Y. 2017)
- Lowry o/b/o J.B. v. Astrue, 474 F. App'x 801, 804 (2d Cir. 2012)
- Pratts v. Chater, 94 F.3d 34 (2d Cir. 1996)
- Parvon v. Commissioner, 2020 WL 1131220, *4 (W.D.N.Y. 2020)
- Loni S. v. Commr. of Social Sec., 2023 WL 4195887, *19 n.13 (N.D.N.Y. 2023)
- Mongeur v. Heckler, 722 F.2d 1033, 1040 (2d Cir. 1983)
- Cottrell v. Commissioner of Social Security, 2019 WL 201508, *3 (W.D.N.Y. 2019)
- Currie v. Comm'r of Soc. Sec., No. 17-CV-602(MAT), 2018 WL 5023606, at *3 (W.D.N.Y. Oct. 17, 2018)
- Gutierrez v. Berryhill, 333 F. Supp. 3d 267, 272 (W.D.N.Y. 2018)
- Maleski v. Commissioner, 2020 WL 210064, *4 (W.D.N.Y. 2020)
- Camille v. Colvin, 652 F. App'x 25, 28 (2d Cir. 2016)
- Lopez obo Y.T. v. Commissioner of Social Security, 2020 WL 4504987, *2 (W.D.N.Y. 2020)
- Pagan o/b/o Delgado v. Barnhart, 409 S. Supp. 2d 217, 220 (W.D.N.Y. 2006)
- Beaman v. Commissioner, 2020 WL 473618, *6 (W.D.N.Y. 2020)