

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

Cortina C. v. Commissioner of Social Security

Cortina C. · No. 24-CV-972-FPG · Decided March 11, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Western District of New York reviewed the Commissioner of Social Security’s denial of Plaintiff Cortina C.’s application for Supplemental Security Income. The Court held that the Administrative Law Judge’s residual functional capacity determination and evaluation of the medical opinions were supported by substantial evidence and complied with applicable legal standards. The Commissioner’s motion for judgment on the pleadings was granted, Plaintiff’s motion was denied, and the complaint was dismissed with prejudice.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Western District of New York
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Western District of New York
DECIDED	March 11, 2026
DOCKET	24-CV-972-FPG
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff sought judicial review under the Social Security Act of the Commissioner's final decision denying Supplemental Security Income. Both parties moved for judgment on the pleadings under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(c).
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court reviews the Commissioner's final decision to determine whether it is supported by substantial evidence and based on the correct legal standard; the court does not conduct de novo review or reweigh the evidence.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unpublished district court decision; precedential status not designated
PARTIES	Cortina C. v. Commissioner of Social Security

TOPICS

- judicial review of agency action
- administrative law
- motion for judgment on the pleadings
- civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the ALJ's residual functional capacity determination was supported by substantial evidence.
2. Whether the ALJ improperly relied on Plaintiff's ability to care for her children.
3. Whether the ALJ adequately evaluated the supportability and consistency of the medical opinions of nurse practitioner Brown-Young and therapist Quinn.
4. Whether the ALJ's limitation to occasional interaction with the public, coworkers, and supervisors was supported by substantial evidence.

HOLDINGS

1. The ALJ's determination that Plaintiff could perform a reduced range of light work with specified limitations was supported by substantial evidence.
2. The ALJ properly considered Plaintiff's ability to care for her children, together with medical and treatment evidence, in evaluating the residual functional capacity.
3. The ALJ reasonably limited Plaintiff to occasional interaction with the general public, coworkers, and supervisors.
4. The ALJ adequately addressed, or the record otherwise permitted the court to glean, the supportability and consistency analyses for Brown-Young's and Quinn's opinions; any procedural error was harmless.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“In reviewing a final decision of the SSA, this Court is limited to determining whether the SSA’s conclusions were supported by substantial evidence in the record and were based on a correct legal standard.” (Legal Standard, I)

“Substantial evidence means more than a mere scintilla. It means such relevant evidence as a reasonable mind might accept as adequate to support a conclusion.” (Legal Standard, I)

“The mere fact that Plaintiff can identify other evidence to support a different conclusion does not entitle her to relief.” (Discussion, II.i)

“Thus, even if an ALJ fails to explicitly evaluate the consistency and supportability factors with respect to a particular medical opinion, remand is warranted only if the reviewing court is “unable to fathom the ALJ’s rationale in relation to [the] evidence in the record.”” (Discussion, II.iii)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff applied for Supplemental Security Income alleging disability from bipolar disorder, anxiety, depression, diabetes, high blood pressure, and a partially deflated lung. The ALJ found severe impairments including obesity, asthma, COPD, obstructive sleep apnea, depressive disorder, anxiety disorder, and PTSD, but determined that Plaintiff retained the residual functional capacity for a reduced range of light work with

exertional, environmental, and social limitations. The ALJ found that Plaintiff had no past relevant work but could perform jobs existing in significant numbers in the national economy.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff applied for Supplemental Security Income in January 2022. An administrative law judge found in February 2024 that Plaintiff was not disabled, and the Appeals Council denied review in August 2024. Plaintiff then filed this action, and the district court granted the Commissioner's motion for judgment on the pleadings, denied Plaintiff's motion, and dismissed the complaint with prejudice.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Talavera v. Astrue, 697 F.3d 145, 151 (2d Cir. 2012)
- Moran v. Astrue, 569 F.3d 108, 112 (2d Cir. 2009)
- Schaal v. Apfel, 134 F.3d 496, 501 (2d Cir. 1998)
- Wagner v. Sec'y of Health & Human Servs., 906 F.2d 856, 860 (2d Cir. 1990)
- Bowen v. City of New York, 476 U.S. 467, 470-71 (1986)
- Rosa v. Callahan, 168 F.3d 72, 77 (2d Cir. 1999)
- Mongeur v. Heckler, 722 F.2d 1033, 1040 (2d Cir. 1983)
- Mordean L. v. Comm'r of Soc. Sec., No. 19-CV-277-FPG, 2020 WL 6886557, at *5 (W.D.N.Y. Nov. 24, 2020)
- Genier v. Astrue, 606 F.3d 46, 49 (2d Cir. 2010)
- Emery S. v. Comm'r of Soc. Sec., No. 20-CV-662-FPG, 2021 WL 2592363, at *4 (W.D.N.Y. June 24, 2021)
- Verne W. v. Comm'r of Soc. Sec., 23-CV-6277-FPG, 2023 WL 8644415, at *4 (W.D.N.Y. Dec. 14, 2023)
- Little v. Comm'r of Soc. Sec., No. 1:19-CV-0897 (WBC), 2020 WL 6205691, at *8 (W.D.N.Y. Oct. 22, 2020)
- Amy T. v. Comm'r of Soc. Sec., 20-CV-0910 (DEP), 2021 WL 6063057, at *7 (N.D.N.Y. Dec. 22, 2021)
- McIntyre v. Colvin, 758 F.3d 146, 149 (2d Cir. 2014)
- Michael G. v. Comm'r of Soc. Sec., 23-CV-00767 EAW, 2024 WL 3616282, at *5 (W.D.N.Y. July 31, 2024)
- Ward v. Comm'r of Soc. Sec., No. 18-CV-1317-FPG, 2020 WL 3035850, at *3 (W.D.N.Y. June 5, 2020)
- Loucks v. Kijakazi, 2022 WL 2189293, at *2
- Berry v. Schweiker, 675 F.2d 464, 469 (2d Cir. 1982)
- Davidia B. v. Comm'r of Soc. Sec., 21-CV-384, 2023 WL 5361000, at *5 (W.D.N.Y. Aug. 22, 2023)