

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

Jeffrey A. v. Commissioner of Social Security

Jeffrey A. · No. 7:25-CV-00511 · Decided March 30, 2026

SUMMARY

The document is a Report and Recommendation by a United States magistrate judge in a Social Security disability benefits appeal. It recommends reversing and remanding the Commissioner’s decision because the administrative law judge failed to adequately analyze the claimant’s ability to sit, stand, and walk and failed to build a logical bridge between the evidence concerning his depressive and anxiety disorders and the residual functional capacity assessment.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Western District of Virginia, Roanoke Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	C. Kailani Memmer
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Western District of Virginia, Roanoke Division
DECIDED	March 30, 2026
DOCKET	7:25-CV-00511
DISPOSITION	reversed_and_remanded
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Report and recommendation on a claimant's action seeking judicial review of the Commissioner's denial of disability insurance benefits.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court reviews whether the ALJ applied the correct legal standards and whether substantial evidence supports the factual findings. The court may not reweigh conflicting evidence, make credibility determinations, or substitute its judgment for the Commissioner's. Remand is appropriate when the ALJ's analysis is so deficient that it frustrates meaningful review.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	nonprecedential
PARTIES	Jeffrey A. v. Commissioner of Social Security

TOPICS

judicial review of agency action

agency adjudication

administrative law

PRACTICE AREAS

Social Security disability

administrative law

judicial review of agency action

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the ALJ adequately analyzed Jeffrey's ability to sit, stand, and walk before finding that he could perform light work.
2. Whether the ALJ built an accurate and logical bridge between the evidence concerning Jeffrey's depressive disorder and anxiety disorder and the RFC limitations.
3. Whether the Commissioner's denial of disability insurance benefits should be reversed and remanded under sentence four of 42 U.S.C. § 405(g).

HOLDINGS

1. The ALJ failed to perform an adequate function-by-function analysis of Jeffrey's ability to sit, stand, and walk, despite evidence contradicting the finding that he could perform light work.
2. The ALJ failed to build an accurate and logical bridge between the evidence concerning Jeffrey's severe depressive and anxiety disorders and the RFC limitations.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"With regard to functional limitations, the claimant reported difficulty lifting, squatting, bending, standing, reaching, walking, sitting, kneeling, climbing stairs, seeing, remembering things, completing tasks, concentrating, understanding, following instructions, and using his hands." (R. 34)

"I find the ALJ's statements on pages 37 and 38 are conclusions, R. 37-38, not logical bridges." (R. 38)

"Thus, I find the ALJ failed to build a logical bridge between the evidence about Jeffrey's depressive disorder and anxiety disorder and his conclusions, so I recommend that this case should be remanded." (R. 38)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Jeffrey A., born in 1969, applied for disability insurance benefits based on an alleged onset date of June 25, 2021. The ALJ found severe impairments including obesity, diabetes mellitus with neuropathy, adrenal insufficiency, hyperthyroidism, depressive disorder, anxiety disorder, liver disease, and lumbar spine spondylosis, but determined that Jeffrey retained the residual functional capacity for a restricted range of light work. The ALJ found he could not perform past relevant work but could perform jobs such as office helper, information clerk, and mail clerk. The magistrate judge focused on contradictions concerning Jeffrey's ability to sit, stand, and walk and on the ALJ's insufficient explanation connecting the evidence of depressive disorder and anxiety disorder to the RFC.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Jeffrey A. applied for disability insurance benefits, alleging disability beginning June 25, 2021. The claim was denied initially and on reconsideration; after an administrative hearing, the ALJ issued an unfavorable decision on August 20, 2024, and the Appeals Council denied review on May 29, 2025. The claimant then filed this civil action, which was referred to the magistrate judge under 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1)(B). The magistrate judge recommended that the Commissioner's decision be reversed and remanded under sentence four of 42 U.S.C. § 405(g).

DISPOSITION

reversed_and_remanded

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

On remand, the ALJ should conduct an adequate function-by-function analysis of Jeffrey's ability to sit, stand, and walk; explain how contradictory evidence is reconciled with the RFC; build a logical bridge between the evidence concerning his depressive and anxiety disorders and the RFC; address the plaintiff's remaining arguments; and re-evaluate the evidence as a whole.

CASES CITED

- Arakas v. Commissioner, Social Security Administration, 983 F.3d 83, 94-95 (4th Cir. 2020)
- Craig v. Chater, 76 F.3d 585, 589 (4th Cir. 1996)
- Biestek v. Berryhill, 587 U.S. 97, 103 (2019)
- Mastro v. Apfel, 270 F.3d 171, 176 (4th Cir. 2001)
- Mascio v. Colvin, 780 F.3d 632, 636 (4th Cir. 2015)
- Monroe v. Colvin, 826 F.3d 176, 188-90 (4th Cir. 2016)
- Cichocki v. Astrue, 729 F.3d 172, 177 (2d Cir. 2013)
- Dowling v. Commissioner of Social Security Administration, 986 F.3d 377, 387-89 (4th Cir. 2021)
- Johnson v. Barnhart, 434 F.3d 650, 654 n.1 (4th Cir. 2005)
- Heckler v. Campbell, 461 U.S. 458, 460-62 (1983)
- Oakes v. Kijakazi, 70 F.4th 207, 211 (4th Cir. 2023)
- Lewis v. Berryhill, 858 F.3d 858, 861 (4th Cir. 2017)
- Taylor v. Weinberger, 512 F.2d 664, 666 (4th Cir. 1975)
- Tracey H. v. Kijakazi, No. 4:20-CV-40, 2022 WL 731535, at *4 (W.D. Va. Mar. 10, 2022)
- Connie B. v. Kijakazi, No. 7:22-CV-00260, 2023 WL 3959922, at *7 (W.D. Va. June 12, 2023)
- Williams v. Berryhill, No. 1:16-CV-00064-MR, 2017 WL 927256, at *3 (W.D.N.C. Mar. 8, 2017)
- Inman v. Berryhill, No. 7:17-CV-182-FL, 2018 WL 7324920, at *4 (E.D.N.C. Nov. 29, 2018)
- Jennifer S. v. Bisignano, No. 5:24-CV-00071, 2025 WL 2388607, at *4 n.4 (W.D. Va. Aug. 15, 2025)
- Jennifer W. v. Kijakazi, No. 1:22-CV-01177, 2023 WL 2245635, at *5 (D. Md. Feb. 27, 2023)
- Henderson v. Kijakazi, No. CV AAQ-20-3346, 2022 WL 1555408, at *3 (D. Md. May 17, 2022)

- *Melissa B. v. Commissioner, Social Security Administration*, No. CV SAG-23-1917, 2024 WL 2304877, at *3 (D. Md. May 21, 2024)
- *Cook v. Berryhill*, No. 2:16-CV-85, 2017 WL 8895457, at *17 (N.D.W. Va. Dec. 27, 2017)
- *Besaw v. Kijakazi*, No. 1:23-CV-00001-MR, 2023 WL 8461178, at *4 (W.D.N.C. Dec. 6, 2023)
- *Mills v. Berryhill*, No. 1:16-CV-00025-MR, 2017 WL 957542, at *4 (W.D.N.C. Mar. 10, 2017)
- *Timothy F. v. Kijakazi*, No. 7:22-CV-174, 2023 WL 5733882, at *8 (W.D. Va. Sept. 5, 2023)
- *Jacob G. o/b/o G.G. v. Berryhill*, No. 7:18-CV-15, 2019 WL 1571286, at *7 (W.D. Va. Feb. 26, 2019)
- *Brown v. Berryhill*, No. 7:16-cv-00404, 2018 WL 1439602, at *3 (W.D. Va. Mar. 22, 2018)
- *Robin R. v. Commissioner of Social Security*, No. 4:24-CV-00026, 2025 WL 2702046, at *11 (W.D. Va. Sept. 23, 2025)
- *Dolly H. v. Kijakazi*, No. 2:22-CV-00573, 2023 WL 6174413, at *1 (S.D.W. Va. Sept. 22, 2023)
- *Woodington v. Kijakazi*, No. 2:20-CV-51-BO, 2022 WL 619808, at *2 (E.D.N.C. Mar. 2, 2022)
- *Spivey v. O'Malley*, No. 2:22-CV-16-FL, 2024 WL 333857, at *4 (E.D.N.C. Jan. 2, 2024)
- *Thomas v. Berryhill*, 916 F.3d 307, 311 (4th Cir. 2019)
- *Hancock v. Barnhart*, 206 F. Supp. 2d 757, 763 n.3 (W.D. Va. 2002)