

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF CONNECTICUT

Gina B. v. Martin O'Malley, Commissioner of Social Security

Civil No. 3:24-cv-1883(RAR) (D. Conn. Mar. 27, 2026) · No. 3:24-cv-1883(RAR) · Decided March 27, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the District of Connecticut reviews the Commissioner of Social Security’s denial of Gina B.’s application for disability insurance benefits. The court denies the plaintiff’s motion to reverse or remand and grants the Commissioner’s motion to affirm, concluding that the administrative law judge applied the correct legal standards and that the decision was supported by substantial evidence.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the District of Connecticut
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Robert A. Richardson
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the District of Connecticut
DECIDED	March 27, 2026
DOCKET	3:24-cv-1883(RAR)
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff sought judicial review under 42 U.S.C. § 405(g) of the Commissioner's denial of Social Security disability benefits and moved to reverse or remand. The Commissioner moved to affirm.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court reviewed whether the Commissioner applied the correct legal principles and whether the decision was supported by substantial evidence. The Commissioner's factual findings were conclusive if supported by substantial evidence, and the court could not conduct a de novo disability determination, reweigh the evidence, or substitute its judgment for that of the ALJ.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished district court opinion
PARTIES	Gina B. v. Martin O'Malley, Commissioner of Social Security

TOPICS

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

PRACTICE AREAS

Social Security disability

administrative law

judicial review of agency action

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the ALJ's residual functional capacity determination was supported by substantial evidence and free of legal error.
2. Whether the ALJ improperly evaluated the medical opinion evidence under the supportability and consistency regulations.
3. Whether the ALJ failed to develop the administrative record by formulating the RFC without relying on additional treating-source opinions.
4. Whether the ALJ erred by failing to include limitations for off-task behavior, absenteeism, or the need to lie down in the RFC.
5. Whether hypothetical limitations posed to the vocational expert were binding on the RFC determination.

HOLDINGS

1. The ALJ's RFC determination was supported by substantial evidence and did not contain legal error; the court therefore declined to disturb the Commissioner's decision.
2. The ALJ properly evaluated the medical opinions under the applicable regulations by addressing supportability and consistency and reasonably explained why portions of some opinions were persuasive while other portions were not.
3. The ALJ did not fail to develop the record because the administrative record contained sufficient evidence from which the ALJ could assess Plaintiff's RFC.
4. The ALJ did not err by declining to include additional limitations for off-task behavior, absenteeism, or the need to lie down.
5. The ALJ was not required to include every limitation mentioned in a hypothetical posed to the vocational expert in the final RFC.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"She can understand, remember, and carry out simple instructions with occasional contact with the public, coworkers, and supervisors in an environment with occasional simple changes." (R. 36)

"The ALJ relied on sufficient medical evidence, including one medical opinion, which assessed Plaintiff to be functionally able to work light jobs." (R. 42-43)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff alleged disability from anxiety disorder, major depressive disorder, PTSD, fibromyalgia, and POTS, with an onset date of August 1, 2019, and a date last insured of December 31, 2021. The ALJ found that Plaintiff had not engaged in substantial gainful activity, had severe mental and physical impairments, and retained the residual functional capacity for light work with environmental, hazard, social, and instructional limitations. The

administrative record reflected generally conservative treatment, generally unremarkable physical examinations, a steady coordinated gait, and mental-health findings showing largely stable symptoms and intact or adequate cognitive functioning. The court concluded that substantial evidence supported the ALJ's evaluation of the medical opinions, symptoms, RFC, and vocational evidence.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff applied for Title II disability insurance benefits alleging disability beginning August 1, 2019. The application was denied initially and on reconsideration; following a November 9, 2023 administrative hearing, the ALJ denied the claim on December 21, 2023. The Appeals Council denied review on September 26, 2024. Plaintiff filed this action on November 26, 2024. The court denied Plaintiff's motion to reverse or remand and granted the Commissioner's motion to affirm.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- Zambrana v. Califano, 651 F.2d 842, 844 (2d Cir. 1981)
- Wagner v. Secretary of Health and Human Services, 906 F.2d 856, 860 (2d Cir. 1990)
- Johnson v. Bowen, 817 F.2d 983, 985 (2d Cir. 1987)
- Berry v. Schweiker, 675 F.2d 464, 467 (2d Cir. 1982)
- Schauer v. Schweiker, 675 F.2d 55, 57 (2d Cir. 1982)
- Williams ex rel. Williams v. Bowen, 859 F.2d 255, 258 (2d Cir. 1988)
- Richardson v. Perales, 402 U.S. 389, 401 (1971)
- Butts v. Barnhart, 388 F.3d 377, 383 (2d Cir. 2004)
- Bonet v. Colvin, 523 F. App'x 58, 59 (2d Cir. 2013)
- Veino v. Barnhart, 312 F.3d 578, 588 (2d Cir. 2002)
- Vanessa N. v. Commissioner of Social Security, No. 1:23-CV-00913 EAW, 2024 WL 4131242, at *5 (W.D.N.Y. Sept. 9, 2024)
- Brault v. Commissioner of Social Security, 683 F.3d 444, 448 (2d Cir. 2012)
- Bellamy v. Apfel, 110 F. Supp. 2d 81, 87 (D. Conn. 2000)
- Gina C. v. Commissioner of Social Security Administration, No. 3:21CV00423(SALM), 2022 WL 167922, at *10 (D. Conn. Jan. 18, 2022)
- Penfield v. Colvin, 563 F. App'x 839, 840-41 (2d Cir. 2014)
- Paul S. v. Kijakazi, No. 3:20-CV-1662 (AVC), 2021 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 253056, at *2 n.3 (D. Conn. Nov. 16, 2021)
- Patterson v. Commissioner of Social Security, No. 1:18-cv-0566 (WBC), 2019 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 161161, at *14 (W.D.N.Y. Sept. 20, 2019)

- Goettel v. Commissioner of Social Security, No. 18-cv-1285 (WBC), 2019 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 197768, at *9 (W.D.N.Y. Nov. 14, 2019)
- Pratts v. Chater, 94 F.3d 34, 37 (2d Cir. 1996)
- Echevarria v. Secretary of Health and Human Services, 685 F.2d 751, 755 (2d Cir. 1982)
- Swiantek v. Commissioner, 588 F. App'x 82, 83-84 (2d Cir. 2015)
- Martinez v. Berryhill, No. 3:17-cv-843 (SRU), 2019 WL 1199393, at *11 (D. Conn. Mar. 14, 2019)
- Guillen v. Berryhill, 697 F. App'x 107, 108-09 (2d Cir. 2017)
- Delgado v. Berryhill, No. 17-CV-54 (JCH), 2018 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 41745, at *23 (D. Conn. Mar. 13, 2018)
- Tankisi v. Commissioner of Social Security, 521 F. App'x 29, 34 (2d Cir. 2013)
- Angelica M. v. Saul, No. 3:20-CV-00727 (JCH), 2021 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 130889 (D. Conn. July 14, 2021)
- Holt v. Colvin, No. 16-CV-1971, 2018 WL 1293095, at *7 (D. Conn. Mar. 13, 2018)
- Langston v. Commissioner of Social Security, No. 21-CV-00723 (KAM), 2024 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 6204, at *32 (E.D.N.Y. Jan. 11, 2024)
- Taylor v. Commissioner of Social Security, 711 F. Supp. 3d 148, 161 (E.D.N.Y. 2024)