

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY

Jennifer B. v. Commissioner of Social Security

Jennifer B. v. Commissioner of Social Security · No. 3:25-cv-00214 (MAS) · Decided January 22, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the District of New Jersey reviews Jennifer B.’s appeal from the Commissioner of Social Security’s denial of Disability Insurance Benefits. The court holds that the Administrative Law Judge’s evaluation of the medical opinion evidence and Plaintiff’s subjective complaints was supported by substantial evidence. The court affirms the Commissioner’s decision.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the District of New Jersey
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Michael A. Shipp
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the District of New Jersey
DECIDED	January 22, 2026
DOCKET	3:25-cv-00214 (MAS)
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff sought judicial review under 42 U.S.C. § 405(g) of the Commissioner of Social Security's final decision denying Disability Insurance Benefits.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court reviews the Commissioner's factual findings to determine whether they are supported by substantial evidence and may not reweigh the evidence or substitute its own conclusions for those of the fact-finder.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished, nonprecedential
PARTIES	Jennifer B. v. Commissioner of Social Security

TOPICS

- judicial review of agency action
- administrative law
- disability definition

PRACTICE AREAS

- Social Security disability benefits
- administrative law
- judicial review of agency action

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the ALJ adequately evaluated and explained the persuasiveness of chiropractor David Lesneski's medical opinions under the Social Security regulations.
2. Whether the ALJ adequately evaluated Plaintiff's subjective complaints and whether the finding that those complaints were not entirely consistent with the record was supported by substantial evidence.
3. Whether the Commissioner's denial of Disability Insurance Benefits was supported by substantial evidence.

HOLDINGS

1. The ALJ adequately evaluated Lesneski's opinions and reasonably found them not persuasive because the extensive limitations he identified were not fully supported by the objective findings and were inconsistent with other evidence in the record.
2. The ALJ's finding that Plaintiff's statements concerning the intensity, persistence, and limiting effects of her symptoms were not entirely consistent with the medical and other evidence was supported by substantial evidence.
3. The Commissioner's final decision denying Plaintiff's request for Disability Insurance Benefits was supported by substantial evidence and was affirmed.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“To survive judicial review, the Commissioner’s decision must be supported by substantial evidence.” (at 8)

“When weighing medical opinions in Social Security matters, administrative law judges must consider a range of factors, but all they must explain are the reasons for their decisions.” (at 9)

“It is, additionally, “not for this court to reweigh the various medical opinions in the record[,]” but instead “to determine] if there is substantial evidence to support the ALJ’s weighing of those opinions.”” (at 10)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff alleged disability based principally on lumbar and cervical degenerative disc disease and a history of left foot fracture with post-traumatic ankle osteoarthritis. The ALJ found those impairments severe but determined that Plaintiff retained the residual functional capacity for a restricted range of light work. The ALJ found that Plaintiff could not perform her past relevant work but could perform other jobs existing in significant numbers in the national economy, including folder, sorter, and cleaner.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff applied for Disability Insurance Benefits in September 2022, alleging disability beginning October 2, 2020, and later amended the onset date to September 1, 2021. The Administration denied the claim initially and on reconsideration; following a June 11, 2024 hearing, the ALJ denied benefits on August 15, 2024. The Appeals Council denied review, making the ALJ's decision final, and the district court affirmed.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- *Matthews v. Apfel*, 239 F.3d 589, 592 (3d Cir. 2001)
- *Richardson v. Perales*, 402 U.S. 389, 390, 401 (1971)
- *Morales v. Apfel*, 225 F.3d 310, 316 (3d Cir. 2000)
- *Consolidated Edison Co. v. NLRB*, 305 U.S. 197, 229 (1938)
- *Ginsburg v. Richardson*, 436 F.2d 1146, 1148 (3d Cir. 1971)
- *Laws v. Celebrezze*, 368 F.2d 640, 642 (4th Cir. 1966)
- *Rutherford v. Barnhart*, 399 F.3d 546, 552 (3d Cir. 2005)
- *Fargnoli v. Massanari*, 247 F.3d 34, 38 (3d Cir. 2001)
- *Zirnsak v. Colvin*, 777 F.3d 607, 610 (3d Cir. 2014)
- *Schaudeck v. Commissioner of Social Security*, 181 F.3d 429, 431 (3d Cir. 1999)
- *Cotter v. Harris*, 650 F.2d 481, 482 (3d Cir. 1981)
- *Hartranft v. Apfel*, 181 F.3d 358, 359 n.1, 360 (3d Cir. 1999)
- *Bowen v. Yuckert*, 482 U.S. 137, 146 n.5 (1987)
- *Malloy v. Commissioner of Social Security*, 306 F. App'x 761, 763 (3d Cir. 2009)
- *Zaborowski v. Commissioner of Social Security*, 115 F.4th 637, 638-39 (3d Cir. 2024)
- *Pyle v. Commissioner of Social Security*, No. 23-815, 2024 WL 4278291, at *1 n.1 (W.D. Pa. Sept. 24, 2024)
- *Joseph P. v. Commissioner of Social Security*, No. 21-13524, 2023 WL 1929945, at *5 (D.N.J. Feb. 10, 2023)
- *Tedesco v. Commissioner of Social Security*, 833 F. App'x 957, 961 (3d Cir. 2020)
- *Kelly v. Colvin*, No. 09-759, 2013 WL 5273814, at *10 (D. Del. Sept. 18, 2013)
- *Stephanie P. v. Commissioner of Social Security*, No. 21-12524, 2023 WL 2214179, at *4 (D.N.J. Feb. 24, 2023)
- *Tricia W. v. Commissioner of Social Security*, No. 24-11499, 2025 WL 3033994, at *6 (D.N.J. Oct. 30, 2025)
- *Chandler v. Commissioner of Social Security*, 667 F.3d 356, 363 (3d Cir. 2011)
- *Hoyman v. Colvin*, 606 F. App'x 678, 680 (3d Cir. 2015)

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