

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF OREGON

Yolanda S. C. v. Commissioner of Social Security Administration

Yolanda S. C. · No. 2:25-cv-00482-JR · Decided March 16, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the District of Oregon reviewed the Commissioner of Social Security's denial of Yolanda C.'s applications for Disability Insurance Benefits and Supplemental Security Income. The court held that the ALJ failed to provide legally sufficient reasons for discounting the plaintiff's subjective symptom testimony and the opinions of her physician and mental health therapist. The court reversed the Commissioner's decision and remanded for the calculation and payment of benefits.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the District of Oregon
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Jolie A. Russo
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the District of Oregon
DECIDED	March 16, 2026
DOCKET	2:25-cv-00482-JR
DISPOSITION	reversed_and_remanded
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Action for judicial review of the Commissioner's final decision denying applications for Disability Insurance Benefits and Supplemental Security Income under the Social Security Act.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court reviews the Commissioner's decision for substantial evidence and legal error. An ALJ must provide specific, clear, and convincing reasons supported by substantial evidence to reject a claimant's symptom testimony when there is no affirmative evidence of malingering, and must adequately explain the supportability and consistency findings concerning medical opinions.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unknown
PARTIES	Yolanda S. C. v. Commissioner of Social Security Administration

TOPICS

judicial review of agency action

administrative law

remedies

PRACTICE AREAS

administrative law

social security

disability benefits

judicial review of agency action

remedies

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the ALJ provided legally sufficient, specific, clear, and convincing reasons supported by substantial evidence for discounting plaintiff's subjective symptom testimony.
2. Whether the ALJ properly evaluated the supportability and consistency of the medical opinions of Dr. Annika Maly and Anna Lembke, LPC.
3. Whether the case should be remanded for further administrative proceedings or for calculation and payment of benefits under the credit-as-true doctrine.

HOLDINGS

1. The ALJ erred by discounting plaintiff's subjective symptom testimony without providing specific, clear, and convincing reasons supported by substantial evidence.
2. The ALJ erred by finding Dr. Maly's physical residual-functional-capacity opinions unpersuasive without adequately supporting the findings regarding supportability and consistency.
3. The ALJ erred by finding Anna Lembke's opinions unpersuasive without substantial evidence supporting the conclusions that the opinions were unsupported or inconsistent with the record.
4. The credit-as-true standard was satisfied, and remand for calculation and payment of benefits rather than further administrative proceedings was appropriate.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Providing a summary of medical evidence in support of a [RFC] finding”— even a detailed one – “is not the same as providing clear and convincing reasons for finding the claimant’s testimony not credible.”

(Discussion § I)

“The Court concludes the credit-as-true standard is satisfied here and that remand for the payment of benefits is appropriate.” (Discussion § III)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff alleged disability beginning April 1, 2021, based on physical and mental impairments including fibromyalgia, degenerative disc disease, bilateral carpal tunnel syndrome, depression, anxiety, and PTSD. She testified that chronic pain, numbness, balance problems, and mental-health symptoms limited her ability to sit, stand, walk, use her hands, concentrate, and perform work activities. The record included imaging and electrodiagnostic evidence of spinal degeneration and bilateral median-nerve entrapment, as well as opinions from Dr. Annika Maly and therapist Anna Lembke describing disabling physical and mental limitations.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The ALJ denied plaintiff's applications after a March 28, 2024 hearing, finding at step five that she could perform a significant number of jobs in the national economy. The Appeals Council denied review, and plaintiff

filed this action. The district court reversed the Commissioner's decision and remanded for calculation and payment of benefits.

DISPOSITION

reversed_and_remanded

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

Remand to the Commissioner of Social Security for calculation and payment of benefits.

CASES CITED

- 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)
- Smartt v. Kijakazi, 53 F.4th 489, 499 (9th Cir. 2022)
- Thomas v. Barnhart, 278 F.3d 947, 959 (9th Cir. 2002)
- Lambert v. Saul, 980 F.3d 1266, 1278 (9th Cir. 2020)
- Dahl v. Commissioner of Social Security Administration, 2015 WL 5772060, at *5 (D. Or. Sept. 30, 2015)
- Ellefson v. Colvin, 2016 WL 3769359, at *6 n.5 (D. Or. July 14, 2016)
- Cortes v. Colvin, 2016 WL 1192638, at *4 (C.D. Cal. Mar. 28, 2016)
- Woods v. Kijakazi, 32 F.4th 785, 791-92 (9th Cir. 2022)
- Kevin R. H. v. Saul, 2021 WL 4330860, at *4 (D. Or. Sept. 23, 2021)
- Coleman v. Saul, 979 F.3d 751, 757 (9th Cir. 2020)
- Tommasetti v. Astrue, 533 F.3d 1035, 1041 (9th Cir. 2008)
- Benecke v. Barnhart, 379 F.3d 587, 589 (9th Cir. 2004)
- Rollins v. Massanari, 261 F.3d 853, 855 (9th Cir. 2001)
- Garrison v. Colvin, 759 F.3d 995, 1009, 1015, 1019-22 & n.28 (9th Cir. 2014)
- Trevizo v. Berryhill, 871 F.3d 664, 682 (9th Cir. 2017)
- Luna v. Astrue, 623 F.3d 1032, 1035 (9th Cir. 2010)
- Leitz v. Kijakazi, No. 22-35356, 2023 WL 4342114, at *3 (9th Cir. July 5, 2023)
- Hoffschneider v. Kijakazi, No. 18-15504, 2022 WL 3229989, at *3 (9th Cir. Aug. 10, 2022)
- Varela v. Saul, 827 F. App'x 713, 714-15 (9th Cir. 2020)
- Smith v. Saul, 820 F. App'x 582, 586 (9th Cir. 2020)