

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF OREGON,
MEDFORD DIVISION

Jayson C. v. Commissioner, Social Security Administration

No. 1:25-cv-00168-YY · No. No. 1:25-cv-00168-YY · Decided March 20, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the District of Oregon reviews the Commissioner of Social Security’s denial of Jayson C.’s claims for Disability Insurance Benefits and Supplemental Security Income. The court holds that the Administrative Law Judge improperly evaluated the plaintiff’s subjective symptom testimony, lay witness testimony, and medical opinions, particularly in light of the plaintiff’s fibromyalgia. The Commissioner’s decision is reversed and remanded for further proceedings.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the District of Oregon, Medford Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Youlee Yim You
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the District of Oregon
DECIDED	March 20, 2026
DOCKET	No. 1:25-cv-00168-YY
DISPOSITION	reversed_and_remanded
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff sought judicial review under 42 U.S.C. § 405(g) of the Commissioner's final decision denying Disability Insurance Benefits and Supplemental Security Income. The district court reversed the Commissioner's decision and remanded for further administrative proceedings.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court must affirm if the Commissioner's decision applies proper legal standards and is supported by substantial evidence. Substantial evidence is more than a mere scintilla and means such relevant evidence as a reasonable mind might accept as adequate. The court must consider evidence supporting and detracting from the ALJ's conclusion, may not substitute its judgment for the Commissioner's where the evidence reasonably supports either outcome, and must uphold reasonable inferences drawn from the record.

PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished district court opinion; persuasive only
PARTIES	Jayson C. v. Commissioner, Social Security Administration

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 provided legally sufficient clear and convincing reasons for discounting plaintiff's subjective symptom testimony.
2. Whether the ALJ properly evaluated plaintiff's partner's lay witness testimony.
3. Whether the ALJ properly evaluated the medical opinions of consultative examiner Thomas Warren Roseland, CNP, and treating physician Nat Fondell, MD, under 20 C.F.R. §§ 404.1520c and 416.920c.
4. Whether the ALJ's residual functional capacity assessment included all limitations supported by the record.
5. Whether the record required remand for an immediate award of benefits or further administrative proceedings.

HOLDINGS

1. The ALJ failed to provide specific, clear, and convincing reasons supported by substantial evidence for discounting plaintiff's testimony about the intensity, persistence, and limiting effects of his symptoms.
2. The ALJ erred in rejecting plaintiff's partner's lay witness testimony because the ALJ provided no independent record-based rationale and relied on the same defective reasoning used to discount plaintiff's testimony.
3. The ALJ improperly rejected Thomas Warren Roseland, CNP's opinion as unsupported and inconsistent with the record.
4. The ALJ improperly rejected Nat Fondell, MD's opinion as unsupported and inconsistent with the record.
5. Further administrative proceedings, rather than an immediate award of benefits, were appropriate.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Because fibromyalgia is a rheumatic disease that causes inflammation of the fibrous connective tissue components of muscles, tendons, ligaments, and other tissue, it is diagnosed entirely on the basis of a patient’s reports of pain and other symptoms.” (Discussion § I)

“An ALJ may not single out (i.e., cherry-pick) isolated examples of temporary well-being or relief from disabling symptoms to reject testimony as being inconsistent with the medical record as a whole.” (Discussion § I.A)

“Delivering a medical opinion via checkbox form is not in itself a reason to discount a medical opinion.” (Discussion § III.C)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff alleged disability beginning May 5, 2019, based principally on fibromyalgia, inflammatory or rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, and several mental impairments. He described widespread pain, severe fatigue, insomnia, cognitive problems, limited walking and sitting tolerance, and symptom flares that required extended recovery. The record also documented fibromyalgia with 18 of 18 tender points, chronic pain, fatigue, and difficulty performing daily activities, although some examinations reflected normal strength, mobility, sensation, and neurological functioning. Plaintiff received limited treatment in part because medications caused adverse reactions and physical therapy was not covered by his insurance.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff's applications were denied initially and on reconsideration. After a November 21, 2023 hearing, the ALJ issued a decision on February 14, 2024, finding plaintiff not disabled. The Appeals Council denied review, and plaintiff filed this action. The district court concluded that the ALJ improperly evaluated plaintiff's subjective symptom testimony, his partner's lay testimony, and medical opinions from Thomas Warren Roseland, CNP, and Nat Fondell, MD.

DISPOSITION

reversed_and_remanded

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

The ALJ must reassess plaintiff's subjective symptom testimony, plaintiff's partner's testimony, and the medical opinions of Thomas Warren Roseland, CNP, and Nat Fondell, MD, and conduct any additional proceedings necessary to determine whether plaintiff is disabled.

CASES CITED

- Lewis v. Astrue, 498 F.3d 909, 911 (9th Cir. 2007)
- Biestek v. Berryhill, 139 S. Ct. 1148, 1150 (2019)
- Garrison v. Colvin, 759 F.3d 995, 1009-10, 1013, 1017-18, 1020-21 (9th Cir. 2014)
- Lingenfelter v. Astrue, 504 F.3d 1028, 1035 (9th Cir. 2007)
- Parra v. Astrue, 481 F.3d 742, 746 (9th Cir. 2007)
- Tommasetti v. Astrue, 533 F.3d 1035, 1038 (9th Cir. 2008)
- Smolen v. Chater, 80 F.3d 1273, 1281 (9th Cir. 1996)
- Dodrill v. Shalala, 12 F.3d 915, 918 (9th Cir. 1993)

- *Orteza v. Shalala*, 50 F.3d 748, 750 (9th Cir. 1995)
- *Thomas v. Barnhart*, 278 F.3d 947, 959 (9th Cir. 2002)
- *Tammy S. v. Commissioner of Social Security Administration*, No. 6:17-cv-01562-HZ, 2018 WL 5924505, at *4 (D. Or. Nov. 10, 2018)
- *Reddick v. Chater*, 157 F.3d 715, 722 (9th Cir. 1998)
- *Smartt v. Kijakazi*, 53 F.4th 489, 498 (9th Cir. 2022)
- *Revels v. Berryhill*, 874 F.3d 648, 657, 663-64, 666 (9th Cir. 2017)
- *Benecke v. Barnhart*, 379 F.3d 587, 590, 593 (9th Cir. 2004)
- *Hummel v. Kijakazi*, 2023 WL 7318492, at *1-2 (9th Cir. Nov. 7, 2023)
- *Rollins v. Massanari*, 261 F.3d 853, 855 (9th Cir. 2001)
- *Carmickle v. Commissioner, Social Security Administration*, 533 F.3d 1155, 1162 (9th Cir. 2008)
- *Trevizo v. Berryhill*, 871 F.3d 664, 680-81 (9th Cir. 2017)
- *Gamble v. Chater*, 68 F.3d 319, 321 (9th Cir. 1995)
- *Molina v. Astrue*, 674 F.3d 1104, 1111-12 (9th Cir. 2012)
- *Cooper v. Bowen*, 815 F.2d 557, 661 (9th Cir. 1987)
- *Orn v. Astrue*, 495 F.3d 625, 639 (9th Cir. 2007)
- *Lester v. Chater*, 81 F.3d 821, 833 (9th Cir. 1995)
- *Popa v. Berryhill*, 872 F.3d 901, 907 (9th Cir. 2017)
- *Dominguez v. Colvin*, 808 F.3d 403, 407-08 (9th Cir. 2015), as amended (Feb. 5, 2016)
- *Treichler v. Commissioner of Social Security Administration*, 775 F.3d 1090, 1100 (9th Cir. 2014)