

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF
ILLINOIS

Valorie Ann Childers-Bleier v. Commissioner of Social Security

Childers-Bleier · No. 25-CV-00096-SPM · Decided November 24, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Southern District of Illinois granted the Commissioner of Social Security’s motion for a sentence-four remand under 42 U.S.C. § 405(g). The court reversed the denial of Valorie Ann Childers-Bleier’s Disability Insurance Benefits and Supplemental Security Income claims, directing the Appeals Council to issue a favorable decision with an onset date of February 3, 2021 and to remand the earlier Disability Insurance Benefits period to an administrative law judge for further proceedings. The court directed the Clerk to enter judgment for the plaintiff and close the case.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Southern District of Illinois
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Stephen P. McGlynn
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Southern District of Illinois
DECIDED	November 24, 2025
DOCKET	25-CV-00096-SPM
DISPOSITION	reversed_and_remanded
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	The Commissioner of Social Security moved for a sentence-four remand under 42 U.S.C. § 405(g), and the parties stipulated to a favorable disability determination for part of the claims and further administrative proceedings for the remaining period.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	A sentence-four remand under 42 U.S.C. § 405(g) requires a finding of agency error and results in a final, appealable order.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unknown

TOPICS

- judicial review of agency action
- agency adjudication
- administrative law
- remedies
- civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the court should grant the Commissioner's motion for a sentence-four remand under 42 U.S.C. § 405(g).
2. What relief and administrative proceedings were required on remand for Plaintiff's DIB and SSI claims.

HOLDINGS

1. A sentence-four remand under 42 U.S.C. § 405(g) was warranted, and the Commissioner's final decision denying Plaintiff's DIB and SSI applications was reversed and remanded.
2. Upon a sentence-four remand, judgment should be entered in favor of the plaintiff.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“A sentence four remand (as opposed to a sentence six remand) depends upon a finding of error, and is itself a final, appealable order.”

“Upon a sentence four remand, judgment should be entered in favor of the plaintiff.”

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff filed concurrent DIB and SSI claims on August 27, 2021. The parties agreed that, on remand, the Appeals Council would find Plaintiff disabled as of February 3, 2021, while the period from June 10, 2020 through February 2, 2021 remained adjudicated or unfavorable. The parties further agreed that the remaining DIB period should be remanded to an ALJ for evaluation of the medical opinions, residual functional capacity findings, and any necessary additional vocational evidence.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff applied for concurrent Disability Insurance Benefits and Supplemental Security Income claims. An administrative law judge issued an unfavorable decision on July 3, 2023; the Appeals Council remanded on November 9, 2023; and the ALJ again found Plaintiff not disabled on July 25, 2024. In the district court, the Commissioner moved for a sentence-four remand, which the court granted, reversing the Commissioner's final decision and remanding with specified instructions.

DISPOSITION

reversed_and_remanded

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

The Appeals Council must issue a favorable decision on Plaintiff's DIB and SSI claims with an onset date of February 3, 2021, and remand Plaintiff's Title II DIB claim for June 10, 2020 through February 2, 2021 to an ALJ. The ALJ must evaluate the DIB claim for that unfavorable period, including the medical opinions and RFC

findings; obtain additional vocational expert testimony if warranted; take any further action necessary to complete the administrative record; offer Plaintiff an opportunity for a hearing; and issue a new decision.

CASES CITED

- Perlman v. Swiss Bank Corp. Comprehensive Disability Protection Plan, 195 F.3d 975, 978 (7th Cir. 1999)
- Shalala v. Schaefer, 509 U.S. 292, 302-03 (1993)

OPINION

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS VALORIE ANN CHILDERS- BLEIER, Plaintiff, v. Case No. 25-CV-00096-SPM COMMISSIONER OF SOCIAL SECURITY, Defendant. MEMORANDUM AND ORDER McGLYNN, District Judge: Before the Court is a Motion to Remand pursuant to sentence four of 42 U.S.C. § 405(g) filed by the Defendant Commissioner of Social Security.

(Doc. 28). Plaintiff Valorie Ann Childers-Bleier filed a Response. (Doc. 30). A sentence four remand (as opposed to a sentence six remand) depends upon a finding of error, and is itself a final, appealable order. See Perlman v. Swiss Bank Corp. Comprehensive Disability Prot. Plan, 195 F.3d 975, 978 (7th Cir. 1999). Upon a sentence four remand, judgment should be entered in favor of the plaintiff.

Shalala v. Schaefer, 509 U.S. 292, 302–03 (1993). Regarding Plaintiff’s concurrent Disability Insurance Benefits (“DIB”) and Supplemental Security Income (“SSI”) claims both filed on August 27, 2021, the parties agree and stipulate that, upon remand, the Appeals Council will issue a favorable decision finding that Plaintiff was disabled as of February 3, 2021 (the day prior to Plaintiff’s 55th birthday).

(See Docs. 28, 30). For the unadjudicated portion of Plaintiff’s Title II DIB claim from the time period of June 10, 2020 to February 2, 2021 (the so-called “unfavorable period”), the Appeals Council will remand that specific claim to an Administrative Law Judge for further proceedings. (See Docs. 28, 30).

On remand, the ALJ should evaluate Plaintiff’s Title II DIB claim for the unfavorable period, including any medical opinions and the RFC findings; if warranted, obtain additional vocational expert testimony; take any further action needed to complete the administrative record resolving the afore-mentioned issues; offer Plaintiff Childers-Bleier the opportunity for a hearing; and issue a new decision.

Plaintiff Childers-Bleier initially applied for DIB and SSI and received an unfavorable decision from ALJ Robert Luetkenhaus on July 3, 2023. (Docs. 1, 16). Plaintiff filed a timely Request for Review with the Social Security Administration’s Appeals Council, which remanded the decision back to ALJ Luetkenhaus on November 9, 2023. (Docs. 1, 16).

On July 25, 2024, ALJ Luetkenhaus once again issued a decision finding Plaintiff not disabled. (Docs. 1, 16). While recognizing that the agency has a full docket, the Court urges the Commissioner to expedite this case on remand.

Therefore, for good cause shown, the Defendant Commissioner's Motion to Remand (Doc. 28) is GRANTED. The final decision of the Commissioner of Social Security denying Plaintiff's application for Disability Insurance Benefits and Supplemental Security Income is REVERSED and REMANDED to the Commissioner; upon remand, the Appeals Council will (1) issue a favorable decision on Plaintiff's Disability Insurance Benefits and Supplemental Security Income claims with an onset date of February 3, 2021 and (2) remand Plaintiff's Title II Disability Insurance Benefits claim for the period of June 10, 2020 to February 2, 2021 to an Administrative Law Judge for rehearing and reconsideration of the evidence, pursuant to sentence four of 42 U.S.C. § 405(g).

The Clerk of Court is DIRECTED to enter judgment in favor of Plaintiff and to close this case on the Court's docket. IT IS SO ORDERED. DATED: November 24, 2025 s/ Stephen P. McGlynn
STEPHEN P. McGLYNN U.S. District Judge