

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEVADA

Shannon Marie Schurman v. Frank Bisignano, Commissioner of Social Security

No. 2:25-cv-00078-MDC (D. Nev. Dec. 17, 2025) · No. 2:25-cv-00078-MDC · Decided December 17, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the District of Nevada denied Shannon Marie Schurman's request to reverse or remand the denial of her Social Security disability benefits. The court held that the Administrative Law Judge's evaluation of medical expert Dr. Jill Silverman's opinion, including opinions concerning standing, walking, and absenteeism, was supported by substantial evidence. The court affirmed the ALJ's decision and directed the clerk to enter final judgment and close the case.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the District of Nevada
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the District of Nevada
DECIDED	December 17, 2025
DOCKET	2:25-cv-00078-MDC
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff sought judicial review under 42 U.S.C. § 405(g) of the Commissioner's final decision denying her applications for disability insurance benefits and supplemental security income.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court reviews the Commissioner's factual findings under the deferential substantial-evidence standard and must uphold findings supported by more than a mere scintilla of evidence or evidence a reasonable mind might accept as adequate. Where the evidence is susceptible to more than one rational interpretation, the court must uphold the ALJ's conclusion.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Nonprecedential district-court order
PARTIES	Shannon Marie Schurman v. Frank Bisignano, Commissioner of Social Security

TOPICS

judicial review of agency action

administrative law

disability definition

ada / disability

PRACTICE AREAS

Social Security

administrative law

disability benefits

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether substantial evidence supported the ALJ's discounting of Dr. Silverman's opinion concerning Schurman's standing and walking limitations.
2. Whether substantial evidence supported the ALJ's discounting of Dr. Silverman's opinion concerning Schurman's potential work absenteeism.
3. Whether the ALJ improperly substituted a lay medical opinion for medical expertise when discounting portions of Dr. Silverman's opinion.

HOLDINGS

1. The ALJ reasonably discounted Dr. Silverman's opinion concerning Schurman's standing and walking limitations because it was inconsistent with the medical record, including the benefits from lumbar injections, equivocal straight-leg-raise findings, normal strength and sensation, and generally mild lumbar imaging findings.
2. The ALJ reasonably discounted Dr. Silverman's opinion that Schurman would have difficulty getting to work several days per month because the medical record reflected generally routine and conservative treatment and daily activities inconsistent with the asserted severity of her limitations.
3. The ALJ did not err by discounting portions of Dr. Silverman's opinion because an ALJ may independently review and draw conclusions from medical evidence and may reject a medical opinion when expressly providing clear and convincing reasons supported by the record.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"On judicial review, an ALJ's factual findings [are] 'conclusive' if supported by 'substantial evidence.'" (at 6)

"[E]vidence of medical treatment successfully relieving symptoms can undermine a claim of disability." (at 7)

"The Ninth Circuit 'presum[es] that ALJs are, at some level, capable of independently reviewing and forming conclusions about medical evidence to discharge their statutory duty to determine whether a claimant is disabled[.]'" (at 10)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Schurman alleged disability based principally on rheumatoid arthritis, degenerative disc disease, osteoarthritis, diabetes mellitus, and related limitations in standing and walking. The ALJ found that she had severe impairments but retained the residual functional capacity for light work and could perform her past work as a deliverer, merchandiser, and usher. In evaluating medical-expert Dr. Jill Silverman's opinion, the ALJ discounted portions concerning standing, walking, and potential absenteeism because the record reflected beneficial lumbar

injections, generally mild or equivocal examination and imaging findings, conservative treatment, and daily activities.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Schurman applied for DIB and SSI in May 2021. After the applications were denied initially and on reconsideration, an ALJ conducted hearings, denied benefits on February 7, 2024, and found that Schurman could perform her past relevant work. The Appeals Council denied review, making the ALJ's decision the Commissioner's final decision. The District Court denied Schurman's requested relief, granted the Commissioner's request to affirm, affirmed the ALJ's decision, and closed the case.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- Mathews v. Eldridge, 424 U.S. 319 (1976)
- Gonzalez v. Sullivan, 914 F.2d 1197, 1203 (9th Cir. 1990)
- Bowen v. Yuckert, 482 U.S. 137, 140-42 (1987)
- Berry v. Astrue, 622 F.3d 1228, 1231 (9th Cir. 2010)
- Pinto v. Massanari, 249 F.3d 840, 845 (9th Cir. 2001)
- Gutierrez v. Comm'r of Soc. Sec. Admin., 740 F.3d 519, 528 (9th Cir. 2014)
- Tackett v. Apfel, 180 F.3d 1094, 1100-01 (9th Cir. 1999)
- Biestek v. Berryhill, 587 U.S. 97, 103 (2019)
- Richardson v. Perales, 402 U.S. 389, 401 (1971)
- Consolidated Edison Co. v. NLRB, 305 U.S. 197, 229 (1938)
- Ford v. Saul, 950 F.3d 1141, 1159 (9th Cir. 2020)
- Valentine v. Comm'r Soc. Sec. Admin., 574 F.3d 685, 690 (9th Cir. 2009)
- Wellington v. Berryhill, 878 F.3d 867, 876 (9th Cir. 2017)
- Magallanes v. Bowen, 881 F.2d 747, 755 (9th Cir. 1989)
- Lambert v. Saul, 980 F.3d 1266, 1277 (9th Cir. 2020)
- Farlow v. Kijakazi, 53 F.4th 485, 488 (9th Cir. 2022)
- Day v. Weinberger, 522 F.2d 1154, 1156 (9th Cir. 1975)