

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

Gregory Lee Boetticher v. Frank Bisignano, Commissioner of Social
Security

Boetticher · No. 3:25-cv-01220-JRK · Decided January 2, 2026

SUMMARY

This Report and Recommendation addresses Gregory Lee Boetticher’s action seeking judicial review of the Commissioner of Social Security’s denial of Supplemental Security Income. The magistrate judge concludes that the Administrative Law Judge applied proper legal standards and supported the residual functional capacity assessment with substantial evidence, and recommends affirming the Commissioner’s decision.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio, Western Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Reuben J. Shepherd
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio, Western Division
DECIDED	January 2, 2026
DOCKET	3:25-cv-01220-JRK
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Report and recommendation on a claimant's action seeking judicial review of the Commissioner's final decision denying Supplemental Security Income benefits.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court reviews the Commissioner's final decision to determine whether it is supported by substantial evidence and whether proper legal standards were applied. The court may not decide facts anew, evaluate credibility, or reweigh the evidence, and must uphold the decision if substantial evidence supports it, even if the evidence could also support the claimant's position. Legal error warrants remand unless harmless.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	nonprecedential

PARTIES

Gregory Lee Boetticher v. Frank Bisignano, Commissioner of Social Security

TOPICS

judicial review of agency action

agency adjudication

administrative law

PRACTICE AREAS

Social Security

Administrative Law

Judicial Review of Agency Action

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the ALJ improperly relied on lay medical judgment rather than medical opinion evidence in assessing Boetticher's residual functional capacity.
2. Whether the ALJ's residual-functional-capacity finding regarding overhead reaching, handling, and fingering was supported by substantial evidence and adequately explained.

HOLDINGS

1. An ALJ's residual-functional-capacity determination need not be based on a physician's opinion consistent with the ALJ's finding; the dispositive inquiry is whether the RFC is supported by substantial evidence and results from application of proper legal standards.
2. The ALJ adequately explained and supported the RFC limitations by relying on the medical record and testimony, including preserved grip strength and range of motion, thenar atrophy, the carpal-tunnel diagnosis, reported dropping of objects, and the claimant's ability to perform activities involving his upper extremities.
3. The Commissioner's final decision denying Boetticher's SSI application should be affirmed because the ALJ applied proper legal standards and reached a decision supported by substantial evidence.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“The RFC determination “is an ‘administrative finding,’ and the final responsibility for determining an individual’s RFC is reserved to the Commissioner.”” (Discussion)

“We have previously rejected the argument that a residual functional capacity determination cannot be supported by substantial evidence unless a physician offers an opinion consistent with that of the ALJ.” (Discussion)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Boetticher alleged disability based principally on degenerative spine disease, fibromyalgia, bilateral carpal tunnel syndrome, right-knee impairment, and sacroiliitis. The medical record included imaging, treatment, injections, surgery for a right-knee meniscus tear, and examinations showing both reported pain and generally preserved strength, gait, and upper-extremity function. The ALJ found that Boetticher could perform light work

with restrictions, including frequent handling and fingering and occasional overhead reaching, and found him capable of returning to past work as a machine operator.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Boetticher protectively filed for SSI on December 19, 2022. His claim was denied initially and on reconsideration; following an administrative hearing, the ALJ issued a decision finding him not disabled on May 24, 2024, and the Appeals Council denied review on April 11, 2025. Boetticher filed this action on June 10, 2025, challenging the ALJ's residual-functional-capacity assessment. The magistrate judge recommended affirmance of the Commissioner's decision, subject to review by the assigned district judge upon specific objections.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Combs v. Commissioner of Social Security, 459 F.3d 640, 642-43 (6th Cir. 2006)
- Rogers v. Commissioner of Social Security, 486 F.3d 234, 241 (6th Cir. 2007)
- Biestek v. Berryhill, 139 S. Ct. 1148, 1154 (2019)
- Consolidated Edison Co. v. NLRB, 305 U.S. 197, 229 (1938)
- Jones v. Commissioner of Social Security, 336 F.3d 469, 476-77 (6th Cir. 2003)
- Mullen v. Bowen, 800 F.2d 535, 545 (6th Cir. 1986)
- Bowen v. Commissioner of Social Security, 478 F.3d 742, 746 (6th Cir. 2007)
- Rabbers v. Commissioner of Social Security Administration, 582 F.3d 647, 654 (6th Cir. 2009)
- Fleischer v. Astrue, 774 F. Supp. 2d 875, 877 (N.D. Ohio 2011)
- Shrader v. Astrue, No. 11-13000, 2012 WL 5383120, at *6 (E.D. Mich. Nov. 1, 2012)
- Schmidt v. Sullivan, 914 F.2d 117, 118 (7th Cir. 1990)
- Meece v. Barnhart, 192 F. App'x 456, 465 (6th Cir. 2006)
- Winning v. Commissioner of Social Security, 661 F. Supp. 2d 807, 823-24 (N.D. Ohio 2009)
- Harris v. Commissioner of Social Security, No. 1:14-cv-1212, 2015 WL 770340, at *19 (N.D. Ohio Feb. 23, 2015)
- Clifford v. Apfel, 227 F.3d 863, 870 (7th Cir. 2000)
- Weaver v. Secretary of Health and Human Services, 722 F.2d 310, 312 (6th Cir. 1983)
- Mokbel-Aljahmi v. Commissioner of Social Security, 732 F. App'x 395, 401 (6th Cir. 2018)
- Shepard v. Commissioner of Social Security, 705 F. App'x 435, 442-43 (6th Cir. 2017)
- Rudd v. Commissioner of Social Security, 531 F. App'x 719, 728 (6th Cir. 2013)
- Deskin v. Commissioner of Social Security, 605 F. Supp. 2d 908 (N.D. Ohio 2008)
- Guido v. Commissioner of Social Security, No. 13-cv-13520, 2014 WL 4771929, at *12 (E.D. Mich. Sept. 24, 2014)

- Carr v. Commissioner of Social Security, No. 23-CV-00187, 2024 WL 1556398, at *11 (N.D. Ohio Jan. 8, 2024)
- Winans v. Commissioner of Social Security, No. 5:22-cv-01793, 2023 WL 7622634, at *4 (N.D. Ohio Nov. 15, 2023)
- Fox v. Commissioner of Social Security, No. 5:23-CV-580, 2023 WL 7018362, at *8-9 (N.D. Ohio Oct. 10, 2023)
- Davidson v. Commissioner of Social Security, No. 3:22CV938, 2023 WL 5948122, at *4 (N.D. Ohio Sept. 13, 2023)
- Van Pelt v. Commissioner of Social Security, No. 1:19 CV 2844, 2020 WL 7769729, at *10-11 (N.D. Ohio Dec. 30, 2020)
- Watson v. Commissioner of Social Security, No. 25-cv-287, 2025 WL 2458765, at *5 (N.D. Ohio Aug. 27, 2025)
- Berkshire v. Dahl, 928 F.3d 520, 530 (6th Cir. 2019)
- Howard v. Secretary of Health and Human Services, 932 F.2d 505, 509 (6th Cir. 1991)
- Overholt v. Green, No. 1:17-CV-00186, 2018 WL 3018175, at *2 (W.D. Ky. June 15, 2018)
- United States v. Wandashega, 924 F.3d 868, 878-79 (6th Cir. 2019)

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