

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA, ABINGDON DIVISION

April A. Davidson v. Frank Bisignano, Commissioner of Social Security

No. 1:25CV00017, United States District Court for the Western District of Virginia, Abingdon Division (March 31, 2026)

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Western District of Virginia adopted the magistrate judge’s Report and Recommendation in a Social Security disability benefits action. The court denied April A. Davidson’s objection, accepted the recommendation to affirm the Commissioner of Social Security’s decision, and ordered that final judgment be entered.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Western District of Virginia, Abingdon Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	James P. Jones
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Western District of Virginia, Abingdon Division
DECIDED	March 31, 2026
DOCKET	1:25CV00017
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	The plaintiff sought judicial review of the Commissioner’s final decision denying disability insurance and supplemental security income benefits. After a magistrate judge issued a Report and Recommendation recommending affirmance, the plaintiff filed an objection. The district court conducted de novo review of the objected-to portions and denied the objection, accepted the Report and Recommendation, and directed entry of a separate final judgment.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The district court reviews objected-to portions of a magistrate judge’s report de novo under 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1) and Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 72(b). It must uphold the ALJ’s factual findings and final decision if supported by substantial evidence and reached through application of the correct legal standard, while ensuring that the ALJ

	builds an accurate and logical bridge from the evidence to the conclusions.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unknown; no precedential-status designation appears in the opinion.
PARTIES	April A. Davidson v. Frank Bisignano, Commissioner of Social Security

TOPICS

judicial review of agency action administrative law civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

Social Security administrative law civil procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the magistrate judge's Report and Recommendation should be accepted after de novo review of the plaintiff's objection.
2. Whether the Commissioner's denial of disability insurance and supplemental security income benefits was supported by substantial evidence and reached through application of the correct legal standard.

HOLDINGS

1. The Report and Recommendation was properly accepted because it accurately resolved the issues presented in the plaintiff's objection.
2. The Commissioner's final decision denying benefits was affirmed because the applicable review standard was satisfied and the magistrate judge correctly resolved the plaintiff's challenges.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Under the Act, I must uphold the factual findings and final decision of the administrative law judge (ALJ) if they are supported by substantial evidence and were reached through application of the correct legal standard.” (at 1)

“It consists of more than a mere scintilla of evidence but may be somewhat less than a preponderance.” (at 1)

“To pass muster, ALJs must build an accurate and logical bridge from the evidence to their conclusions.” (at 1)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

April A. Davidson sought disability insurance and supplemental security income benefits under the Social Security Act. The Commissioner denied her claim, and the plaintiff challenged that final administrative decision in the district court. The magistrate judge recommended affirming the denial, and the plaintiff's objection repeated the arguments she had presented to the magistrate judge.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The action was referred to Magistrate Judge Pamela Meade Sargent under 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1)(B) and Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 72(b). The magistrate judge issued a Report on September 8, 2025, recommending that the Commissioner's decision be affirmed. The plaintiff filed a timely objection on September 19, 2025; the Commissioner did not respond. The district court accepted the Report and Recommendation, denied the objection, and ordered that a separate final judgment be entered.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- Coffman ex rel. Estate of Coffman v. Bowen, 829 F.2d 514, 517 (4th Cir. 1987)
- Biestek v. Berryhill, 139 S. Ct. 1148, 1154 (2019)
- Laws v. Celebrezze, 368 F.2d 640, 642 (4th Cir. 1966)
- Arakas v. Comm'r, 983 F.3d 83, 95 (4th Cir. 2020)