

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF RHODE
ISLAND

Corrine B. v. Frank Bisignano, Commissioner of Social Security
Administration

Corrine B. v. Bisignano, C.A. No. 1:25-cv-00291-AEM (D.R.I. Feb. 5, 2026) · No. 1:25-cv-00291-AEM ·
Decided February 5, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the District of Rhode Island denied Corrine B.’s motion to reverse the denial of her claims for Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance and granted the Commissioner’s motion to affirm. The court held that substantial evidence supported the Administrative Law Judge’s residual functional capacity assessment, including the absence of a specific supervisor-interaction limitation and the assessment of the claimant’s ability to sustain a normal workday and workweek. Final judgment was ordered in favor of the Commissioner.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the District of Rhode Island
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Amy E. Moses
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the District of Rhode Island
DECIDED	February 5, 2026
DOCKET	1:25-cv-00291-AEM
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff sought judicial review under 42 U.S.C. § 405(g) of the Commissioner's denial of her applications for SSI and SSDI. The parties filed cross-motions, with Plaintiff moving to reverse or remand and the Commissioner moving to affirm.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court reviews the Commissioner's factual findings for substantial evidence and does not reweigh the evidence, resolve conflicts in the evidence, or substitute its judgment for that of the Commissioner. If the decision is supported by substantial evidence, the court must affirm.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished

PARTIES

Corrine B. v. Frank Bisignano, Commissioner of 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 adequately supported the RFC by omitting a specific limitation on Corrine's ability to interact with supervisors.
2. Whether the ALJ was required to make a separate express finding concerning Corrine's ability to complete a normal workday and workweek.

HOLDINGS

1. The ALJ adequately supported the RFC's absence of a supervisor-interaction limitation because the state-agency psychological consultants found Corrine not significantly limited in accepting instructions and responding appropriately to criticism from supervisors, and Corrine reported getting along very well with authority figures.
2. The ALJ adequately accounted for Corrine's ability to sustain work over a normal workday and workweek by relying on the state-agency psychological consultants' findings that she could carry out simple tasks for two-hour periods over a normal workday and workweek and was not significantly limited in sustaining an ordinary routine without special supervision.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“The Court does not reinterpret or reweigh the evidence or otherwise substitute its own judgment for that of the Commissioner.” (at 2)

“The ALJ’s RFC finding that Corrine was not limited in her ability to interact with supervisors is adequately supported by the consulting opinions as well as Corrine’s own representations and as such, must be affirmed.” (at 5)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Corrine is a 30-year-old high school graduate with major depressive disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, and posttraumatic stress disorder. The ALJ found that these conditions were severe impairments but determined that they did not meet or medically equal a listed impairment. The ALJ assessed an RFC for work at all exertional levels with specified physical and mental limitations, including limited public contact and superficial coworker contact, and found that Corrine could perform jobs existing in significant numbers in the national economy.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Corrine filed applications for SSDI and SSI on May 3, 2023. The applications were denied initially and on reconsideration. After an administrative hearing, the ALJ issued an unfavorable decision on May 1, 2024, and the Appeals Council denied review on April 14, 2025. Corrine filed this action on June 18, 2025. The court denied her motion to reverse and granted the Commissioner's motion to affirm.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- *Biestek v. Berryhill*, 587 U.S. 97, 103 (2019)
- *Consol. Edison Co. v. NLRB*, 305 U.S. 197, 229 (1938)
- *Frustaglia v. Sec'y Health & Hum. Servs.*, 829 F.2d 192, 195 (1st Cir. 1987) (per curiam)
- *Brown v. Apfel*, 71 F. Supp. 2d 28, 30 (D.R.I. 1999)
- *Brown v. Apfel*, 71 F. Supp. 2d 28, 30 (D.R.I. 1999), *aff'd*, 230 F.3d 1347 (1st Cir. 2000) (per curiam)
- *Thomas P. v. Kijakazi*, C.A. No. 21-00020-WES, 2022 WL 92651, at *8 (D.R.I. Jan. 10, 2022)
- *Tegan S. v. Saul*, 546 F. Supp. 3d 162, 168 (D.R.I. 2021)
- *Rodriguez Pagan v. Sec'y Health & Hum. Servs.*, 819 F.2d 1, 3 (1st Cir. 1987) (per curiam)
- *Wells v. Barnhart*, 267 F. Supp. 2d 138, 144 (D. Mass. 2003)
- *Thomas L. v. O'Malley*, C.A. No. 24-00195-WES, 2024 WL 4948805, at *7 (D.R.I. Dec. 3, 2024)
- *Emily C. v. Dudek*, C.A. No. 24-00324-LDA, 2025 WL 1263715, at *7 (D.R.I. May 1, 2025)

OPINION

Bisignano

PER CURIAM.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

FOR THE DISTRICT OF RHODE ISLAND

) Corrine B.,) Plaintiff,)) v.) C.A. No. 1:25-cv-00291-AEM) Frank Bisignano, Commissioner of
) Social Security Administration,) Defendant.))

MEMORANDUM AND ORDER

AMY E. MOSES, United States Magistrate Judge. Plaintiff Corrine is a 30-year-old high school graduate who suffers from severe impairments of major depressive disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, and posttraumatic stress disorder. ECF No. 7 at 23, 49. The Commissioner of the Social Security Administration (the “Commissioner” or “Defendant”) denied Corrine’s claims for Supplemental Security Income (“SSI”) and Social Security Disability Insurance (“SSDI”) under the Social Security Act (the “Act”), 42 U.S.C. § 405(g). ECF No. 7 at 21-32. With the consent of the parties, this case has been referred to me for all further proceedings and the entry of judgment

in accordance with 28 U.S.C. § 636(c) and Rule 73 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. Based upon my review of the record, the parties' submissions, and independent research, I find that there is substantial evidence in the record to support the Commissioner's decision and findings that Corrine is not disabled within the meaning of the Act.

I. PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Corrine filed applications for SSDI and SSI on May 3, 2023. ECF No. 7 at 21. Her claims were denied on June 29, 2023 (*id.* at 93-110) and on reconsideration on September 12, 2023 (*id.* at 115-30). Corrine requested an Administrative Hearing that was held on February 13, 2024 before the Administrative Law Judge, Paul Goodale (the "ALJ"). *Id.* at 43-92. At the hearing, Corrine was represented by counsel and testified on her own behalf; Vocational Expert ("VE") Jennifer Anken testified as well. *Id.* The ALJ issued a decision unfavorable to Corrine on May 1, 2024 (*id.* at 18-32) and the Appeals Council denied Corrine's request for review on April 14, 2025 (*id.* at 5-7). Corrine timely appealed by filing her Complaint on June 18, 2025, seeking to reverse the decision of the Commissioner. ECF No. 1. On September 11, 2025, Corrine filed Plaintiff's Motion to Reverse the Decision of the Commissioner. ECF No. 9. On September 19, 2025, the Commissioner filed Defendant's Motion to Affirm the Commissioner's Decision (ECF No. 11) and on October 3, 2025, Corrine filed Plaintiff's Reply in Support of Motion to Reverse or Remand (ECF No. 12).

II. STANDARD OF REVIEW

The Commissioner's findings as to any fact "shall be" conclusive if supported by substantial evidence. 42 U.S.C. § 405(g). Substantial evidence "means—and means only— 'such relevant evidence as a reasonable mind might accept as adequate to support a conclusion.'" *Biestek v. Berryhill*, 587 U.S. 97, 103 (2019) (quoting *Consol. Edison Co. v. NLRB*, 305 U.S. 197, 229 (1938)). The determination of substantiality is based upon an evaluation of the record as a whole. *Frustaglia v. Sec'y Health & Hum. Servs.*, 829 F.2d 192, 195 (1st Cir. 1987) (*per curiam*); *Brown v. Apfel*, 71 F. Supp. 2d 28, 30 (D.R.I. 1999), *aff'd*, 230 F.3d 1347 (1st Cir. 2000) (*per curiam*). The Court's role in reviewing the Commissioner's decision is limited. *Brown*, 71 F. Supp. 2d at 30. The Court does not reinterpret or reweigh the evidence or otherwise substitute its own judgment for that of the Commissioner. *Thomas P. v. Kijakazi*, C.A. No. 21-00020-WES, 2022 WL 92651, at *8 (D.R.I. Jan. 10, 2022), report and recommendation adopted by text order, (D.R.I. Mar. 31, 2022). Where the Commissioner's decision is supported by substantial evidence, the Court must affirm. *Tegan S. v. Saul*, 546 F. Supp. 3d 162, 168 (D.R.I. 2021); *Rodriguez Pagan v. Sec'y Health & Hum. Servs.*, 819 F.2d 1, 3 (1st Cir. 1987) (*per curiam*).

III. ALJ DECISION

The ALJ follows a five-step process in evaluating a claim of disability. See 20 C.F.R. §§ 404.1520, 416.920. The claimant bears the burden of proof at Steps One through Four, and the Commissioner bears the burden at Step Five. *Wells v. Barnhart*, 267 F. Supp. 2d 138, 144 (D. Mass. 2003). Here, at Step One, the ALJ determined that Corrine had not engaged in substantial gainful activity since

the alleged onset date of May 30, 2021. ECF No. 7 at 23. At Step Two, the ALJ found that Corrine’s major depressive disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, and posttraumatic stress disorder were severe impairments. *Id.* At Step Three, the ALJ first found that Corrine did not have an impairment or combination of impairments that met or medically equaled a Listing. *Id.* at 26. The ALJ determined that Corrine had the Residual Functional Capacity (“RFC”)¹ to perform a full range of work at all exertional levels. *Id.* at 28. The RFC contained the following non-exertional limitations: Corrine can frequently stoop, crouch, crawl, or kneel; frequently climb ramps or stairs; cannot climb ladders, ropes, or scaffolds; can perform simple, routine, repetitive work tasks involving only simple work-related decisions; can tolerate occasional changes in work 1 RFC is “the most you can still do despite your limitations,” considering “[y]our impairment(s), and any related symptoms, such as pain, [that] may cause physical and mental limitations that affect what you can do in a work setting.” 20 C.F.R. § 404.1545(a)(1). setting; cannot do production rate or pace work or assembly-line work in close tandem with coworkers at a pace that is outwardly set; and can do individual table or bench work. *Id.* In addition, the RFC stated that Corrine can have occasional contact with the general public and frequent but superficial contact—i.e., brief, perfunctory, routine interactions—with coworkers. *Id.* At Step Four, the ALJ found that Corrine was unable to perform any past relevant work. *Id.* at 33-34. Finally, at Step Five, the ALJ relied on the VE and considered Corrine’s age, education, work experience, and RFC in concluding that there are jobs that exist in significant numbers in the national economy that Corrine could perform. *Id.* at 34. The ALJ therefore concluded that Corrine is not disabled within the meaning of the Act. *Id.* at 35.

IV. ANALYSIS

On appeal to this Court, Corrine claims the ALJ erred as a matter of law by “failing to build a sufficient logic bridge” to the social limitations in the RFC—specifically, the lack of any limitations related to interacting with supervisors. ECF No. 9 at 2, 7. She also argues that the ALJ erred as a matter of law by formulating an RFC that did not consider her ability to complete a normal workday and workweek.² *Id.* at 2. The Commissioner moves to affirm the ALJ’s decision, arguing that the ALJ was not required to further explain why the RFC assessment did not limit Plaintiff’s ability to interact with supervisors, and that an ALJ can sufficiently account for a claimant’s ability to work a normal workday and workweek by relying on the state agency consultants’ findings. ECF No. 11 at 1-2. The Government notes that both of Corrine’s arguments are “boilerplate” and have been “squarely rejected” by this Court. *Id.* at 1. ² Corrine lays out two additional arguments in her “Statement of the Issues” but does not address them anywhere else in the Motion. ECF No. 9 at 2. A. Social Limitations Corrine argues that the case should be remanded because the ALJ did not account for any limitations in her ability to interact with supervisors, in contrast to the RFC’s limitations to “occasional” interactions with the general public and “frequent but superficial” contact with coworkers. ECF No. 9 at 7. This argument is based on the fact that in analyzing the Paragraph B criteria under Step Three, the ALJ found that the Corrine had a

“moderate” limitation in interacting with others. *Id.*; see ECF No. 7 at 26-27. However, “the paragraph B limitations ‘are not an RFC assessment but are used only to rate the severity of mental impairments at steps 2 and 3 of the sequential evaluation process.’ The moderate limitations the ALJ found simply do not translate into any specific RFC restriction or require a finding of disability.” *Thomas L. v. O’Malley*, C.A. No. 24-00195-WES, 2024 WL 4948805, at *7 (D.R.I. Dec. 3, 2024) (quoting 61 Fed. Reg. 34474) (cleaned up), report and recommendation adopted by text order, (D.R.I. Jan. 27, 2025). Corrine’s argument also ignores the findings of state agency psychological consultants’ Drs. Susan Killenberg, M.D. and Albert Hamel, Ph.D., who found that she was “moderately limited” in her ability to interact with the general public and get along with coworkers or peers, but “not significantly limited” in her ability to accept instructions and respond appropriately to criticism from supervisors. ECF No. 7 at 100, 123. Contrary to Corrine’s argument that the ALJ “fails to provide insight to why limitations related to interacting with supervisors were omitted” (ECF No. 9 at 7), the ALJ specifically cited to these findings when he deemed the assessments of the state agency psychological consultants persuasive. ECF No. 7 at 28. Corrine also self-reported getting along “very well” with authority figures. *Id.* at 261, 280. Corrine’s arguments on the ALJ’s evaluation of the record regarding her ability to interact with others improperly ask this Court to reweigh the evidence in a light more favorable to her. See *Thomas P.*, 2022 WL 92651, at *8. The ALJ’s RFC finding that Corrine was not limited in her ability to interact with supervisors is adequately supported by the consulting opinions as well as Corrine’s own representations and as such, must be affirmed. B. Workday and Workweek As noted by the Government, this Court has repeatedly dispatched with the boilerplate argument that the ALJ failed to assess a claimant’s ability to complete a full workday and workweek when formulating their RFC. ECF No. 11 at 6. By definition, the RFC finding “‘is an assessment of an individual’s ability to do sustained work-related physical and mental activities in a work setting on a regular and continuing basis. A “regular and continuing basis” means 8 hours a day, for 5 days a week, or an equivalent work schedule.’” *Thomas L.*, 2024 WL 4948805, at *8 (quoting 61 Fed. Reg. 34474). The ALJ relied upon the findings of the state agency psychological consultants Drs. Killenberg and Hamel, noting that they opined that Corrine had a moderate limitation in her ability to “complete a normal workday/workweek without interruptions from psychologically based symptoms and to perform at a consistent pace without an unreasonable number and length of rest periods” and could “carry out simple tasks for two-hour periods over a normal workday/workweek.” ECF No. 7 at 28; see *id.* at 100, 123. The consultants’ findings also included that Corrine was not significantly limited in her ability to “sustain an ordinary routine without special supervision.” *Id.* at 100, 123. The ALJ’s RFC finding is supported by the reports of the state agency medical consultants who necessarily consider “a claimant’s capacity to sustain work over a normal workday and workweek on an ongoing basis,” as “to do otherwise would, of course, provide no insight into a claimant’s actual functional capacity.” *Emily C. v. Dudek*, C.A. No. 24-00324-LDA, 2025 WL 1263715, at *7 (D.R.I. May 1, 2025) (citing *Social Security*

Administration's Program Operations Manual System, DI § 24510.057(B)(1)-(2), (4)).

V. CONCLUSION

For the reasons discussed herein, Plaintiff's Motion to Reverse the Decision of the Commissioner (ECF No. 9) is DENIED and Defendant's Motion to Affirm the Commissioner's Decision (ECF No. 11) is GRANTED. The Clerk shall enter Final Judgment in favor of the Commissioner. /s/

Amy E. Moses

AMY E. MOSES

United States Magistrate Judge February 5, 2026