

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF MARYLAND

Marie B. v. Frank Bisignano, Commissioner, Social Security Administration

No. Civil No. 25-00345-CDA, United States District Court for the District of Maryland (March 30, 2026)

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the District of Maryland reviewed the Social Security Administration’s denial of Marie B.’s claims for Disability Insurance Benefits and Supplemental Security Income. The court held that the Administrative Law Judge inadequately explained the assessment of the medical opinions, subjective evidence, and residual functional capacity, preventing meaningful judicial review. The court denied both motions, reversed the Commissioner’s decision, remanded for further proceedings, and directed the clerk to close the case.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the District of Maryland
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Charles D. Austin
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the District of Maryland
DECIDED	March 30, 2026
DOCKET	Civil No. 25-00345-CDA
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 court denied both motions, reversed the Commissioner's decision, and remanded for further proceedings.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court reviews whether the ALJ's factual findings are supported by substantial evidence and whether the ALJ applied the correct legal standards. Substantial evidence is evidence that a reasoning mind would accept as sufficient to support a conclusion; it is more than a mere scintilla and somewhat less than a preponderance.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unpublished memorandum opinion; precedential status not stated in the opinion.

PARTIES

Marie B. v. Frank Bisignano, Commissioner, Social Security Administration

TOPICS

judicial review of agency action

administrative law

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PRACTICE AREAS

Social Security disability benefits

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QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the ALJ adequately evaluated the medical opinion evidence and explained the evidentiary basis for Plaintiff's RFC.
2. Whether the ALJ adequately considered the complete medical record, including conflicting evidence and Plaintiff's subjective statements, in determining disability.

HOLDINGS

1. The ALJ's RFC assessment was not supported by an adequate narrative explanation because the decision did not identify and reconcile the evidence supporting each limitation or build an accurate and logical bridge from the evidence to the RFC conclusion.
2. Remand is appropriate where the ALJ fails to adequately analyze functions that are critically relevant to determining the claimant's disability status and the deficiency frustrates meaningful review.
3. The Commissioner's decision could not be upheld because the ALJ's inadequate analysis prevented the court from determining whether the decision was supported by substantial evidence and reached through proper legal standards.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"The Court must uphold the decision of the SSA if it is supported by substantial evidence and if the SSA employed proper legal standards." (at 1)

"Thus, an ALJ must identify evidence that supports their conclusions and build an accurate and logical bridge from that evidence to their conclusions." (at 4)

"Because the inconsistencies and omissions between the ALJ's analysis and the RFC 'frustrate meaningful review' of the ALJ's decision, remand is appropriate." (at 6)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff alleged disability based principally on vertigo, migraines, pain, and mental impairments including depression, anxiety, dysthymic disorder, and related conditions. The ALJ found several severe impairments, assessed an RFC for a limited range of light work, and determined that Plaintiff could perform jobs existing in significant numbers in the national economy. In reviewing the record, the district court found that the ALJ did

not adequately address conflicting medical evidence, several providers' opinions, a consulting psychologist's evaluation, or the evidentiary basis for the RFC limitations.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff filed applications for DIB and SSI in July and August 2021, alleging disability beginning May 1, 2018. The claims were denied initially and on reconsideration. Following a March 19, 2024 hearing, an ALJ found Plaintiff not disabled on July 19, 2024; the Appeals Council denied review. The case was referred to Magistrate Judge Charles D. Austin with the parties' consent, and the court reversed and remanded under sentence four of 42 U.S.C. § 405(g).

DISPOSITION

reversed_and_remanded

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

The case is remanded to the Commissioner for further proceedings and further explanation consistent with the opinion, including adequate evaluation and reconciliation of the medical evidence, opinions, subjective statements, and RFC findings. The court expressed no opinion on the ultimate entitlement to benefits.

CASES CITED

- Craig v. Chater, 76 F.3d 585, 589 (4th Cir. 1996)
- Sims v. Apfel, 530 U.S. 103, 106-07 (2000)
- Kiser v. Saul, 821 F. App'x 211, 212 (4th Cir. 2020)
- Hancock v. Astrue, 667 F.3d 470, 472 (4th Cir. 2012)
- Coffman v. Bowen, 829 F.2d 514, 517 (4th Cir. 1987)
- Laws v. Celebrezze, 368 F.2d 640, 642 (4th Cir. 1966)
- Sterling Smokeless Coal Co. v. Akers, 131 F.3d 438, 439-40 (4th Cir. 1997)
- DeLoatch v. Heckler, 715 F.2d 148, 150 (4th Cir. 1983)
- Thomas v. Berryhill, 916 F.3d 307, 311 (4th Cir. 2019)
- Monroe v. Colvin, 826 F.3d 176, 188 (4th Cir. 2016)
- Dowling v. Commissioner of Social Security Administration, 986 F.3d 377, 387, 389 (4th Cir. 2021)
- Woods v. Berryhill, 888 F.3d 686, 694 (4th Cir. 2018)
- Mascio v. Colvin, 780 F.3d 632, 636 (4th Cir. 2015)
- Rodney G. v. Kijakazi, No. 22-3007-BAH, 2023 WL 6465436, at *4 (D. Md. Oct. 3, 2023)
- Mallett v. Berryhill, No. 18-241-D, 2019 WL 2932776, at *4 (E.D.N.C. June 17, 2019)

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