

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF
ILLINOIS, WESTERN DIVISION

Todd E. v. Frank J. Bisignano, Commissioner of Social Security

Todd E. · No. 3:25-cv-50008 · Decided February 6, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois affirmed the Commissioner of Social Security’s decision finding that Todd E. was not disabled from December 1, 2020, through September 15, 2022. The court rejected challenges concerning the vocational expert’s job-number testimony, the ALJ’s handling of a consultative examiner’s report, and the explanation for the differing disability periods. The court denied the plaintiff’s motion for reversal and remand and granted the Commissioner’s motion for summary judgment.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, Western Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Michael F. Iasparro
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, Western Division
DECIDED	February 6, 2026
DOCKET	3:25-cv-50008
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff sought judicial review under 42 U.S.C. § 405(g) of the Commissioner’s final decision partially denying continued disability insurance benefits. The parties consented to magistrate-judge jurisdiction. Plaintiff moved for reversal and remand, and the Commissioner moved for summary judgment.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court reviews whether the Commissioner’s decision is supported by substantial evidence and is free of legal error. Factual findings supported by substantial evidence are conclusive; the court reviews the record as a whole but does not reweigh evidence, resolve evidentiary conflicts, determine credibility, or substitute its judgment for the ALJ’s.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	nonprecedential

PARTIES

Todd E. v. Frank J. Bisignano, Commissioner of Social Security

TOPICS

judicial review of agency action

agency adjudication

administrative law

PRACTICE AREAS

Social Security disability benefits

administrative law

judicial review of agency action

vocational expert evidence

medical opinion evaluation

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the ALJ established at step five that a significant number of jobs existed in the national economy that Plaintiff could perform despite his residual functional capacity.
2. Whether the ALJ was required to recontact the consultative examiner because the examiner's assessment contained vague limitations.
3. Whether the ALJ adequately explained the weight assigned to the consultative examiner's report and considered its supportability and consistency.
4. Whether the ALJ adequately explained the determination that Plaintiff was not disabled from December 1, 2020, through September 15, 2022, despite finding him disabled before and after that period.

HOLDINGS

1. The ALJ's reliance on the vocational expert's testimony concerning the bagger position was sufficient to establish that a significant number of jobs existed in the national economy. The bagger position alone involved 75,000 jobs, so any error concerning the packer and sandwich-maker positions was harmless.
2. An apparent conflict concerning the packer and sandwich-maker positions would ordinarily require the ALJ to elicit a reasonable explanation, but the court did not decide whether the vocational expert's explanation was adequate because the bagger position independently supplied a significant number of jobs and rendered any error harmless.
3. The ALJ was not required to recontact Dr. Heinrichs because the consultative examination report was complete and adequate for decisionmaking; the allegedly vague limitations were superfluous rather than missing information necessary to evaluate the impairment.
4. The ALJ adequately explained the decision to give Dr. Heinrichs' report only some weight by addressing its supportability and consistency with the record.
5. The ALJ adequately explained that Plaintiff experienced medical improvement and was not disabled from December 1, 2020, through September 15, 2022, while later evidence reflected worsening symptoms that supported disability beginning September 16, 2022.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“If supported by substantial evidence, the Commissioner’s factual findings are conclusive.” (Standard of Review)

“As that is a significant number on its own, any error in the ALJ finding Plaintiff capable of performing the packer or sandwich maker positions was harmless.” (Discussion, Part 1)

“Thus, Dr. Heinrichs’ report was not inadequate or incomplete and the ALJ’s responsibility to recontact Dr. Heinrichs was not triggered.” (Discussion, Part 2)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff had previously been found disabled because of epilepsy and anxiety disorder. During the period from December 1, 2020, through September 15, 2022, the record reflected reduced seizure frequency and limited supporting medical documentation, and Plaintiff reported grand mal seizures only once every few months. Beginning in or after September 2022, Plaintiff experienced worsening symptoms, including more frequent tremors, falls, leg swelling, and seizures, leading the ALJ to find him disabled again as of September 16, 2022.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The Commissioner initially found Plaintiff disabled because of epilepsy and anxiety disorder and later confirmed continuing disability. After a fraud-hotline allegation, the Commissioner determined that Plaintiff was no longer disabled as of December 1, 2020. Following an Appeals Council remand, an ALJ found Plaintiff not disabled from December 1, 2020, through September 15, 2022, but again disabled beginning September 16, 2022. The Appeals Council denied review on November 4, 2024, making the ALJ’s decision final, and Plaintiff filed this action.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- *Thorlton v. King*, 127 F.4th 1078, 1081 (7th Cir. 2025)
- *Mandrell v. Kijakazi*, 25 F.4th 514, 515, 518 (7th Cir. 2022)
- *Biestek v. Berryhill*, 587 U.S. 97, 103 (2019)
- *Warnell v. O’Malley*, 97 F.4th 1050, 1052-54 (7th Cir. 2024)
- *Beardsley v. Colvin*, 758 F.3d 834, 836 (7th Cir. 2014)
- *Milhem v. Kijakazi*, 52 F.4th 688, 694, 697 (7th Cir. 2022)
- *Chavez v. Berryhill*, 895 F.3d 962, 964, 966 (7th Cir. 2018)
- *Weatherbee v. Astrue*, 649 F.3d 565, 569 (7th Cir. 2011)
- *Surprise v. Saul*, 968 F.3d 658, 662 (7th Cir. 2020)
- *Overman v. Astrue*, 546 F.3d 456, 463 (7th Cir. 2008)
- *Canady v. O’Malley*, No. 5:23-cv-318-RJ, 2024 WL 2817542, at *4 (E.D.N.C. June 3, 2024)
- *Amanda L. S. v. Kijakazi*, No. 21 C 5775, 2023 WL 2711663, at *7 (N.D. Ill. Mar. 30, 2023)

- Schmitz v. Colvin, 124 F.4th 1029, 1034 (7th Cir. 2024)
- Brown v. Colvin, 845 F.3d 247, 255 (7th Cir. 2016)
- Cain v. Bisignano, 148 F.4th 490, 495, 497, 500 (7th Cir. 2025)
- Hess v. O'Malley, 92 F.4th 671, 678 (7th Cir. 2024)
- Simila v. Astrue, 573 F.3d 503, 516-17 (7th Cir. 2009)
- Britt v. Berryhill, 889 F.3d 422, 427 (7th Cir. 2018)
- Skinner v. Astrue, 478 F.3d 836, 844 (7th Cir. 2007)
- Bradley v. Village of University Park, Illinois, 59 F.4th 887, 897 (7th Cir. 2023)
- Crowell v. Kijakazi, 72 F.4th 810, 816 (7th Cir. 2023)
- Bjornson v. Astrue, 671 F.3d 640, 642 (7th Cir. 2012)
- Gentle v. Barnhart, 430 F.3d 865, 868 (7th Cir. 2005)
- Schmidt v. Barnhart, 395 F.3d 737, 745-46 (7th Cir. 2005)
- Zellweger v. Saul, 984 F.3d 1251, 1255 (7th Cir. 2021)
- Jeske v. Saul, 955 F.3d 583, 590 (7th Cir. 2020)
- Padua v. Bisignano, 145 F.4th 784, 789 (7th Cir. 2025)