

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
MISSOURI, EASTERN DIVISION

Judy Scheer v. Frank J. Bisignano, Commissioner of the Social
Security Administration

Scheer · No. 4:25-cv-00256-MTS · Decided March 31, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri reviewed the Commissioner of Social Security’s denial of Judy Scheer’s applications for Disability Insurance Benefits and Supplemental Security Income. The court held that the Administrative Law Judge’s assessment of the severity of Scheer’s mental impairments and the persuasiveness of Dr. Spencer’s opinion was supported by substantial evidence. The court affirmed the Commissioner’s decision and ordered that a separate judgment accompany the memorandum and order.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri, Eastern Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Lee
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri, Eastern Division
DECIDED	March 31, 2026
DOCKET	4:25-cv-00256-MTS
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff sought judicial review under 42 U.S.C. §§ 405(g) and 1383(c) (3) of the Commissioner's final decision denying Disability Insurance Benefits and Supplemental Security Income.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court reviewed whether the ALJ's decision was supported by substantial evidence on the record as a whole, considering evidence that both supports and detracts from the decision, while deferring to the ALJ when the decision fell within the available zone of choice.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unknown
PARTIES	Judy Scheer v. Frank J. Bisignano, Commissioner of the Social Security Administration

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 properly evaluated Dr. Spencer's medical opinion concerning the severity of Scheer's mental impairments under 20 C.F.R. § 404.1520c.
2. Whether substantial evidence supported the ALJ's findings that Scheer's mental impairments caused only mild limitations and were non-severe.
3. Whether the Commissioner's denial of DIB and SSI should be affirmed.

HOLDINGS

1. The ALJ properly evaluated Dr. Spencer's opinion by addressing its supportability and consistency with the examination findings and the record as a whole.
2. The Commissioner's decision must be affirmed because the ALJ's findings were supported by substantial evidence on the record as a whole, even though the evidence might have supported a contrary conclusion.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“At bottom, Plaintiff contends that the ALJ’s findings above—and the underlying evidence in the record—neither preclude Dr. Spencer’s moderate-limitation findings nor require a conclusion that Plaintiff’s limitations are only mild.” (Opinion Discussion)

“Indeed, after considering the evidence in the record as a whole, the Court finds that the ALJ’s assessment was within the “available zone of choice” and must therefore be affirmed.” (Opinion Discussion)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Scheer alleged disability from multiple physical and mental conditions, including orthopedic impairments, obesity, depression, eating disorders, ADHD, and other medical conditions. The ALJ found severe physical impairments but found her alleged mental impairments non-severe, determining that she had only mild limitations in the four broad areas of mental functioning. The ALJ assigned a sedentary residual functional capacity with extensive limitations and found that, although Scheer could not perform her past relevant work, she could perform work such as medical receptionist.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Scheer applied for DIB and SSI alleging disability beginning August 9, 2020. Following a hearing, an ALJ found in March 2024 that she was not disabled, concluding at step five that she could perform jobs existing in

significant numbers in the national economy. The Appeals Council denied review, making the ALJ's decision the Commissioner's final decision. The district court affirmed.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- Baker v. Secretary of Health & Human Services, 955 F.2d 552, 555 (8th Cir. 1992)
- Moore v. Astrue, 572 F.3d 520, 523 (8th Cir. 2009)
- Goff v. Barnhart, 421 F.3d 785, 793 (8th Cir. 2005)
- Wagner v. Astrue, 499 F.3d 842, 848 (8th Cir. 2007)
- Biestek v. Berryhill, 139 S. Ct. 1148, 1154 (2019)
- Cox v. Astrue, 495 F.3d 614, 617 (8th Cir. 2007)
- McNamara v. Astrue, 590 F.3d 607, 610 (8th Cir. 2010)
- Locher v. Sullivan, 968 F.2d 725, 727 (8th Cir. 1992)
- Hurd v. Astrue, 621 F.3d 734, 738 (8th Cir. 2010)
- Howard v. Massanari, 255 F.3d 577, 581 (8th Cir. 2001)
- Beckley v. Apfel, 152 F.3d 1056, 1059 (8th Cir. 1998)
- Cooper v. Sullivan, 919 F.2d 1317, 1320 (8th Cir. 1990)
- Starman v. Kijakazi, 2:20-cv-0035-SRC, 2021 WL 4459729, at *4 (E.D. Mo. Sept. 29, 2021)
- Svendsen v. Kijakazi, 1:21-cv-1029-CBK, 2022 WL 2753163, at *8 (D.S.D. July 14, 2022)
- Goss v. Kijakazi, 4:21-cv-0663-LPR-JJV, 2022 WL 1511521, at *3 (E.D. Ark. May 12, 2022)
- Osmanovic v. Bisignano, 4:24-cv-0679-NCC, 2025 WL 2771473, at *3 (E.D. Mo. Sept. 29, 2025)
- Woolf v. Shalala, 3 F.3d 1210, 1213 (8th Cir. 1993)
- Austin v. Kijakazi, 52 F.4th 723, 728 (8th Cir. 2022)
- Hardy v. Dudek, 4:24-cv-0171-MTS, 2025 WL 917222, at *6 (E.D. Mo. Mar. 26, 2025)
- Loucks v. Kijakazi, 21-1749, 2022 WL 2189293 (2d Cir. 2022)