

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF
NEW YORK

Brian Scott Roberts v. Commissioner of Social Security

Roberts v. Commissioner of Social Security · No. 5:25-CV-00208 (ML) · Decided March 26, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Northern District of New York affirmed the Commissioner's denial of Brian Scott Roberts's application for Social Security disability benefits. The court held that the administrative law judge's evaluation of the medical opinion and testimonial evidence, as well as the residual functional capacity determination, was supported by substantial evidence. Plaintiff's motion for judgment on the pleadings was denied, Defendant's motion was granted, and the complaint was dismissed.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Northern District of New York
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Miroslav Lovric
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Northern District of New York
DECIDED	March 26, 2026
DOCKET	5:25-CV-00208 (ML)
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff sought judicial review under 42 U.S.C. § 405(g) of the Commissioner's denial of Title XVI Social Security benefits. The parties filed cross-motions for judgment on the pleadings, treated under General Order No. 18 as motions under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(c).
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court reviewed whether the Commissioner applied the correct legal principles and whether the determination was supported by substantial evidence. The court stated that substantial evidence is relevant evidence that a reasonable mind would find sufficient to support a conclusion, and that a factual finding may be rejected only if a reasonable factfinder would have to conclude otherwise.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	nonprecedential
PARTIES	Brian Scott Roberts v. Commissioner of Social Security

TOPICS

judicial review of agency action

administrative law

administrative procedure act

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PRACTICE AREAS

Social Security disability benefits

administrative law

judicial review of agency action

civil procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the ALJ properly evaluated the medical opinion evidence, including the moderate limitations identified in Dr. David Schaich's consultative opinion.
2. Whether the ALJ properly evaluated Plaintiff's subjective testimony concerning social interaction, concentration, conflict avoidance, and medication-related fatigue.
3. Whether the Commissioner's denial of benefits was supported by substantial evidence and should be affirmed.

HOLDINGS

1. The ALJ properly evaluated Dr. Schaich's consultative opinion, and the RFC adequately addressed the moderate limitations identified in that opinion.
2. The ALJ properly evaluated Plaintiff's subjective complaints and supported the resulting findings with substantial evidence.
3. The Commissioner's determination that Plaintiff was not disabled was supported by substantial evidence and was affirmed.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"A Court must determine whether the correct legal principles were applied and whether the determination is supported by substantial evidence, which is defined as such relevant evidence as a reasonable mind would find sufficient to support a conclusion." (transcript at 3)

"To begin with, the RFC determination need not mirror a particular medical opinion, even one deemed persuasive. Rather, an ALJ should base its RFC determination on the longitudinal record." (transcript at 5)

"It is not sufficient that reasonable parties could interpret the evidence differently, and it is not the function of this reviewing Court to reweigh the evidence." (transcript at 7)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff, born in 1970, left school before completing the tenth grade and had worked as a hotel janitor, manufacturing-facility packer, and restaurant dishwasher. He had not worked since 2020 and based his claim entirely on mental-health impairments, including post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and anxiety. The ALJ found that Plaintiff could perform work at all exertional levels subject to nonexertional limitations involving simple instructions, routine work, social interaction, occasional changes, and no supervisory responsibilities, and found jobs existing in significant numbers that Plaintiff could perform.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff applied for Title XVI benefits on October 26, 2021, alleging disability beginning November 11, 2017. Administrative Law Judge John Ramos denied the claim on May 22, 2024, and the Appeals Council denied review on January 27, 2025. Plaintiff commenced this action on January 13, 2025. After oral argument on March 20, 2026, the district court denied Plaintiff's motion, granted Defendant's motion, affirmed the Commissioner's decision, and dismissed the complaint.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- Brault v. Social Security Administration Commissioner, 683 F.3d 443 (2d Cir. 2012)
- Melanie L. v. Commissioner of Social Security, 2022 WL 17992220, at *8 (N.D.N.Y. Dec. 29, 2022)
- Jeff S. v. Commissioner of Social Security, 2024 WL 5345046, at *6 (N.D.N.Y. Dec. 11, 2024), report and recommendation adopted, 2025 WL 254898 (N.D.N.Y. Jan. 21, 2025)