

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF
INDIANA, SOUTH BEND DIVISION

Kortney G. v. Frank Bisignano, Commissioner of Social Security

Kortney G. · No. 3:25-CV-00051-SJF · Decided February 3, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Northern District of Indiana reviewed the denial of Kortney G.'s applications for Disability Insurance Benefits and Supplemental Security Income. The court held that the Administrative Law Judge adequately developed the record and supported the residual functional capacity determination with substantial evidence, and affirmed the Commissioner's decision.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Northern District of Indiana, South Bend Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Scott J. Frankel
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Northern District of Indiana, South Bend Division
DECIDED	February 3, 2026
DOCKET	3:25-CV-00051-SJF
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Judicial review under 42 U.S.C. § 405(g) of the Commissioner's final decision denying applications for Disability Insurance Benefits and Supplemental Security Income.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court determines whether the ALJ applied the correct legal standards and whether the decision is supported by substantial evidence. Substantial evidence is more than a scintilla but may be less than a preponderance. The court reviews the entire administrative record but may not reweigh evidence, resolve conflicts, assess credibility anew, or substitute its judgment for the ALJ's. The ALJ must adequately articulate the analysis so the reviewing court can trace the reasoning and determine that important evidence was considered.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished district court opinion; persuasive value only

TOPICS

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PRACTICE AREAS

Social Security disability

administrative law

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mental impairments and residual functional capacity

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the ALJ failed to fully and fairly develop the administrative record by not ordering an additional consultative psychological examination.
2. Whether the ALJ was required to disregard or treat as stale the state-agency psychological opinion because additional medical records were submitted after that opinion.
3. Whether the ALJ's decision denying benefits was supported by substantial evidence and applied the correct legal standards.

HOLDINGS

1. The ALJ did not abuse his discretion or fail to fully and fairly develop the record by declining to order another consultative psychological examination. The evidence was sufficient to support a decision, and the claimant did not identify ambiguity, missing specialized medical evidence, or other objective evidence requiring further development.
2. The later-submitted medical records did not render the state-agency psychological opinion stale or require remand because the claimant identified no new significant diagnosis or information that reasonably could have changed the opinion.
3. The Commissioner's decision was supported by substantial evidence and applied the correct legal standards; remand was not warranted.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“The question on judicial review is not whether the claimant is disabled; rather, the Court considers whether the ALJ used “the correct legal standards and [whether] the decision is supported by substantial evidence.””
(Section II.B)

“Without more from Ms. G to support her arguments, the Court cannot find that the ALJ needed to order another consultative examination or otherwise failed to develop the record.” (Section III.C)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Kortney G. alleged disability based on physical and mental impairments, including anxiety and depression. The ALJ found several severe impairments, including morbid obesity, spinal degenerative changes, chronic pain syndrome, and anxiety and depression, but found that none met or equaled a listed impairment. The ALJ assessed a sedentary-work residual functional capacity with additional physical and mental restrictions and determined that Kortney G. could not perform past relevant work but could perform other jobs existing in significant numbers in the national economy. The record included generally normal or unremarkable mental-status findings, treatment through the Bowen Center, and a state-agency psychological opinion based on the available evidence.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Kortney G. applied for DIB and SSI in April 2022, alleging disability beginning December 28, 2020. The applications were denied initially and on reconsideration. Following an August 17, 2023 telephone hearing, the ALJ denied benefits on November 28, 2023. The Appeals Council denied review on November 21, 2024, making the ALJ's decision final. Kortney G. filed this action on January 17, 2025; the parties consented to magistrate-judge jurisdiction, and the court affirmed the Commissioner's decision.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- Fast v. Barnhart, 397 F.3d 468, 470 (7th Cir. 2005)
- Clifford v. Apfel, 227 F.3d 863, 868 (7th Cir. 2000), as amended (Dec. 13, 2000)
- Elder v. Astrue, 529 F.3d 408, 413 (7th Cir. 2008)
- Roddy v. Astrue, 705 F.3d 631, 636 (7th Cir. 2013)
- Simila v. Astrue, 573 F.3d 503, 513 (7th Cir. 2009)
- Skinner v. Astrue, 478 F.3d 836, 841 (7th Cir. 2007)
- Richardson v. Perales, 402 U.S. 389, 401 (1971)
- Summers v. Berryhill, 864 F.3d 523, 526 (7th Cir. 2017)
- Biestek v. Berryhill, 139 S. Ct. 1148, 1154 (2019)
- Young v. Barnhart, 362 F.3d 995, 1001 (7th Cir. 2004)
- Lopez v. Barnhart, 336 F.3d 535, 539 (7th Cir. 2003)
- Scott v. Barnhart, 297 F.3d 589, 595 (7th Cir. 2002)
- Craft v. Astrue, 539 F.3d 668, 673 (7th Cir. 2008)
- Moore v. Colvin, 743 F.3d 1118, 1123 (7th Cir. 2014)
- Indoranto v. Barnhart, 374 F.3d 470, 474 (7th Cir. 2004)
- Briscoe ex rel. Taylor v. Barnhart, 425 F.3d 345, 355 (7th Cir. 2005)
- Campbell v. Shalala, 988 F.2d 741, 744 (7th Cir. 1993)
- Nelms v. Astrue, 553 F.3d 1093, 1098 (7th Cir. 2009)

- Poyck v. Astrue, 414 F. App'x 859, 861 (7th Cir. 2011)
- Timothy H. v. Kijakazi, No. 20 C 581, 2022 WL 4079433, at *3 (N.D. Ill. Sept. 6, 2022)
- Miranda M. v. O'Malley, No. 1:24-CV-00333-MPB-MKK, 2024 WL 5159611, at *7 (S.D. Ind. Nov. 27, 2024)
- Whitaker v. King, No. 24-CV-555-SCD, 2025 WL 501865, at *4-*5 (E.D. Wis. Feb. 14, 2025)
- Bakke v. Kijakazi, 62 F.4th 1061, 1066-67 (7th Cir. 2023)
- Thorlton v. King, 127 F.4th 1078, 1080 (7th Cir. 2025)
- Burmester v. Berryhill, 920 F.3d 507, 510 (7th Cir. 2019)

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