

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF
MASSACHUSETTS

Bruno Moura v. Frank Bisignano, Commissioner of Social Security

Moura · No. 25-10274-MPK · Decided March 26, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the District of Massachusetts considers Bruno Moura’s motion for judgment on the pleadings and the Commissioner of Social Security’s motion to affirm the denial of disability insurance benefits. The opinion reviews the administrative record, medical and vocational evidence, the ALJ’s residual functional capacity determination, and alleged errors concerning the evaluation of medical opinions. The document text provided ends during the court’s discussion of whether the ALJ properly evaluated the consistency of a state-agency medical consultant’s opinion.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the District of Massachusetts
WRITING FOR THE COURT	M. Page Kelley
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the District of Massachusetts
DECIDED	March 26, 2026
DOCKET	25-10274-MPK
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff sought judicial review under 42 U.S.C. § 405(g) of the Commissioner of Social Security's denial of disability insurance benefits. The parties filed cross-motions: Plaintiff moved for judgment on the pleadings, and the Commissioner moved to affirm the administrative decision.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court reviewed the Commissioner's factual findings for substantial evidence under 42 U.S.C. § 405(g), while reviewing legal conclusions for errors of law. The court was required to uphold the decision if a reasonable mind could accept the evidence as adequate, even if the record could support a different interpretation.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished district-court opinion
PARTIES	Bruno Moura v. Frank Bisignano, Commissioner of Social Security

TOPICS

judicial review of agency action

motion for judgment on the pleadings

administrative law

civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

Social Security disability

administrative law

federal civil procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the ALJ adequately evaluated the consistency of the state-agency medical consultant Dr. Robert Terlato's opinion with the medical and nonmedical evidence under 20 C.F.R. § 404.1520c.
2. Whether the ALJ's characterization of Dr. Scott Haas's consultative psychological examination as generally benign was inconsistent with the finding at Step Two that Moura had severe depressive and anxiety disorders.
3. Whether the Commissioner's denial of benefits was supported by substantial evidence.

HOLDINGS

1. The ALJ satisfied the regulatory minimum articulation requirement for evaluating the consistency of Dr. Terlato's opinion. The ALJ's discussion of the medical record, the absence of treating-source opinions imposing additional limitations, and the absence of evidence that Moura's condition worsened adequately addressed consistency.
2. The ALJ's finding that Moura had severe depressive and anxiety disorders at Step Two was not inconsistent with relying on generally benign mental-status examinations when formulating the residual functional capacity at Step Four.
3. The Commissioner's decision denying benefits was supported by substantial evidence and contained no reversible legal error.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“The challenged consistency analyses were properly performed, and the ALJ’s opinion is supported by substantial evidence.” (Section IV)

“Taken as a whole, the ALJ’s opinion meets the minimal level of articulation required by the regulations.” (AR at 28)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Moura alleged disability beginning May 5, 2017, based principally on cervical-spine, left-shoulder, and left-ulnar impairments, as well as depression and anxiety. The ALJ found severe physical and mental impairments but determined that Moura retained the residual functional capacity for a restricted range of light work, including simple routine tasks and limited overhead reaching and left-arm manipulation. The medical record generally reflected benign physical and mental-status examinations, and state-agency consultants concluded that Moura retained work-related functional capacity.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Moura filed a Title II application for disability insurance benefits, which was denied initially and on reconsideration. After a telephonic hearing, the ALJ issued an unfavorable decision on February 28, 2024, and the Appeals Council denied review. Moura then filed this action, and the court denied his motion for judgment on the pleadings, granted the Commissioner's motion to affirm, and ordered judgment for the Commissioner.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- Allison M. v. Kijakazi, No. 22-cv-10033-FDS, 2023 WL 5650100 (D. Mass. Aug. 31, 2023)
- Purdy v. Berryhill, 887 F.3d 7 (1st Cir. 2018)
- Phillips v. Kijakazi, No. 4:22-cv-10319-IT, 2023 WL 5807344 (D. Mass. Sept. 7, 2023)
- Sacilowski v. Saul, 959 F.3d 431 (1st Cir. 2020)
- Seavey v. Barnhart, 276 F.3d 1 (1st Cir. 2001)
- Freeman v. Barnhart, 274 F.3d 606 (1st Cir. 2001)
- Sullivan v. Hudson, 490 U.S. 877, 885 (1989)
- Richardson v. Perales, 402 U.S. 389, 401 (1971)
- Manso-Pizarro v. Secretary of Health & Human Services, 76 F.3d 15, 16 (1st Cir. 1996)
- Biestek v. Berryhill, 587 U.S. 97, 103 (2019)
- Libby v. Astrue, 473 Fed. Appx. 8, 8 (1st Cir. 2012)
- Consolidated Edison Co. v. NLRB, 305 U.S. 197, 229 (1938)
- Lizotte v. Secretary of Health & Human Services, 654 F.2d 127, 128 (1st Cir. 1981)
- Rodriguez v. Secretary of Health & Human Services, 647 F.2d 218, 222 (1st Cir. 1981)
- Ward v. Commissioner of Social Security Administration, 211 F.3d 652, 655 (1st Cir. 2000)
- Nguyen v. Chater, 172 F.3d 31, 35 (1st Cir. 1999) (per curiam)
- Carrara v. Kijakazi, No. 21-CV-10239-DJC, 2022 WL 4111799, at *2 (D. Mass. Sept. 8, 2022), aff'd, No. 22-1861, 2023 WL 7474407 (1st Cir. June 26, 2023)
- LaRose v. O'Malley, No. 23-CV-11963-ADB, 2024 WL 4932517, at *16 (D. Mass. Dec. 2, 2024)
- Harrison v. Saul, No. CV 20-10295-LTS, 2021 WL 1153028, at *5 (D. Mass. Mar. 26, 2021)
- Nicole C. v. Saul, No. 19-cv-00127, 2020 WL 57727, at *4 (D.R.I. Jan. 6, 2020)
- Vazquez v. Kijakazi, No. 3:20-CV-30176-KAR, 2022 WL 952764, at *12-*13 (D. Mass. Mar. 30, 2022)
- Perrino v. Kijakazi, No. 21-CV-11267-ADB, 2023 WL 2743370, at *7-*8 (D. Mass. Mar. 31, 2023)
- George L. v. Bisignano, No. CV 25-188-PAS, 2026 WL 765550, at *4 (D.R.I. Mar. 18, 2026)
- Thorley v. O'Malley, No. 22-CV-10884-DJC, 2024 WL 1333511, at *10 (D. Mass. Mar. 28, 2024)
- Martinez v. Kijakazi, No. 3:20-CV-30151-KAR, 2021 WL 5054477, at *9-*10 (D. Mass. Oct. 29, 2021)
- Tucker v. Kijakazi, No. 21-cv-10317, 2022 WL 18032978, at *13 (D. Mass. Sept. 30, 2022)
- Lopardo v. Berryhill, No. 3:17-CV-30185-KAR, 2019 WL 1284820, at *11 (D. Mass. Mar. 20, 2019)

- Dube v. Kijakazi, No. 23-1068, 2024 WL 372841, at *1 (1st Cir. Jan. 16, 2024)
- Williams v. Colvin, No. 2:13-cv-00125-JAW, 2014 WL 220744, at *2 (D. Me. Jan. 21, 2014)
- Michael K. v. Kijakazi, No. CV 20-541MSM, 2022 WL 43497, at *8 (D.R.I. Jan. 5, 2022)
- Conrad v. Kijakazi, 666 F. Supp. 3d 161, 172 (D. Mass. 2023)
- McDonald v. Secretary of Health and Human Services, 795 F.2d 1118, 1122-23 (1st Cir. 1986)
- Diane K. v. Kijakazi, No. CV 22-215WES, 2023 WL 8713695, at *6-*7 (D.R.I. Dec. 18, 2023)
- Maillet v. Colvin, No. CV 15-13365-MGM, 2016 WL 3676142, at **4, 6 (D. Mass. July 7, 2016)
- Valle v. Berryhill, 444 F. Supp. 3d 299, 311-12 (D. Mass. 2020)
- Shatema B. v. Saul, No. 1:19-CV-00566-NT, 2020 WL 4383802, at *3 (D. Me. July 31, 2020), report and recommendation adopted, 2020 WL 4757063 (D. Me. Aug. 17, 2020)

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