

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF
ILLINOIS, EASTERN DIVISION

Kajuan M. v. Frank J. Bisignano

No. 23 C 50426 (N.D. Ill. 2026) · No. No. 23 C 50426 · Decided March 17, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois reviews the denial of Kajuan M.’s applications for disability insurance benefits and supplemental security income. The court grants the claimant’s motion for summary judgment and remands the matter to the Social Security Administration because the ALJ did not adequately explain the residual functional capacity findings concerning the claimant’s left arm and hand limitations, including lifting, reaching, pushing, pulling, and handling. The court also identifies concerns regarding the ALJ’s treatment of the claimant’s visual impairment and declines to address the remaining arguments.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Jeffrey T. Gilbert
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division
DECIDED	March 17, 2026
DOCKET	No. 23 C 50426
DISPOSITION	remanded
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Claimant sought 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. The parties consented to magistrate-judge jurisdiction. The court granted Claimant's motion for summary judgment and remanded for further administrative proceedings.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court reviews the Commissioner's decision deferentially and must affirm if it is supported by substantial evidence, but the ALJ must build an accurate and logical bridge from the evidence to the conclusion and must provide enough explanation to permit meaningful judicial review.

PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished
PARTIES	Kajuan M. v. Frank J. Bisignano, Commissioner of Social Security

TOPICS

judicial review of agency action administrative law

PRACTICE AREAS

Social Security disability administrative law judicial review of agency action

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the ALJ supported the RFC with substantial evidence and adequately explained the restrictions included for, and omitted from, Claimant's left arm.
2. Whether the ALJ adequately considered evidence of Claimant's continuing left-hand limitations and explained why no handling or fingering restrictions were included in the RFC.
3. Whether the ALJ considered the combined effects of Claimant's severe and nonsevere impairments, including his left-eye visual impairment, in formulating the RFC.
4. Whether the ALJ adequately addressed vocational-expert testimony that additional lifting and reaching restrictions would preclude the identified jobs.

HOLDINGS

1. The RFC was not supported by substantial evidence because the ALJ failed to explain why the evidence of ongoing left-arm weakness and instability warranted the specific reaching, pushing, and pulling restrictions included in the RFC but no lifting restrictions.
2. Remand was warranted because the ALJ's reasons for rejecting evidence and testimony concerning Claimant's left-hand limitations were internally inconsistent and did not adequately explain why no left-hand-use restrictions were included in the RFC.
3. The ALJ was required on remand to consider Claimant's visual limitations and the combined effects of all medically determinable impairments, including impairments found nonsevere, when formulating the RFC and to explain whether any visual restrictions were warranted.
4. The ALJ was required to explain how he weighed or resolved the vocational expert's testimony that additional lifting and reaching restrictions would eliminate the identified light-work jobs.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"The ALJ therefore failed to build a logical bridge from the record evidence to the RFC." (R.28)

"In accordance with the fourth sentence of 42 U.S.C. § 405(g), the Court remands this case to the Social Security Administration for further proceedings consistent with this Memorandum Opinion and Order."
(Conclusion)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Claimant had a severe left shoulder condition involving Charcot deformity, recurrent instability, a rotator cuff tear, reverse shoulder arthroplasty, multiple dislocations, and two surgeries in late 2022. The record also contained evidence of left upper-extremity weakness, diminished sensation and reflexes, limited hand use, difficulty lifting and grasping, and curling of the fourth and fifth digits of the left hand. Claimant had congenital absence or blindness of the left cornea and testified to blurry vision and inability to drive. The ALJ found several impairments nonsevere and assessed light work with some left-arm restrictions but no lifting, hand-use, or visual restrictions.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Claimant applied for disability insurance benefits and supplemental security income, alleging disability beginning November 18, 2021. The applications were denied initially and on reconsideration. Following a hearing at which Claimant and a vocational expert testified, the ALJ found Claimant not disabled under the Social Security Act. The Appeals Council denied review, making the ALJ's decision the Commissioner's final decision. The district court remanded because the ALJ did not adequately explain the RFC's limitations concerning Claimant's left arm, left hand, and vision.

DISPOSITION

remanded

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

The Social Security Administration must conduct further proceedings consistent with the opinion. On remand, the ALJ must explain whether lifting limitations should be included in the RFC, reconsider the evidence and testimony concerning left-hand use, consider the combined effects of all impairments, consider Claimant's visual limitations, and explain whether visual restrictions should be included in the RFC.

CASES CITED

- Villano v. Astrue, 556 F.3d 558, 561-62 (7th Cir.)
- Zurawski v. Halter, 245 F.3d 881, 885 (7th Cir.)
- Gedatus v. Saul, 994 F.3d 893, 900 (7th Cir.)
- Richardson v. Perales, 402 U.S. 389, 401 (1971)
- Warnell v. O'Malley, 97 F.4th 1050, 1053-54 (7th Cir.)
- Eichstadt v. Astrue, 534 F.3d 663, 665 (7th Cir.)
- Berger v. Astrue, 516 F.3d 539, 544 (7th Cir.)
- Simila v. Astrue, 573 F.3d 503, 520 (7th Cir.)
- Yurt v. Colvin, 758 F.3d 850, 857 (7th Cir.)
- Gregory W. v. Saul, 2020 WL 4816075, at *5 (N.D. Ill. Aug. 18, 2020)
- Elizabeth F. v. Bisignano, 2026 WL 594780, at *2 (N.D. Ill. Mar. 3, 2026)

- Campbell v. Bowen, 822 F.2d 1518, 1523 n.6 (10th Cir.)
- Williams v. Colvin, 757 F.3d 610, 613 (7th Cir.)
- Golembiewski v. Barnhart, 322 F.3d 912, 918 (7th Cir.)
- Lothridge v. Saul, 984 F.3d 1227, 1233 (7th Cir.)
- RuthAnn G. v. Saul, 2021 WL 2349671, at *7 (N.D. Ind. June 9, 2021)
- Thomas-Edwards v. Colvin, 2014 WL 4794180, at *5-6 (N.D. Ind. Sept. 24, 2014)

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