

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Paul Gonzalez v. Commissioner of Social Security

No. 2:24-cv-02768-CSK (E.D. Cal. July 28, 2025) · No. 2:24-cv-02768-CSK · Decided July 28, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of California reviewed the Commissioner of Social Security’s denial of Paul Gonzalez’s application for supplemental security income. The court held that the Administrative Law Judge provided sufficiently specific reasons for discounting the more severe aspects of Gonzalez’s subjective symptom testimony and that the decision was supported by substantial evidence. Plaintiff’s motion for summary judgment was denied, the Commissioner’s cross-motion was granted, and the final decision was affirmed.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Chi Soo Kim
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
DECIDED	July 28, 2025
DOCKET	2:24-cv-02768-CSK
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff sought judicial review under 42 U.S.C. § 405(g) of the Commissioner's final decision denying supplemental security income. The parties filed cross-motions for summary judgment.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court may reverse the Commissioner's decision only if the ALJ committed legal error or the decision was unsupported by substantial evidence. Substantial evidence is more than a mere scintilla but less than a preponderance and means such relevant evidence as a reasonable mind might accept as adequate. The court reviews evidence supporting and detracting from the ALJ's conclusion but may not affirm on a ground on which the ALJ did not rely. The ALJ's interpretation must be upheld when the evidence is susceptible to more than one rational interpretation or when an error is harmless.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished district court opinion; precedential status unknown

PARTIES

Paul Gonzalez v. Commissioner of Social Security

TOPICS

judicial review of agency action

administrative law

summary judgment

civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

Social Security

administrative law

civil procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the ALJ provided legally sufficient reasons for discounting the intensity, persistence, and limiting effects of Gonzalez's subjective symptom testimony.
2. Whether the ALJ's finding that Gonzalez was not disabled was supported by substantial evidence and free from legal error.

HOLDINGS

1. The ALJ properly discounted the more severe aspects of Gonzalez's subjective symptom testimony because the ALJ identified sufficiently specific reasons, including conservative and inconsistent treatment, improvement with medication, treatment noncompliance, inconsistency with objective medical evidence, and inconsistency with activities of daily living.
2. The Commissioner's final decision was supported by substantial evidence and free from legal error.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"The Court finds the ALJ provided sufficiently specific reasons for discounting the more severe aspects of Plaintiff's symptom testimony regarding his mental impairments, such that the Court does not find Plaintiff's testimony was arbitrarily discredited." (at 11)

"Having addressed all of the points of error raised by Plaintiff, the Court finds the ALJ's decision otherwise supported by substantial evidence in the record and free from legal error." (at 11-12)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Gonzalez alleged disability from PTSD, agoraphobia, anxiety, depression, chronic social phobia, and generalized anxiety disorder. The ALJ found severe mental impairments but determined that they did not meet or medically equal a listed impairment. The ALJ assessed a residual functional capacity for work at all exertional levels with limitations to simple instructions, occasional interaction with coworkers and supervisors, no interaction with the public, and no production-rate work. Relying on vocational-expert testimony, the ALJ found Gonzalez capable of performing several jobs existing in significant numbers in the national economy.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Gonzalez applied for supplemental security income on February 22, 2022. His application was denied initially and on reconsideration. After a December 12, 2023 administrative hearing, the ALJ found him not disabled on

February 28, 2024. The Appeals Council denied review on September 12, 2024, making the ALJ's decision the Commissioner's final decision. The district court denied Gonzalez's motion for summary judgment, granted the Commissioner's cross-motion, affirmed the final decision, and closed the case.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- Lester v. Chater, 81 F.3d 821, 828 n.5 (9th Cir. 1995)
- Ford v. Saul, 950 F.3d 1141, 1148, 1154 (9th Cir. 2020)
- Brewes v. Comm'r, 682 F.3d 1157, 1161-62 (9th Cir. 2012)
- Mata v. Colvin, 2014 WL 5472784, at *4 (E.D. Cal. Oct. 28, 2014)
- Indep. Towers of Wash. v. Washington, 350 F.3d 925, 929 (9th Cir. 2003)
- Luther v. Berryhill, 891 F.3d 872, 875 (9th Cir. 2018)
- Treichler v. Comm'r, 775 F.3d 1090, 1106 (9th Cir. 2014)
- Revels v. Berryhill, 874 F.3d 648, 655 (9th Cir. 2017)
- Brown-Hunter v. Colvin, 806 F.3d 487, 493 (9th Cir. 2015)
- Parra v. Astrue, 481 F.3d 742, 750-51 (9th Cir. 2007)
- Burch v. Barnhart, 400 F.3d 676, 680-81 (9th Cir. 2005)
- Rollins v. Massanari, 261 F.3d 853, 857 (9th Cir. 2001)
- Bunnell v. Sullivan, 947 F.2d 341, 346 (9th Cir. 1991)
- Fair v. Bowen, 885 F.2d 597, 604 n.5 (9th Cir. 1989)
- Smartt v. Kijakazi, 53 F.4th 489, 498-99 (9th Cir. 2022)
- Tidwell v. Saul, 836 F. App'x 523, 525-26 (9th Cir. 2020)
- Gregg v. Astrue, 2009 WL 3295117, at *4 (E.D. Wash. Oct. 13, 2009)
- Molina v. Astrue, 674 F.3d 1104, 1113 (9th Cir. 2012)