

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Gloria Castaneda v. Commissioner of Social Security

Castaneda v. Commissioner of Social Security, No. 1:22-cv-00467-CDB (SS) (E.D. Cal. Sept. 9, 2025) · No. 1:22-cv-00467-CDB (SS) · Decided September 10, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of California reviews the Commissioner of Social Security’s denial of Gloria Castaneda’s applications for disability insurance benefits and supplemental security income. The court grants Plaintiff’s motion for summary judgment, finds that the ALJ failed to provide specific, clear, and convincing reasons supported by substantial evidence for rejecting her symptom testimony, and remands for further proceedings.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Christopher D. Baker
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
DECIDED	September 10, 2025
DOCKET	1:22-cv-00467-CDB (SS)
DISPOSITION	reversed_and_remanded
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff sought judicial review under 42 U.S.C. § 405(g) of the Commissioner's final decision denying her applications for disability insurance benefits and supplemental security income. The parties submitted cross-briefs without oral argument.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court reviewed the Commissioner's decision under 42 U.S.C. § 405(g) and would disturb it only if it was unsupported by substantial evidence or based on legal error. The court reviewed only the reasons provided by the ALJ, did not substitute its judgment for the Commissioner's, and applied harmless-error principles.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unknown
PARTIES	Gloria Castaneda v. Commissioner of Social Security

TOPICS

judicial review of agency action

administrative law

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PRACTICE AREAS

Social Security disability

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QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the ALJ's residual functional capacity assessment adequately accounted for the limitations identified by psychological consultative examiner Dr. Pauline Bonilla.
2. Whether the ALJ provided specific, clear, and convincing reasons supported by substantial evidence for rejecting Castaneda's subjective symptom testimony.

HOLDINGS

1. The ALJ did not err by limiting Castaneda to simple and repetitive work with routine work-related decision-making because an RFC need only be consistent with, and need not be identical to, the limitations assessed in a medical opinion.
2. The ALJ erred by failing to identify specific, clear, and convincing reasons supported by substantial evidence for rejecting Castaneda's symptom testimony.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"The Court finds Plaintiff's argument persuasive and concludes the ALJ failed to provide clear and convincing reasons supported by substantial evidence for rejecting Plaintiff's testimony." (III.B)

"Accordingly, the ALJ did not identify specific, clear, and convincing reasons supported by substantial evidence for discrediting Plaintiff's symptom testimony." (III.B)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Castaneda applied for disability insurance benefits and supplemental security income, alleging disability beginning July 3, 2015. The ALJ found severe impairments including degenerative joint disease, obesity, minimal carpal tunnel syndrome, depression, and anxiety, but determined that Castaneda retained the residual functional capacity for medium work with physical and mental limitations and could perform jobs existing in the national economy. Castaneda testified to significant left-arm and back pain, headaches, and mental-health symptoms, while also reporting limited household activities, shopping, driving, and childcare with substantial assistance from her mother.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Castaneda filed Title II and Title XVI applications in 2017. The applications were denied initially and on reconsideration; following a hearing, the ALJ found her not disabled on February 16, 2021, and the Appeals Council denied review on December 16, 2021. The district court granted Castaneda's motion for summary judgment, reversed the Commissioner's decision, and remanded for further proceedings.

DISPOSITION

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

The Commissioner's decision was reversed and the matter was remanded for further administrative proceedings.

CASES CITED

- Hill v. Astrue, 698 F.3d 1153, 1158-59 (9th Cir. 2012)
- Tommasetti v. Astrue, 533 F.3d 1035, 1038-39 (9th Cir. 2008)
- Shinseki v. Sanders, 556 U.S. 396, 409-10 (2009)
- Tackett v. Apfel, 180 F.3d 1094, 1098 (9th Cir. 1999)
- Beltran v. Astrue, 700 F.3d 386, 389 (9th Cir. 2012)
- Bayliss v. Barnhart, 427 F.3d 1211, 1217 (9th Cir. 2005)
- Turner v. Commissioner of Social Security, 613 F.3d 1217, 1222-23 (9th Cir. 2010)
- Stubbs-Danielson v. Astrue, 539 F.3d 1169, 1173-74 (9th Cir. 2008)
- Vertigan v. Halter, 260 F.3d 1044, 1049-50 (9th Cir. 2001)
- Andrews v. Shalala, 53 F.3d 1035, 1039 (9th Cir. 1995)
- Orn v. Astrue, 495 F.3d 625, 635, 659 (9th Cir. 2007)
- Molina v. Astrue, 674 F.3d 1104, 1104, 1112, 1115 (9th Cir. 2012)
- Lingenfelter v. Astrue, 504 F.3d 1028, 1036 (9th Cir. 2007)
- Smolen v. Chater, 80 F.3d 1273, 1281-82, 1284 & n.7 (9th Cir. 1996)
- Treichler v. Commissioner of Social Security, 775 F.3d 1090, 1102 (9th Cir. 2014)
- Carmickle v. Commissioner of Social Security, 533 F.3d 1155, 1160-61 (9th Cir. 2008)
- Moisa v. Barnhart, 367 F.3d 882, 885 (9th Cir. 2004)
- Stewart v. Kijakazi, No. 1:22-cv-00189-ADA-HBK, 2023 WL 4162767, at *5 (E.D. Cal. June 22, 2023)
- Record v. Kijakazi, No. 1:22-cv-00495-BAM, 2023 WL 2752097, at *4 (E.D. Cal. Mar. 31, 2023)
- Wilson v. Berryhill, 757 Fed. Appx. 595, 597 (9th Cir. 2019)
- Smartt v. Kijakazi, 53 F.4th 489, 494 (9th Cir. 2022)
- Bray v. Commissioner of Social Security Administration, 554 F.3d 1219, 1226 (9th Cir. 2009)
- Bunnell v. Sullivan, 947 F.2d 341, 346 (9th Cir. 1991)
- Burch v. Barnhart, 400 F.3d 676, 680 (9th Cir. 2005)
- Reddick v. Chater, 157 F.3d 715, 722 (9th Cir. 1998)
- Hairston v. Saul, 827 Fed. Appx. 772, 773 (9th Cir. 2020)
- Garrison v. Colvin, 759 F.3d 995, 1015 (9th Cir. 2014)
- Moore v. Commissioner of Social Security Administration, 278 F.3d 920, 924 (9th Cir. 2002)
- Brown-Hunter v. Colvin, 806 F.3d 487, 493 (9th Cir. 2015)
- Dominguez v. Colvin, 808 F.3d 403, 407 (9th Cir. 2015)

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