

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
PENNSYLVANIA

Scott J. v. Frank Bisignano, Commissioner of Social Security

No. 24-cv-6865 (E.D. Pa. Feb. 6, 2026) · No. 24-cv-6865 · Decided February 6, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania denied Scott J.'s request for review of the Commissioner of Social Security's decision denying his claim for Social Security Disability Insurance benefits. The court held that Plaintiff failed to demonstrate that his Sjogren's syndrome or fibromyalgia met or medically equaled a listed impairment and that substantial evidence supported the ALJ's finding that he could perform medium work and past relevant work. The opinion was issued upon consent to magistrate judge jurisdiction.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Lynne A. Sitarski
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania
DECIDED	February 6, 2026
DOCKET	24-cv-6865
DISPOSITION	denied
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff sought judicial review under the Social Security Act of the Commissioner's final decision denying his application for SSDI benefits. The parties consented to disposition by a magistrate judge. The court denied Plaintiff's Request for Review.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court reviews the Commissioner's factual findings for substantial evidence and compliance with correct legal standards, exercises plenary review over legal issues, and may not reweigh the evidence or substitute its own factual determinations.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished
PARTIES	Scott J. v. Frank Bisignano, Commissioner of Social Security

TOPICS

judicial review of agency action

administrative law

agency adjudication

disability definition

ada / disability

PRACTICE AREAS

Social Security disability

administrative law

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disability benefits

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the ALJ adequately considered whether Plaintiff's Sjogren's syndrome met or medically equaled Listing 14.10.
2. Whether the ALJ adequately considered whether Plaintiff's fibromyalgia met or medically equaled a listing, including Listing 14.09D.
3. Whether substantial evidence supported the ALJ's medium-work residual functional capacity assessment and evaluation of Plaintiff's subjective symptoms.

HOLDINGS

1. Plaintiff failed to demonstrate that his Sjogren's syndrome satisfied either subsection A or subsection B of Listing 14.10, and the ALJ's step-three determination was supported by substantial evidence.
2. Plaintiff failed to demonstrate that his fibromyalgia, alone or in combination with another impairment, medically equaled Listing 14.09, including subsection D.
3. The ALJ's medium-work RFC assessment and evaluation of Plaintiff's subjective symptoms were supported by substantial evidence, and the court would not reweigh the evidence.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"Courts are not permitted to re-weigh the evidence or impose their own factual determinations." (Section V.B.2)

"RFC is 'the most a [Plaintiff] can still do despite [his] limitations.'" (Section V.B.2)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Scott J. alleged disability from small fiber neuropathy, fibromyalgia, pain, muscle spasms, brain fog, degenerative spinal conditions, and Sjogren's syndrome. The record documented repeated complaints of fatigue, pain, weakness, paresthesia, and substantial weight loss, but also largely normal examinations, substantial daily activities, conservative treatment, and medical opinions ranging from no exertional limitations to light-work limitations. The ALJ found severe peripheral neuropathy, Sjogren's syndrome, fibromyalgia, and cervical degenerative disc disease, but determined that Plaintiff retained the residual functional capacity for medium work with environmental restrictions and could perform several past relevant jobs.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff protectively filed for SSDI on October 24, 2021, alleging disability beginning November 17, 2017. The application was denied initially and on reconsideration. After an administrative hearing, the ALJ issued an

unfavorable decision on April 18, 2024, and the Appeals Council denied review on October 29, 2024. Plaintiff filed this action on December 30, 2024; after briefing, the court denied review and left the Commissioner's decision intact.

DISPOSITION

denied

CASES CITED

- Sykes v. Apfel, 228 F.3d 259, 262-63, 266 (3d Cir. 2000)
- Poulos v. Commissioner of Social Security, 474 F.3d 88, 92 (3d Cir. 2007)
- Hartranft v. Apfel, 181 F.3d 358, 360 (3d Cir. 1999)
- Burnett v. Commissioner of Social Security, 220 F.3d 112, 118, 120 n.2, 122 (3d Cir. 2000)
- Sullivan v. Zebley, 493 U.S. 521, 530-32 (1990)
- Jones v. Barnhart, 364 F.3d 501, 505 (3d Cir. 2004)
- Rembert v. Commissioner of Social Security, 142 F. App'x 570, 572 (3d Cir. 2005)
- Atkins v. Commissioner of Social Security, 810 F. App'x 122, 129 (3d Cir. 2020)
- United States v. Shulick, 18 F.4th 91, 113 (3d Cir. 2021)
- Chandler v. Commissioner of Social Security, 667 F.3d 356, 359, 363 (3d Cir. 2011)
- Mason v. Shalala, 994 F.2d 1058, 1067-68 (3d Cir. 1993)
- Cotter v. Harris, 642 F.2d 700, 704 (3d Cir. 1981)
- Richardson v. Perales, 402 U.S. 389, 401 (1971)
- Zirnsak v. Colvin, 777 F.3d 607, 612 (3d Cir. 2014)
- Sanborn v. Commissioner of Social Security, 613 F. App'x 171, 177 (3d Cir. 2015)