

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF
FLORIDA

Lucia Castillo v. Frank Bisignano, Commissioner of Social Security

Case No. 25-20962-CIV-ALTMAN/MATTHEWMAN · No. Case No. 25-20962-CIV-
ALTMAN/MATTHEWMAN · Decided January 13, 2026

SUMMARY

This document is a magistrate judge’s Report and Recommendation in a Social Security disability benefits action in the Southern District of Florida. The plaintiff challenges the Administrative Law Judge’s partially favorable decision, arguing that the residual functional capacity assessment and evaluation of her symptoms were not supported by substantial evidence. The excerpt addresses motions for summary judgment and analyzes the alleged limitations arising from the plaintiff’s knee, spinal, neurological, fibromyalgia, and mental impairments.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Southern District of Florida
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Chief United States Magistrate Judge
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Southern District of Florida
DECIDED	January 13, 2026
DOCKET	Case No. 25-20962-CIV-ALTMAN/MATTHEWMAN
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Report and recommendation on the parties' cross-motions for summary judgment in an action seeking judicial review under 42 U.S.C. § 405(g) of the Commissioner's partially favorable Social Security disability determination.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court reviews the Commissioner's factual findings to determine whether they are supported by substantial evidence and whether the correct legal standards were applied. The court may not decide facts anew, reweigh the evidence, or substitute its judgment for the Commissioner's. Legal conclusions receive no presumption of validity, and failure to apply the correct law or provide sufficient reasoning requires reversal.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	nonprecedential

PARTIES

Lucia Castillo v. Frank Bisignano, Commissioner of Social Security

TOPICS

judicial review of agency action

administrative law

summary judgment

civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

Social Security disability benefits

administrative law

federal civil procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether substantial evidence supported the ALJ's residual functional capacity finding for the period from July 1, 2020, through December 12, 2023.
2. Whether the ALJ reversibly erred by not expressly discussing an August 2023 neurological evaluation.
3. Whether the ALJ properly considered Castillo's cervical, lumbar, knee, and other physical impairments in combination.
4. Whether the ALJ properly evaluated Castillo's subjective complaints of pain and other symptoms.

HOLDINGS

1. The ALJ's RFC finding was supported by substantial evidence because the ALJ considered the record as a whole and incorporated restrictions addressing Castillo's impairments.
2. Failure to identify every alleged impairment as severe at step two is not reversible error when the ALJ identifies at least one severe impairment and proceeds through the sequential evaluation, provided all impairments are considered at later steps.
3. The ALJ's failure to expressly discuss the August 2023 neurological evaluation did not require remand because an ALJ need not discuss every piece of evidence and Castillo did not explain how the evaluation established additional work-related limitations.
4. The ALJ properly evaluated Castillo's subjective complaints, and the evaluation was supported by substantial evidence.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“The ALJ found that Plaintiff’s “medically determinable impairments could reasonably be expected to cause the alleged symptoms; however, [Plaintiff’s] statements concerning the intensity, persistence and limiting effects of these symptoms are not entirely consistent with the medical evidence and other evidence in the record for the reasons explained in this decision.”” (R. 29)

“The Court finds that the RFC is supported by substantial evidence. And, “[u]nder a substantial evidence standard of review, [the claimant] must do more than point to evidence in the record that supports her position; she must show the absence of substantial evidence supporting the ALJ’s conclusion.”” (R. 35-36)

“Based on the foregoing, the Court RECOMMENDS as follows: 1. The Court finds that the record contains substantial evidence to support the denial of benefits to Plaintiff. Thus, the Court recommends that the

decision of the Commissioner be AFFIRMED.” (R. 24)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Castillo alleged disability based on physical and mental impairments including fibromyalgia, osteoarthritis, spinal disorders, obesity, anxiety, depression, and related symptoms. The ALJ determined that she had the residual functional capacity for light work with postural, environmental, and mental limitations, and found that jobs existed in significant numbers in the national economy before December 13, 2023. Castillo argued that the RFC failed to account for her knee, neurological, cervical, lumbar, and subjective symptom evidence.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Castillo filed Title II and Title XVI applications alleging disability beginning July 1, 2020. The claims were initially denied and denied on reconsideration. After a March 2024 hearing, the ALJ found Castillo not disabled from July 1, 2020, through December 12, 2023, but disabled beginning December 13, 2023. The Appeals Council denied review on February 11, 2025. Castillo sought review in the district court and moved for summary judgment; the Commissioner filed a cross-motion. The magistrate judge recommended denying Castillo's motion and granting the Commissioner's motion.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- *Lamb v. Bowen*, 847 F.2d 698, 701 (11th Cir. 1988)
- *Crawford v. Commissioner of Social Security*, 363 F.3d 1155, 1158 (11th Cir. 2004) (per curiam)
- *Lewis v. Callahan*, 125 F.3d 1436, 1439 (11th Cir. 1997)
- *Bloodsworth v. Heckler*, 703 F.2d 1233, 1239 (11th Cir. 1983)
- *Brown v. Sullivan*, 921 F.2d 1233, 1236 (11th Cir. 1990)
- *Ted Martin v. Louis W. Sullivan, Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, Martin v. Sullivan*, 894 F.2d 1520, 1529 (11th Cir. 1990)
- *Ingram v. Commissioner of Social Security Administration*, 496 F.3d 1253, 1260 (11th Cir. 2007)
- *Cornelius v. Sullivan*, 936 F.2d 1143, 1145-46 (11th Cir. 1991)
- *Gibson v. Heckler*, 762 F.2d 1516, 1518 n.1 (11th Cir. 1985)
- *Winschel v. Commissioner of Social Security*, 631 F.3d 1176, 1180 (11th Cir. 2011)
- *Tuggerson-Brown v. Commissioner of Social Security*, 572 F. App'x 949, 951 (11th Cir. 2014)
- *Randolph v. Commissioner of Social Security*, No. 23-13733, 2024 WL 3650237, at *2 (11th Cir. Aug. 5, 2024)
- *Walker v. Bowen*, 826 F.2d 996, 1000 (11th Cir. 1987)
- *Dicks v. Colvin*, 2016 WL 4927637, at *4 (M.D. Fla. Sept. 16, 2016)
- *Lozada v. Kijakazi*, No. 22-80867-CIV, 2023 WL 5978082, at *6 (S.D. Fla. Sept. 14, 2023)

- *Hodgman v. Colvin*, 2016 WL 860260, at *5 (M.D. Fla. Mar. 7, 2016)
- *Sims v. Commissioner of Social Security*, 706 F. App'x 595, 604 (11th Cir. 2017)
- *Lewen v. Commissioner of Social Security*, 605 F. App'x 967, 969 (11th Cir. 2015)
- *Dyer v. Barnhart*, 395 F.3d 1206, 1211, 1212 (11th Cir. 2005)
- *Lara v. Commissioner of Social Security*, 705 F. App'x 804, 815 (11th Cir. 2017)
- *Mitchell v. Commissioner, Social Security Administration*, 771 F.3d 780, 782 (11th Cir. 2014)
- *Holt v. Sullivan*, 921 F.2d 1221, 1223 (11th Cir. 1991)
- *Wilson v. Barnhart*, 284 F.3d 1219, 1226 (11th Cir. 2002)
- *Thomas v. Arn*, 474 U.S. 140, 149 (1985)
- *Henley v. Johnson*, 885 F.2d 790, 794 (11th Cir. 1989)

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