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Description of document: Department of Agriculture (USDA) records released in response to requests from Associated Press and other news media regarding the Shirley Sherrod situation, 2010

Requested date: 21-September-2015

Released date: 05-November-2015

Posted date: 30-November-2015

Source of document: Freedom of Information Act Request
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Room 428-W, Whitten Building
Washington, DC 20250-0706
Email: USDAFOIA@ocio.usda.gov

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United States Department of Agriculture

United States
Department of
Agriculture

November 5, 2015

Delivered via Electronic Mail

Office of the Chief
Information Officer

1400 Independence
Avenue SW
Washington, DC
20250

Re: Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request **2015-OSEC-05803-F**
Final Response

This is the final response to your September 21, 2015 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) FOIA Service Center (FSC). You requested a digital/electronic copy of the records released in response to requests from Associated Press (and other news media) regarding the Shirley Sherrod situation.

Your request has been processed under the FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552.

A search for responsive records was conducted in USDA's FSC. The search produced a total of two thousand eight hundred and sixty-four (2,864) pages. After review, the FSC determined that one thousand three hundred and fifty-five (1,355) pages are being released in their entirety. Fifty-eight (58) pages have been withheld in full; and portions of one thousand four hundred and fifty-one (1,451) pages have been withheld pursuant to FOIA Exemptions (b)(2), (b)(5) and (b)(6) as described below.

Internal Personnel Rules and Practices of an Agency
Exemptions 5 U.S.C. §552(b)(2)

Exemption (b)(2) of the FOIA exempts from mandatory disclosure records that are "related solely to the internal personnel rules and practices of an agency." In *Milner v. Dep 't of the Navy*, the Supreme Court emphasized, the "key word" in the exemption and the one word which "most clearly marks the provision's boundaries- is personnel." *Milner v. Dep 't of the Navy*, 131 S. Ct. 1259 (2011). The Supreme Court went on to state that one example of personnel rules and practices are activities involving "employee relations or human resources," which "concern the conditions of employment in federal agencies -- such matters as hiring and firing, work rules and discipline, compensation and benefits." *Milner*, 131 S. Ct. at 1265. In this instance, Ms. Shirley Sherrod's USDA vet results report was withheld under exemption (b)(2) since it pertains solely to employee relations and is a product of an internal human resources' search.

Inter-Agency or Intra-Agency Communication
Exemption 5 U.S.C. §552(b)(5)

FOIA Exemption (b)(5) protects from disclosure those inter- or intra-agency documents that are normally privileged in the civil discovery context. The three most frequently invoked privileges are the deliberative process privilege, the attorney work-product privilege, and the attorney-client privilege. After carefully reviewing the responsive documents, the FC has determined that portions of the responsive documents qualify for protection under the following privileges:

The Deliberative Process Privilege protects the integrity of the deliberative or decision-making processes within the agency by exempting from mandatory disclosure opinions, conclusions, and recommendations included within inter-agency or intra-agency memoranda or letters. The release of this internal information would discourage the expression of candid opinions and inhibit the free and frank exchange of information among agency personnel.

The deliberative process also protects pre-decisional materials. Pre-decisional materials are those prepared to assist an agency in arriving at a decision, and may include recommendations, draft documents, proposals, suggestions and other subjective documents which may reflect the personal opinions of the writer rather than the policy of the agency. The records withheld under this privilege include email communications and internal documents involving the resignation of Ms. Shirley Sherrod that detail both agency officials' reaction and immediate response to the situation, as well as officials' ongoing efforts to address and resolve the matter.

The Attorney-Client Privilege protects "confidential communication between an attorney and his/her client relating to a legal matter for which the client has sought professional advice." *Mead Data Cent., Inc. v. US. Dep't of the Air Force*, 566 F.2d 242,252 (D.C. Cir. 1977). Although this privilege fundamentally applies to facts divulged by a client to his/her attorney, this privilege also encompasses any opinion given by an attorney to his/her client based upon those facts, as well as communications between attorneys that reflect client supplied information. The records withheld under this privilege include email communications and records disclosed by agency officials to OGC, and other email communication that contain client-supplied information.

Personal Privacy Interests
Exemption 5 U.S.C. §552(b)(6)

FOIA Exemption (b)(6) permits the government to withhold information regarding individuals when the disclosure of such information "would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy" and where such privacy interests outweigh any

FOIA #2015-OSEC-05803-F

public interest which would be advanced by the disclosure of their contact information. To make this determination, we are required to perform a balancing test. In a balancing test, the agency weighs the individual's right to privacy against the public's right to disclosure. In this instance, we have determined that the disclosure of agency officials' personal email accounts, certain government email addresses, personal telephone numbers, cellular telephone numbers would shed no light on the performance of the agency's statutory obligations or operations and therefore the interest to be served by disclosure does not outweigh the privacy interest of the individuals in question. Therefore, this information has been redacted in numerous documents. We have also redacted discussions involving an employee's family health matter, as well as Ms. Sherrod's personally identifiable information and vet report results as they do not serve any public interest.

You have the right to appeal this determination. Should you wish to do so, you must send your appeal, within 45 days from the date of this letter, to: Assistant Secretary for Administration, USDA, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Whitten Building 209-A, Washington, D.C. 20250-0103. Your envelope and letter should be marked "FOIA Appeal." Copies of the FOIA and USDA regulations are available at www.dm.usda.gov/foia.

Provisions of the FOIA allow us to recover part of the cost of complying with your request. In this instance, because the cost is below the \$25 minimum, there is no charge.¹

If you have any questions regarding the processing of this request, please contact Department FOIA Team Lead, Marqui Barnes at (202) 694-1802 or electronically at marqui.barnes@ocio.usda.gov or USDAFOIA@ocio.usda.gov. Please reference FOIA case number 2015-OSEC-05803-F.

The FSC Team appreciates the opportunity to assist you in this matter.

Sincerely,



Marqui Barnes
Department FOIA Team Lead
FOIA Service Center

Enclosure(s): CD – Responsive records (2,864 pgs.)

¹ 7 CFR § 1.18.

TJV

From: Tonsager, Dallas
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:31 PM
To: TJV

Mr. Secretary

I had tried you earlier today on a different email address which failed.

I am shocked by the comments made by State Director Shirley Sherrod and posted on the internet. She was immediately suspended and my understanding is she has resigned.

Dallas

TJV

From: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:51 PM
To: Exemption (b)(6)
Cc: Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Subject: Fw: Shirley Sherrod

Mr Secretary
Not sure you received the original from Dallas regarding the story being carried today.
Karen Ross
Chief of Staff
Office of the Secretary

From: Tonsager, Dallas
To: Exemption (b)(6)
Cc: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:04:06 2010
Subject: Shirley Sherrod

Dear Mr. Secretary

We have just seen the video of Georgia State Director Shirley Sherrod and are deeply disturbed. Cheryl has put her on administrative leave pending a full investigation. Of course, the video suggests that this is about a farm loan, and those programs were transferred to the Farm Service Agency in 1995.

Shirley explained to Cheryl that this piece of tape shows only one small part of a longer story she told of her personal transformation beyond race, and is about a farmer who came to see her in 1986 when she was working as a farm advocate. The rest of the story apparently explains how she came to assist this farmer and many other white farmers during this time period. She said there is a copy of the entire speech, and Cheryl asked her to provide it as quickly as possible.

Dallas and Cheryl

Dallas Tonsager | Under Secretary

Rural Development

U.S. Department of Agriculture

1400 Independence Ave., S.W. | Washington, D.C. 20250

Phone: 202.720.4581 | Fax: 202.720.2080

www.rurdev.usda.gov

TJV

From: TJV
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:22 AM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Mather, Chris
Subject: Today

I would like an email to every employee at USDA that reaffirms our commitment to a USDA that has no tolerance for discrimination in any form by anyone. I also want to remind every employee that as a USDA employee they have a unique and important individual responsibility to represent USDA well in all their official actions, statements, and public presentations and that all of us are held to a high standard. You may have to explain in the email what happened yesterday in general terms to provide a context for this email. If doing an email is cumbersome I suggest at a minimum a prominent web posting.

TV

TJV

From: TJV
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:37 PM
To: Tonsager, Dallas
Subject: Re:

Dallas - she has offered her resignation which is appropriate.

Exemption (b)(5)

Exemption (b)(5)

TV

----- Original Message -----

From: Tonsager, Dallas
To: TJV
Sent: Mon Jul 19 17:30:47 2010
Subject:

Mr. Secretary

I had tried you earlier today on a different email address which failed.

I am shocked by the comments made by State Director Shirley Sherrod and posted on the internet. She was immediately suspended and my understanding is she has resigned.

Dallas

TJV

From: Kamerri
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:34 PM
To: Exemption (b)(6)
Subject: Just called

Apparently I missed a change in your number - probably happened long ago since I call so rarely.

I wanted you to know that Chad is heading into the office now to access the email Shirley copied to our public email accounts Thursday night and send it to Malcolm, Carole, and Kevin. I was made aware of the email late afternoon today, but my focus at the time was the safety of Cheryl Cook, since she is in this very publically and has no security. On that note, she is home safely now, the state police are aware of the controversy and have driven by her home a few times, I have given her my parking space on the apron, and our security officers know to keep a watchful eye.

Call me if there is anything I can do. Embarrassed to admit, I sleep with my backberry so I am always reachable.

Kathleen A. Merrigan Deputy Secretary USDA

TJV

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:51 PM
To: Exemption (b)(6); Harden, Krysta
Subject: Fw: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA
202-409-7911

From: Maisel, Chad
To: Eve, Malcolm; Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 21:40:38 2010
Subject: FW: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet
Email train from 7/15 with DS' public account (Exemption (b)(6)) cced

From: Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Thursday, July 15, 2010 7:07 PM
To: Exemption (b)(6)
Cc: Exemption (b)(6); Merrigan, Kathleen
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

My words were taken out of context. I told about something that happened in 1986 when I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm. When so many black farmers were losing their. My point was that I initially did not do all that I could but in the process realized it was not about black versus white but about poor people or those who have versus those who do not.

If they will use all that I said you see that I talked about what I did to save that white farmers farm and from there went to help hundreds of other white farmers

I use the story to try to get people to move beyond race and work together

I feel deeply hurt that someone would take my words out of context and try to make them mean something else

My record of work for others for 45 years will show my love for people and for fairness

Shirley Sherrod

Sent using BlackBerry

From: George Ko - Exemption (b)(6)
To: Sherrod, Shirley - Athens, GA
Cc: Exemption (b)(6); Merrigan, Kathleen (OSEC); Exemption (b)(6); Thomas, Donnie - Athens, GA
Sent: Thu Jul 15 15:33:41 2010
Subject: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Dear Ms. Sherrod:

I recently came across a video of your speech at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet in Douglas Coffee County, GA: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=62hPa37v2J4>

In the video, you stated that you did not help a white farmer with the "full force of what [you] could do" when he sought your help. From the context of your speech, you seem to imply that the "amount" of help you provided was due to the color of his skin (white) and because of your sympathy and preference for black farmers.

Are your comments and the context of the comments in your speech correct? As Georgia's USDA Rural Development State Director, do you believe your comments were appropriate?

Thank you,

George Ko

--

George Ko

Exemption (b)(6)

TJV

From: The Office of the Secretary
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:14 PM
To: ALL-USDA-2K
Subject: Message from Secretary Vilsack

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250**

Dear employee:

Some of you may have seen the news stories about USDA today. I want to reiterate my commitment and that of the leadership at USDA to civil rights. We all must work to ensure that we are treating our customers and employees equally and fairly and we all should have zero tolerance for discrimination.

I also want to remind all of you that you have a unique and important individual responsibility to represent this sentiment in your official actions, statements, and public presentations. We are lucky to have the opportunity to work for the American people and we owe it to them to instill confidence in our leadership. Our words and actions matter.

We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and I thank you for your service and efforts to achieve this goal,

Secretary Vilsack

TJV

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 10:50 PM
To: Exemption (b)(6)
Cc: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole
Subject: Pending Press Stories

We sent our statement re Sherrod to FOX and CNN tonight per their request. FOX included it in story. Wonkette has posted something and AP TV put together piece but so far, pick up minimal after FOX.

We sent state by state releases on migratory effort this afternoon. So far, no questions.
Chris Mather

TJV

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:08 AM
To: [Redacted] Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: Re: Jackson Lewis

Will do. Meeting with Pearlie at 8:30.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

[Redacted] Exemption b6

----- Original Message -----

From: TJV
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:31:52 2010
Subject: Jackson Lewis

We need to make sure that the report forthcoming from Jackson Lewis make sure recommendations are inclusive in addressing all discriminatory actions of all kinds and all aspects.

TV

TJV

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:10 AM
To: Exemption b6 (b)(6); Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Mather, Chris
Subject: Re: Today

Will work with Mather on it this am.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption b6 (b)(6)

----- Original Message -----

From: TJV
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Mather, Chris
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:21:30 2010
Subject: Today

I would like an email to every employee at USDA that reaffirms our commitment to a USDA that has no tolerance for discrimination in any form by anyone. I also want to remind every employee that as a USDA employee they have a unique and important individual responsibility to represent USDA well in all their official actions, statements, and public presentations and that all of us are held to a high standard. You may have to explain in the email what happened yesterday in general terms to provide a context for this email. If doing an email is cumbersome I suggest at a minimum a prominent web posting.

TV

TJV

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:18 AM
To: Exemption (b)(6)
Subject: FW: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

Importance: High

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Mather, Chris
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:08:20 2010
Subject: Fw: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

CNN American Morning talked to Sherrod. Transcript below.
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:46:21 2010
Subject: Fw: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

Rest of the transcript.

I'm trying to see if I can find the clip online. Esp interested in hearing the full response from this response-

Shirley Sherrod: IF I TRIED TO FIGHT IT AND DIDN'T HAVE ANY SUPPORT FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, WHAT -- WHAT.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture

Exs (b)(2), (b)(6)

From: Kaplan, Karrah
To: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:37:13 2010
Subject: FW: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

updated

From: McCandless, Brittany
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:37 AM

To: Kraft, James; Dalberto, Emily; Manning, Regina; Kaplan, Karrah
Subject: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

MISSING PART BELOW IN RED:

American Morning transcript

Kiran Chetry and **John Roberts** interview **Shirley Sherrod**, a black Agriculture Department employee, who resigned Monday after conservative media outlets aired a video of her telling an audience she had not given a white farmer "the full force of what I could do" to help him save the family farm. She says the charges of racism are wrong

MISSING PART BELOW IN RED:

Kiran Chetry: THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ACCEPTS THE RESIGNATION OF AN EMPLOYEE AFTER A VIDEO SURFACED SHOWING HER TELLING AN AUDIENCE THAT SHE WITHHELD ASSISTANCE TO A WHITE FARMER BECAUSE OF HIS RACE. LET'S LISTEN TO WHAT SHE TOLD THE NAACP. DOES THAT VIDEO TELL THE WHOLE STORY? JOINING US NOW ON THE PHONE FROM ALBANY, GEORGIA, SHERRI SHERROD HERSELF. THANKS FOR BEING WITH US THIS MORNING, SHIRLEY.

Shirley Sherrod: THANK YOU.

Kiran Chetry: YOU SAY THIS WAS PART OF THE STORY AND THAT IT WAS PART THAT WAS SPLICED ENOUGH TO SHOW YOU IN A BAD LIGHT, THAT THIS ISN'T THE WHOLE STORY. WILL YOU FINISH FOR US HOW THIS ENDED?

Shirley Sherrod: OKAY. I WAS SPEAKING TO THAT GROUP LIKE I'VE DONE MANY GROUPS AND I TELL THEM ABOUT A TIME WHEN I THOUGHT THE ISSUE WAS RACE AND RACE ONLY. AND I TELL THEM THE STORY OF HOW I WORKED WITH A WHITE FARMER BACK IN 1986. I WAS NOT WORKING FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE. I WAS WORKING WITH AND NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION ASSISTING FARMERS THROUGHOUT SOUTH GEORGIA AND THE SOUTHEAST. AND THIS FARMER CAME TO ME FOR HELP. I WAS TELLING THE STORY ABOUT HOW WORKING WITH HIM HELPED ME TO SEE THAT THE ISSUE IS NOT ABOUT RACE, IT'S ABOUT THOSE WHO HAVE VERSUS THOSE WHO DO NOT HAVE. AND I TELL HOW I TOOK HIM TO A LAWYER WHO I THOUGHT WOULD HELP HIM. IN THE END, THAT LAWYER DIDN'T. IN THE END, I HAD TO FRANTICLY LOOK FOR A LAWYER BECAUSE WHEN USDA LIFTED -- I'M SORRY. WHEN THE COURTS LIFTED THE INJUNCTION AGAINST USDA IN MAY OF 1987, THIS WHITE FARMER WAS 1 OF 13 THAT WAS FORECLOSED ON BY THE STATE OF GEORGIA. I HAD TO FRANTICLY FIND A LAWYER WHO WOULD FILE A CHAPTER 11 TO STOP THE FORECLOSURE. HE COULDN'T -- AT THAT TIME WE HAD UP TO 12 --

Kiran Chetry: BUT LET ME SAID -- YOU SAID YOU DIDN'T KNOW ENOUGH, DIDN'T GIVE HIM THE FULL FORCE OF WHAT YOU COULD DO. YOU SAID YOU REFERRED HIM TO THE LAWYER WHO WAS WHITE AND PERHAPS HE COULD HELP HIM. WHAT DID YOU MEAN BY THAT?

Shirley Sherrod: WHAT I MEANT WAS, I DIDN'T KNOW ANYONE ELSE, I DIDN'T KNOW ANOTHER LAWYER AT THAT TIME WHO WAS LOCAL, WHO KNEW SOMETHING ABOUT CHAPTER 12. BUT I THOUGHT IF I TOOK HIM TO A WHITE LAWYER, HE WOULD DEFINITELY DO ALL THAT HE COULD TO HELP SAVE HIS FARM.

John Roberts: MS. SHERROD LET'S MAKE IT CLEAR THOUGH. THIS HAPPENED 24 YEARS AGO. YOU EVENTUALLY WORKED WITH THIS WHITE FARMER, YOU EVENTUALLY BECAME FRIENDS, YOU SAY, WITH THE FARMER AND HIS WIFE. SO THE QUESTION I HAVE IS, WHEN THE US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE CAME TO YOU AND SAID YOU HAVE TO STEP DOWN, WHY DIDN'T YOU JUST SAY WAIT A MINUTE, YOU DON'T KNOW THE FULL STORY, HERE'S THE FULL STORY, WHY SHOULD I STEP DOWN?

Shirley Sherrod: I DID SAY THAT. BUT THEY FOR SOME REASON, THE STUFF THAT FOX AND THE TEA PARTY DOES IS SCARING THE ADMINISTRATION. I TOLD... I TOLD THEM GET THE WHOLE TAPE AND LOOK AT HOW I TELL PEOPLE WE HAVE TO GET BEYOND RACE AND START WORKING TOGETHER.

John Roberts: I THINK THAT MANY PEOPLE AT HOME MIGHT BE THINKING, IF YOU'RE RECOUNTING AN OLD STORY, WHY DID YOU SUCCUMB TO PRESSURE TO STEP DOWN, WHY DIDN'T YOU TRY TO FIGHT THIS?

Shirley Sherrod: IF I TRIED TO FIGHT IT AND DIDN'T HAVE ANY SUPPORT FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, WHAT -- WHAT.

Kiran Chetry: BEN JEALOUS REFERRED TO YOU AND THIS SURFACING OF THE TAPE, "HER ACTIONS WERE SHAMEFUL. WHILE SHE WENT ON TO EXPLAIN IN THE STORY, SHE ULTIMATELY REALIZED HER MISTAKE AS WELL AS THE COMMON PREDICAMENT OF WORKING PEOPLE OF ALL RACES. SHE GAVE NO INDICATION SHE HAD ATTEMPTED TO RIGHT THE WRONG SHE HAD DONE TO THIS MAN." AND THE REACTION FROM MANY IN THE AUDIENCE IS DISTURBING. THIS IS FROM BEN JEALOUS. DID YOU TRY TO CLARIFY WITH THE NAACP YOUR STORY?

Shirley Sherrod: NO, I HAVEN'T HAD A CHANCE TO TALK TO ANYONE. ALL OF THIS WAS HAPPENING SO FAST. AND IT'S UNFORTUNATE THAT THE NAACP WOULD MAKE A STATEMENT WITHOUT EVEN CHECKING TO SEE WHAT HAPPENED. THIS WAS 24 YEARS AGO AND I'M TELLING A STORY TO TRY TO UNITE PEOPLE WITH THAT NOW.

John Roberts: CERTAINLY YOU'RE COMING OUT AND TELLING YOUR STORY NOW TAKES IT TO A DIFFERENT LEVEL AND OBVIOUSLY WE'RE GOING TO KEEP FOLLOWING THIS. IT IS GOOD TO GET YOUR SIDE OF IT. SHERRI SH SHERLY SHERROD, FORMER DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE OFFICIAL. PERHAPS WE CAN GET YOU BACK ON AGAIN, GET YOUR FACE ON TV AS WELL AND TALK TO YOU MORE ABOUT THIS AS THIS STORY CONTINUES TO DEVELOP.

Shirley Sherrod: I DON'T MIND.

TJV

From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 8:51 PM
To: TJV
Cc: Harden, Krysta; Jett, Carole
Subject: Resign. Letter

Importance: High

Sir,

Below is a copy of Shirley's letter.

Kevin

Cheryl

I feel so disappointed that the Secretary and President let a misrepresentation of my words on the part of th Tea Party be the reason to ask me to resign

Please look at the tape and see that I use the story from 1986 to show people that the issue is not about race but about those who have v ersus those who do not

I used everything and everyone I could to help me to save that white farmers land. That family has the land because of what I did. He became a very good friend. I went on to help save many other white land owners thru the years

I submit my resignation but in doing so want to put the administration on notice that I will get the whole story out.

My whole life speaks for my commitment to fairness whether white or black.

Shirley Sherrod

Suzanne Palmieri prepared this

Monday -- July 19th --

- 6: 18 p.m. Jett sends email regarding situation with RD Director in GA. Deputy is on return flight to Washington from Orlando, Florida.
- 7:29 p.m. Jett forwards copy of approved Statement by Secretary. Deputy still in air.
- 7:31 p.m. Jett forwards WCBS story with partial clip from March speech.
- 8:25 p.m. Deputy lands at DCA.
- 8:45 p.m. Lavallee sends press alert containing FOX news story.

Tuesday -- July 20th --

- 8:23 a.m. Jett forwards CNN transcript.
- 1:14 p.m. Receive Secretary's message to all employees.
- 1:19 p.m. Jett responds to inquiry regarding incoming calls.
- 1:21 p.m. Palmieri inquires to Jett to clarify call procedures.
- 2:00 p.m. Jett, Mather, Washo (Ross comes in later) pull the Deputy out of a meeting in her office and in the staff office, they inform the Deputy that Sherrod was on CNN non-stop, that NAACP might be reversing their statement, and that Chris Liu was inquiring whether we would be changing course. The Deputy expressed concern that Sherrod was attacking the Administration on TV and that our jobs as political appointees is to protect the President. Palmieri inquired as to how we should respond to calls coming into the office since we were told not to engage. Jett decided all should be forwarded to the Deiphouse. Mather said that the Secy would be going out with a statement to all employees but not issuing another press statement.
- 4:15 pm Deputy turns on CNN for the first time and after watching 15 minutes of coverage, leaves her office to visit with Cheryl Cook to discuss her safety. Requests Cook's permission to discuss situation with Secret Service.

Sometime between 4 and 5: Maisel informs the Deputy that Sherrod copied the Deputy and Secretary on an email exchange last Thursday night where she explains that the video clip was taken out of context.

Between 4:30 and 6:30 the focus is Cook. Deputy asks Jett for JT Stroud's phone number. Jett says that she had already called Heard about monitoring Cook's emails for threats. Deputy calls Stroud. Deputy calls OIG Wong. Deputy calls Mike Edwards at Ethics to see if USDA can pay for hotel. Deputy again visits with Cook, along with Tsonager. Invites Cook to her home for the evening and/or encourages her to seek a hotel. Cook insists on driving home. Deputy calls Edwards to inquire whether Tsonager can pay for security detail. Deputy again visits Cook to give her Deputy's parking pass. Sheryl Maddox arrives in Cooks office at that time to monitor emails. Deputy and Maddox discuss the need for Maddox to reach out to State Police in Cook's home vicinity to alert them of the situation. Deputy speaks to guards at Apron asking that they escort Cook to her car when she departs and to watch for her arrival in the morning.

- 6:00ish Deputy seeks out Ross to brief her on her actions concerning Cook. Jett walks by – Deputy updates her quickly. Deputy suggests that when Jett next speaks to the Secy, that they consider the Obama McCrystal speech, which acknowledged the General's outstanding service to the country.
- 6:15ish Deputy asks Maisel to print out copy of email sent by Sherrod Thursday night to public email and reads for the first time. Departs for residence.
- 7:37 p.m. Deputy emails Cook asking for confirmation that she arrived safely home.
- 7:47 p.m. Cook responds she is safely on her way.
- 7:50 p.m. Deputy calls Ross. Discussed current CNN coverage that had turned from a focus on race to the anatomy of decision making.
- 7:53 p.m. Deputy calls Washo to discuss develop story line on USDA's decision process. Reports of email copied by Sherrod.
- 8:16 p.m. Jett calls Deputy to discuss email.
- 8:57 p.m. Cooks responds she is safe at home and that State Police are patrolling.
- 9:04 p.m. Jett calls to request a copy of email
- 9:06 p.m. Deputy thanks Cook for update.
- 9:11 p.m. Deputy calls Maisel to ask him about possibility of accessing email account from home.
- 9:12 p.m. Eve calls Maisel to ask him to retrieve email from office
- 9:14 p.m. Maisel calls Deputy to let her know that he is returning to office to return email

- 9:17 p.m. Jett calls to let Deputy know that Maisel needs to go into the office to forward a copy.
- 9:24 p.m. Maddux reports Cook confirmation that Cook has arrived safely home.
- 9:27 p.m. Deputy acknowledges receipt of Maddux email.
- 9:34 p.m. Deputy emails Secretary to report that Maisel was heading to office to retrieve email from Sherrod and of Cook arrival home safely.
- 9:41 p.m. Maisel forwards email to Jett, Eve and Washo

Wednesday 22nd

- 6:45 a.m. Jett forwards email from Mather sharing new public statement.
- 7:30 a.m. Jett emails Deputy asking if she can open meeting, as she will be briefing Tonsager for hearing
- 7:35 a.m. Deputy calls Jett and asks what the plan is. Jett does not say.
- 8:15 Leonard speaks with Deputy outside her office. Expresses disappointment that he was not consulted. Leonard says that Reid signed off on statements and process.
- 8:20 Lavallee informs Deputy that OC has instructed all Dept. leaders to not speak with the press on this topic.
- Sometime in the morning Deputy calls Silverman in California to inquire as to OGC's role in the decisionmaking process. Silverman says he was informed of the decision Monday evening after it had been made.
- 11:30 a.m. Deputy seeks meeting with Secretary
- 1:00 p.m. Deputy meets with Secretary to hear his plan to resolve the situation. Deputy suggests decisionmaking is too insular, noting that, for example, neither Civil Right nor OGC were consulted.

Deputy's emails

Kamerri

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:18 PM
To: Exemption (b)(6)
Cc: Palmieri, Suzanne
Subject: Today

Monday

Georgia rd dir resigned. Will fill you in.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)



Kamerri

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 7:29 PM
To: [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Cc: Palmieri, Suzanne
Subject: Fw: final

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

[Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)

From: Mather, Chris
To: Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:35:49 2010
Subject: Fw: final

Will push send shortly.
Chris Mather

From: Gavin, Tom
To: Mather, Chris; [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Cc: Cherlin, Reid H.
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:32:13 2010
Subject: final
Chris -

We are good with this version on this end. Counsel has cleared the language. Only change is in the first sentence.

Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.

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Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 7:31 PM
To: Exemption (b)(6)
Cc: Palmieri, Suzanne
Subject: Fw: WCBS story on Sherod
Attachments: image001.jpg

Fyi
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Mather, Chris
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:52:19 2010
Subject: Fw: WCBS story on Sherod

FYI
Chris Mather

From: Maloney, Wayne
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: Zaina, Lisa; Cook, Cheryl; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:31:29 2010
Subject: WCBS story on Sherod

SHOCK: Video Suggests Racism At NAACP Event

NEW YORK (CBS) —



[Click here to enlarge](#)

1 of 1

Shirley Sherrod, USDA Rural Development Georgia State Director
Last Tuesday, the NAACP passed a resolution condemning racism in the Tea Party movement. The organization's delegates called on Tea Party leaders to "repudiate those in their ranks who use racist language in their signs and speeches."

Tea Party members and supporters saw the resolution as a condemnation of the group itself, which calls for fiscal responsibility, restrictions on governmental power, and backs political candidates who claim the same.

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He also claimed to possess recorded evidence of racism from the NAACP.

On Monday, Breitbart posted a video of a speech by Shirley Sherrod, USDA Rural Development Georgia State Director, delivered at the NAACP's 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet.

The video shows Sherrod speaking of racial considerations being a factor for how much help she would give.

"The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking but he was trying to show me he was superior to me. I know what he was doing, but he had come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was, I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," Sherrod said.

"I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough," Sherrod said. "So that when he, I assumed the Department of Agriculture had sent him to me, either that or the Georgia Department of Agriculture, and he needed to go back and report that I did try to help him."

In the video, Sherrod also spoke of referring the white farmer to a white lawyer, thinking the latter would be more sympathetic because of race. "So I took him to a white lawyer that had attended some of training that we had provided because Chapter 12 bankruptcy had just been enacted for the family farm. So I figured if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him."

Kamerri

From: Lavallee, Aaron
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 8:45 PM
To: Kamerri
Subject: Fw: Google Alert - Vilsack

From: Google Alerts
To: Lavallee, Aaron
Sent: Mon Jul 19 20:42:53 2010
Subject: Google Alert - Vilsack

News

3 new results for Vilsack

US Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack talks renewable energy, farm issues in ...

Farm and Dairy

by Chris Kick WOOSTER, Ohio –Touting a new agriculture and a new economy for America, US Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack and US Rep. ...

[See all stories on this topic »](#)

USDA Official Who Withheld Help from White Farmer Resigns

Big Government (blog)

... and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person," Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a written statement. ...

[See all stories on this topic »](#)

USDA Launches 'Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food' Website

Gourmet Retailer

... and regional food systems, we can spur job growth in our rural communities and ultimately strengthen American agriculture," said Secretary Vilsack. ...

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[Manage your alerts.](#)

Kamerri

From: Lavallee, Aaron
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 8:45 PM
To: Kamerri
Subject: Fw: Google Alert - USDA

From: Google Alerts
To: Lavallee, Aaron
Sent: Mon Jul 19 20:25:57 2010
Subject: Google Alert - USDA

News

5 new results for **USDA**

[Video Shows USDA Official Saying She Didn't Give 'Full Force' of Help to White ...](#)

FOXNews

"There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person," Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack ...

[See all stories on this topic »](#)



FOXNews

[USDA crop and weather report for July 19](#)

Bismarck Farm & Ranch Guide

For the week ending July 18, wheat harvest was in full swing in southwestern counties and had begun in the Panhandle, according to USDA's National ...

[See all stories on this topic »](#)

[USDA invites comments on Asparagus Revenue Loss Program](#)

Review Messenger

WASHINGTON, July 19, 2010 – Farm Service Agency Administrator Jonathan Coppess today announced that USDA is accepting comments on its proposed rule to ...

[See all stories on this topic »](#)

[USDA funds now available for livestock, bee losses](#)

MachineFinder

More than \$13 million was released by the USDA to help farmers and ranchers who experienced losses last year that were tied to weather, disease or other ...

[See all stories on this topic »](#)

[HRW: New Burmese Military Party Undermines Free Elections](#)

Voice of America

Human Rights Watch Monday called the government's decision to allow the Union Solidarity and Development Association, or USDA, to disband and transfer its ...

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Deputy's emails
Tuesday

Kamerri

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:23 AM
To: [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Cc: Palmieri, Suzanne
Subject: Fw: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

Importance: High

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

[Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)

From: Mather, Chris
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:08:20 2010
Subject: Fw: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

CNN American Morning talked to Sherrod. Transcript below.
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:46:21 2010
Subject: Fw: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

Rest of the transcript.

I'm trying to see if I can find the clip online. Esp interested in hearing the full response from this response-

Shirley Sherrod: IF I TRIED TO FIGHT IT AND DIDN'T HAVE ANY SUPPORT FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, WHAT -- WHAT.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

From: Kaplan, Karrah
To: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:37:13 2010
Subject: FW: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

updated

From: McCandless, Brittany
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:37 AM

To: Kraft, James; Dalberto, Emily; Manning, Regina; Kaplan, Karrah
Subject: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

MISSING PART BELOW IN RED:

American Morning transcript

Kiran Chetry and **John Roberts** interview **Shirley Sherrod**, a black Agriculture Department employee, who resigned Monday after conservative media outlets aired a video of her telling an audience she had not given a white farmer "the full force of what I could do" to help him save the family farm. She says the charges of racism are wrong.

MISSING PART BELOW IN RED:

Kiran Chetry: THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ACCEPTS THE RESIGNATION OF AN EMPLOYEE AFTER A VIDEO SURFACED SHOWING HER TELLING AN AUDIENCE THAT SHE WITHHELD ASSISTANCE TO A WHITE FARMER BECAUSE OF HIS RACE. LET'S LISTEN TO WHAT SHE TOLD THE NAACP. DOES THAT VIDEO TELL THE WHOLE STORY? JOINING US NOW ON THE PHONE FROM ALBANY, GEORGIA, SHERRI SHERROD HERSELF. THANKS FOR BEING WITH US THIS MORNING, SHIRLEY.

Shirley Sherrod: THANK YOU.

Kiran Chetry: YOU SAY THIS WAS PART OF THE STORY AND THAT IT WAS PART THAT WAS SPLICED ENOUGH TO SHOW YOU IN A BAD LIGHT, THAT THIS ISN'T THE WHOLE STORY. WILL YOU FINISH FOR US HOW THIS ENDED?

Shirley Sherrod: OKAY. I WAS SPEAKING TO THAT GROUP LIKE I'VE DONE MANY GROUPS AND I TELL THEM ABOUT A TIME WHEN I THOUGHT THE ISSUE WAS RACE AND RACE ONLY. AND I TELL THEM THE STORY OF HOW I WORKED WITH A WHITE FARMER BACK IN 1986. I WAS NOT WORKING FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE. I WAS WORKING WITH AND NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION ASSISTING FARMERS THROUGHOUT SOUTH GEORGIA AND THE SOUTHEAST. AND THIS FARMER CAME TO ME FOR HELP. I WAS TELLING THE STORY ABOUT HOW WORKING WITH HIM HELPED ME TO SEE THAT THE ISSUE IS NOT ABOUT RACE, IT'S ABOUT THOSE WHO HAVE VERSUS THOSE WHO DO NOT HAVE. AND I TELL HOW I TOOK HIM TO A LAWYER WHO I THOUGHT WOULD HELP HIM. IN THE END, THAT LAWYER DIDN'T. IN THE END, I HAD TO FRANTICLY LOOK FOR A LAWYER BECAUSE WHEN USDA LIFTED -- I'M SORRY. WHEN THE COURTS LIFTED THE INJUNCTION AGAINST USDA IN MAY OF 1987, THIS WHITE FARMER WAS 1 OF 13 THAT WAS FORECLOSED ON BY THE STATE OF GEORGIA. I HAD TO FRANTICLY FIND A LAWYER WHO WOULD FILE A CHAPTER 11 TO STOP THE FORECLOSURE. HE COULDN'T -- AT THAT TIME WE HAD UP TO 12 --

Kiran Chetry: BUT LET ME SAID -- YOU SAID YOU DIDN'T KNOW ENOUGH, DIDN'T GIVE HIM THE FULL FORCE OF WHAT YOU COULD DO. YOU SAID YOU REFERRED HIM TO THE LAWYER WHO WAS WHITE AND PERHAPS HE COULD HELP HIM. WHAT DID YOU MEAN BY THAT?

Shirley Sherrod: WHAT I MEANT WAS, I DIDN'T KNOW ANYONE ELSE, I DIDN'T KNOW ANOTHER LAWYER AT THAT TIME WHO WAS LOCAL, WHO KNEW SOMETHING ABOUT CHAPTER 12. BUT I THOUGHT IF I TOOK HIM TO A WHITE LAWYER, HE WOULD DEFINITELY DO ALL THAT HE COULD TO HELP SAVE HIS FARM.

John Roberts: MS. SHERROD LET'S MAKE IT CLEAR THOUGH. THIS HAPPENED 24 YEARS AGO. YOU EVENTUALLY WORKED WITH THIS WHITE FARMER, YOU EVENTUALLY BECAME FRIENDS, YOU SAY, WITH THE FARMER AND HIS WIFE. SO THE QUESTION I HAVE IS, WHEN THE US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE CAME TO YOU AND SAID YOU HAVE TO STEP DOWN, WHY DIDN'T YOU JUST SAY WAIT A MINUTE, YOU DON'T KNOW THE FULL STORY, HERE'S THE FULL STORY, WHY SHOULD I STEP DOWN?

Shirley Sherrod: I DID SAY THAT. BUT THEY FOR SOME REASON, THE STUFF THAT FOX AND THE TEA PARTY DOES IS SCARING THE ADMINISTRATION. I TOLD... I TOLD THEM GET THE WHOLE TAPE AND LOOK AT HOW I TELL PEOPLE WE HAVE TO GET BEYOND RACE AND START WORKING TOGETHER.

John Roberts: I THINK THAT MANY PEOPLE AT HOME MIGHT BE THINKING, IF YOU'RE RECOUNTING AN OLD STORY, WHY DID YOU SUCCUMB TO PRESSURE TO STEP DOWN, WHY DIDN'T YOU TRY TO FIGHT THIS?

Shirley Sherrod: IF I TRIED TO FIGHT IT AND DIDN'T HAVE ANY SUPPORT FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, WHAT -- WHAT.

Kiran Chetry: BEN JEALOUS REFERRED TO YOU AND THIS SURFACING OF THE TAPE, "HER ACTIONS WERE SHAMEFUL. WHILE SHE WENT ON TO EXPLAIN IN THE STORY, SHE ULTIMATELY REALIZED HER MISTAKE AS WELL AS THE COMMON PREDICAMENT OF WORKING PEOPLE OF ALL RACES. SHE GAVE NO INDICATION SHE HAD ATTEMPTED TO RIGHT THE WRONG SHE HAD DONE TO THIS MAN." AND THE REACTION FROM MANY IN THE AUDIENCE IS DISTURBING. THIS IS FROM BEN JEALOUS. DID YOU TRY TO CLARIFY WITH THE NAACP YOUR STORY?

Shirley Sherrod: NO, I HAVEN'T HAD A CHANCE TO TALK TO ANYONE. ALL OF THIS WAS HAPPENING SO FAST. AND IT'S UNFORTUNATE THAT THE NAACP WOULD MAKE A STATEMENT WITHOUT EVEN CHECKING TO SEE WHAT HAPPENED. THIS WAS 24 YEARS AGO AND I'M TELLING A STORY TO TRY TO UNITE PEOPLE WITH THAT NOW.

John Roberts: CERTAINLY YOU'RE COMING OUT AND TELLING YOUR STORY NOW TAKES IT TO A DIFFERENT LEVEL AND OBVIOUSLY WE'RE GOING TO KEEP FOLLOWING THIS. IT IS GOOD TO GET YOUR SIDE OF IT. SHERRI SH SHERLY SHERROD, FORMER DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE OFFICIAL. PERHAPS WE CAN GET YOU BACK ON AGAIN, GET YOUR FACE ON TV AS WELL AND TALK TO YOU MORE ABOUT THIS AS THIS STORY CONTINUES TO DEVELOP.

Shirley Sherrod: I DON'T MIND.

Kamerri

From: The Office of the Secretary
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:14 PM
To: ALL-USDA-2K
Subject: Message from Secretary Vilsack

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250**

Dear employee:

Some of you may have seen the news stories about USDA today. I want to reiterate my commitment and that of the leadership at USDA to civil rights. We all must work to ensure that we are treating our customers and employees equally and fairly and we all should have zero tolerance for discrimination.

I also want to remind all of you that you have a unique and important individual responsibility to represent this sentiment in your official actions, statements, and public presentations. We are lucky to have the opportunity to work for the American people and we owe it to them to instill confidence in our leadership. Our words and actions matter.

We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and I thank you for your service and efforts to achieve this goal,

Secretary Vilsack

Kamerri

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:19 PM
To: Wood, Maureen
Cc: [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Subject: we have no comment

Don't refer calls to Deputy Secretary.

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

[Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*

Kamerri

From: Palmieri, Suzanne
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:21 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Cc: Wood, Maureen; Kamerri
Subject: RE: We have no comment

If calls come in to our number, where do we refer them? the deputy will not be responding.

-----Original Message-----

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:19 PM
To: Wood, Maureen
Cc: [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6); Palmieri, Suzanne
Subject: We have no comment

Don't refer calls to Deputy Secretary.

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

[Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)

Kamerri

From: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:47 PM
To: [REDACTED] Exemption (b)(6)
Subject: Re: Checking in

Sure. To Thurmont without incident. Thanks for caring.

----- Original Message -----

From: Kamerri
To: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Tue Jul 20 19:37:01 2010
Subject: Checking in

Can't imagine a rougher day for you. Let me know what, if anything, I can do to help. I'm sorry I wasn't around Monday to help as the situation developed.

My focus right now is your physical and mental wellbeing. Would you please email or call when you get home so that I know you made it safely? Thank you my friend.
Kathleen A. Merrigan Deputy Secretary USDA

Kamerri

From: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:57 PM
To: [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Subject: Re: Checking in

I'm home safely, neighbors waiting to tell me the PA State Police have already driven by.

----- Original Message -----

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To: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Tue Jul 20 19:37:01 2010
Subject: Checking in

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Kathleen A. Merrigan Deputy Secretary USDA

Kamerri

From: Maddux, Sheryl -USDA
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:24 PM
To: Kamerri; Heard, Robin; Repass, Todd; Lescallett, Kenneth
Subject: Cheryl Cook

Cheryl made it safely home and her neighbor told her that the PA State Police had driven by a couple of times.

Sheryl K. Maddux

USDA Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Coordination.

Kamerri

From: Merrigan, Kathleen
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:39 PM
To: Kamerri
Cc: Palmieri, Suzanne
Subject: FW: Forced Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

Importance: High

From: [REDACTED] Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:28 PM
To: [REDACTED] Exemption (b)(6); Merrigan, Kathleen
Subject: Forced Resignation of Shirley Sherrod
Importance: High

Honorable Mr. Vilsack & Ms. Merrigan: I strongly urge you to make a public appology for forcing Ms. Shirley Sherrod to resign her position. If you or your subordinates had not jumped to conclusions before reacting to such internet folly, you would have understood that what Ms. Sherrod was saying was remarkable. Her recounting of an epiphany WRT her ignorance of caucasians was very revealing & should not have been reason for dismissal. If your subordinates had only listened to the full speech & offered a rebuttal on the internet as well as in the news, you & the administration would have come out looking good. Now you all look like bumpkins; how can I keep supporting the adminsitration when you all act so stupidly?!

Please clean up this mess, state the facts, don't overreact (didn't any of you get any management training before assuming your positions?), and for God's sake, give Shirley her job back!!! This is a shameful incident.

Shirley C. Rubens

Kammerri

From: Maisel, Chad
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:42 PM
To: Kammerri; Palmieri, Suzanne
Subject: Email has been forwarded

Apologies again. I can tell you that lessons have been learned

Chad Maisel

Exemption (b)(6)

Kamerri

From: Palmieri, Suzanne
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:44 PM
To: Maisel, Chad; [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Subject: Re: Email has been forwarded

Thanks. Sorry you had to go in.
Suzanne Smith Palmieri
Chief of Staff
Office of the Deputy Secretary
USDA

[Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)

From: Maisel, Chad
To: Kamerri; Palmieri, Suzanne
Sent: Tue Jul 20 21:42:21 2010
Subject: Email has been forwarded

Apologies again. I can tell you that lessons have been learned

Chad Maisel

[Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)

Deputy's emails Wednesday

Kamerri

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:45 AM
To: Rollerson, Cherylene -USDA; Markovich, Amanda; Trollinger, Shelia -USDA; Wood, Maureen; Diephouse, Greg
Cc: Exemption (b)(6) Palmieri, Suzanne; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: Fw: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod
Attachments: image001.jpg

Here is our most recent statement.

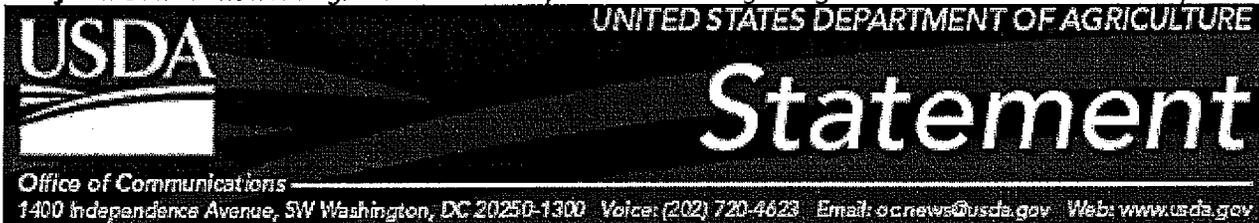
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Mather, Chris
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wed Jul 21 05:17:54 2010
Subject: Fw: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

This went at 2
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wed Jul 21 02:07:06 2010
Subject: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod



Release No. PENDING

Contact:
USDA Office of Communications
(202) 720-4623

Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

WASHINGTON, July 21, 2010 - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack tonight released the following statement in response to the release of remarks in video from Shirley Sherrod:

"I am of course willing and will conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts to ensure to the American people we are providing services in a fair and equitable manner."

17
USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice), or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Exemption (b)(6)

Palmieri, Suzanne

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:18 PM
To: [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Cc: Palmieri, Suzanne
Subject: Today

Georgia rd dir resigned. Will fill you in.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

[Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*

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Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 7:29 PM
To: Exemption (b)(6)
Cc: Palmieri, Suzanne
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Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Mather, Chris
To: Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb
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To: Mather, Chris; Exemption (b)(6)
Cc: Cherlin, Reid H.
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:32:13 2010
Subject: final
Chris –

Exemption 5

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Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 7:31 PM
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Cc: Palmieri, Suzanne
Subject: Fw: WCBS story on Sherod

Fyi
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

[Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)

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FYI
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To: Mather, Chris
Cc: Zaina, Lisa; Cook, Cheryl; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
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Subject: WCBS story on Sherod

SHOCK: Video Suggests Racism At NAACP Event

NEW YORK (CBS) —



[to enlarge](#)

1 of 1

Shirley Sherrod, USDA Rural Development Georgia State Director

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The video shows Sherrod speaking of racial considerations being a factor for how much help she would give.

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"I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough," Sherrod said. "So that when he, I assumed the Department of Agriculture had sent him to me, either that or the Georgia Department of Agriculture, and he needed to go back and report that I did try to help him."

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Palmieri, Suzanne

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Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:23 AM
To: Exemption (b)(6)
Cc: Palmieri, Suzanne
Subject: Fw: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

Importance: High

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

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CNN American Morning talked to Sherrod. Transcript below.
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:46:21 2010
Subject: Fw: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

Rest of the transcript.

I'm trying to see if I can find the clip online. Esp interested in hearing the full response from this response-

Shirley Sherrod: IF I TRIED TO FIGHT IT AND DIDN'T HAVE ANY SUPPORT FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, WHAT -- WHAT.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Kaplan, Karrah
To: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:37:13 2010
Subject: FW: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

updated

From: McCandless, Brittany
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:37 AM

To: Kraft, James; Dalberto, Emily; Manning, Regina; Kaplan, Karrah
Subject: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

MISSING PART BELOW IN RED:

American Morning transcript

Kiran Chetry and John Roberts interview **Shirley Sherrod**, a black Agriculture Department employee, who resigned Monday after conservative media outlets aired a video of her telling an audience she had not given a white farmer "the full force of what I could do" to help him save the family farm. She says the charges of racism are wrong

MISSING PART BELOW IN RED:

Kiran Chetry: THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ACCEPTS THE RESIGNATION OF AN EMPLOYEE AFTER A VIDEO SURFACED SHOWING HER TELLING AN AUDIENCE THAT SHE WITHHELD ASSISTANCE TO A WHITE FARMER BECAUSE OF HIS RACE. LET'S LISTEN TO WHAT SHE TOLD THE NAACP. DOES THAT VIDEO TELL THE WHOLE STORY? JOINING US NOW ON THE PHONE FROM ALBANY, GEORGIA, SHERRI SHERROD HERSELF. THANKS FOR BEING WITH US THIS MORNING, SHIRLEY.

Shirley Sherrod: THANK YOU.

Kiran Chetry: YOU SAY THIS WAS PART OF THE STORY AND THAT IT WAS PART THAT WAS SPLICED ENOUGH TO SHOW YOU IN A BAD LIGHT, THAT THIS ISN'T THE WHOLE STORY. WILL YOU FINISH FOR US HOW THIS ENED?

Shirley Sherrod: OKAY. I WAS SPEAKING TO THAT GROUP LIKE I'VE DONE MANY GROUPS AND I TELL THEM ABOUT A TIME WHEN I THOUGHT THE ISSUE WAS RACE AND RACE ONLY. AND I TELL THEM THE STORY OF HOW I WORKED WITH A WHITE FARMER BACK IN 1986. I WAS NOT WORKING FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE. I WAS WORKING WITH AND NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION ASSISTING FARMERS THROUGHOUT SOUTH GEORGIA AND THE SOUTHEAST. AND THIS FARMER CAME TO ME FOR HELP. I WAS TELLING THE STORY ABOUT HOW WORKING WITH HIM HELPED ME TO SEE THAT THE ISSUE IS NOT ABOUT RACE, IT'S ABOUT THOSE WHO HAVE VERSUS THOSE WHO DO NOT HAVE. AND I TELL HOW I TOOK HIM TO A LAWYER WHO I THOUGHT WOULD HELP HIM. IN THE END, THAT LAWYER DIDN'T. IN THE END, I HAD TO FRANTICLY LOOK FOR A LAWYER BECAUSE WHEN USDA LIFTED -- I'M SORRY. WHEN THE COURTS LIFTED THE INJUNCTION AGAINST USDA IN MAY OF 1987, THIS WHITE FARMER WAS 1 OF 13 THAT WAS FORECLOSED ON BY THE STATE OF GEORGIA. I HAD TO FRANTICLY FIND A LAWYER WHO WOULD FILE A CHAPTER 11 TO STOP THE FORECLOSURE. HE COULDN'T -- AT THAT TIME WE HAD UP TO 12 --

Kiran Chetry: BUT LET ME SAID -- YOU SAID YOU DIDN'T KNOW ENOUGH, DIDN'T GIVE HIM THE FULL FORCE OF WHAT YOU COULD DO. YOU SAID YOU REFERRED HIM TO THE LAWYER WHO WAS WHITE AND PERHAPS HE COULD HELP HIM. WHAT DID YOU MEAN BY THAT?

Shirley Sherrod: WHAT I MEANT WAS, I DIDN'T KNOW ANYONE ELSE, I DIDN'T KNOW ANOTHER LAWYER AT THAT TIME WHO WAS LOCAL, WHO KNEW SOMETHING ABOUT CHAPTER 12. BUT I THOUGHT IF I TOOK HIM TO A WHITE LAWYER, HE WOULD DEFINITELY DO ALL THAT HE COULD TO HELP SAVE HIS FARM.

John Roberts: MS. SHERROD LET'S MAKE IT CLEAR THOUGH. THIS HAPPENED 24 YEARS AGO. YOU EVENTUALLY WORKED WITH THIS WHITE FARMER, YOU EVENTUALLY BECAME FRIENDS, YOU SAY, WITH THE FARMER AND HIS WIFE. SO THE QUESTION I HAVE IS, WHEN THE US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE CAME TO YOU AND SAID YOU HAVE TO STEP DOWN, WHY DIDN'T YOU JUST SAY WAIT A MINUTE, YOU DON'T KNOW THE FULL STORY, HERE'S THE FULL STORY, WHY SHOULD I STEP DOWN?

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Shirley Sherrod: I DON'T MIND.

Palmieri, Suzanne

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:45 AM
To: Rollerson, Cherylene -USDA; Markovich, Amanda; Trollinger, Shelia -USDA; Wood, Maureen; Dienhouse, Greg
Cc: [REDACTED] Palmieri, Suzanne; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: Fw: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

Here is our most recent statement.

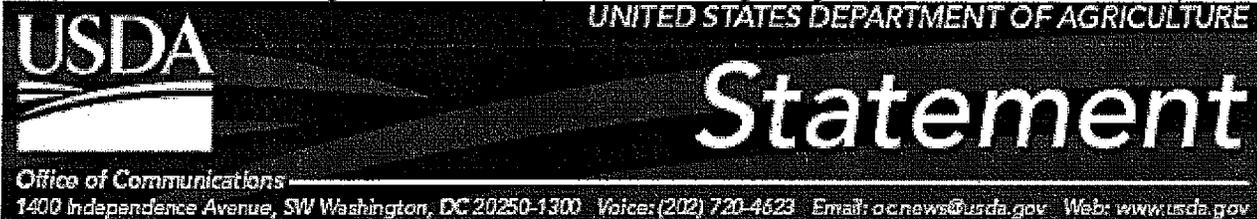
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

[REDACTED] Exemption (b)(6)

From: Mather, Chris
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wed Jul 21 05:17:54 2010
Subject: Fw: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

This went at 2
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wed Jul 21 02:07:06 2010
Subject: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod



Release No. PENDING

Contact:
USDA Office of Communications
(202) 720-4623

Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

WASHINGTON, July 21, 2010 - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack tonight released the following statement in response to the release of remarks in video from Shirley Sherrod:

"I am of course willing and will conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts to ensure to the American people we are providing services in a fair and equitable manner."

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice), or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Exemption (b)(6)

Monday – July 19th –

- 6: 18 p.m. Jett sends email regarding situation with RD Director in GA. Deputy is on return flight to Washington from Orlando, Florida.
- 7:29 p.m. Jett forwards copy of approved Statement by Secretary. Deputy still in air.
- 7:31 p.m. Jett forwards WCBS story with partial clip from March speech.
- 8:25 p.m. Deputy lands at DCA.
- 8:45 p.m. Lavallee sends press alert containing FOX news story.

Tuesday – July 20th –

- 8:23 a.m. Jett forwards CNN transcript.
- 1:14 p.m. Receive Secretary's message to all employees.
- 1:19 p.m. Jett responds to inquiry regarding incoming calls.
- 1:21 p.m. Palmieri inquires to Jett to clarify call procedures.
- 2:00 p.m. Jett, Mather, Washo (Ross comes in later) pull the Deputy out of a meeting in her office and in the staff office, they inform the Deputy that Sherrod was on CNN non-stop, that NAACP might be reversing their statement, and that Chris Liu was inquiring whether we would be changing course. The Deputy expressed concern that Sherrod was attacking the Administration on TV and that our jobs as political appointees is to protect the President. Palmieri inquired as to how we should respond to calls coming into the office since we were told not to engage. Jett decided all should be forwarded to the Deiphouse. Mather said that the Secy would be going out with a statement to all employees but not issuing another press statement.
- 4:15 pm Deputy turns on CNN for the first time and after watching 15 minutes of coverage, leaves her office to visit with Cheryl Cook to discuss her safety. Requests Cook's permission to discuss situation with Secret Service.

Sometime between 4 and 5: Maisel informs the Deputy that Sherrod copied the Deputy and Secretary on an email exchange last Thursday night where she explains that the video clip was taken out of context.

Between 4:30 and 6:30 the focus is Cook. Deputy asks Jett for JT Stroud's phone number. Jett says that she had already called Heard about monitoring Cook's emails for threats. Deputy calls Stroud. Deputy calls OIG Wong. Deputy calls Mike Edwards at Ethics to see if USDA can pay for hotel. Deputy again visits with Cook, along with Tsonager. Invites Cook to her home for the evening and/or encourages her to seek a hotel. Cook insists on driving home. Deputy calls Edwards to inquire whether Tsonager can pay for security detail. Deputy again visits Cook to give her Deputy's parking pass. Sheryl Maddox arrives in Cooks office at that time to monitor emails. Deputy and Maddox discuss the need for Maddox to reach out to State Police in Cook's home vicinity to alert them of the situation. Deputy speaks to guards at Apron asking that they escort Cook to her car when she departs and to watch for her arrival in the morning.

- 6:00ish Deputy seeks out Ross to brief her on her actions concerning Cook. Jett walks by – Deputy updates her quickly. Deputy suggests that when Jett next speaks to the Secy, that they consider the Obama McCrystal speech, which acknowledged the General's outstanding service to the country.
- 6:15ish Deputy asks Maisel to print out copy of email sent by Sherrod Thursday night to public email and reads for the first time. Departs for residence.
- 7:37 p.m. Deputy emails Cook asking for confirmation that she arrived safely home.
- 7:47 p.m. Cook responds she is safely on her way.
- 7:50 p.m. Deputy calls Ross. Discussed current CNN coverage that had turned from a focus on race to the anatomy of decision making.
- 7:53 p.m. Deputy calls Washo to discuss develop story line on USDA's decision process. Reports of email copied by Sherrod.
- 8:16 p.m. Jett calls Deputy to discuss email.
- 8:57 p.m. Cooks responds she is safe at home and that State Police are patrolling.
- 9:04 p.m. Jett calls to request a copy of email
- 9:06 p.m. Deputy thanks Cook for update.
- 9:11 p.m. Deputy calls Maisel to ask him about possibility of accessing email account from home.
- 9:12 p.m. Eve calls Maisel to ask him to retrieve email from office
- 9:14 p.m. Maisel calls Deputy to let her know that he is returning to office to return email

- 9:17 p.m. Jett calls to let Deputy know that Maisel needs to go into the office to forward a copy.
- 9:24 p.m. Maddux reports Cook confirmation that Cook has arrived safely home.
- 9:27 p.m. Deputy acknowledges receipt of Maddux email.
- 9:34 p.m. Deputy emails Secretary to report that Maisel was heading to office to retrieve email from Sherrod and of Cook arrival home safely.
- 9:41 p.m. Maisel forwards email to Jett, Eve and Washo

Wednesday 22nd

- 6:45 a.m. Jett forwards email from Mather sharing new public statement.
- 7:30 a.m. Jett emails Deputy asking if she can open meeting, as she will be briefing Tonsager for hearing
- 7:35 a.m. Deputy calls Jett and asks what the plan is. Jett does not say.
- 8:15 Leonard speaks with Deputy outside her office. Expresses disappointment that he was not consulted. Leonard says that Reid signed off on statements and process.
- 8:20 Lavalley informs Deputy that OC has instructed all Dept. leaders to not speak with the press on this topic.

Sometime in the morning Deputy calls Silverman in California to inquire as to OGC's role in the decisionmaking process. Silverman says he was informed of the decision Monday evening after it had been made.

- 11:30 a.m. Deputy seeks meeting with Secretary
- 1:00 p.m. Deputy meets with Secretary to hear his plan to resolve the situation. Deputy suggests decisionmaking is too insular, noting that, for example, neither Civil Right nor OGC were consulted.

Kamerri

From: Lavallee, Aaron
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 8:45 PM
To: Kamerri
Subject: Fw: Google Alert - Vilsack

From: Google Alerts
To: Lavallee, Aaron
Sent: Mon Jul 19 20:42:53 2010
Subject: Google Alert - Vilsack

News 3 new results for Vilsack

US Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack talks renewable energy, farm issues in ...

Farm and Dairy

by Chris Kick WOOSTER, Ohio –Touting a new agriculture and a new economy for America, US Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack and US Rep. ...

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USDA Official Who Withheld Help from White Farmer Resigns

Big Government (blog)

... and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person," Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a written statement. ...

[See all stories on this topic »](#)

USDA Launches 'Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food' Website

Gourmet Retailer

... and regional food systems, we can spur job growth in our rural communities and ultimately strengthen American agriculture," said Secretary Vilsack. ...

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Tip: Use a minus sign (-) in front of terms in your query that you want to exclude.. [Learn more.](#)

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From: Lavallee, Aaron
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 8:45 PM
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Subject: Fw: Google Alert - USDA

From: Google Alerts
To: Lavallee, Aaron
Sent: Mon Jul 19 20:25:57 2010
Subject: Google Alert - USDA

News [5 new results for USDA](#)

Video Shows USDA Official Saying She Didn't Give 'Full Force' of Help to White ...

FOXNews

"There is zero tolerance for discrimination at **USDA**, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person," Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack ...

[See all stories on this topic »](#)



FOXNews

USDA crop and weather report for July 19

Bismarck Farm & Ranch Guide

For the week ending July 18, wheat harvest was in full swing in southwestern counties and had begun in the Panhandle, according to **USDA's** National ...

[See all stories on this topic »](#)

USDA invites comments on Asparagus Revenue Loss Program

Review Messenger

WASHINGTON, July 19, 2010 – Farm Service Agency Administrator Jonathan Coppess today announced that **USDA** is accepting comments on its proposed rule to ...

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USDA funds now available for livestock, bee losses

MachineFinder

More than \$13 million was released by the **USDA** to help farmers and ranchers who experienced losses last year that were tied to weather, disease or other ...

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HRW: New Burmese Military Party Undermines Free Elections

Voice of America

Human Rights Watch Monday called the government's decision to allow the Union Solidarity and Development Association, or **USDA**, to disband and transfer its ...

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Tip: Use a plus sign (+) to match a term in your query exactly as is.. [Learn more.](#)

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Kamerri

Deputy's emails
Tuesday

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:23 AM
To: [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Cc: Palmieri, Suzanne
Subject: Fw: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD
Importance: High

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

[Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)

From: Mather, Chris
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:08:20 2010
Subject: Fw: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

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To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb
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Deputy's emails Wednesday

Kamerri

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:45 AM
To: Rollerson, Cherylene -USDA; Markovich, Amanda; Trollinger, Shelia -USDA; Wood, Maureen; Dienhouse, Greg
Cc: Exemption (b)(6) Palmieri, Suzanne; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: Fw: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod
Attachments: image001.jpg

Here is our most recent statement.

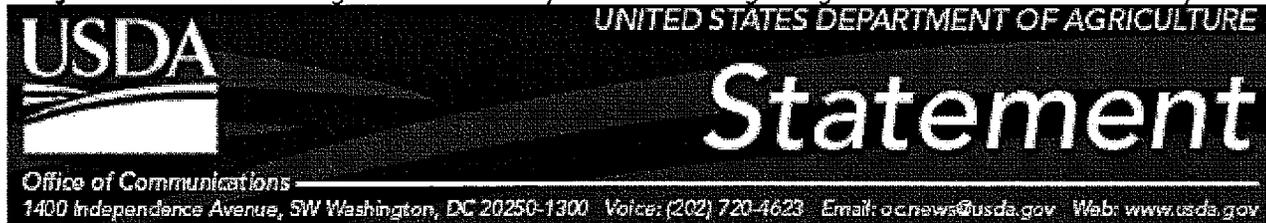
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

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To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
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This went at 2
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From: Chan, Stephanie
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Release No. PENDING

Contact:
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Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Exemption (b)(6)

Palmieri, Suzanne

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:18 PM
To: [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Cc: Palmieri, Suzanne
Subject: Today

Georgia rd dir resigned. Will fill you in.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

[Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)

Palmieri, Suzanne

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 7:29 PM
To: [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Cc: Palmieri, Suzanne
Subject: Fw: final

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

[Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)

From: Mather, Chris
To: Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:35:49 2010
Subject: Fw: final

Will push send shortly.
Chris Mather

From: Gavin, Tom
To: Mather, Chris; [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Cc: Cherlin, Reid H.
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:32:13 2010
Subject: final
Chris –

[Redacted] Exemption 5

Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.

Palmieri, Suzanne

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 7:31 PM
To: Exemption (b)(6)
Cc: Palmieri, Suzanne
Subject: Fw: WCBS story on Sherrod

Fyi
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Mather, Chris
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:52:19 2010
Subject: Fw: WCBS story on Sherrod

FYI
Chris Mather

From: Maloney, Wayne
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: Zaina, Lisa; Cook, Cheryl; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:31:29 2010
Subject: WCBS story on Sherrod

SHOCK: Video Suggests Racism At NAACP Event

NEW YORK (CBS) —



to enlarge

1 of 1

Shirley Sherrod, USDA Rural Development Georgia State Director

Last Tuesday, the NAACP passed a resolution condemning racism in the Tea Party movement. The organization's delegates called on Tea Party leaders to "repudiate those in their ranks who use racist language in their signs and speeches."

Tea Party members and supporters saw the resolution as a condemnation of the group itself, which calls for fiscal responsibility, restrictions on governmental power, and backs political candidates who claim the same.

The NAACP's action caught the attention of Andrew Breitbart of BigGovernment.com, who said the controversy was "absolutely manufactured for political gain," in a summer "in which the economy is the number one issue affecting blacks and whites in this country. This country can ill afford the schism of race to be exploited the way [he is] based upon the false premise of the Tea Party being racist."

He also claimed to possess recorded evidence of racism from the NAACP.

On Monday, Breitbart posted a video of a speech by Shirley Sherrod, USDA Rural Development Georgia State Director, delivered at the NAACP's 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet.

The video shows Sherrod speaking of racial considerations being a factor for how much help she would give.

"The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking but he was trying to show me he was superior to me. I know what he was doing, but he had come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was, I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," Sherrod said.

"I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough," Sherrod said. "So that when he, I assumed the Department of Agriculture had sent him to me, either that or the Georgia Department of Agriculture, and he needed to go back and report that I did try to help him."

In the video, Sherrod also spoke of referring the white farmer to a white lawyer, thinking the latter would be more sympathetic because of race. "So I took him to a white lawyer that had attended some of training that we had provided because Chapter 12 bankruptcy had just been enacted for the family farm. So I figured if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him."

Palmieri, Suzanne

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:23 AM
To: [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Cc: Palmieri, Suzanne
Subject: Fw: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

Importance: High.

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

[Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)

From: Mather, Chris
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:08:20 2010
Subject: Fw: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

CNN American Morning talked to Sherrod. Transcript below.
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:46:21 2010
Subject: Fw: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

Rest of the transcript.

I'm trying to see if I can find the clip online. Esp interested in hearing the full response from this response-

Shirley Sherrod: IF I TRIED TO FIGHT IT AND DIDN'T HAVE ANY SUPPORT FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, WHAT -- WHAT.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture

[Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)

From: Kaplan, Karrah
To: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:37:13 2010
Subject: FW: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

updated

From: McCandless, Brittany
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:37 AM

To: Kraft, James; Dalberto, Emily; Manning, Regina; Kaplan, Karrah
Subject: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

MISSING PART BELOW IN RED:

American Morning transcript

Kiran Chetry and John Roberts interview **Shirley Sherrod**, a black Agriculture Department employee, who resigned Monday after conservative media outlets aired a video of her telling an audience she had not given a white farmer "the full force of what I could do" to help him save the family farm. She says the charges of racism are wrong

MISSING PART BELOW IN RED:

Kiran Chetry: THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ACCEPTS THE RESIGNATION OF AN EMPLOYEE AFTER A VIDEO SURFACED SHOWING HER TELLING AN AUDIENCE THAT SHE WITHHELD ASSISTANCE TO A WHITE FARMER BECAUSE OF HIS RACE. LET'S LISTEN TO WHAT SHE TOLD THE NAACP. DOES THAT VIDEO TELL THE WHOLE STORY? JOINING US NOW ON THE PHONE FROM ALBANY, GEORGIA, SHERRI SHERROD HERSELF. THANKS FOR BEING WITH US THIS MORNING, SHIRLEY.

Shirley Sherrod: THANK YOU.

Kiran Chetry: YOU SAY THIS WAS PART OF THE STORY AND THAT IT WAS PART THAT WAS SPLICED ENOUGH TO SHOW YOU IN A BAD LIGHT, THAT THIS ISN'T THE WHOLE STORY. WILL YOU FINISH FOR US HOW THIS ENDED?

Shirley Sherrod: OKAY. I WAS SPEAKING TO THAT GROUP LIKE I'VE DONE MANY GROUPS AND I TELL THEM ABOUT A TIME WHEN I THOUGHT THE ISSUE WAS RACE AND RACE ONLY. AND I TELL THEM THE STORY OF HOW I WORKED WITH A WHITE FARMER BACK IN 1986. I WAS NOT WORKING FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE. I WAS WORKING WITH AND NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION ASSISTING FARMERS THROUGHOUT SOUTH GEORGIA AND THE SOUTHEAST. AND THIS FARMER CAME TO ME FOR HELP. I WAS TELLING THE STORY ABOUT HOW WORKING WITH HIM HELPED ME TO SEE THAT THE ISSUE IS NOT ABOUT RACE, IT'S ABOUT THOSE WHO HAVE VERSUS THOSE WHO DO NOT HAVE. AND I TELL HOW I TOOK HIM TO A LAWYER WHO I THOUGHT WOULD HELP HIM. IN THE END, THAT LAWYER DIDN'T. IN THE END, I HAD TO FRANTICLY LOOK FOR A LAWYER BECAUSE WHEN USDA LIFTED -- I'M SORRY. WHEN THE COURTS LIFTED THE INJUNCTION AGAINST USDA IN MAY OF 1987, THIS WHITE FARMER WAS 1 OF 13 THAT WAS FORECLOSED ON BY THE STATE OF GEORGIA. I HAD TO FRANTICLY FIND A LAWYER WHO WOULD FILE A CHAPTER 11 TO STOP THE FORECLOSURE. HE COULDN'T -- AT THAT TIME WE HAD UP TO 12 --

Kiran Chetry: BUT LET ME SAID -- YOU SAID YOU DIDN'T KNOW ENOUGH, DIDN'T GIVE HIM THE FULL FORCE OF WHAT YOU COULD DO. YOU SAID YOU REFERRED HIM TO THE LAWYER WHO WAS WHITE AND PERHAPS HE COULD HELP HIM. WHAT DID YOU MEAN BY THAT?

Shirley Sherrod: WHAT I MEANT WAS, I DIDN'T KNOW ANYONE ELSE, I DIDN'T KNOW ANOTHER LAWYER AT THAT TIME WHO WAS LOCAL, WHO KNEW SOMETHING ABOUT CHAPTER 12. BUT I THOUGHT IF I TOOK HIM TO A WHITE LAWYER, HE WOULD DEFINITELY DO ALL THAT HE COULD TO HELP SAVE HIS FARM.

John Roberts: MS. SHERROD LET'S MAKE IT CLEAR THOUGH. THIS HAPPENED 24 YEARS AGO. YOU EVENTUALLY WORKED WITH THIS WHITE FARMER, YOU EVENTUALL BECAME FRIENDS, YOU SAY, WITH THE FARMER AND HIS WIFE. SO THE QUESTION I HAVE IS, WHEN THE US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE CAME TO YOU AND SAID YOU HAVE TO STEP DOWN, WHY DIDN'T YOU JUST SAY WAIT A MINUTE, YOU DON'T KNOW THE FULL STORY, HERE'S THE FULL STORY, WHY SHOULD I STEP DOWN?

Shirley Sherrod: I DID SAY THAT. BUT THEY FOR SOME REASON, THE STUFF THAT FOX AND THE TEA PARTY DOES IS SCARING THE ADMINISTRATION. I TOLD... I TOLD THEM GET THE WHOLE TAPE AND LOOK AT HOW I TELL PEOPLE WE HAVE TO GET BEYOND RACE AND START WORKING TOGETHER.

John Roberts: I THINK THAT MANY PEOPLE AT HOME MIGHT BE THINKING, IF YOU'RE RECOUNTING AN OLD STORY, WHY DID YOU SUCCUMB TO PRESSURE TO STEP DOWN, WHY DIDN'T YOU TRY TO FIGHT THIS?

Shirley Sherrod: IF I TRIED TO FIGHT IT AND DIDN'T HAVE ANY SUPPORT FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, WHAT -- WHAT.

Kiran Chetry: BEN JEALOUS REFERRED TO YOU AND THIS SURFACING OF THE TAPE, "HER ACTIONS WERE SHAMEFUL. WHILE SHE WENT ON TO EXPLAIN IN THE STORY, SHE ULTIMATELY REALIZED HER MISTAKE AS WELL AS THE COMMON PREDICAMENT OF WORKING PEOPLE OF ALL RACES. SHE GAVE NO INDICATION SHE HAD ATTEMPTED TO RIGHT THE WRONG SHE HAD DONE TO THIS MAN." AND THE REACTION FROM MANY IN THE AUDIENCE IS DISTURBING. THIS IS FROM BEN JEALOUS. DID YOU TRY TO CLARIFY WITH THE NAACP YOUR STORY?

Shirley Sherrod: NO, I HAVEN'T HAD A CHANCE TO TALK TO ANYONE. ALL OF THIS WAS HAPPENING SO FAST. AND IT'S UNFORTUNATE THAT THE NAACP WOULD MAKE A STATEMENT WITHOUT EVEN CHECKING TO SEE WHAT HAPPENED. THIS WAS 24 YEARS AGO AND I'M TELLING A STORY TO TRY TO UNITE PEOPLE WITH THAT NOW.

John Roberts: CERTAINLY YOU'RE COMING OUT AND TELLING YOUR STORY NOW TAKES IT TO A DIFFERENT LEVEL AND OBVIOUSLY WE'RE GOING TO KEEP FOLLOWING THIS. IT IS GOOD TO GET YOUR SIDE OF IT. SHERRI SH SHERLY SHERROD, FORMER DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE OFFICIAL. PERHAPS WE CAN GET YOU BACK ON AGAIN, GET YOUR FACE ON TV AS WELL AND TALK TO YOU MORE ABOUT THIS AS THIS STORY CONTINUES TO DEVELOP.

Shirley Sherrod: I DON'T MIND.

Palmieri, Suzanne

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:45 AM
To: Rollerson, Cherylene -USDA; Markovich, Amanda; Trollinger, Shelia -USDA; Wood, Maureen; Dienhouse, Greg
Cc: [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6) Palmieri, Suzanne; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: Fw: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

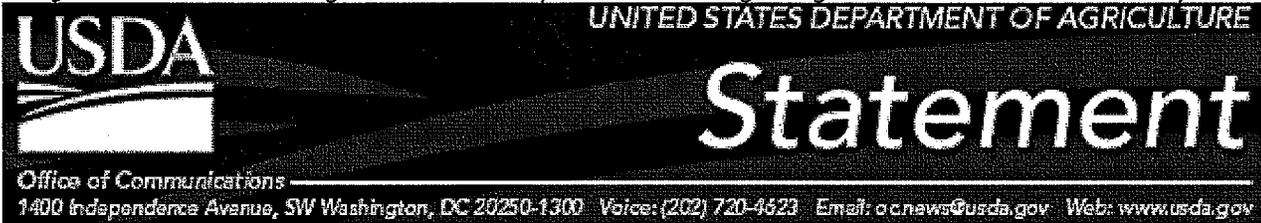
Here is our most recent statement.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

[Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)

From: Mather, Chris
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wed Jul 21 05:17:54 2010
Subject: Fw: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

This went at 2
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wed Jul 21 02:07:06 2010
Subject: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod



Release No. PENDING

Contact:
USDA Office of Communications
(202) 720-4623

Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

WASHINGTON, July 21, 2010 - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack tonight released the following statement in response to the release of remarks in video from Shirley Sherrod:

"I am of course willing and will conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts to ensure to the American people we are providing services in a fair and equitable manner."

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice), or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Exemption (b)(6)

Maisel, Chad

From: georgeko@gmail.com
Sent: Thursday, July 15, 2010 4:34 PM
To: [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Cc: [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6); Tom Vilsack; [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6); Wierigan, Kathleen
Subject: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Dear Ms. Sherrod:

I recently came across a video of your speech at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet in Douglas Coffee County, GA: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=62hPa37v2J4>

In the video, you stated that you did not help a white farmer with the "full force of what [you] could do" when he sought your help. From the context of your speech, you seem to imply that the "amount" of help you provided was due to the color of his skin (white) and because of your sympathy and preference for black farmers.

Are your comments and the context of the comments in your speech correct? As Georgia's USDA Rural Development State Director, do you believe your comments were appropriate?

Thank you,

George Ko

--
George Ko

[Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)

Maisel, Chad

From: [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Thursday, July 15, 2010 7:07 PM
To: [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Cc: [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6); Merrigan, Kathleen
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

My words were taken out of context. I told about something that happened in 1986 when I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm. When so many black farmers were losing their. My point was that I initially did not do all that I could but in the process realized it was not about black versus white but about poor people or those who have versus those who do not.

If they will use all that I said you see that I talked about what I did to save that white farmers farm and from there went to help hundreds of other white farmers

I use the story to try to get people to move beyond race and work together

I feel deeply hurt that someone would take my words out of context and try to make them mean something else

My record of work for others for 45 years will show my love for people and for fairness

Shirley Sherrod

Sent using BlackBerry

From: George Ko [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
To: Sherrod, Shirley - Athens, GA
Cc: [Redacted] Exemption b6; Merrigan, Kathleen (OSEC); [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6); [Redacted] Exemption Thomas, Donnie - Athens, GA
Sent: Thu Jul 15 15:33:41 2010
Subject: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

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Thank you,

George Ko

--

George Ko

Exemption (b)(6)

Maisel, Chad

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:53 PM
To: Maisel, Chad
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Chad. Thx.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Maisel, Chad
To: Eve, Malcolm; Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 21:40:38 2010
Subject: FW: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet
Email train from 7/15 with DS' public account Exemption (b)(6) cced

From: Exemption (b)(6) Exemption (b)(6)

Sent: Thursday, July 15, 2010 7:07 PM

To: Exemption (b)(6)

Cc: Exemption (b)(6) Merrigan, Kathleen

Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

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Sent using BlackBerry

From: George Ko Exemption (b)(6)

To: Sherrod, Shirley - Athens, GA

Cc: Exemption b6 Merrigan, Kathleen (OSEC) Exemption b6

Exemption b6 Thomas,

Donnie - Athens, GA

Sent: Thu Jul 15 15:33:41 2010

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Are your comments and the context of the comments in your speech correct? As Georgia's USDA Rural Development State Director, do you believe your comments were appropriate?

Thank you,

George Ko

--
George Ko

Exemption (b)(6)

Maisel, Chad

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:59 PM
To: Maisel, Chad; Eve, Malcolm; Washo, Kevin
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Chad. When did you discover this message?

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Maisel, Chad
To: Eve, Malcolm; Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 21:40:38 2010
Subject: FW: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet
Email train from 7/15 with DS' public account [redacted] Exemption (b)(6) cced

From: [redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Thursday, July 15, 2010 7:07 PM
To: [redacted]
Cc: [redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
[redacted] Merrigan, Kathleen
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

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Shirley Sherrod

Sent using BlackBerry

From: George Ko <georgeko@gmail.com>
To: Sherrod, Shirley - Athens, GA
Cc: [redacted] Exemption (b)(6) Merrigan, Kathleen (OSEC) [redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
[redacted] Exemption (b)(6) Thomas,
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Are your comments and the context of the comments in your speech correct? As Georgia's USDA Rural Development State Director, do you believe your comments were appropriate?

Thank you,

George Ko

--

George Ko

Exemption (b)(6)

Maisel, Chad

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:07 PM
To: Maisel, Chad
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

No worries. When did you let the Deputy Secretary know about it?
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Maisel, Chad
To: Jett, Carole; Eve, Malcolm; Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:06:14 2010
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

On Thursday. With this email account I sometimes wait to see how the email exchanges develop so that I can best decide who to send it along to. I wish I had forwarded it right away.

From: Jett, Carole
To: Maisel, Chad; Eve, Malcolm; Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 21:58:40 2010
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Chad. When did you discover this message?

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

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To: Eve, Malcolm; Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 21:40:38 2010
Subject: FW: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet
Email train from 7/15 with DS' public account [redacted] cced

From: [redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Thursday, July 15, 2010 7:07 PM
To: [redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Cc: [redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
[redacted] Merrigan, Kathleen
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

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Sent using BlackBerry

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Are your comments and the context of the comments in your speech correct? As Georgia's USDA Rural Development State Director, do you believe your comments were appropriate?

Thank you,

George Ko

--
George Ko

Exemption (b)(6)

Maisel, Chad

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:09 PM
To: Maisel, Chad
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Thanks. Get some sleep.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Maisel, Chad
To: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:08:21 2010
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

This afternoon

From: Jett, Carole
To: Maisel, Chad
Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:07:24 2010
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

No worries. When did you let the Deputy Secretary know about it?
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

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To: Jett, Carole; Eve, Malcolm; Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:06:14 2010
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

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Chad. When did you discover this message?

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

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Email train from 7/15 with DS' public account [redacted] Exemption (b)(6) cced

From: [redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Thursday, July 15, 2010 7:07 PM
To: [redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Cc: [redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
[redacted] Exemption (b)(6) Merrigan, Kathleen
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

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Sent using BlackBerry

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To: Sherrod, Shirley - Athens, GA
Cc: [redacted] Exemption (b)(6); Merrigan, Kathleen (OSEC); [redacted] Exemption (b)(6); [redacted] Thomas, Donnie - Athens, GA
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Are your comments and the context of the comments in your speech correct? As Georgia's USDA Rural DevelopmentÂ State Director, do you believe your comments were appropriate?Â

Thank you,

George Ko

--

George Ko

Exemption (b)(6)

Maisel, Chad

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:29 AM
To: Maisel, Chad
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Have you interviewed with Astri yet?

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Maisel, Chad
To: Jett, Carole
Sent: Wed Jul 21 07:26:11 2010
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

I would say 3:00pm

From: Jett, Carole
To: Maisel, Chad
Sent: Wed Jul 21 07:13:18 2010
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Chad
I am putting a tick tock together. Do you know time?
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Maisel, Chad
To: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:08:21 2010
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

This afternoon

From: Jett, Carole
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Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:07:24 2010
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

No worries. When did you let the Deputy Secretary know about it?
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Maisel, Chad
To: Jett, Carole; Eve, Malcolm; Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:06:14 2010
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

On Thursday. With this email account I sometimes wait to see how the email exchanges develop so that I can best decide who to send it along to. I wish I had forwarded it right away.

From: Jett, Carole
To: Maisel, Chad; Eve, Malcolm; Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 21:58:40 2010
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Chad. When did you discover this message?

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Maisel, Chad
To: Eve, Malcolm; Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 21:40:38 2010
Subject: FW: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet
Email train from 7/15 with DS' public account Exemption (b)(6) cced

From: Exemption (b)(6) [mailto:Exemption (b)(6)]
Sent: Thursday, July 15, 2010 7:07 PM
To: Exemption (b)(6)
Cc: Exemption (b)(6); Merrigan, Kathleen
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

My words were taken out of context. I told about something that happened in 1986 when I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm. When so many black farmers were losing their. My point was that I initially did not do all that I could but in the process realized it was not about black versus white but about poor people or those who have versus those who do not.

If they will use all that I said you see that I talked about what I did to save that white farmers farm and from there went to help hundreds of other white farmers

I use the story to try to get people to move beyond race and work together

I feel deeply hurt that someone would take my words out of context and try to make them mean something else

My record of work for others for 45 years will show my love for people and for fairness

Shirley Sherrod

Sent using BlackBerry

From: George Ko Exemption (b)(6)
To: Sherrod, Shirley - Athens, GA
Cc: Exemption b6; Merrigan, Kathleen (OSEC); Exemption b6
Exemption (b)(6) Thomas,

Donnie - Athens, GA

Sent: Thu Jul 15 15:33:41 2010

Subject: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Dear Ms. Sherrod:

I recently came across a video of your speech at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet in Douglas Coffee County, GA: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=62hPa37v2J4>

In the video, you stated that you did not help a white farmer with the "full force of what [you] could do" when he sought your help. From the context of your speech, you seem to imply that the "amount" of help you provided was due to the color of his skin (white) and because of your sympathy and preference for black farmers.

Are your comments and the context of the comments in your speech correct? As Georgia's USDA Rural Development State Director, do you believe your comments were appropriate?

Thank you,

George Ko

--

George Ko

Exemption (b)(6)

Maisel, Chad

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:04 AM
To: Maisel, Chad
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Perfect. Thx.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Maisel, Chad
To: Jett, Carole
Sent: Wed Jul 21 08:27:00 2010
Subject: RE: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Re the tick tock:

As I think more about the timeline, I think I told DS about the existence of an email around 4p. I actually printed it out and showed it to her around 6:15p.

Deputy's emails

Kamerri

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:18 PM
To: [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Cc: Parnier, Suzanne
Subject: Today

Monday

Georgia rd dir resigned. Will fill you in.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

[Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)

Kamerri

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 7:29 PM
To: [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Cc: Palmieri, Suzanne
Subject: Fw: final

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

[Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)

From: Mather, Chris
To: Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:35:49 2010
Subject: Fw: final

Will push send shortly.
Chris Mather

From: Gavin, Tom
To: Mather, Chris; [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Cc: Cherlin, Reid H.
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:32:13 2010
Subject: final
Chris –

[Redacted] Exemption (b)(5)

Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.

Kamerri

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 7:31 PM
To: Exemption (b)(6)
Cc: Parnien, Suzanne
Subject: Fw: WCBS story on Sherod
Attachments: image001.jpg

Fyi
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Mather, Chris
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:52:19 2010
Subject: Fw: WCBS story on Sherod

FYI
Chris Mather

From: Maloney, Wayne
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: Zaina, Lisa; Cook, Cheryl; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:31:29 2010
Subject: WCBS story on Sherod

SHOCK: Video Suggests Racism At NAACP Event

NEW YORK (CBS) —



[to enlarge](#)

1 of 1

Shirley Sherrod, USDA Rural Development Georgia State Director

Last Tuesday, the NAACP passed a resolution condemning racism in the Tea Party movement. The organization's delegates called on Tea Party leaders to "repudiate those in their ranks who use racist language in their signs and speeches."

Tea Party members and supporters saw the resolution as a condemnation of the group itself, which calls for fiscal responsibility, restrictions on governmental power, and backs political candidates who claim the same.

The NAACP's action caught the attention of Andrew Breitbart of BigGovernment.com, who said the controversy was "absolutely manufactured for political gain," in a summer "in which the economy is the number one issue affecting blacks and whites in this country. This country can ill afford the schism of race to be exploited the way [he is] based upon the false premise of the Tea Party being racist."

He also claimed to possess recorded evidence of racism from the NAACP.

On Monday, Breitbart posted a video of a speech by Shirley Sherrod, USDA Rural Development Georgia State Director, delivered at the NAACP's 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet.

The video shows Sherrod speaking of racial considerations being a factor for how much help she would give.

"The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking but he was trying to show me he was superior to me. I know what he was doing, but he had come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was, I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," Sherrod said.

"I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough," Sherrod said. "So that when he, I assumed the Department of Agriculture had sent him to me, either that or the Georgia Department of Agriculture, and he needed to go back and report that I did try to help him."

In the video, Sherrod also spoke of referring the white farmer to a white lawyer, thinking the latter would be more sympathetic because of race. "So I took him to a white lawyer that had attended some of training that we had provided because Chapter 12 bankruptcy had just been enacted for the family farm. So I figured if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him."

Kamerri

From: The Office of the Secretary
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:14 PM
To: ALL-USDA-2K
Subject: Message from Secretary Vilsack

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250**

Dear employee:

Some of you may have seen the news stories about USDA today. I want to reiterate my commitment and that of the leadership at USDA to civil rights. We all must work to ensure that we are treating our customers and employees equally and fairly and we all should have zero tolerance for discrimination.

I also want to remind all of you that you have a unique and important individual responsibility to represent this sentiment in your official actions, statements, and public presentations. We are lucky to have the opportunity to work for the American people and we owe it to them to instill confidence in our leadership. Our words and actions matter.

We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and I thank you for your service and efforts to achieve this goal,

Secretary Vilsack

Kamerri

From: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:47 PM
To: [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Subject: Re: Checking in

Sure. To Thurmont without incident. Thanks for caring.

----- Original Message -----

From: Kamerri
To: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Tue Jul 20 19:37:01 2010
Subject: Checking in

Can't imagine a rougher day for you. Let me know what, if anything, I can do to help. I'm sorry I wasn't around Monday to help as the situation developed.

My focus right now is your physical and mental wellbeing. Would you please email or call when you get home so that I know you made it safely? Thank you my friend.

Kathleen A. Merrigan Deputy Secretary USDA

Kamerri

From: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Monday, July 20, 2010 8:57 PM
To: Exemption (b)(6)
Subject: Re: Checking in

I'm home safely, neighbors waiting to tell me the PA State Police have already driven by.

----- Original Message -----

From: Kamerri
To: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Tue Jul 20 19:37:01 2010
Subject: Checking in

Can't imagine a rougher day for you. Let me know what, if anything, I can do to help. I'm sorry I wasn't around Monday to help as the situation developed.

My focus right now is your physical and mental wellbeing. Would you please email or call when you get home so that I know you made it safely? Thank you my friend.
Kathleen A. Merrigan Deputy Secretary USDA

Kamerri

From: Maddux, Sheryl -USDA
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:24 PM
To: Kamerri; Heard, Robin; Repass, Todd; Lescallett, Kenneth
Subject: Cheryl Cook

Cheryl made it safely home and her neighbor told her that the PA State Police had driven by a couple of times.

Sheryl K. Maddux

USDA Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Coordination.

Kamerri

From: Merrigan, Kathleén
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:39 PM
To: Kamerri
Cc: Palmieri, Suzanne
Subject: FW: Forced Resignation of Shirley Sherrod
Importance: High

From: [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:26 PM
To: [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6) Merrigan, Kathleen
Subject: Forced Resignation of Shirley Sherrod
Importance: High

Honorable Mr. Vilsack & Ms. Merrigan: I strongly urge you to make a public appology for forcing Ms. Shirley Sherrod to resign her position. If you or your subordinates had not jumped to conclusions before reacting to such internet folly, you would have understood that what Ms. Sherrod was saying was remarkable. Her recounting of an epiphany WRT her ignorance of caucasians was very revealing & should not have been reason for dismissal. If your subordinates had only listened to the full speech & offered a rebuttal on the internet as well as in the news, you & the administration would have come out looking good. Now you all look like bumpkins; how can I keep supporting the adminsitration when you all act so stupidly?!

Please clean up this mess, state the facts, don't overreact (didn't any of you get any management training before assuming your positions?), and for God's sake, give Shirley her job back!!! This is a shameful incident.

Shirley C. Rubens

Kamerri

From: Maisel, Chad
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:42 PM
To: Kamerri; Palmieri, Suzanne
Subject: Email has been forwarded

Apologies again. I can tell you that lessons have been learned

Chad Maisel

Exemption (b)(6)

Kamerri

From: Palmieri, Suzanne
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:44 PM
To: Maisel, Chad; [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Subject: Re: Email has been forwarded

Thanks. Sorry you had to go in.
Suzanne Smith Palmieri
Chief of Staff
Office of the Deputy Secretary
USDA

[Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)

From: Maisel, Chad
To: Kamerri; Palmieri, Suzanne
Sent: Tue Jul 20 21:42:21 2010
Subject: Email has been forwarded

Apologies again. I can tell you that lessons have been learned

Chad Maisel

[Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)

1 - (18 instances) Exs (b)(2), (b)(6)

2 - (2 instances) Exemption 5

1 - (1 instance) Exemption (b)(5)

Cook, Cheryl

From: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Monday, July 26, 2010 11:15 AM
To: DeJong, Justin; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: FW: AP inquiry

-----Original Message-----

From: Jalonick, Mary Clare [mailto:[Exemption \(b\)\(6\)](#)]
Sent: Monday, July 26, 2010 11:07 AM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: AP inquiry

Hello -- I cover USDA for AP and was hoping to chat with you about the Sherrod situation -- I know I'd have to work through the press office but thought I'd send a personal email as well. I've asked them for an interview also. Thanks much, my numbers are below.

Mary Clare Jalonick
The Associated Press
202-641-9461 (office)

Exemption (b)(6)

Twitter: MCJalonick

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[IP_US_DISC]

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Cook, Cheryl

From: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 2:16 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: RE: Hey

Sorry for the delay.

I received your forward of Krysta's message indicating that the Secretary wanted Shirley on Admin Leave at 3:33 p.m. Per my outgoing call log, I called the GA state office at 3:37 (adjusting for my phone's clock being off by 4.5 hours).

There was no answer at the state office, so I call her cell phone at 3:38 and reached her. That was the conversation putting her on leave and hearing her explanation.

I called her back on her cell phone at 4:42 to ask whether she'd be willing to resign.

I called her a third time on her cell phone at 5:56 to ask whether she'd be willing to offer a letter of resignation by the end of the day.

I called her a fourth time at 6:35 to ask whether she'd be willing to pull over to the side of the road, and submit a resignation by email.

I received her email at 6:55 and forwarded to WHLO.

-----Original Message-----

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 1:09 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Hey
Importance: High

Sorry to bug you. Can you give me the exact times that you called shirley sherrod on Monday?

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

Cook, Cheryl

From: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 8:24 AM
To: Maddux, Sheryl -USDA
Cc: Jett, Carole
Subject: Just a few more Sherrod-related emails this morning
Attachments: RE: Shirley Sherrod quote; I am offended by reports of cheryl cooks conduct; Rehire Shirley Sherrod

Good morning to you both, and happy Friday.

Cook, Cheryl

From: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:27 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Fw: ABC News / Good Morning America

One more

From: Bosland, Katie
To: Cook, Cheryl; [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Wed Jul 21 12:09:55 2010
Subject: ABC News / Good Morning America

Hi Cheryl-

My name is Katie Bosland and I work for ABC News / Good Morning America with George Stephanopoulos and Robin Roberts. I wanted to reach out as we have been covering and following Shirley Sherrrod's departure from your organization closely and wanted to let you know that should you want to speak out – clear up any misconceptions – that we are here, ready to listen. I have also been in touch with Stephanie Chan in the communications department but wanted you to know personally of our sincere interest in getting the truth out and hearing from you, as your voice is one that has been absent from the discussion thus far.

We'll hope to speak soon and take care – I am reachable 2/47 via blackberry at [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)

All best,
Katie Bosland

Katie Bosland | Segment Producer | ABC News, *Good Morning America* | Katie.Bosland@abc.com | 202.222.7331

Cook, Cheryl

From: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:57 AM
To: [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Cc: Abebe, Yeshimebet; Magdey.Abdallah@one.usda.gov; [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6); Zaina, Lisa; Mather, Chris
Subject: RE: Statement

I have asked for something to provide to the State Directors. In the meantime, please steer those in your region to the public statements released by the Secretary, most recently at 2:00 this morning, as follows -

Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

WASHINGTON, July 21, 2010 - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack tonight released the following statement in response to the release of remarks in video from Shirley Sherrod:

"I am of course willing and will conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts to ensure to the American people we are providing services in a fair and equitable manner."

-----Original Message-----

From: [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6) mailto:[Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:48 AM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Cc: Abebe, Yeshimebet; Magdey.Abdallah@one.usda.gov; Katie.Yocum@one.usda.gov; Zaina, Lisa; Mather, Chris
Subject: FW: Statement

Cheryl-

Would it make sense to have talking points for SDs around the country in case they start getting calls by reporters or are asked to comment at events?

-----Original Message-----

From: Brunner, Terry - Albuquerque, NM
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:44 AM
To: Chiappe, Cristina - Washington, DC
Subject: Statement

Cristina: If this issue with the Georgia State Director continues throughout today, I wouldn't be surprised if some enterprising reporters start calling other State Directors around the country or asking us about this when they see us at events. What does NO want us to say about this situation if asked?

Terry Brunner
State Director
USDA Rural Development-New Mexico
6200 Jefferson, NE Room 255
Albuquerque, NM 87109
Office: [Redacted]
Fax: [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)

Cook, Cheryl

From: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:54 AM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Fw: from Philip Shenon, "The Daily Beast," www.thedailybeast.com

From: Phil Shenon
To: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Wed Jul 21 09:26:53 2010
Subject: from Philip Shenon, "The Daily Beast," www.thedailybeast.com

Ms. Cook,

I'm a reporter for The Daily Beast website, www.thedailybeast.com.

I've been asked to write on the Shirley Sherrod story. Obviously you figure prominently in it.

Would it be possible to talk? I'm at Exemption (b)(6)

If not, can you help me understand by email what happened here?

Thank you.

Phil Shenon
www.philipshenon.com
www.thedailybeast.com
cellphone: Exemption (b)(6)

Cook, Cheryl

From: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:53 AM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: Emails

Attachments: Shirley Sherrod; Reinstate Shirley Sherrod immediately; do the right thing; Shirley Sherrod; Shirley Sherrod; Reinstate Shirley Sherrod!; Reinstate Shirley Sherrod immediately!; My two cents; Not Pleased with the DOA; Shirley Sherrod firing; Sherrod; Shirley Sherrod; Protest firing of Shirley Sherrod; Unfair to Shirley Sherrod; Shirley Sherrod is a hero, who could not have acted in a racist manner; Shirley Sherrod; Behavior; Please Reinstate Shirley Sherrod; rush to judgement; Shirley Sherrod; Media coverage and second look at Sherrod case; You need to reinstate Sherrod; Apologize and Rehire Ms. Sherron NOW; Shirley Sherrod; Representation; Got integrity?; Shirley Sherrod; news; Shirley Sherrod; Shirley Sherrod; REINSTATE SHIRLEY SHERROD; Shirley Sherrod; Unfair firing of Ms. Sherrod; Reinstate Shirley Sherrod; Shirley Sherrod; Reinstate Shirley Sherrod; Shirley Todd; Reinstate Ms. Sherrod; RESIGN; The Unjust Firing of Shirley Sherrod; Give Ms. Sherrod her job back; Embarrassing behavior by a Public Official; Rehire Shirley Sherrod with apologies; Zellner charges reverse double standard.; Shirley Sherrod incident; Shirley Sherrod; Shirley Sherrod; In the matter of Shirley Sherrod; Re-Instate Sherrod!; Please rescind your rash action on Shirley Sherrod; We are watching; Fired for that 24-year-old anecdote? Seriously?

Sent to Sheryl Maddux, too. She forwarded to OIG and others. Only a few really seem threatening in any way, most just heap shame upon my head.

Cook, Cheryl

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:22 PM
To: Tonsager, Dallas; Cook, Cheryl; Vasquez, Victor
Cc: Zaina, Lisa
Subject: Secretary statement

Importance: High

Yesterday, I asked for and accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation for two reasons. First, for the past 18 months, we have been working to turn the page on the sordid civil rights record at USDA and this controversy could make it more difficult to move forward on correcting injustices.

Second, state rural development directors make many decisions and are often called to use their discretion. The controversy surrounding her comments would create situations where her decisions, rightly or wrongly, would be called into question making it difficult for her to bring jobs to Georgia.

Our policy is clear. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA and we strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have a duty to ensure that when we provide services to the American people we do so in an equitable manner. But equally important is our duty to instill confidence in the American people that we are fair service providers. Carole Jett Deputy Chief of Staff USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

Cook, Cheryl

From: [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:18 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Embarrassing behavior by a Public Official

Ms. Cook,

I was extremely disappointed at the news report identifying you as the individual who demanded Shirley Sherrod resign her post.

As an attorney I would think you above others would adhere to the concepts of a fair hearing and due process as a pillar of your public service management duties. And yet you apparently took an out of context remark and used to it to force a career public servant from her position without any reasonable attempt at ascertaining the truth of the matter.

If there is any justice, Ms. Sherrod will be invited back to work and you will be sent to some much needed Human Resources training on responsible investigation techniques.

Shame on you.

Best regards in you future private endeavors,
S. Van Hook

--

Skip Van Hook
Lexington, Kentucky
Mobile [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*

"There is a debt of service due from every man to his country, proportioned to the bounties which nature and fortune have measured to him." Thomas Jefferson, 1796

Cook, Cheryl

From: Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:05 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Rehire Shirley Sherrod with apologies

I'm a U.S. Citizen, African American and resident of the state of Maryland.

Against that backdrop, I'm writing to urge you and Secretary Vilsack to reconsider your demand for Shirley Sherrod's resignation from the USDA. Apparently, you or whoever demanded her resignation acted too soon after a heavily edited video from the right-wing supporting Andrew Breitbart was made public. If you had taken the time to review the entire video or had spoken to Ms. Sherrod about the context of her words, you might have learned the entire truth -- the entire story. Instead, in your rush to not appear like you supported racism in your agency, you terminated the employment of someone dedicated to public service. Indeed, if you watched the entire video, you would have learned that Ms. Sherrod's comments were taken out of context, that the anecdote was part of a larger story, one in which she explains how she overcame her initial prejudice. According to Ms. Sherrod, herself, "The story helped me realize that race is not the issue, it's about the people who have and the people who don't. When I speak to groups, I try to speak about getting beyond the issue of race."

Had you done some further investigating, you might've also learned that the white farmer about whom Ms. Sherrod spoke actually counts Ms. Sherrod as a close friend who helped him save his farm. In the words of the wife of Mr. Roger Spooner, "She's a good friend ... she helped save [our] farm...They have not treated her right."

The "they" that Ms. Spooner is referring would be you, Ms. Cook.

I don't know that my letter will do much good, but I strongly urge you to reconsider your position and to offer Ms. Sherrod her job back. She appears to be a woman dedicated to public service and dedicated to helping small and struggling farmers in this country -- something the Department of Agriculture desperately needs more of.

Sincerely,

Cook, Cheryl

From: [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:47 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Zellner charges reverse double standard.

Dear Ms Cheryl Cook,

As a personal friend of Shirley and, Civil Rights Legend, Rev. Charles Sherrod, I want to protest your overly political and precipitous dismissal of Ms Shirley Sherrod from her position with the USDA.

Researchers will ask how many white racists in the last 50 years have been dismissed as quickly with as little due process. President Obama needs and deserves our protection and support, but sometimes he needs to take a risk and not bend his knee at the shrine of Southern and American racism.

Re-instate Shirley Sherrod!

In struggle,

Dr. Bob Zellner

Cook, Cheryl

From: [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:42 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Shirley Sherrod incident

Dear Undersecretary Cook:

My name is Casey Kaplan. I'm a U.S. Citizen and resident of the state of Texas. I care passionately about agricultural issues facing our country, but I care even more passionately about civil rights, treating citizens equally and fairly, and overcoming racism in this great country.

Against that backdrop, I'm writing to urge you and Secretary Vilsack to reconsider your demand for Shirley Sherrod's resignation from the USDA. Apparently, you or whoever demanded her resignation acted too soon after a heavily edited video from the right-wing supporting Andrew Breitbart was made public. If you had taken the time to review the entire video or had spoken to Ms. Sherrod about the context of her words, you might have learned the entire truth – the entire story. Instead, in your rush to not appear like you supported racism in your agency, you terminated the employment of someone dedicated to public service. Indeed, if you watched the entire video, you would have learned that Ms. Sherrod's comments were taken out of context, that the anecdote was part of a larger story, one in which she explains how she overcame her initial prejudice. According to Ms. Sherrod, herself, "The story helped me realize that race is not the issue, it's about the people who have and the people who don't. When I speak to groups, I try to speak about getting beyond the issue of race."

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The "they" that Ms. Spooner is referring would be you, Ms. Cook.

I don't know that my letter will do much good, but I strongly urge you to reconsider your position and to offer Ms. Sherrod her job back. She appears to be a woman dedicated to public service and dedicated to helping small and struggling farmers in this country – something the Department of Agriculture desperately needs more of.

Sincerely,

Casey Kaplan

[Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)

Cook, Cheryl

From: [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:38 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Shirley Sherrod

Dear Ms. Cook,

I find it more than disturbing that a famed civil rights activist would be fired by you on patently false information, edited and distributed by anti-administration sources. The least you owe Sherrod is an apology and reinstatement. The most you owe her is to change your methods of dealing with your employees.

Terence Cannon

[Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)

Cook, Cheryl

From: Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:33 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Shirley Sherrod

Dear Ms. Cook,

I am writing in outrage over the forced resignation of Shirley Sherrod. As an historian of the civil rights movement, I can tell you that Shirley and her husband Charles have been in the forefront of trying to unite blacks and whites. SHE IS NOT A RACIST. Her remarks edited (distorted) on You Tube do not reflect the entire story, which is to show that she overcame race to focus on helping poor people regardless of their race. If the Obama Administration does not reverse this miscarriage of justice, then it will be a victory for crass politics over truth. Fox News and other conservatives cannot control the president's agenda, especially with respect to racial and economic reform. The behavior of the NAACP in this instance has also been deplorable and deserves condemnation. The President should speak out in his eloquent way and try once again to educate the American public about what racism really means in the past and present. He can use Shirley Sherrod not as a cartoon figure created on You Tube, but as one of the real heroes in the fight for social and economic justice.

Sincerely,

Steven F. Lawson
Professor Emeritus of History
Rutgers University

Cook, Cheryl

From: [REDACTED] Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:31 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: In the matter of Shirley Sherrod

Dear Ms. Cook,

I think it a matter of great import that the story be made public in its entirety. I have researched the full account of Ms. Sherrod's behavior and experience now in question and based on all the facts, there is absolutely no evidence that would support claims that she is a racist.

She was, all those years ago, being honest about her initial feelings AND more significantly about her growth in understanding that it is class and not ethnicity which was the pertinent issue.

Further, the white farming family in question, has spoken out in her defense.

By acting in haste, Fox News and CNN have been allowed to write the story and the story they have written is false.

What can you now do to right this wrong?
I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Marjorie
Marjorie Loring Gauley

Cook, Cheryl

From: Exemption (b)(6) on behalf of Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:15 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Please rescind your rash action on Shirley Sherrod

Dear Ms. Cook,

I was very upset to learn that you, representing the administration, have taken ill-informed and hasty action against Shirley Sherrod. I am a white former civil rights worker, and well-acquainted with Sherrod and her husband. They have consistently acted to oppose racism of all kinds. Please look into the facts, rather than acting on the basis of political expediency and a right-wing witch hunt.

I hope to hear from you soon about your decision to reverse your ill-considered action.

sincerely,

--

William Minter

Exemption (b)(6)

<http://www.africanfocus.org>

<http://www.noeasyvictories.org>

<http://www.mysteryplaces.net>

Cook, Cheryl

From: [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:15 PM
To: Harrington-Watson, Shirley
Cc: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Re-Instate Sherrod!

Re-Instate Sherrod! This is outrageous.

Richard Downes

[Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*

A white American businessman

Cook, Cheryl

From: [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:28 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: CNN inquiry

Good afternoon—today CNN aired a lengthy interview with Shirley Sherrod regarding her resignation. She said you asked her to pull over to the side of the road to text in her resignation, and also said you told her the resignation request came from the White House.

We would like to speak with you about what happened.

You can reach me at any time at [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*

Thanks much,
Rachel Streitfeld
CNN Producer

[Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*

Cook, Cheryl

From: [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:22 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: shirley sherrod

Dear Ms. Cook,

Hi, I'm working on the Shirley Sherrod/USDA story today and I wanted to reach out to you. Ms. Sherrod, on CNN today, said you were the one who called her and said she had to resign -- she said you specifically said she had to resign because the story was going to be on Glenn Beck.

I wanted to give you the chance to respond to that -- please give me a call when you can.

Thanks,
Rachel

--
Rachel Slajda
Reporter-Blogger, Talking Points Memo

[Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*

Cook, Cheryl

From: [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:54 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Handling the Sherrod Matter

Dear Ms. Cook,

You are the one that should be fired, not Shirley Sherrod.

Your willingness to act without all the facts, apparently bowing to pressure from above, is the worst kind of incompetence.

The honorable thing to do is resign. At least you will save your self respect.

Joseph M. Cleary

--
Darwin's Dictum

"How odd it is that anyone should not see that all observation must be for or against some view if it is to be of any service!"

Cook, Cheryl

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:44 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Cc: DeJong, Justin; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole
Subject: RE: CNN NewsroomAM w/Tony Harris...

Will pass on to press shop. Thanks

From: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:41 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole
Subject: FW: CNN NewsroomAM w/Tony Harris...

Chris, is this program on the list to receive a call from OC?

From: Durham, Diane [mailto:Exemption (b)(6)]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:33 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: CNN NewsroomAM w/Tony Harris...

Ms. Cook, CNN NewsroomAM w/Tony Harris is requesting a live interview as soon as possible with you regarding Shirley Sherrod's dismissal. Please call me so we might discuss the possibility of this interview. Thank you.

Diane Durham
Editorial Producer/NewsroomAM

Exemption (b)(6) cell

Cook, Cheryl

From: Durham, Diane [Exemption (b)(6)]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:33 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
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Diane Durham
Editorial Producer/NewsroomAM

Exemption (b)(6) cell

Cook, Cheryl

From: Scott Mansfield [Exemption (b)(6)]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:03 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: We are watching

Did you ask Sherrod to resign? You made a mistake!!!

Positive Creations
Scott Mansfield

Exemption (b)(6)

Edge Certified - City & State Minority Certification - OSU Licensed Vendor

Cook, Cheryl

From: [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:00 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Fired for that 24-year-old anecdote? Seriously?

Shirley Sherrod was fired because right-wing propagandists manipulated a 24-year-old anecdote she used to talk about overcoming racism? Seriously? Since when is Glenn Beck running the Department of Agriculture?

If the Department was trying to look absolutely ridiculous, congratulations: <http://www.cnn.com/2010/POLITICS/07/20/agriculture.employee.naacp/index.html?hpt=T1>

Major Fail.

Cook, Cheryl

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:44 AM
To: Cook, Cheryl; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole
Cc: [REDACTED] Exemption (b)(6)
Subject: Re: Cheryl - John Roberts at CNN here..

We don't want to make the story last any longer. Hope still is that this is one day story.
Chris Mather

From: Cook, Cheryl
To: Mather, Chris; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole
Cc: [REDACTED] Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Tue Jul 20 11:29:40 2010
Subject: Fw: Cheryl - John Roberts at CNN here..

From: Roberts, John
To: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Tue Jul 20 11:16:33 2010
Subject: Cheryl - John Roberts at CNN here..

Cheryl,
It's my understanding that you were the USDA official who asked Shirley Sherrod to resign. Was the decision based solely on the snippet of video that is on the internet, or did you have more information regarding Ms. Sherrod's record?

Thanks very much,
John Roberts
CNN

Cook, Cheryl

From: Roberts, John [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:17 AM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Cheryl - John Roberts at CNN here..

Cheryl,
It's my understanding that you were the USDA official who asked Shirley Sherrod to resign. Was the decision based solely on the snippet of video that is on the internet, or did you have more information regarding Ms. Sherrod's record?

Thanks very much,
John Roberts
CNN

Cook, Cheryl

From: McNeilly, Timothy - Washington, DC [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:07 AM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: FW: SD admin leave

The PIC has asked if there is anything that can be shared with the GA employees on the overall situation. Your message below seems most appropriate – are you ok with it being sent from the state office to the GA employees?

Timothy J. McNeilly | Director, Legislative and Public Affairs
Rural Development
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W. | Washington, D.C. 20250
Phone: 202.720.1019 | Fax: 202.690.4083

www.rurdev.usda.gov

"Committed to the future of rural communities"
"Estamos dedicados al futuro de las comunidades rurales"

From: Cook, Cheryl [mailto:[Redacted]] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:28 AM
To: Graves, Donna - Athens, GA; Thomas, Donnie - Athens, GA
Cc: McNeilly, Timothy - Washington, DC
Subject: Re: SD admin leave

Here's the official statement on Ms. Sherrod from the Secretary's office:

"Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the Department, and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously."

My advice to you and others who might get media calls is to refer the caller to the Department's Office of Communications. Chris Mather is the Director of Communications. Justin DeJong is the Department's Press Secretary. Please do not issue any other statements. I know this is a difficult time for all of you who worked with Shirley, but it only gets worse if we perpetuate the situation with further statements to the media.

Cheryl

From: Graves, Donna - Athens, GA
To: Cook, Cheryl; Thomas, Donnie - Athens, GA
Sent: Mon Jul 19 17:38:54 2010
Subject: Re: SD admin leave
Is there language we should use to explain to our employees? If we come up with some, should it have your blessing before it goes out?

From: Cook, Cheryl <[Redacted]> *Exemption (b)(6)*
To: Graves, Donna - Athens, GA
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:13:49 2010
Subject: Re: SD admin leave

Yes, Donna, paperwork to follow. I will ask Donnie to serve as Acting State Director till this gets ironed out.

----- Original Message -----

From: [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6) [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
To: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:59:57 2010
Subject: SD admin leave

Cheryl:

Donnie Thomas and I have been advised that Shirley is on Admin Leave effective immediately. Will something be send confirming?

Reommendation is for Donnie to be Acting - he was between SD's and is Asst to SD. Do we initiate this or does your office?

Any questions, please call Donnie at [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6) or me at [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)

Thanks. Donna

Cook, Cheryl

From: Thomas, Donnie - Athens, GA [Donnie.Thomas@ga.usda.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:51 AM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Cc: Stapler, EJ - Athens, GA
Subject: Re: SD admin leave

Thanks Cheryl.

Donnie via BB

From: Cook, Cheryl <Exemption (b)(6)>
To: Graves, Donna - Athens, GA; Thomas, Donnie - Athens, GA
Cc: McNeilly, Timothy - Washington, DC
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:28:01 2010
Subject: Re: SD admin leave

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Any questions, please call Donnie at *Exemption (b)(6)* or me at *Exemption (b)(6)*

Thanks. Donna

Cook, Cheryl

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:19 AM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Fw: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD
Importance: High

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Mather, Chris
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:08:20 2010
Subject: Fw: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

CNN American Morning talked to Sherrod. Transcript below.
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:46:21 2010
Subject: Fw: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

Rest of the transcript.

I'm trying to see if I can find the clip online. Esp interested in hearing the full response from this response-

Shirley Sherrod: IF I TRIED TO FIGHT IT AND DIDN'T HAVE ANY SUPPORT FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, WHAT -- WHAT.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Kaplan, Karrah
To: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:37:13 2010
Subject: FW: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

updated

From: McCandless, Brittany

8/4/2010

Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:37 AM

To: Kraft, James; Dalberto, Emily; Manning, Regina; Kaplan, Karrah

Subject: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

MISSING PART BELOW IN RED:

American Morning transcript

Kiran Chetry and John Roberts interview **Shirley Sherrod**, a black Agriculture Department employee, who resigned Monday after conservative media outlets aired a video of her telling an audience she had not given a white farmer "the full force of what I could do" to help him save the family farm. She says the charges of racism are wrong

MISSING PART BELOW IN RED:

Kiran Chetry: THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ACCEPTS THE RESIGNATION OF AN EMPLOYEE AFTER A VIDEO SURFACED SHOWING HER TELLING AN AUDIENCE THAT SHE WITHHELD ASSISTANCE TO A WHITE FARMER BECAUSE OF HIS RACE. LET'S LISTEN TO WHAT SHE TOLD THE NAACP. DOES THAT VIDEO TELL THE WHOLE STORY? JOINING US NOW ON THE PHONE FROM ALBANY, GEORGIA, SHERRI SHERROD HERSELF. THANKS FOR BEING WITH US THIS MORNING, SHIRLEY.

Shirley Sherrod: THANK YOU.

Kiran Chetry: YOU SAY THIS WAS PART OF THE STORY AND THAT IT WAS PART THAT WAS SPLICED ENOUGH TO SHOW YOU IN A BAD LIGHT, THAT THIS ISN'T THE WHOLE STORY. WILL YOU FINISH FOR US HOW THIS ENDED?

Shirley Sherrod: OKAY. I WAS SPEAKING TO THAT GROUP LIKE I'VE DONE MANY GROUPS AND I TELL THEM ABOUT A TIME WHEN I THOUGHT THE ISSUE WAS RACE AND RACE ONLY. AND I TELL THEM THE STORY OF HOW I WORKED WITH A WHITE FARMER BACK IN 1986. I WAS NOT WORKING FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE. I WAS WORKING WITH AND NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION ASSISTING FARMERS THROUGHOUT SOUTH GEORGIA AND THE SOUTHEAST. AND THIS FARMER CAME TO ME FOR HELP. I WAS TELLING THE STORY ABOUT HOW WORKING WITH HIM HELPED ME TO SEE THAT THE ISSUE IS NOT ABOUT RACE, IT'S ABOUT THOSE WHO HAVE VERSUS THOSE WHO DO NOT HAVE. AND I TELL HOW I TOOK HIM TO A LAWYER WHO I THOUGHT WOULD HELP HIM. IN THE END, THAT LAWYER DIDN'T. IN THE END, I HAD TO FRANTICLY LOOK FOR A LAWYER BECAUSE WHEN USDA LIFTED -- I'M SORRY. WHEN THE COURTS LIFTED THE INJUNCTION AGAINST USDA IN MAY OF 1987, THIS WHITE FARMER WAS 1 OF 13 THAT WAS FORECLOSED ON BY THE STATE OF GEORGIA. I HAD TO FRANTICLY FIND A LAWYER WHO WOULD FILE A CHAPTER 11 TO STOP THE FORECLOSURE. HE COULDN'T -- AT THAT TIME WE HAD UP TO 12 --

Kiran Chetry: BUT LET ME SAID -- YOU SAID YOU DIDN'T KNOW ENOUGH, DIDN'T GIVE HIM THE FULL FORCE OF WHAT YOU COULD DO. YOU SAID YOU REFERRED HIM TO THE LAWYER WHO WAS WHITE AND PERHAPS HE COULD HELP HIM. WHAT DID YOU MEAN BY THAT?

Shirley Sherrod: WHAT I MEANT WAS, I DIDN'T KNOW ANYONE ELSE, I DIDN'T KNOW ANOTHER LAWYER AT THAT TIME WHO WAS LOCAL, WHO KNEW SOMETHING ABOUT CHAPTER 12. BUT I THOUGHT IF I TOOK HIM TO A WHITE LAWYER, HE WOULD DEFINITELY DO ALL THAT HE COULD TO HELP SAVE HIS FARM.

John Roberts: MS. SHERROD LET'S MAKE IT CLEAR THOUGH. THIS HAPPENED 24 YEARS AGO. YOU EVENTUALLY WORKED WITH THIS WHITE FARMER, YOU EVENTUALLY BECAME FRIENDS, YOU SAY, WITH THE FARMER AND HIS WIFE. SO THE QUESTION I HAVE IS, WHEN THE US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE CAME TO YOU AND SAID YOU HAVE TO STEP DOWN, WHY DIDN'T YOU JUST SAY WAIT A MINUTE, YOU DON'T KNOW THE FULL STORY, HERE'S THE FULL STORY, WHY SHOULD I STEP DOWN?

Shirley Sherrod: I DID SAY THAT. BUT THEY FOR SOME REASON, THE STUFF THAT FOX AND THE TEA PARTY DOES IS SCARING THE ADMINISTRATION. I TOLD... I TOLD THEM GET THE WHOLE TAPE AND

LOOK AT HOW I TELL PEOPLE WE HAVE TO GET BEYOND RACE AND START WORKING TOGETHER.

John Roberts: I THINK THAT MANY PEOPLE AT HOME MIGHT BE THINKING, IF YOU'RE RECOUNTING AN OLD STORY, WHY DID YOU SUCCUMB TO PRESSURE TO STEP DOWN, WHY DIDN'T YOU TRY TO FIGHT THIS?

Shirley Sherrod: IF I TRIED TO FIGHT IT AND DIDN'T HAVE ANY SUPPORT FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, WHAT – WHAT.

Kiran Chetry: BEN JEALOUS REFERRED TO YOU AND THIS SURFACING OF THE TAPE, "HER ACTIONS WERE SHAMEFUL. WHILE SHE WENT ON TO EXPLAIN IN THE STORY, SHE ULTIMATELY REALIZED HER MISTAKE AS WELL AS THE COMMON PREDICAMENT OF WORKING PEOPLE OF ALL RACES. SHE GAVE NO INDICATION SHE HAD ATTEMPTED TO RIGHT THE WRONG SHE HAD DONE TO THIS MAN." AND THE REACTION FROM MANY IN THE AUDIENCE IS DISTURBING. THIS IS FROM BEN JEALOUS. DID YOU TRY TO CLARIFY WITH THE NAACP YOUR STORY?

Shirley Sherrod: NO, I HAVEN'T HAD A CHANCE TO TALK TO ANYONE. ALL OF THIS WAS HAPPENING SO FAST. AND IT'S UNFORTUNATE THAT THE NAACP WOULD MAKE A STATEMENT WITHOUT EVEN CHECKING TO SEE WHAT HAPPENED. THIS WAS 24 YEARS AGO AND I'M TELLING A STORY TO TRY TO UNITE PEOPLE WITH THAT NOW.

John Roberts: CERTAINLY YOU'RE COMING OUT AND TELLING YOUR STORY NOW TAKES IT TO A DIFFERENT LEVEL AND OBVIOUSLY WE'RE GOING TO KEEP FOLLOWING THIS. IT IS GOOD TO GET YOUR SIDE OF IT. SHERRI SH SHERLY SHERROD, FORMER DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE OFFICIAL. PERHAPS WE CAN GET YOU BACK ON AGAIN, GET YOUR FACE ON TV AS WELL AND TALK TO YOU MORE ABOUT THIS AS THIS STORY CONTINUES TO DEVELOP.

Shirley Sherrod: I DON'T MIND.

Cook, Cheryl

From: Tonsager, Dallas
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:53 AM
To: Cook, Cheryl; Zaina, Lisa
Subject: Please read the lower portion of this story

http://blogs.ajc.com/jay-bookman-blog/2010/07/20/in-the-curious-case-of-shirley-sherrod-lets-see-the-whole-tape/?cxntfid=blogs_jay_bookman_blog

Dallas Tonsager | Under Secretary
Rural Development
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W. | Washington, D.C. 20250
Phone: 202.720.4581 | Fax: 202.720.2080
www.rurdev.usda.gov

Cook, Cheryl

From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 7:41 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Re: You ok

Yes, enjoy, did we ever get the full copy of the speech?

----- Original Message -----
From: Cook, Cheryl
To: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 19:39:26 2010
Subject: Re: You ok

Yes, thanks for asking. Heading home - always a morale boost. Once again, I find myself grateful for a long ride home.

----- Original Message -----
From: Washo, Kevin
To: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Mon Jul 19 19:35:48 2010
Subject: You ok

Cook, Cheryl

From: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:14 PM
To: Maddux, Sheryl -USDA
Subject: FW: REINSTATE SHIRLEY SHERROD

From: [redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)* [mailto:[redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:09 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: REINSTATE SHIRLEY SHERROD

I think it is reprehensible that she was FORCED to resign for her comments regarding an incident that happened over 20 years AGO while she was not even an employee. Did anyone at the Dept of Agriculture fully vet the decision, watch the video recording, speak to the white farmers etc. I feel this was a political hack job!.

Cook, Cheryl

From: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:14 PM
To: Maddux, Sheryl -USDA
Subject: FW: Shirley Sherrod

From: Exemption (b)(6) [mailto:Exemption (b)(6)]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:07 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Shirley Sherrod

Dear Ms. Cook,

I find it very disturbing that your agency would fire someone because of a questionable right wing web sites claims of racism. As the facts come to light it would appear her firing was predicated on a vicious lie. It would seem you et.al. had an immediate knee jerk reaction...wouldn't it have been better to actually find out the facts before denying a woman of her livelihood? Particularly when the story she was telling was one of redemption and healing. I hope your agency does the right thing.

Respectfully,
Bryan M. Hoffman

Exemption (b)(6)

Cook, Cheryl

From: Cook, Cheryl

Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:14 PM

To: Maddux, Sheryl -USDA

Subject: email messages re. Georgia RD State Director

Attachments: Unfair firing of Ms. Sherrod; Reinstate Shirley Sherrod; Shirley Sherrod; Reinstate Shirley Sherrod; Shirley Todd; Reinstate Ms. Sherrod; RESIGN; The Unjust Firing of Shirley Sherrod; Give Ms. Sherrod her job back; Embarrassing behavior by a Public Official; Rehire Shirley Sherrod with apologies; Zellner charges reverse double standard.; Shirley Sherrod incident; Shirley Sherrod; Shirley Sherrod; In the matter of Shirley Sherrod; Re-Instate Sherrod!; Please rescind your rash action on Shirley Sherrod; We are watching; Fired for that 24-year-old anecdote? Seriously?

Cook, Cheryl

From: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:55 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: FW: CNN Interview Request: Tuesday July 20, 2010
Importance: High

From: Griffin, Janelle [mailto:*Exemption (b)(6)*]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:41 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: CNN Interview Request: Tuesday July 20, 2010
Importance: High

Hi Ms. Cook,

I hope you're doing well.

I've reached out to you earlier today regarding an interview with Rick Sanchez.

We're now speaking to Ms. Shirley Sherrod and we're hoping you could join us by phone before 5P et to weigh in with your side of the situation.

Please feel free to contact me via email or at *Exemption (b)(6)* to let me know.

Thanks!

Cook, Cheryl

From: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:41 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole
Subject: FW: CNN NewsroomAM w/Tony Harris...

Chris, is this program on the list to receive a call from OC?

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Diane Durham
Editorial Producer/NewsroomAM

Exemption (b)(6) cell

Cook, Cheryl

From: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:29 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Cc: Mather, Chris
Subject: Two more interview requests
Attachments: CNN inquiry; shirley sherrod

Cook, Cheryl

From: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:19 AM
To: 'Timothy.McNeilly@wdc.usda.gov'
Subject: Re: SD admin leave

Yes

From: McNeilly, Timothy - Washington, DC
To: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Tue Jul 20 09:07:25 2010
Subject: FW: SD admin leave

The PIC has asked if there is anything that can be shared with the GA employees on the overall situation. Your message below seems most appropriate – are you ok with it being sent from the state office to the GA employees?

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Cheryl

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8/4/2010

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From: Cook, Cheryl <Exemption (b)(6)>
To: Graves, Donna - Athens, GA
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:13:49 2010
Subject: Re: SD admin leave

Yes, Donna, paperwork to follow. I will ask Donnie to serve as Acting State Director till this gets ironed out.

----- Original Message -----

From: Donna.Graves@one.usda.gov <Exemption (b)(6)>
To: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:59:57 2010
Subject: SD admin leave

Cheryl:

Donnie Thomas and I have been advised that Shirley is on Admin Leave effective immediately. Will something be send confirming?

Reommendation is for Donnie to be Acting - he was between SD's and is Asst to SD. Do we initiate this or does your office?

Any questions, please call Donnie at Exemption (b)(6) or me at Exemption (b)(6)

Thanks. Donna

Cook, Cheryl

From: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:44 AM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Re: Who is acting SD in GA?

Donnie Thomas, who was acting at the change of administrations. He has been Assistant to the State Director.

From: Berge, John
To: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:37:58 2010
Subject: Who is acting SD in GA?

John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@oscc.usda.gov

Cook, Cheryl

From: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:28 AM
To: [Redacted]; [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Cc: Timothy.McNeilly@wdc.usda.gov
Subject: Re: SD admin leave

Here's the official statement on Ms. Sherrod from the Secretary's office:

"Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the Department, and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously."

My advice to you and others who might get media calls is to refer the caller to the Department's Office of Communications. Chris Mather is the Director of Communications. Justin DeJong is the Department's Press Secretary. Please do not issue any other statements. I know this is a difficult time for all of you who worked with Shirley, but it only gets worse if we perpetuate the situation with further statements to the media.

Cheryl

From: Graves, Donna - Athens, GA
To: Cook, Cheryl; Thomas, Donnie - Athens, GA
Sent: Mon Jul 19 17:38:54 2010
Subject: Re: SD admin leave

Is there language we should use to explain to our employees? If we come up with some, should it have your blessing before it goes out?

From: Cook, Cheryl <[Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)>
To: Graves, Donna - Athens, GA
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:13:49 2010
Subject: Re: SD admin leave

Yes, Donna, paperwork to follow. I will ask Donnie to serve as Acting State Director till this gets ironed out.

----- Original Message -----

From: [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6) <[Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)>
To: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:59:57 2010
Subject: SD admin leave

Cheryl:

Donnie Thomas and I have been advised that Shirley is on Admin Leave effective immediately. Will something be send confirming?

Reommendation is for Donnie to be Acting - he was between SD's and is Asst to SD. Do we initiate this or does your office?

Any questions, please call Donnie at [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6) or me at [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)

Thanks. Donna

Cook, Cheryl

From: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:51 PM
To: 'Graves, Donna - Athens, GA'; 'Thomas, Donnie - Athens, GA'
Subject: RE: SD admin leave

We'll provide you with a statement by morning.

From: Graves, Donna - Athens, GA [mailto:Donna.Graves@ga.usda.gov]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:39 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl; Thomas, Donnie - Athens, GA
Subject: Re: SD admin leave

Is there language we should use to explain to our employees? If we come up with some, should it have your blessing before it goes out?

From: Cook, Cheryl <Exemption (b)(6)>
To: Graves, Donna - Athens, GA
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:13:49 2010
Subject: Re: SD admin leave

Yes, Donna, paperwork to follow. I will ask Donnie to serve as Acting State Director till this gets ironed out.

----- Original Message -----
From: Exemption (b)(6) <Exemption (b)(6)>
To: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:59:57 2010
Subject: SD admin leave

Cheryl:

Donnie Thomas and I have been advised that Shirley is on Admin Leave effective immediately. Will something be send confirming?

Reommendation is for Donnie to be Acting - he was between SD's and is Asst to SD. Do we initiate this or does your office?

Any questions, please call Donnie at Exemption (b)(6) or me at Exemption (b)(6)

Thanks. Donna

Cook, Cheryl

From: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 7:42 PM
To: Washo, Kevin
Subject: Re: You ok

Not yet. She assured me again that it exists, though.

----- Original Message -----
From: Washo, Kevin
To: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Mon Jul 19 19:40:36 2010
Subject: Re: You ok

Yes, enjoy, did we ever get the full copy of the speech?

----- Original Message -----
From: Cook, Cheryl
To: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 19:39:26 2010
Subject: Re: You ok

Yes, thanks for asking. Heading home - always a morale boost. Once again, I find myself grateful for a long ride home.

----- Original Message -----
From: Washo, Kevin
To: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Mon Jul 19 19:35:48 2010
Subject: You ok

Cook, Cheryl

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 7:16 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Tonsager, Dallas; Washo, Kevin; Wyant, Monica; Cook, Cheryl; Harden, Krysta
Subject: Re: Hey

Importance: High

Good
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Jett, Carole; Tonsager, Dallas; Washo, Kevin; Wyant, Monica; Cook, Cheryl; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 19:15:06 2010
Subject: RE: Hey

I will go. Justin and Aaron out. Caleb has PAD meeting and Avalos hearing in afternoon. What room number is it in? 10 oclock right?

-----Original Message-----

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:26 PM
To: Tonsager, Dallas; Washo, Kevin; Wyant, Monica; Cook, Cheryl; Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Subject: Re: Hey

We will get you covered and OC will go with you tomorrow.

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

----- Original Message -----

From: Tonsager, Dallas
To: Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin; Wyant, Monica; Cook, Cheryl; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 17:12:57 2010
Subject: RE: Hey

I wouldn't be surprised to get a question over this matter during my hearings this week. Would appreciate some help on a response.

-----Original Message-----

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:33 PM
To: Washo, Kevin; Wyant, Monica; Tonsager, Dallas; Cook, Cheryl
Subject: FW: Hey

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:32 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Jett, Carole
Subject: Hey

The S is absolutely sick and mad over the S Sherrod issue. He wants her immediately on Adm leave, Justin is working on a strong statement and I need to call Rep Bishop as soon as ya'll give me the go ahead.

Cook, Cheryl

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 7:15 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Tonsager, Dallas; Washo, Kevin; Wyant, Monica; Cook, Cheryl; Harden, Krysta
Subject: RE: Hey

I will go. Justin and Aaron out. Caleb has PAD meeting and Avalos hearing in afternoon. What room number is it in? 10 oclock right?

-----Original Message-----

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:26 PM
To: Tonsager, Dallas; Washo, Kevin; Wyant, Monica; Cook, Cheryl; Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Subject: Re: Hey

We will get you covered and OC will go with you tomorrow.

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

----- Original Message -----

From: Tonsager, Dallas
To: Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin; Wyant, Monica; Cook, Cheryl; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 17:12:57 2010
Subject: RE: Hey

I wouldn't be surprised to get a question over this matter during my hearings this week. Would appreciate some help on a response.

-----Original Message-----

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:33 PM
To: Washo, Kevin; Wyant, Monica; Tonsager, Dallas; Cook, Cheryl
Subject: FW: Hey

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:32 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Jett, Carole
Subject: Hey

The S is absolutely sick and mad over the S Sherrod issue. He wants her immediately on Adm leave, Justin is working on a strong statement and I need to call Rep Bishop as soon as ya'll give me the go ahead.

Cook, Cheryl

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:46 PM
To: Maloney, Wayne
Cc: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Re: Fox News called again-Read this

Thanks Wayne. We have statement. Chan, you want to be main point on these press calls?
Chris Mather

From: Maloney, Wayne
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:43:11 2010
Subject: Fox News called again-Read this

Chris,

Joy Lin from Fox News called me and asked me to confirm that Ms. Sherrod had resigned. I told her that I had no knowledge and could not confirm. She asked me to "pass it up the food chain". I asked her where she had heard what she told me and she said it "was a rumor from the NAACP."

Wayne

Cook, Cheryl

From: Washo, Kevin

Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:46 PM

To: Cook, Cheryl

Subject: Let me know as soon as its in your inbox

Cook, Cheryl

From: Maloney, Wayne
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:43 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Fox News called again-Read this

Chris,

Joy Lin from Fox News called me and asked me to confirm that Ms. Sherrod had resigned. I told her that I had no knowledge and could not confirm. She asked me to "pass it up the food chain". I asked her where she had heard what she told me and she said it "was a rumor from the NAACP."

Wayne

Cook, Cheryl

From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:15 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Email

You have it?

Cook, Cheryl

From: Graves, Donna - Athens, GA [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:39 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl; Thomas, Donnie - Athens, GA
Subject: Re: SD admin leave

Is there language we should use to explain to our employees? If we come up with some, should it have your blessing before it goes out?

From: Cook, Cheryl [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
To: Graves, Donna - Athens, GA
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:13:49 2010
Subject: Re: SD admin leave

Yes, Donna, paperwork to follow. I will ask Donnie to serve as Acting State Director till this gets ironed out.

----- Original Message -----

From: [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
To: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:59:57 2010
Subject: SD admin leave

Cheryl:

Donnie Thomas and I have been advised that Shirley is on Admin Leave effective immediately. Will something be send confirming?

Reommendation is for Donnie to be Acting - he was between SD's and is Asst to SD. Do we initiate this or does your office?

Any questions, please call Donnie at [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6) or me at [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)

Thanks, Donna

Cook, Cheryl

From: Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:00 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: SD admin leave

Cheryl:

Donnie Thomas and I have been advised that Shirley is on Admin Leave effective immediately. Will something be send confirming?

Reommendation is for Donnie to be Acting - he was between SD's and is Asst to SD. Do we initiate this or does your office?

Any questions, please call Donnie at Exemption (b)(6) or me at Exemption (b)(6)

Thanks. Donna

Cook, Cheryl

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:33 PM
To: Washo, Kevin; Wyant, Monica; Tonsager, Dallas; Cook, Cheryl
Subject: FW: Hey

Importance: High

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:32 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Jett, Carole
Subject: Hey

The S is absolutely sick and mad over the S Sherrod issue. He wants her immediately on Adm leave, Justin is working on a strong statement and I need to call Rep Bishop as soon as ya'll give me the go ahead.

Cook, Cheryl

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:06 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl; Tonsager, Dallas; Washo, Kevin
Cc: Wyant, Monica
Subject: Urgent

Importance: High

Sherliy Sherrod is on tape and you need to see/hear immediately

<http://hotair.com>

In upper right search Sherrod

We need to take immediate action.

Carole Jett

Deputy Chief of Staff

USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

Cook, Cheryl

From: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:56 PM
To: Washo, Kevin
Subject: FW:

-----Original Message-----

From: Sherrod, Shirley - Athens, GA [mailto:]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:55 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: .

Exemption (b)(6)

Cheryl

I feel so disappointed that the Secretary and President let a misrepresentation of my words on the part of th Tea Party be the reason to ask me to resign

Please look at the tape and see that I use the story from 1986 to show people that the issue is not about race but about those who have v ersus those who do not

I used everything and everyone I could to help me to save that white farmers land. That family has the land because of what I did. He became a very good friend. I went on to help save many other white land owners thru the years

I submit my resignation but in doing so want to put the administration on notice that I will get the whole story out.

My whole life speaks for my commitment to fairness whether white or black.

Shirley sherrod

Sent using BlackBerry

Cook, Cheryl

From: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:14 PM
To: [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Subject: Re: SD admin leave

Yes, Donna, paperwork to follow. I will ask Donnie to serve as Acting State Director till this gets ironed out.

----- Original Message -----

From: [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6) [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
To: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:59:57 2010
Subject: SD admin leave

Cheryl:

Donnie Thomas and I have been advised that Shirley is on Admin Leave effective immediately. Will something be send confirming?

Reommendation is for Donnie to be Acting - he was between SD's and is Asst to SD. Do we initiate this or does your office?

Any questions, please call Donnie at [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6) or me at [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)

Thanks. Donna

Cook, Cheryl

From: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:35 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin; Wyant, Monica; Tonsager, Dallas
Subject: Re: Hey

Done

----- Original Message -----

From: Jett, Carole
To: Washo, Kevin; Wyant, Monica; Tonsager, Dallas; Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:33:04 2010
Subject: FW: Hey

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:32 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Jett, Carole
Subject: Hey

The S is absolutely sick and mad over the S Sherrod issue.

Ex (b)(5)

Ex (b)(5)

Cook, Cheryl

From: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:27 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Tonsager, Dallas; Washo, Kevin
Cc: Wyant, Monica
Subject: RE: Urgent

My computer won't load it. Heading for Dallas' office to try there.

-----Original Message-----

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:06 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl; Tonsager, Dallas; Washo, Kevin
Cc: Wyant, Monica
Subject: Urgent
Importance: High

Sherliy Sherrod is on tape and you need to see/hear immediately

<http://hotair.com>

In upper right search Sherrod

We need to take immediate action.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

Cook, Cheryl

From: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 8:24 AM
To: Maddux, Sheryl -USDA
Cc: Jett, Carole
Subject: Emails since the last batch I sent you

Attachments: Shame!; What have you done?; sherrod; Shirley Sherrod should not be given her job back...; Shirley Sherrod; Fire Tom Vilsack not Shirley Sherrod; Shirley Sherrod should not lose her job; Spooner/Sherrard; re: Shirley Sherrod; please reinstate shirley sherrod; The firing.; Shirley Sherrod; Your resignation; Reinstate Shirley Sherrod; Forced Resignation of Shirley Sherrod; By BLACKBERRY?!?!; Sherrod; Shame on you!; Shirley Sherrod; ABC News / Good Morning America; Apologize & Rehire Shirley Sherrod; Untitled; Your failure to investigate the complaint about Shirley Sherrod; USDA GA RD; Shirley Sherrod; RE: Statement; Sherrod; Fwd: Doctored Tapes; RE: ABC News / Good Morning America; Handling the Sherrod Matter; Reinstate Ms. Shirley Sherrod Now!; RE: By BLACKBERRY?!?!; Fw: COMMENTS on "Finding of No Significant Impact - Gulf Trading and Transport LLC"; Sherrod resignation; Unjust behavior...; I do not understand; KUDOS to Secretary Vilsack; Re: Shirley Sherrod incident; Shirley Sherrod; resign; FW: Ms Sherrod; Rush to Judgement; Yahoo! News Story - Fired Ag worker mulls job offer after WH apology - Yahoo! News; Shirley Sherrod

Hi, Sheryl

The tone of a few has been positive, and the pace has slowed since yesterday afternoon's news conference. Unless you or others strenuously object, I plan to resume my normal parking arrangements, etc. tomorrow.

Cheryl

Cook, Cheryl

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 4:20 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl

How is this? Does it help?

If approached by the press in person:

1. [REDACTED] Exemption b5

2. [REDACTED] Ex (b)(5)

Information Regarding USDA's Actions

On Monday after learned about a video online showing Mrs. Sherrod saying things that we thought would make it hard to turn the page on civil rights abuses at USDA.

We immediately put her on administrative leave then asked if she was willing to resign, to which she said yes. We called her twice to ask for a letter of resignation so that we could respond to press inquiries about her status.

On Tuesday, the entire tape of the speech she gave was released by the NAACP and after watching it, we determined we had acted without all of the information.

The Secretary spoke to Shirley Sherrod on Wednesday and apologized. He also told her I was sorry for the pain this caused her and her family and friends. We did a press briefing that same day and also spoke to the Congressional Black Caucus on Wednesday.

We have discussed with Mrs. Sherrod a unique opportunity at USDA and asked her to return to USDA. With all that she has seen, endured and accomplished, it would be invaluable to have her experience, commitment and record of service at USDA. And if she wants her old job back, she can have it.

We admit we reacted too quickly and should have taken the time to listen and learn.

The White House did not direct the Secretary to do this, it was USDA's decision.

We continue to review the circumstances that brought us to this day so that nothing like this happens again.

Chris Mather
Director of Communications
USDA
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 402A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0060
chris.mather@usda.gov

Cook, Cheryl

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 2:39 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Re: Hey

Importance: High

Thank you.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

----- Original Message -----

From: Cook, Cheryl
To: Jett, Carole
Sent: Fri Jul 23 14:16:26 2010
Subject: RE: Hey

Sorry for the delay.

I received your forward of Krysta's message indicating that the Secretary wanted Shirley on Admin Leave at 3:33 p.m. Per my outgoing call log, I called the GA state office at 3:37 (adjusting for my phone's clock being off by 4.5 hours).

There was no answer at the state office, so I call her cell phone at 3:38 and reached her. That was the conversation putting her on leave and hearing her explanation.

I called her back on her cell phone at 4:42 to ask whether she'd be willing to resign.

I called her a third time on her cell phone at 5:56 to ask whether she'd be willing to offer a letter of resignation by the end of the day.

I called her a fourth time at 6:35 to ask whether she'd be willing to pull over to the side of the road, and submit a resignation by email.

I received her email at 6:55 and forwarded to WHLO.

-----Original Message-----

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 1:09 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Hey
Importance: High

Sorry to bug you. Can you give me the exact times that you called shirley sherrod on Monday?

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

Cook, Cheryl

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 1:09 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Hey

Importance: High

Sorry to bug you. Can you give me the exact times that you called shirley sherrod on Monday?

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

Cook, Cheryl

From: Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 12:08 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Unanswered questions

Dear Ms. Cook,

I hope I have reached the right individual. I have used the USDA directory to try to locate you. If I have reached the wrong individual, please accept my apology and provide me with the correct email address.

The media has left out some important questions in thier coverage of the Shirley Sherrod story. These questions are for the Cheryl Cook referred to on CNN by Ms. Sherrod many times this week.

- Did you tell Shirley Sherrod that the White House wanted her out...as she says you did?
- If you did tell her that, what was the basis for doing so?
- Did someone at the White House tell you that Ms. Sherrod had to go?
- If so, who was that and exactly when did they say that to you?
- What precisely did that person say?

I understand that this situation has placed you between a rock and a hard place. I realize that I have no more *nor any less* right to be asking you these questions than anyone else. I am simply an American voter who needs to know the answers to these questions in order to vote effectively. As an act of conscience and patriotism, please respond with simple, straight forward answers by return email.

Sincerely,

Paul Springle

Cook, Cheryl

From: [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 6:25 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Rehire Shirley Sherrod

I was deeply displeased by the firing of Shirley Sherrod over statements taken completely out of context in an attempt by Fox News to "frame" Ms. Sherrod. I think it would be wise for whomever supervises USDA Deputy Under Secretary Cheryl Cook—who asked for Sherrod's resignation over the incident without what appears to be any investigation—to give Ms. Cook a strong warning. What an unmitigated disaster.

I do apologize if I have contacted the wrong Ms. Cook. This email is intended for USDA Deputy Under Secretary Cheryl Cook and I found this email here: <http://ds.usda.gov/result.aspx?FullName=&FirstName=cheryl&LastName=cook&Agency=Select%20Agency&Wildcard=>

Sincerely,

Katy Miessner

[Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)

Cook, Cheryl

From: Edith Corlette *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Thursday, July 29, 2010 5:14 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Apologize to Shirley Sherrod

When are you going to apologize for your part in the firing of Shirley Sherrod? Have I somehow missed your apology? The Obama administration, which you represent, should be ashamed for falling prey to the propaganda. I hope that the Department of Agriculture will 1) stop reacting to the conservative rhetoric and most important 2) address the discrimination in your department. I am an African American. I wonder if there had been an African American in your position would this have happened? Would this African American have said "Look do we have all the facts? I'll not participate in another lynching without proof." That didn't happen and what we have now is a mess of high proportion. It you haven't done so-Do the right thing and publicly apologize.

Thanks

Edith Taylor

Cook, Cheryl

From: Tonsager, Dallas
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 4:47 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: FW: Shirley Sherrod

From: Tonsager, Dallas
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:04 PM
To: [REDACTED] Exemption (b)(6)
Cc: Ross, Karen -Chief of Staff; Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin
Subject: Shirley Sherrod

Dear Mr. Secretary

We have just seen the video of Georgia State Director Shirley Sherrod and are deeply disturbed. Cheryl has put her on administrative leave pending a full investigation. Of course, the video suggests that this is about a farm loan, and those programs were transferred to the Farm Service Agency in 1995.

Shirley explained to Cheryl that this piece of tape shows only one small part of a longer story she told of her personal transformation beyond race, and is about a farmer who came to see her in 1986 when she was working as a farm advocate. The rest of the story apparently explains how she came to assist this farmer and many other white farmers during this time period. She said there is a copy of the entire speech, and Cheryl asked her to provide it as quickly as possible.

Dallas and Cheryl

Dallas Tonsager | Under Secretary
Rural Development
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W. | Washington, D.C. 20250
Phone: 202.720.4581 | Fax: 202.720.2080
www.rurdev.usda.gov

Cook, Cheryl

From: Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 3:17 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: RE: Shirley Sherrod quote

This message is intended for Cheryl Cook, the Deputy Undersecretary of Rural Development for the USDA. If this is not you, please let me know and accept my apologies.

I was just wondering if you could confirm or deny the allegation made by Shirley Sherrod that you told her to resign because of Glenn Beck.

As Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack tried to pressure her into resigning, Sherrod says Deputy Undersecretary Cheryl Cook called her Monday to say "do it, because you're going to be on 'Glenn Beck' tonight."

http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/07/22/AR2010072201265_pf.html

Thank you for your time,
George Fields

Cook, Cheryl

From: Geoffrey Feldman [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 11:49 AM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: I am offended by reports of cheryl cooks conduct

I realize that there may be different stories but if even a particle of what Ms. Sherrod has said about your demands for her resignation is true – I am offended.

Even if the stories about Ms. Sherrod were true, I am offended by the spectacle of a manager being so contemptuous of an employee that they call them repeatedly, while they are driving, on a matter that is so emotional. In the government I want, everyone deserves a respectful and calm moment with their boss before being asked to resign. No excuses. Demanding employment end to please a fast news cycle is grotesque.

Either you did what Ms. Sherrod said you did, in which case you should fully, publicly and notably apologize for that conduct independent of what facts have now emerged or you should provide your own version of the facts. This is a teachable moment and I want to see that you are learning. Your apology will demonstrate respect for integrity over spin ... something I think you have backwards so far.

I supported our president in the election and I still support him. My government should not be run by Glenn Beck or Andrew Breitbart. Irrespective of mistreating Ms. Sherrod is a government that I helped elect giving so much credibility to these raging right wing monsters. Get some decency, some respect and some spine.

You have not lead by good example. You still can set that example, by admitting your mistakes. In the future, before you demand a resignation, provide an opportunity for a calm meeting and respect what other Federal employees have to say. If you cannot do that, I think your employment must come to an end. This is what I will ask of my Senators and Congress woman if you cannot step up to the plate. I want your views, your side of the story and evidence of personal reflection on what mistakes you honestly made. No spin, just truth and hopefully growth.

Geoffrey Feldman
Lowell, Massachusetts

Cook, Cheryl

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 8:50 AM
To: Cook, Cheryl; Maddux, Sheryl -USDA
Subject: Re: Emails since the last batch I sent you
Importance: High

I leave it up to professionals. Pls continue sending your emails to Sheryl and me.

Thx for your patience.

Carole Jett

Deputy Chief of Staff

USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Cook, Cheryl
To: Maddux, Sheryl -USDA
Cc: Jett, Carole
Sent: Thu Jul 22 08:24:11 2010
Subject: Emails since the last batch I sent you

Hi, Sheryl

The tone of a few has been positive, and the pace has slowed since yesterday afternoon's news conference. Unless you or others strenuously object, I plan to resume my normal parking arrangements, etc. tomorrow.

Cheryl

Cook, Cheryl

From: [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 3:58 AM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Shirley Sherrod

Ms. Cook,

As a supporter of the Obama administration, I would like to thank Secretary Vilsack for apologizing to Shirley Sherrod and offering her another job at USDA. It is to his credit that he manned up and rectified a terrible wrong.

A modest suggestion: Perhaps the next time FOX and/or some right-wing lunatic attempts to falsely accuse/slander a group (ACORN) or individual (Ms. Sherrod), the administration will go to the trouble of verifying the story before capitulating.

Thank you.

Rodger French

Cook, Cheryl

From: Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 12:50 AM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Cc: Exemption (b)(6)
Subject: Yahoo! News Story - Fired Ag worker mulls job offer after WH apology - Yahoo! News

J Lightfoot Exemption (b)(6) has sent you a news article.
(Email address has not been verified.)

Personal message:

You, too, should offer Shirley Sherrod a public apology and ask for her forgiveness. You handled the situation horribly and failed to show leadership. Shame on you.

Fired Ag worker mulls job offer after WH apology - Yahoo! News

http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20100721/ap_on_go_pr_wh/us_usda_racism_resignation

=====
Yahoo! News
<http://news.yahoo.com/>

Cook, Cheryl

From: Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:18 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Rush to Judgement

Ms. Cook:

As the Sherrod case now clearly shows, it's past time for the members of this administration to begin to think for themselves in times of crisis.

As panic set in, why did you not take it upon yourself to point out to your superiors that this story was being promulgated by a known right wing ideologue with a long history of falsifying video? That if Fox "News" was beating the drum so strongly, it made it even more important for the administration to do its own diligent investigation before rushing to judgement?

Did the concept of "due process" ever cross your mind?

Please learn from this lesson, and stand up for the rights of people being vilified from the Right.

Shameful incidents like this just enable a hate-filled minority to chip away at the ability of the Obama administration to do what's right for America. And unfortunately, you helped them do it.

At the least, you need to have a heartfelt, face to face chat with Ms. Sherrod and express your regrets for any role you may have played in this sorry incident.

Bill Ward
Portland, OR

Cook, Cheryl

From: norman owen [Exemption (b)(6)]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 8:49 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: FW: Ms Sherrod

norman owen

[Exemption (b)(6)]

EarthLink Revolves Around You.

----- Original Message -----

From: norman owen
To: [Exemption (b)(6)]
Sent: 7/21/2010 8:49:51 PM
Subject: Ms Sherrod

If what Ms Sherrod claims your behavior to have been in this total screwup is true, then it would appear that you are a "pawn", like a "Leming", and you should be the one to "Resign".

A full and verbatim account of what went down is in order so that we of sound mind and integrity can make a rational and sound evaluation of just who the real "clowns" and "jerks" are in this fiasco! Knee jerk, loose cannons!

A very disappointed citizen!

norman owen

[Exemption (b)(6)]

EarthLink Revolves Around You.

Cook, Cheryl

From: Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:40 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: resign

resign

Exemption (b)(6)

Cook, Cheryl

From: Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:29 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Shirley Sherrod

Ms. Cook:

I am writing this as a concerned citizen and voter. My father worked for 35+ years with the USDA serving for years as chief administrator at your Plum Island facility before he retired in the early 70's. I distinctly remember his frustration at the time for the continuance of conflicting policies vs actual practice regarding race that existed within the USDA that he had to try to juggle every day in his job. My father was a very fair man but he retired early mostly because of the continuance of these conflicts within your organization. He was proud of his history at the USDA, but clearly was frustrated when he left because of the continuing conflicts that existed between written policy and how top management (Washington D.C.) actually acted in terms of hiring practices and racially motivated practice.

I have to say that my father would be shamed today by the actions of Sec. Vilsack and yourself in relation to your reckless firing of a fine woman, Shirley Sherrod. The fact that USDA believed FOX news and an obvious race baiter, Andrew Breitbart, before checking the veracity of their clear attempt to exacerbate a racially sensitive issue between the NAACP and the Tea Party radicals shows incredible stupidity if not a racist decision on your part. Your approach to this is stunning to say the least. The fact that you followed the lead of Breitbart and Fox news before doing any due diligence is a disgrace. What has happened to the idea of "innocent before being proven guilty"? I am beginning to feel that we are totally controlled by Wall Street, big corporate interests, Fox News, lobbyists, and that the average citizen is nothing more than an after thought with our government.

The two of you should resign with embarrassment. The USDA should immediately issue Ms. Sherrod a well publicized apology as well as reinstatement (if she wishes to come back) or at the a least full retirement package.

The racists here are you at the top management level for not doing your job properly and for kissing the ring of idiots like Limbaugh, Beck, Rupert Murdoch, O'Reilly, and Breitbart, etc.

Again – shame on you.

Lewis Shanks
Moss Landing CA

8/4/2010

Cook, Cheryl

From: [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:51 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Re: Shirley Sherrod incident

Dear Undersecretary Cook:

I want to commend you and Secretary Vilsack for owning up to the USDA's mistakes and for reaching out to Ms. Sherrod. That was not likely an easy thing to do.

We live in trying times and those hack journalists and other right-wing operatives with a clearly radical agenda will stop at nothing to cause havoc within this administration. We all must be ever vigilant to avoid these types of missteps.

Sincerely,

Casey Kaplan

From: Casey Kaplan [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
To: Cheryl.Cook2@usda.gov
Sent: Tue, July 20, 2010 2:42:03 PM
Subject: Shirley Sherrod incident

Dear Undersecretary Cook:

My name is Casey Kaplan. I'm a U.S. Citizen and resident of the state of Texas. I care passionately about agricultural issues facing our country, but I care even more passionately about civil rights, treating citizens equally and fairly, and overcoming racism in this great country.

Against that backdrop, I'm writing to urge you and Secretary Vilsack to reconsider your demand for Shirley Sherrod's resignation from the USDA. Apparently, you or whoever demanded her resignation acted too soon after a heavily edited video from the right-wing supporting Andrew Breitbart was made public. If you had taken the time to review the entire video or had spoken to Ms. Sherrod about the context of her words, you might have learned the entire truth – the entire story. Instead, in your rush to not appear like you supported racism in your agency, you terminated the employment of someone dedicated to public service. Indeed, if you watched the entire video, you would have learned that Ms. Sherrod's comments were taken out of context, that the anecdote was part of a larger story, one in which she explains how she overcame her initial prejudice. According to Ms. Sherrod, herself, "The story helped me realize that race is not the issue, it's about the people who have and the people who don't. When I speak to groups, I try to speak about getting beyond the issue of race."

Had you done some further investigating, you might've also learned that the white farmer about whom Ms. Sherrod spoke actually counts Ms. Sherrod as a close friend who helped him save his farm. In the words of the wife of Mr. Roger Spooner, "She's a good friend ... she helped save [our] farm...They have not treated her right."

The "they" that Ms. Spooner is referring would be you, Ms. Cook.

I don't know that my letter will do much good, but I strongly urge you to reconsider your position and to offer Ms. Sherrod her job back. She appears to be a woman dedicated to public service and dedicated to helping small and struggling farmers in this country -- something the Department of Agriculture desperately needs more of.

Sincerely,

8/4/2010

Casey Kaplan

Exemption (b)(6)

Cook, Cheryl

From: [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:24 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: KUDOS to Secretary Vilsack

Facebook -

Save Shirley Sherrod

Tell Sec. Vilsack while it may have come a little late - he manned up - for that I support him - facing it head on - I think he can fix the long standing problems there for civil rights - but he has to be willing to be patient, listen and stand! But above all, STAND

Thank you, Vilsack!

Cook, Cheryl

From: Sandra Keenan [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 3:53 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: I do not understand

Your Agency has zero tolerance for discrimination - well I and others have zero tolerance for people who don't do their homework and bully people. If what I have read in the papers and have seen on tv is true, since when is the main source of information fox news. I expect govt officials (and I am one) to not make decisions by the seat of their pants. What you and your USDA Secretary have done to Shirley Sherrod is abominable and I would expect that you and Vilsak and NAACP and Obama would apologize to her in a very public way.

I have supported Obama through thick and thin but this egregious action by whomever makes me wonder what is going on in our "transparent" govt that he promised. I am very disappointed.

I know I am only one of the little people so probably my opinion doesn't mean much - not only have I emailed the President, the Vice President, Secretary of the USDA but also the NAACP. And I never have emailed govt officials before.

Sandra L Keenan

I am sure that you probably won't even read this

Cook, Cheryl

From: Sean R. Murphy [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 3:42 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Unjust behavior...

Dear Ms. Cook,

I am very disappointed to hear of your involvement with the firing of Ms. Sherrod. You and your office are guilty of a gross injustice in this regard and I expect you to make every effort to remedy this situation. I am sure higher ups put pressure on you to make those calls but you need to do your due diligence before carrying out such hasty and dramatic actions. Can you imagine if someone took some comments you made over 20 years ago and only chose to zero in on two mins worth of a 45 minute speech/talk?

Sincerely,

Sean R. Murphy

--
Sean R. Murphy
MA - Sustainable International Development

[Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*

Apres Bondie c'est la Ter
(After God it is the Land)
Dominica's National Motto

Cook, Cheryl

From: Elsie Cubero [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 3:21 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Sherrod resignation

Ms Cook:

You are doing the present administration a great injustice if both you and Mr. Vilsack you do not make separate abject apology to Ms Sherrod, including admission of your failure to make a investigation of the "facts" in the NAACP soundbite, as any reasonable person would have done.

Please. You obviously acted to try to limit the damage to the administration. Now do not allow the further damage of your thoughtless knee-jerk reaction.

If Ms Sherrod had to stop her car while on the road to render a resignation by blackberry at your request is true, your action does not reflect anything but a knee-jerk reaction, without any attempt to investigate the facts. And it is inconceivable that you could have done this without Mr Vilsack's concurrence.

Absent the apologies from you both it is inevitable that both your reputations will be besmirched as political flunkies whose decisions are made for partisan purposes.

One additional thing: Do not accept the resignation proffered by Ms Sherrod under duress. If initially accepted, rescind the acceptance. If Ms Sherrod does not wish to work for your agency, she can submit another letter of resignation AFTER she received and mulls over your apologies.

Elsie Cubero

[Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*

Cook, Cheryl

From: William Anon [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:37 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: RE: By BLACKBERRY?!?!

P.S. And after the IG report shows how incompetent you are, I hope Ms. Sherrod sues you for all you're worth, Ms. Cook!

From: [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*
To: [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Subject: By BLACKBERRY?!?!
Date: Wed, 21 Jul 2010 10:49:35 -0400

Really? You asked her to resign using her Blackberry while driving?

Man...I hope the IG nails you to the wall. That's the most unprofessional way of managing people that I've heard of in a long time.

How did you get a job in Government, anyway?

- Joe Allen

The New Busy is not the too busy. Combine all your e-mail accounts with Hotmail. Get busy.

The New Busy think 9 to 5 is a cute idea. Combine multiple calendars with Hotmail. Get busy.

Cook, Cheryl

From: Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:24 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Reinstate Ms. Shirley Sherrod Now!

Dear Ms., Cook:

Reliable reporting has you at the nexus of the firing of Ms. Shirley Sherrod. According to Ms. Sherrod, you were the voice on the phone demanding her resignation on behalf of your boss, Ag Secretary Tom Vilsack, for remarks she made at an NAACP event in Douglas County, GA back on March 27, 2010.

I hope you have had the time to review the full and unedited tape. More importantly, I hope you will be among those who are calling for the Secretary to reverse his hasty, and most importantly, erroneous decision to relieve Ms. Sherrod of her job. It was hot-headed. It was wrong. It was done without giving Ms. Sherrod any opportunity to address the accusations made about her. It was done based on the doctored video by promoted by a conservative activist blogger (Andrew Breitbart) and his allies at FOX News Channel.

It takes a big person to admit his or her mistake. You may have just been "carrying out your duties," but you owe Ms. Sherrod your most heartfelt apology and you should be one of the champions for her full reinstatement.

Please convey to your boss, the Secretary, the following sentiment: The longer he delays in doing what is so obviously right, the worse the situation is. Mr. Vilsack was wrong to jump to a conclusion based solely on FOX News and blogosphere reporting. I will be among those calling for his resignation if he does not do what is right by way of Ms. Sherrod.

Apologize sincerely and quickly, and reinstate her immediately.

Sincerely,

J. D. Edwards
Rio Rancho, NM

8/4/2010

Cook, Cheryl

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:36 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: RE: ABC News / Good Morning America

Thanks for sending this over, Cheryl

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:27 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Fw: ABC News / Good Morning America

One more

From: Bosland, Katie
To: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Wed Jul 21 12:09:55 2010
Subject: ABC News / Good Morning America

Hi Cheryl-

My name is Katie Bosland and I work for ABC News / Good Morning America with George Stephanopoulos and Robin Roberts. I wanted to reach out as we have been covering and following Shirley Sherrod's departure from your organization closely and wanted to let you know that should you want to speak out – clear up any misconceptions – that we are here, ready to listen. I have also been in touch with Stephanie Chan in the communications department but wanted you to know personally of our sincere interest in getting the truth out and hearing from you, as your voice is one that has been absent from the discussion thus far.

Well hope to speak soon and take care – I am reachable 2/47 via blackberry a

Exemption (b)(6)

All best,
Katie Bosland

Katie Bosland | Segment Producer | ABC News, *Good Morning America* | Katie.Bosland@abc.com | 202.222.7331

8/4/2010

Cook, Cheryl

From: [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:07 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Fwd: Doctored Tapes

Here's my letter to your boss. If you are indeed responsible for firing this woman, you owe her a full, unconditional and public apology.

In the meantime, my own comment based on your action: you're a jerk, and not a bright one.

When I read that you have apologized, I'll be happy to e-mail you my full, unconditional apology.

Begin forwarded message:

From: c o'donnell <[Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)>
Date: July 20, 2010 9:18:06 PM EDT
To: agsec@usda.gov
Subject: Doctored Tapes

Sir:

Your employees should not lose their jobs over doctored videotapes concocted by a self-described political "activist." You, or whoever the subordinate was who made this call, showed extremely poor judgement as a manager. I am ashamed of you.

And I am ashamed of the President being attacked by proxy for reasons which have nothing to do with agricultural policy by someone in your agency who failed -- dismally failed -- to determine the facts before acting. Even Earl Butz, of "loose pair of shoes" fame, wasn't tossed off the back of the train in a matter of hours, and he was actually guilty as charged.

I'm quite sure, by searching through enough video, I could make any of your employees "say" anything. I could make you say anything. How convenient that someone speaking at an NAACP dinner should be "caught" this way by someone with sympathy for the "tea party" viewpoint after they lost a contest of political pointmaking to the NAACP.

But that was only after the gentleman from the Tea Party Express wrote a stupid and insulting public letter. How dare you or your subordinates find that someone who is telling the tale of how they grew past racist attitudes has committed the equivalent offense. Have you got brains? Use them.

If progressives had known it's this easy to target and eliminate people in federal jobs, we would have circulated specially edited clips of Bush Administration officials running their big mouths. Oh -- wait -- compared with "Mission Accomplished" I guess nothing taken out of context would have had any real meaning.

I suggest the manager who took this action needs to be reassigned or demoted.

If the idea was yours, you owe Ms. Sherrod a full and unconditional apology.

== craig o'donnell

Exemption (b)(6)

== craig o'donnell

Exemption (b)(6)

Cook, Cheryl

From: [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:06 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Sherrod

I am totally shocked that someone who has whined on national tv and has said what she has said would be able to come back. Her lack of integrity and professionalism is not what i would expect our government would want back. Just give her retirement package and say no thanks due to lack of integrity and professionalism. As of now we will have to listen to her and Jesse Jackson (which i usually just A. turn off tv B. change the channel) and i am sure NAACP will now change their tune about her. I am sure there is some rule in the government employee hand book to keep her from coming back. She is a racist whether she thinks she is not now but so far she has tried to make fancy speech is saying she has learned her lesson her sayin it over an over says she has not this is the same crap some racist say to make people think they are not. For once i would like at least one government department have some digenity integrity (sorry i am just frustrated at my government not listening to anyone but special interest groups) Thank you Ms Terry Chockley

Cook, Cheryl

From: Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:00 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Your failure to investigate the complaint about Shirley Sherrod

Dear Ms. Cook,

I understand that you took part in implementing the decision to fire Shirley Sherrod. (If not, please accept my apology and forward this e-mail to the responsible person.)

I hope that this whole affair impresses on you and the entire Administration the necessity of treating right-wing sources with great skepticism. Your Department was responsible for conducting a thorough investigation of any complaints against Ms. Sherrod, but even the least bit of investigation would have revealed the falsity, indeed the fraudulent nature, of the complaint against her.

You and Secretary Vilsack (and perhaps the White House) have been made fools of. I trust this will make you more cautious in the future.

David A. Lewis

Exemption (b)(6)

Cook, Cheryl

From: [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:59 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl

Reinstate Shirley Sherrod

Cook, Cheryl

From: [Redacted] *Exemption* , (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:56 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Shirley Sherrod

If this is the Cheryl Cook involved in the firing of Shirley Sherrod, I strongly urge you to reconsider and to do all you can to support her re-instatement. She has done nothing wrong, but has been the victim of a politically motivated smear, the purpose of which was to draw blood against the NAACP. The federal government should not be made an accomplice of a given side in a partisan dispute, and should ensure that its employees know that they will have fair hearing if they are the victims of a politically motivated smear.

The actions of USDA on this matter leave me greatly disheartened and I hope things will be put right by Ms. Sherrod's immediate reinstatement.

David Bateman
Pennsylvania

Cook, Cheryl

From: Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:53 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Shame on you!

You've given an embarrassing new depth to the phrase "Rush to Judgement."

Cook, Cheryl

From: Exemption (b)(6)

Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:45 PM

To: Exemption (b)(6);

Exemption (b)(6)

Cook, Cheryl

Subject: Forced Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

Ms Cook; I am a retired Federal employee and am outraged that Ms Sherrod was forced to resign her Federal position over an incident that occurred 26 years ago while employed by a State agency; an event, which when viewed in full context, is deemed to be in full support of racial harmony and devoid of any vestige of racism. Once again the Fox network has bamboozled the Obama Administration (and the NAACP organization). Enough is enough; tell Secretary Vilsack to show some dignity and respect; admit your agency made an error in judgement and reinstate Ms Sherrod. The NAACP has issued a statement retracting their premature condemnation of Ms Sherrod; your agency should do the same. African Americans are beginning to ask....."Is having a Black President too heavy a burden for African Americans to bare? Should we revert to the time old tradition and let the white folks run the White House and perhaps we can all return to some semblance of sanity?" Enough already..... Ron Mathis

Cook, Cheryl

From: [REDACTED] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:44 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Your resignation

Ms. Cook,

It is my desire that you resign from your position in the USDA immediately. You are obviously not qualified to hold a position of responsibility within this agency or the US government and since you work for me (the taxpayer) I think it's time you go. If you were directed to act so ignorantly while harassing a valuable employee into resigning then maybe the idiot who directed you needs to resign as well. We (the American taxpayers) are really getting tired of having such inept and stupid people working for us.

Timothy Heinse

The New Busy is not the too busy. Combine all your e-mail accounts with Hotmail. [Get busy.](#)

Cook, Cheryl

From: Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:44 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Reinstate Shirley Sherrod

You may have been under pressure from above, but it was JUST WRONG to fire Shirley Sherrod, and she needs to be reinstated immediately. This action is absolutely disgraceful.

There's no excuse for a knee-jerk reaction to right-wing propaganda and in any case EVERY CIVIL SERVANT is entitled to a fair hearing and due process, which she did not get.

Please exert your efforts to reverse this horrible injustice immediately.

Sincerely,
Anne Peticolas
Austin, Texas

Cook, Cheryl

From: [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:43 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Shirley Sherrod

Please re-consider the forced resignation of Mrs. Shirley Sherrod. I do not know her personally but I truly believe that she was unfairly characterized by the media, and treated unfairly by all that are involved. Please justify to the American public the necessity of her resignation in light of her full remarks.

Sincerely,
Susan Dart
Saratoga Springs NY

Cook, Cheryl

From: [REDACTED] Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:43 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: The firing.

Ms. Cook:

It is appalling that Shirley Sherrod was fired. Your treatment of her--endangering her life by harassing her on the cell phone as she drove--is inexcusable. If anyone should be fired, it is you and your boss, Vilsack. Hire her back immediately, with apologies.

Yours truly,
Jon Holdaway (63 years a rabid Democrat and a consistent voter!)

PS: Amazingly, Tom Vilsack does not have an email address listed in the USDA email directory. What is this? Is he too far up the bureaucratic ladder to hear citizen concerns? I would send him the same message I'm sending you, if only I could.

The New Busy think 9 to 5 is a cute idea. Combine multiple calendars with Hotmail. Get busy.

Cook, Cheryl

From: Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:42 PM
To: AGSEC -USDA; Cook, Cheryl
Subject: please reinstate shirley sherrod

Dear sir,

I, along with millions of other "white farmers", was furious when I saw the released edited version clip of Ms.Sherrod's address to the NAACP. I fully support your zero tolerance policy on discrimination.

having said that, when the full context of the tape was released, I realized that I and millions more jumped to conclusion about Ms.Sherrod, when in fact, her point was in unifying the races, not in dividing. My amends to Ms.Sherrod....

After I watched the full video, I was very humbled and moved by Ms.Sherrod's message to the NAACP about all of us working together.

Please reconsider your decision and reinstate Ms.Sherrod.

Regards,
Terry Wiley
Houston, TX 77090

The Animal Rescue Site needs your help in feeding previously abused animals who are now living their lives in a protective sanctuary or are awaiting adoption! Help feed tens of thousands of animals every day with a simple click, at no cost to you. Visit <http://www.theanimalrescuesite.com> today!

The New Busy think 9 to 5 is a cute idea. Combine multiple calendars with Hotmail. Get busy.

Cook, Cheryl

From: [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:42 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: re: Shirley Sherrod

Please reinstate Shirley Sherrod at the USDA or at least open a public investigation. An apology should be made loud and public to her if the story that "forced" her resignation is found to be untrue. We cannot let these manufactured political stories from either side of the aisle make us react before we have all of the facts. The Acorn controversy hurt a lot of people that didn't deserve it, all for a manufactured lie that has helped divide our country even more. If you don't respond to this as being wrong than you have only let the divide become stronger.

Sincerely,
Theresa Giacomino
Rohnert Park, Ca.

Cook, Cheryl

From: Exemption (b)(6) on behalf of Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:41 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Spooner/Sherrard

I am a Spooner grandchild who was raised in the southwest Georgia area and it is totally absurd that you and your superior terminated an employee due to pressure from the NAACP, Glenn Beck and a false story placed on YOUYUBE. Your admission that it in anyway hinders her ability to work with the farmers in this region shows how truly out of touch you are with the southern farmers and their needs. While her admission that she had those feelings, without acting on them, when facing a farmer who does have the attitude that she reported. Now on the video they seem like they are a sweet couple and now the Spooner brothers have mellowed, but they are 87 going on 88 and 89 going on 90, so it is time and they have had a lot of time and grandchildren to help with that.

It is amazing that she can admit to these feelings in an effort to show that it goes both ways, so that the groups she speaks in front of learn that it is about the people and their needs (not the poor and rich) but what they need. You and your boss have no idea what they need and no idea, obviously what kind of racism she faced in the 80's. I don't even know how bad it was, but I know how bad it still it is today so it must have been terrible then and she went to help a group, a family that at one time was very powerful in the county. Those brothers had a lot, and the other brothers did not get the help from the USDA that Roger got from Sherrard, and many of them lost the majority of their farms while Roger has kept his. Where were you when they were asking for help? If she was able to gain the respect of Roger and his brothers, she has done a lot, and you are only making these farmers have less respect for your organization. I know that is how we feel, and how many more feel.

She admitted her mistakes, if you are too big to admit yours then that tells us the public who you are supposed to serve what we can expect from you. We will also know who you are really serving and it is NOT the RURAL farmers, white or black.

--

Thanks,
Jennifer Spooner

Cook, Cheryl

From: [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:37 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Shirley Sherrod should not lose her job

Dear Cheryl,

I have to agree with this quote by Jed Lewison:

"Shirley Sherrod is a good woman who did nothing wrong and nobody should want to live in the kind of country where good people are fired because politicians are worried that they might become liabilities."

Sincerely,
Kevin Higgins

[Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)

Cook, Cheryl

From: [REDACTED] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:35 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Shirley Sherrod

Dear Ms. Cook:

I am writing to ask that Secretary Vilsack reinstate Shirley Sherrod. The mischaracterization of Ms. Sherrod's speech is an injustice. Please tell Secretary Vilsack not to add to that injustice by accepting a resignation that was done without due diligence.

Sincerely,
Kenneth Tavares
Westport, MA

Cook, Cheryl

From: Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:35 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Fire Tom Vilsack not Shirley Sherrod

To whom it may concern,
Please reinstate Shirley Sherrod and do it publically and quickly. And next time, look both ways before you start shooting. Thank you.

Cook, Cheryl

From: Bosland, Katie [Exemption (b)(6)]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:10 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl; [Exemption (b)(6)]
Subject: ABC News / Good Morning America

Hi Cheryl-

My name is Katie Bosland and I work for ABC News / Good Morning America with George Stephanopoulos and Robin Roberts. I wanted to reach out as we have been covering and following Shirley Sherrod's departure from your organization closely and wanted to let you know that should you want to speak out – clear up any misconceptions – that we are here, ready to listen. I have also been in touch with Stephanie Chan in the communications department but wanted you to know personally of our sincere interest in getting the truth out and hearing from you, as your voice is one that has been absent from the discussion thus far.

We'll hope to speak soon and take care – I am reachable 2/47 via blackberry at [Exemption (b)(6)]

All best,
Katie Bosland

Katie Bosland | Segment Producer | ABC News, *Good Morning America* | Katie.Bosland@abc.com | 202.222.7331

Cook, Cheryl

From: [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:27 AM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Cc: [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Subject: Shirley Sherrod should not be given her job back...

Hi Cheryl,

Assuming you are the Cheryl who told Shirley Sherrod to resign. Please make sure this woman never works for the USDA again. Racism and prejudice should never be allowed no matter who it comes from. If this were a white woman all hell would have broke loose. This woman needs permanently removed from this position. I am disgusted that they are even reconsidering giving her job back.

Feel free to forward my email to the appropriate personnel. I will also contact the NAACP and the President of the United States.

Jodi Church

Cook, Cheryl

From: Matt Clary [Exemption (b)(6)]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:03 AM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Sherrod

You and Sec. Vilsack should be ashamed at the way this woman was treated. She is a civil rights hero and a hero to the working poor, and you tossed her out because of some misleading attack by the biggest right-wing ideologue on the Internet. Shame, shame, shame on you. Give Shirely her job back.

Matt Clary
Lebanon, NH

Hotmail has tools for the New Busy. Search, chat and e-mail from your inbox. [Learn more.](#)

Cook, Cheryl

From: Chiappe, Cristina - Washington, DC [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:58 AM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Cc: Abebe, Yeshimebet; Abdallah, Magdey - Washington, DC; Yocum, Katie - Washington, DC; Zaina, Lisa; Mather, Chris
Subject: RE: Statement

Ok. Thanks.

-----Original Message-----

From: Cook, Cheryl [mailto:[Redacted]] Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:57 AM
To: Chiappe, Cristina - Washington, DC
Cc: Abebe, Yeshimebet (OSEC/RD); Abdallah, Magdey - Washington, DC; Yocum, Katie - Washington, DC; Zaina, Lisa; Mather, Chris
Subject: RE: Statement

I have asked for something to provide to the State Directors. In the meantime, please steer those in your region to the public statements released by the Secretary, most recently at 2:00 this morning, as follows -

Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

WASHINGTON, July 21, 2010 - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack tonight released the following statement in response to the release of remarks in video from Shirley Sherrod:

"I am of course willing and will conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts to ensure to the American people we are providing services in a fair and equitable manner."

-----Original Message-----

From: [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
[mailto:[Redacted]] Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:48 AM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Cc: Abebe, Yeshimebet; Magdey.Abdallah@one.usda.gov; Katie.Yocum@one.usda.gov; Zaina, Lisa; Mather, Chris
Subject: FW: Statement

Cheryl-

Would it make sense to have talking points for SDs around the country in case they start getting calls by reporters or are asked to comment at events?

-----Original Message-----

From: Brunner, Terry - Albuquerque, NM
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:44 AM
To: Chiappe, Cristina - Washington, DC
Subject: Statement

Cristina: If this issue with the Georgia State Director continues throughout today, I wouldn't be surprised if some enterprising reporters start calling other State Directors around the country or asking us about this when they see us at events. What does NO want us to say about this situation if asked?

Terry Brunner
State Director

USDA Rural Development-New Mexico
6200 Jefferson, NE Room 255
Albuquerque, NM 87109
Office: (505) 761-4950
Fax: (505) 761-4976

Cook, Cheryl

From: William Anon [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:50 AM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: By BLACKBERRY?!?!

Really? You asked her to resign using her Blackberry while driving?

Man...I hope the IG nails you to the wall. That's the most unprofessional way of managing people that I've heard of in a long time.

How did you get a job in Government, anyway?

- Joe Allen

The New Busy is not the too busy. Combine all your e-mail accounts with Hotmail. Get busy.

Cook, Cheryl

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:01 AM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Cc: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: RE: from Philip Shenon, "The Daily Beast," www.thedailybeast.com

Tx. Keep them coming to Steph and I. Appreciate it Cheryl.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:54 AM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Fw: from Philip Shenon, "The Daily Beast," www.thedailybeast.com

From: Phil Shenon
To: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Wed Jul 21 09:26:53 2010
Subject: from Philip Shenon, "The Daily Beast," www.thedailybeast.com
Ms. Cook,

I'm a reporter for The Daily Beast website, www.thedailybeast.com.

I've been asked to write on the Shirley Sherrod story. Obviously you figure prominently in it.

Would it be possible to talk? I'm at [Exemption (b)(6)]

If not, can you help me understand by email what happened here?

Thank you.

Phil Shenon
www.philipshenon.com
www.thedailybeast.com
cellphone: [Exemption (b)(6)]

Cook, Cheryl

From: Phil Shenon [Exemption (b)(6)]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:27 AM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: from Philip Shenon, "The Daily Beast," www.thedailybeast.com

Ms. Cook,

I'm a reporter for The Daily Beast website, www.thedailybeast.com.

I've been asked to write on the Shirley Sherrod story. Obviously you figure prominently in it.

Would it be possible to talk? I'm at [Exemption (b)(6)]

If not, can you help me understand by email what happened here?

Thank you.

Phil Shenon
www.philipshenon.com
www.thedailybeast.com
cellphone: [Exemption (b)(6)]

Cook, Cheryl

From: Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:16 AM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: sherrod

Ms. Cook,

You should text your resignation for the handling of the above issue.

Cook, Cheryl

From: Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:02 AM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Shame!

For giving into an extremist attempt to continue to inject racism into our political discourse -- and for ignoring that fundamental right of American justice: all are innocent until proven guilty.

David Phelps
Seattle, WA

Sent from my iPad

Cook, Cheryl

From: Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 8:21 AM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: What have you done?

Please relay to Mr. Vilsek the discontentment I feel regarding his firing of Shirley Sherrod. I have been a loyal supporter of the Obama administration from day one, but if someone doesn't step forward to correct this mess -- torturing a heroic black woman like Shirley Sherrod -- it will be many years before I return to the voting booth again -- if I am made to believe that my vote supported discrimination of this sort -- well, it makes me sick!

The decision to reverse her firing should be as quick and swift as the decision to fire her was originally -- tell your boss to get it done.

Barbara Weisenberger
Fall Creek Wisconsin

Cook, Cheryl

From: [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:31 AM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Shirley Sherrod

I am deeply offended by your actions, rushing to judgment and pressuring Shirly to resign.

You need to own up to your mistake and resign, I and the rest of Americans have lost confidence in your ability to perform your job.

Sincerely

Tim Youngman
Taxpayer

Cook, Cheryl

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:04 AM
To: Tonsager, Dallas; Cook, Cheryl; Vasquez, Victor
Cc: Zaina, Lisa
Subject: Fw: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod
Importance: High

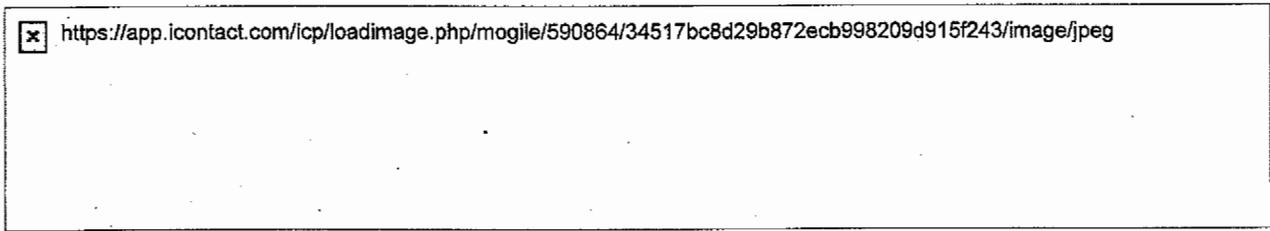
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Mather, Chris
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wed Jul 21 05:17:54 2010
Subject: Fw: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

This went at 2
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wed Jul 21 02:07:06 2010
Subject: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod



Release No. PENDING

Contact:
USDA Office of Communications
(202) 720-4623

Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

WASHINGTON, July 21, 2010 - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack tonight released the following statement in response to the release of remarks in video from Shirley Sherrod:

"I am of course willing and will conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts to ensure to the American people we are providing services in a fair and equitable

manner."

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice), or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Exemption (b)(6)

Cook, Cheryl

From: Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 3:45 AM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Cc: AGSEC -USDA
Subject: Reinstate Shirley Sherrod immediately

Dear Ms. Cook,

Your unfortunate response to an edited and slanderous report on Ms. Sherrod shows an intemperate and unjust handling of a public servant employee. I am outraged that you and your department took the bait of a known biased and untruthful media outlet without fully investigating the actual events pertaining to Ms. Sherrod's speech. She has been harmed by a saboteur's political ploy to tarnish this administration by any means. You and Tom Vilsack owe this individual the right to reclaim her job and a very public apology to her.

I will await the news that you will do the right thing.

Sincerely,
Valerie Hinshaw

Cook, Cheryl

From: Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:57 AM
To: Cheryl.Cook@usda.gov; Cook, Cheryl
Subject: do the right thing

Ms. Cheryl Cook, USDA RD:

An honorable person will admit when they are wrong and they will look stronger for having done the right thing. Re-hire Ms. Sherrod and apologize to her for not taking the time to investigate the allegations.

Sincerely,

Mitja Ng-Baumhackl
Singapore (overseas U.S. military spouse)

Cook, Cheryl

From: Steven Luftman [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:57 AM
To: AGSEC-USDA
Cc: President@whitehouse.gov; ccook@uada.gov; Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Shirley Sherrod

Tom Vilsack,

You should give Shirley Sherrod back her job right now.

You are a bad person, how can you let your self be railroaded by Fox New?

Sincerely,

Steven Luftman

[Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)

Cook, Cheryl

From: Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:05 AM
To: AGSEC -USDA; Cook, Cheryl
Cc: Exemption (b)(6)
Subject: Shirley Sherrod

Secretary Vilsack and Under-Secretary Cook,

First, Secretary Vilsack says he required Ms Sherrod's resignation because she was a racist and:

"There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person," Vilsack said. "We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously."

[<http://www.cnn.com/2010/POLITICS/07/20/agriculture.employee.naACP/index.html?hpt=T2>]

But now, presumably after you have all the facts as you did not when you made the prior statement, if as you say,

"This isn't a situation where we are necessarily judgmental about the content of the statement, that's not the issue here. I don't believe this woman is a racist at all," he said. "She's a political appointee, and her job is basically to focus on job growth in Georgia, and I have deep concern about her ability to do her job without her judgments being second-guessed."

[<http://www.cnn.com/2010/POLITICS/07/20/agriculture.employee.naACP/index.html?hpt=T2>]

to whom I would I complain that "[I] I have deep concern about ... [your] ... ability to do ... [your] ... job without ... [your] ... judgments being second-guessed."?

So far I have used only quotes from Secretary Vilsack, but I've seen no evidence that Under-Secretary Cook denies her alleged role in this fiasco:

"Sherrod said she got four calls Monday from Cheryl Cook, the USDA rural development undersecretary. In the first, she said, she was told she was being put on administrative leave. In the second, she said, she was told she needed to resign."

[<http://www.cnn.com/2010/POLITICS/07/20/agriculture.employee.naACP/index.html?hpt=T2>]

so the "your" in the above is plural, and directed at both Secretary Vilsack and Under-Secretary Cook - isn't English a wonderfully vague language? Especially when a person's statements are edited with a particular goal in mind, as the NAACP says Ms Sherrod's were:

"The video of Shirley Sherrod released by Andrew Breitbart's Big Government Blog on July 19 didn't tell the full story. It was selectively edited to cast her in a negative light. Here is the video, shot by the local NAACP unit that hosted Ms. Sherrod. Watch the video, and judge for yourself."

[http://www.naACP.org/news/entry/video_sherrod/]

I have watched the video at the this site, have either of you?

President Obama (for whom I voted and will probably do so again) promised us a new kind of politics, but a politics wherein those in power make decisions (and destroy the lives of innocents) based on incomplete or manufactured information (e.g. the war in Iraq - subtlety is best applied with a sledgehammer lest the intended recipient not take note) is what President George W Bush gave us.

What the two of you have done and continue to do to Ms Sherrod is shameful and apparently differs only to the extent that you (plural) have destroyed but one life as opposed to tens of thousands.

8/4/2010

Secretary Vilsack posed a hypothetical question along the lines of "If you were denied a a loan or a grant, to what would you attribute this denial. the fact that your applicant was faulty or some other reasons?"
[<http://www.cnn.com/2010/POLITICS/07/20/agriculture.employee.naacp/index.html?hpt=T2> - "Who asked Sherrod to resign?"]

, where that "other reasons" was clearly meant to include the possibility that the grant reviewer is a racist. Well, let me observe that both of you are white and Ms Sherrod is black. Perhaps that is the reason the two of you were so quick to demand her resignation. I'll assume this is not the case, but how big a fuss would I have to raise, taking your comments out of context in such a way that implied that the two of were racists, even though I might later be willing to admit this is the not the case, before the two of you were forced to resign because "[you] are political appointee[s]...?"

If the NAACP can admit its error, who in its haste trashed a "Colored Person's" reputation in an unbelievable example of knee-jerk political-correctness, what excuse do the two of you have for not doing so? Even the Glenn Beck's and Rush Limbaugh's of this sadly imperfect nation deserve better governance than the two of you have offered in this situation.

Have a care,
James Norris
<http://home.wamego.net/jnorris>

Cook, Cheryl

From: [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:48 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Reinstate Shirley Sherrod!

Dear Ms. Cook:

Shirley Sherrod must be reinstated immediately.

She did absolutely nothing wrong, and by cravenly overreacting to a deceptively edited videotape, the USDA, and you, did her a grave injustice.

Before demanding her resignation in such a hasty, unsupported, and cowardly manner, an investigation should have been done to determine the actual content of her remarks, which are thoughtful, honest, and inoffensive to anyone except entrenched bigots.

There is no excuse for caving in to vicious personal attacks and lies spread by known fringe provocateurs like Andrew Breitbart.

Reinstate Shirley Sherrod immediately, with a public apology from Sec. Tom Vilsack and from you, personally.

Sincerely,

Maureen Walsh

Cook, Cheryl

From: Phyllis Brown [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:26 PM
To: Tom.Vilsack@osec.usda.gov; Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Shirley Sherrod

As a concerned citizen for fairness, I respectfully request an investigation into my Ms. Sherrod's situation and as soon as possible her reinstatement. Or I request paid administrative leave until a full investigation and the presentation of the full taped presentation by Ms. Sherrod to the NAACP in March is completed.

Proverbs 18:13 ¹³ He that answers a matter before he hears *it*, it *is* folly and shame unto him.

It sounds like this matter may have been answered before it was heard. The Obama administration must not allow Glen Beck or the Tea Party to cause such an embarrassing over reaction.

I certainly hope and pray that no one else will be treated like this or forced to resign including Ms. Cook. I am sure all involved administration officials want to be fair. It just may be a terrible misunderstanding along with a rush to judgment.

I listened to the interview with Tony Harris and it sounds like she did help the Spooner's, became friends as well as aided/saved their farm.

Cook, Cheryl

From: [REDACTED] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:53 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Reinstate Shirley Sherrod immediately!

I am shocked that your office has participated in making an innocent woman the victim of a slanderous, doctored videotape by requesting her resignation while failing to establish the facts of the situation. You owe this woman a very public apology, you owe her job back, and you owe it to her to repair her reputation that you have participated in destroying. Shame on you.

Ann Donaldson
Boston, MA

Cook, Cheryl

From: [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:42 PM
To: Tonsager, Dallas; [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6); Hannigan, Erin; Cook, Cheryl; Berge, John
Subject: My two cents

I am disappointed with my beloved agency and department's handling of SD Sherrod. Really upset. There but for the grace of god go I.

Message sent from BlackBerry Device

Cook, Cheryl

From: [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:21 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Not Pleased with the DOA

The decision on the part of Secretary Vilseck today to request the resignation of the Rural Development Director in Georgia demonstrates a distinct lack of wisdom on the part of the Secretary. In my opinion the appointee should file a lawsuit against the Department. Mr. Vilseck had better reconsider because he has created a toxic situation that will engulf his department not for a couple of news cycles but for the remainder of the 2012 election cycle. The accusation (an accurate one) will result that demonstrates clearly that the Secretary Vilseck reacted from the potential of a Shirley Sherrod, Glen Beck interview. Secretary Vilseck's pandering to the Tea Party movement at this juncture will figure prominently into the department's inclusion in the discourse during the 2012 mid-term elections. I hope Mr. Vilseck is prepared to resign because if the President is as politically aware as I believe him to be -- Mr. Vilseck's political career as secretary will not survive the year as his appointee and will go back to the private sector. Given his decision this may well be best for his country. Perhaps he should run for office -- he appears to be a very political "animal". He represented that the White House knew nothing about this -- if that is a lie -- that will come out. If it is the case that the White House knew and directed him that too will come out. Please pass along my sentiments -- I'm certain they are not unique.

Sincerely,

Kevin

--

Kevin M Handy

[Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)

Home / Office Phone [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)

Email [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)

Cook, Cheryl

From: [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:16 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Cc: [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Subject: Shirley Sherrod firing

Cheryl:

You need to walk this back ASAP! This has career altering screw-up all over it. tick,tick,tick

Fred Cook|Mesquite Texas

Cook, Cheryl

From: [REDACTED] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:07 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Sherrod

Having seen both the original Fox coverage, and the interviews with the Spooners, with Ms. Sherrod and the entire speech, I am appalled at the actions taken by the USDA. Very poor judgment, and even poorer investigation of the facts. As a lawyer, I do employment investigations for big employers into allegations of wrongdoing all the time. This 24 hour incident does you a huge disservice.

And it does our nation a disservice as well. If responding immediately to right wing television is your biggest concern, its no wonder that so little has been done with the USDA.

Shame on you.

Michael Burke, Esq.
Los Angeles, California

Cook, Cheryl

From: Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:06 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Cc: president@whitehouse.gov
Subject: Shirley Sherrod

Dear Ms. Cook,

I have been listening to, reading, and researching the news stories about the USDA forcing Shirley Sherrod out of her important position in Georgia. It seems very clear that actions were taken with woefully incomplete information, reacting to a brief, edited clip taken from what was in fact an important, thoughtful and compassionate speech about the importance of going beyond racism and race-informed opinions in providing service to one another. In addition, it was a speech reflecting on a nearly-three-decade-old experience, long before she worked for the USDA. As you know now very well, even the white farm couple she supposedly discriminated against has come to her support, reporting that she was vitally important in helping to save their family farm all those years ago. This was when she was working for an organization whose principal mission was to provide assistance to African-American farmers.

I have known and worked with Shirley for over two decades. We have served together on the board of an organization providing support for rural development, both in the U.S. and in developing countries. I served for some years as Executive Director of that organization as well. She has always functioned in a thoughtful, well-informed, and thoroughly balanced manner and she would be one of the last persons, of any race or ethnicity, about whom I would believe charges of racist actions toward anyone. Perhaps it is pertinent in this situation to mention that I am White.

I urge you to review this issue and to recommend to Secretary Vilsack a reversal of the decisions that were clearly premature and ill-advised. Shirley should receive a public apology and be reinstated to her role with USDA. I sincerely believe it would be very difficult for the USDA to find anyone more well-prepared, competent and fair to serve in the position she was forced to resign.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Rev. Joseph D. Keesecker

Exemption (b)(6)

Cook, Cheryl

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:02 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Fw: Cheryl Cook

Importance: High

Fyi. Did you ever get Secretary phone message?
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

----- Original Message -----
From: Harden, Krysta
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Cc: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 21:58:43 2010
Subject: Re: Cheryl Cook

The Secy says Cheryl should work from home especially if there is concern re protesters etc

----- Original Message -----
From: Jett, Carole
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 21:51:28 2010
Subject: Fw: Cheryl Cook

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

----- Original Message -----
From: Heard, Robin
To: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tue Jul 20 21:46:55 2010
Subject: Fw: Cheryl Cook

----- Original Message -----
From: Maddux, Sheryl -USDA
To: Kamerri; Heard, Robin; Repass, Todd; Lescallett, Kenneth
Sent: Tue Jul 20 21:23:53 2010
Subject: Cheryl Cook

Cheryl made it safely home and her neighbor told her that the PA State Police had driven by a couple of times.
Sheryl K. Maddux
USDA Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Coordination.

Cook, Cheryl

From: Annette Bernier *Exemption (b)(6)*

Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:59 PM

To: Cook, Cheryl

Subject: Apologize & Rehire Shirley Sherrod

Dear Ms Cook,

It is rare that I write an email to a US government agency, but after viewing the unfair treatment of Shirley Sherrod, I felt that I needed to voice my point of view.

Ms Cook, you need to **"Give the lady her job back!"**

She was fired unjustly and without being given a chance to explain her side of the story.

Your administration was completely wrong for listening to "Fox" News as your source. In the future, please review **ALL the facts** before making a mistake as huge as this one!

Sincerely,

Annette

Cook, Cheryl

From: Annette Bernier [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:59 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Apologize & Rehire Shirley Sherrod

Dear Ms Cook,

It is rare that I write an email to a US government agency, but after viewing the unfair treatment of Shirley Sherrod, I felt that I needed to voice my point of view.

Ms Cook, you need to **"Give the lady her job back!"**

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Sincerely,

Annette

Cook, Cheryl

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:02 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Fw: Cheryl Cook

Importance: High

Fyi. Did you ever get Secretary phone message?
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

----- Original Message -----
From: Harden, Krysta
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Cc: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 21:58:43 2010
Subject: Re: Cheryl Cook

The Secy says Cheryl should work from home especially if there is concern re protesters etc

----- Original Message -----
From: Jett, Carole
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 21:51:28 2010
Subject: Fw: Cheryl Cook

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

----- Original Message -----
From: Heard, Robin
To: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tue Jul 20 21:46:55 2010
Subject: Fw: Cheryl Cook

----- Original Message -----
From: Maddux, Sheryl -USDA
To: Kamerri; Heard, Robin; Repass, Todd; Lescallett, Kenneth
Sent: Tue Jul 20 21:23:53 2010
Subject: Cheryl Cook

Cheryl made it safely home and her neighbor told her that the PA State Police had driven by a couple of times.
Sheryl K. Maddux
USDA Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Coordination.

Cook, Cheryl

From: Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:47 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Protest firing of Shirley Sherrod

Having been pleased with the Obama administration's decision to hire Shirley Sherrod at the USDA, an agency not known for its civil rights legacy, I truly am shocked that she has been removed from her position apparently because of predictable pressure from enemies of progress. The Sherrods were in the forefront of many who struggled in the South to make the Obama presidency a possibility. Respect and fair treatment for those who blazed the trail is the least we should expect.

Sincerely,
TOM HAYDEN

Cook, Cheryl

From: Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:29 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Unfair to Shirley Sherrod

As I understand it, you are the official who made Shirley Sherrod resign her job. It was incredibly unfair of you to do this based on a doctored video. You should've viewed the unedited video and given Ms. Sherrod a chance to explain her side of things.

Please reinstate Ms. Sherrod.

Cook, Cheryl

From: [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*

Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:28 PM

To: Cook, Cheryl

Subject: Shirley Sherrod is a hero, who could not have acted in a racist manner

Why did you fire her without any investigation?

S h e i l a

Cook, Cheryl

From: Kamerri
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:06 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Re: Checking in

Thank you for the update. I'm glad to know that you're safe and sound. Try to get some sleep.

Kathleen A. Merrigan Deputy Secretary USDA

----- Original Message -----

From: Cook, Cheryl

To: [REDACTED] Exemption (b)(6)

Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:37:20 2010

Subject: Re: Checking in

I'm home safely, neighbors waiting to tell me the PA State Police have already driven by.

----- Original Message -----

From: Kamerri

To: Cook, Cheryl

Sent: Tue Jul 20 19:37:01 2010

Subject: Checking in

Can't imagine a rougher day for you. Let me know what, if anything, I can do to help. I'm sorry I wasn't around Monday to help as the situation developed.

My focus right now is your physical and mental wellbeing. Would you please email or call when you get home so that I know you made it safely? Thank you my friend.

Kathleen A. Merrigan Deputy Secretary USDA

Cook, Cheryl

From: Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:05 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Shirley Sherrod

Ms Cook,

You have done a grave disservice to Shirley Sherrod, to the American People, and to your President. How can you move to fire Ms Sherrod without a close inspection of the allegations against her. A tape promulgated by a known distorter of truth via the method of edited video, has duped you into a very dishonorable decision. Please have her case reopened and get hold of the unedited tape of Ms. Sherrod speech, and talk to the family farmers that were being discussed and then and only then can you make a fair decision.

Thank you,
Mark S. Tague
Providence, RI

8/4/2010

Cook, Cheryl

From: Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:16 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Behavior

Dear Ms. Cook,

From news reports I understand you are the person responsible for today's media circus regarding Ms. Sherrod. Ms. Cook, with your reaction, rather than leadership, you have helped the Tea Party people cut the administration yet again.

I understand there could be many issues not vetted publicly, however, based on what I read, I was moved to write the note below.

Dear Mr. President,

If your staff won't take the time to understand one individual's story, how do you trust them to understand the rest of us?

July is a cruel month for media reporters seeking to fill their advertisers thirst for viewers. So I was not surprised to see a story of former USDA employee Shirley Sherrod being forced to resign because she expressed racial sentiments.

My 11 year old reminds us that we should seek to understand before we look to be understood. Perhaps your staff may want to review their internal procedures on determine someone's value before they act.

Your staff took the easiest way out. It was too easy for your staff to throw Ms. Sherrod under the bus. Not saying she had a perfect game. A blown call is a blown call. Too late for her and too late for you.

Sir, with all due respect, you need to get tougher with your staff and demand professionalism from all of your people.

Make us proud.

Sincerely,

Jim Fisher

E-mail message checked by Spyware Doctor (6.0.0.386)
Database version: 5.14880
<http://www.pctools.com/spyware-doctor-antivirus/>

8/4/2010

Cook, Cheryl

From: Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:09 PM
To: AGSEC -USDA; president@whitehouse.gov; Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Please Reinstate Shirley Sherrod

To Whom it May Concern:

Please, please reinstate Shirley Sherrod.

I am close to tears and extremely disappointed in the way this incident has been handled. You should have listened to the entire speech, prior to demanding Ms. Sherrod's resignation.

Thank you so much.
Cynthia Thomas

Cook, Cheryl

From: Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:57 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: rush to judgement

"Firing Shirley Sherrod was a bad decision, motivated by the wrong reasons, and it should be reversed. She should be reinstated, and it's not a close call." This is a story of redemption, not racism, of overcoming understandable reactionary feelings and growing in wisdom. The government's response is just the opposite. When will you stop being pushed around by ignorance and have the courage to stand up for what's right and good in people? Please forward this message to whomever can influence a mea culpa from the gov't and give this good woman her job back. It's the right thing to do and it is not complicated.

Sincerely,
Denise Sullivan
Beverly, MA

Cook, Cheryl

From: [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:42 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Shirley Sherrod

Dear Ms. Cook:

I can't believe MS. Sherrod was pressured to resign. I hope she is reinstated soon.

Sincerely,
Erin Martin

Cook, Cheryl

From: Kamerri
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:37 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Checking in

Can't imagine a rougher day for you. Let me know what, if anything, I can do to help. I'm sorry I wasn't around Monday to help as the situation developed.

My focus right now is your physical and mental wellbeing. Would you please email or call when you get home so that I know you made it safely? Thank you my friend.
Kathleen A. Merrigan Deputy Secretary USDA

Cook, Cheryl

From: [REDACTED] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:33 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Media coverage and second look at Sherrod case

Dear Ms. Cook,

Today the media has done a service to you and the USDA. They exposed the full context of Ms. Sherrod's remarks in how she worked with the white farmer who needed her help so many years ago.

In reality, the farmer and his wife actually credit her for fighting for them - and saving their farm.

The video that initially sparked the furor was intentionally edited to leave out the redemptive message Ms. Sherrod was sharing about getting beyond race and doing the right thing.

I ask that you investigate further and retract your demand for her resignation.

Instead, please use this as an opportunity to correct the record, expose how this hoax was perpetrated on you, the USDA, the NAACP, the media, and the American people, and make a big deal about bringing Ms. Sherrod back on board.

You'll be a hero for rolling this back, and you'll turn this into an opportunity to show how good people ultimately overcome their bias and racism.

Thank you,

Mike Cannon

Cook, Cheryl

From: Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:17 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: You need to reinstate Sherrod

or, at the very least, apologize for your knee-jerk reaction to bogus right-wing news attacks.

This sort of thing is expected from Fox News, so, you're left as the real loser in this. Let's see you do the right thing and redeem yourself and Ms. Sherrod?

Paul Williams
Lincoln, Nebraska

The New Busy is not the old busy. Search, chat and e-mail from your inbox. [Get started.](#)

Cook, Cheryl

From: [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:11 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Apologize and Rehire Ms. Sherron NOW

Tom Vilsack's pathetic excuse for refusing to admit a mistake is absolutely disgusting. What a sniveling coward he is! And the same goes for you, to the extent you were involved in this appalling decision.

Cook, Cheryl

From: [REDACTED] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:06 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Representation

Ms. Cook: You were set up. I would consult an attorney who specializes in representing federal employees in disciplinary cases, if I were you. You may need one.

Steven F. McNichols

[REDACTED]
Exemption (b)(6)

Cook, Cheryl

From: Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:11 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Shirley Sherrod

You people are truly disgusting cowards. To ruin a woman's career over a right-wing smear is simply astonishing.

As a voter, I'd like to see everyone involved in this travesty at the USDA fired and replaced ASAP...including your craven boss Vilsack.

Cook, Cheryl

From: [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:52 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Got integrity?

Resign and give Shirley Sherrod your job.

Tom Chapman
Outraged Citizen

Cook, Cheryl

From: Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:47 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: news

I was disappointed to see on the news recently about your actions with the USDA woman in Georgia who was telling a story about overcoming the issue of race when dealing with persons in her life. I hated to see that your organization jumped the gun and forced her to resign before getting the whole story. I just wanted to email you and tell you how disappointed I am in your actions given this situation. I am a white male living in Texas and just hate to see people in the positions of power who seem to be abusing their authority over others.

David

Cook, Cheryl

From: [REDACTED] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:47 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Shirley Sherrod

I am quite upset that an esteemed public employee has been fired and forcibly resigned because of lies.

This is how racism works. Good people are eliminated because of fear. You acted in fear. Rehire Mrs. Sherrod immediately

This is a huge travesty and you should be very, very ashamed at bowing to ignorance and fear.

Cook, Cheryl

From: Steve Slaback [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:47 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Shirley Sherrod

Dear Cheryl Cook

I strongly believe you jumped the gun in requesting Shirley Sherrod to resign. If you look at what the conservatives' put out on the web it would appear that she is racist. But if you took time and listen to her whole story you'll find she was not racist but the the opposite a good person helping a poor person no matter what color they are.

REHIRE Shirley Sherrod.

Steve Slaback

Cook, Cheryl

From: Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:42 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Shirley Sherrod

Hi Cheryl,

I know you were just the point person on this, but I hope you can pass along that at least one person is disappointed at the firing of Shirley. I'm not an old friend of hers, but I did have the opportunity in the past to get to know her and I found her to be a warm and gracious human being and definitely not a racist. Yes, politics is a nasty business, but how can President Obama eulogize Senator Byrd one week and then throw Shirley Sherrod under the bus the next? I just don't know what the principle is here, but it isn't an honest discussion of the issues.

Please pass along my concern for what it is worth. Otherwise, I hope you are enjoying your new position and life in Washington.

Pat Druhan

This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the system manager. This message contains confidential information and is intended only for the individual named. If you are not the named addressee you should not disseminate, distribute or copy this e-mail.

Cook, Cheryl

From: [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:09 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: REINSTATE SHIRLEY SHERROD

I think it is reprehensible that she was FORCED to resign for her comments regarding an incident that happened over 20 years AGO while she was not even an employee. Did anyone at the Dept of Agriculture fully vet the decision, watch the video recording, speak to the white farmers etc. I feel this was a political hack job!.

Cook, Cheryl

From: [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:07 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Shirley Sherrod

Dear Ms. Cook,

I find it very disturbing that your agency would fire someone because of a questionable right wing web sites claims of racism. As the facts come to light it would appear her firing was predicated on a vicious lie. It would seem you et.al. had an immediate knee jerk reaction...wouldn't it have been better to actually find out the facts before denying a woman of her livelihood? Particularly when the story she was telling was one of redemption and healing. I hope your agency does the right thing.

Respectfully,
Bryan M. Hoffman

[Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*

Cook, Cheryl

From: [REDACTED] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:02 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Unfair firing of Ms. Sherrod

Ms. Cook,

I was extremely disappointed at the news report identifying you as the individual who demanded Shirley Sherrod resign her post.

As an government employee I would think you above others would adhere to the concepts of a fair hearing and due process as a pillar of your public service management duties. And yet you apparently took an out of context remark and used it to force a career public servant from her position without any reasonable attempt at ascertaining the truth of the matter.

If there is any justice, Ms. Sherrod will be invited back to work and you will be sent to some much needed Human Resources training on responsible investigation techniques.

Shame on you.

Information from ESET NOD32 Antivirus, version of virus signature database 5296
(20100720)

The message was checked by ESET NOD32 Antivirus.

<http://www.eset.com>

Cook, Cheryl

From: [REDACTED] Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 5:56 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Reinstate Shirley Sherrod

I read with great dismay of the gross overreaction to a heavily edited video which amounts to nothing more than a politically motivated hit job. Shirley Sherrod served this country well and is now being victimized by an administration whose common sense should trump this kind of attack. No one should be thrown out of their job and out of government service because a political hack decides it is time to stir the pot. To allow this injustice to continue is to show that this government caves in to reactionary liars, to put it bluntly and that is reprehensible. Shirley Sherrod must be reinstated and a public apology issued to this fine public servant. Thank you.

Patricia Mattos
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Cook, Cheryl

From: Doug Marks [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 5:56 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Shirley Sherrod

Cheryl,

Someone is lying. You either lied to Shirley Sherrod about the White House wanting Shirley to pull over and resign or else Tom Vilsack is lying about the no White House involvement.

If you and Vilsack have half the integrity of Sherrod you will come clean and let the chips fall as they the might. The USDA response to this speech is deplorable. At least CNN had the integrity to get the facts before getting out the knife and stabbing Ms. Sherrod in the back. I wish we could see every thought you had 24 years ago and see if we could find any fault with your inner feelings which you probably hide behind daily. We might all ask God for forgiveness as we rush to make race a political balloon that we let Glenn Beck determine what way the wind will blow it.

Please rethink you actions as them appear to me as remarkably unprofessional,

Doug Marks

[Redacted]
Exemption (b)(6)

Cook, Cheryl

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 5:45 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Re: CNN Interview Request: Tuesday July 20, 2010

S did interview. We are set.

From: Cook, Cheryl
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:55:00 2010
Subject: FW: CNN Interview Request: Tuesday July 20, 2010

From: Griffin, Janelle [mailto:  Exemption (b)(6)]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:41 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: CNN Interview Request: Tuesday July 20, 2010
Importance: High

Hi Ms. Cook,

I hope you're doing well.

I've reached out to you earlier today regarding an interview with Rick Sanchez.

We're now speaking to Ms. Shirley Sherrod and we're hoping you could join us by phone before 5P et to weigh in with your side of the situation.

Please feel free to contact me via email or a  to let me know.

Thanks!

Cook, Cheryl

From: [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 5:43 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Reinstate Shirley Sherrod

Ms. Cook,

I am extremely disappointed at the news report identifying you as the individual who demanded Shirley Sherrod resign her post.

It seems you apparently took an out of context remark and used it to force a career public servant from her position without any reasonable attempt at identifying the truth.

If there is any justice, Ms. Sherrod will be invited back to work will all deliberate speed. The shame in this incident was not caused by Ms. Sherrod, but instead by your reckless disregard for due process.

Paul Pimentel

Cook, Cheryl

From: Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 5:19 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Reinstate Ms. Sherrod

Ms. Cook,

I was extremely disappointed at the news report identifying you as the individual who demanded Shirley Sherrod resign her post.

As an attorney I would think you above others would adhere to the concepts of a fair hearing and due process as a pillar of your public service management duties. And yet you apparently took an out of context remark and used it to force a career public servant from her position without any reasonable attempt at ascertaining the truth of the matter.

If there is any justice, Ms. Sherrod will be invited back to work and you will be sent to some much needed Human Resources training on responsible investigation techniques.

Shame on you.

Best regards,

Susan Shulman

--

Susan B. Shulman
General Counsel/Director of Operations
Metrist Partners
Exemption (b)(6)
www.metristpartners.com

Cook, Cheryl

From: [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 5:31 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Shirley Todd

Ms. Cook,

I can hardly believe your precipitous and unjustified reaction to the Todd incident. Pandering to the conservative blogosphere by throwing her under the bus without any type of examination was not only reprehensible but it shows that the administration is not only weak but gutless.

As some one who makes calls and walks precincts, I wondering if I am supporting a Democratic or Republican administration.

Randolfo R. Pozos

[Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*

Cook, Cheryl

From: [REDACTED] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:45 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: RESIGN

The New Busy think 9 to 5 is a cute idea. Combine multiple calendars with Hotmail. [Get busy.](#)

Cook, Cheryl

From: Griffin, Janelle [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:41 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: CNN Interview Request: Tuesday July 20, 2010
Importance: High

Hi Ms. Cook,

I hope you're doing well.

I've reached out to you earlier today regarding an interview with Rick Sanchez.

We're now speaking to Ms. Shirley Sherrod and we're hoping you could join us by phone before 5P et to weigh in with your side of the situation.

Please feel free to contact me via email or a [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)* to let me know.

Thanks!

Cook, Cheryl

From: twright [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:33 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: The Unjust Firing of Shirley Sherrod

Dear Deputy Under Secretary for USDA Rural Development Cook,

I am dismayed that Shirley Sherrod was forced to resign based on a poorly and incomplete blog post. After her many years of service I am appalled that she was not given the benefit of the doubt and was treated so shabbily by you and the USDA.

I urge you to apologize to her and ask her to return top the USDA immediately.

Sincerely,
Timothy Wright

[Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*

P Please don't print this email unless it is truly necessary.

Cook, Cheryl

From: [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:25 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Give Ms. Sherrod her job back

Dear Undersecretary Cook:

I believe a gross injustice has been committed in the case of Ms. Shirley Sherrod. I urge you to investigate the facts of her case and give a full hearing to her side of the story. This was an incident which took place twenty-three years before she went to work for the USDA. I am confident that given the opportunity to tell the whole story, Ms. Sherrod and Mr. and Mrs. Spooner will persuade you to reverse this decision. The USDA is fortunate to have a person of Shirley Sherrod's caliber and should be quick to give her her job back.

Sincerely,
John W. Baker

[Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)

jjwbaker@earthlink.net

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:10 AM
To: Jett, Carole; Mather, Chris; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Harden, Krysta
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: Sherrod story

3 - Non-Responsive

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 00:00:47 2010
Subject: Sherrod story

CNN just called me, after reaching out to WH. To squash day two stories, I think we need to consider what happens if this has legs tomorrow, early am if possible. We should not say any more that could create another story BUT, press will look elsewhere, and I fear there are people the could albiet wrongly keep story going. How early can we talk.
Chris Mather

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 2:31 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: SUPER URGENT

Importance: High

THIS IS HORRIBLE. From hotair.com

The NAACP is about to learn one of the most basic of all lessons in life – those who live in glass houses should avoid provoking a stone-throwing war. After the civil-rights organization threatened to issue a condemnation of Tea Party activism by equating it with racism (a position from which they ultimately retreated), Andrew Breitbart announced that he would publish at least one video of the NAACP itself cheering racism. Breitbart delivers on that promise today at Big Government, showing USDA official Shirley Sherrod explain to an appreciative NAACP audience in July 2009 how she deliberately withheld information from a white farmer in Georgia trying to save his land and his business...

And there is video

-----Original Message-----

From: Maloney, Wayne
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 1:56 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Zaina, Lisa
Subject: FW: Georgia
Importance: High

Chris,

I was just informed of a video of the Georgia State Director that was posted on the Internet earlier this afternoon. It speaks for itself and you need to watch it right away.

I have discussed this with Tim McNeilly. He has instructed the PIC and the State Director not to respond to media without checking with us first. We have not been contacted by any media outlet but expect that we will.

Tim has been asked by me to draft a statement for our review to be issued if necessary.

Wayne
###

Georgia PIC just called to alert us to a campaign underway involving Shirley Sherrod vs. the Tea Party people. I understand that this may have been brought to your attention already, but in case it hasn't..... The PIC is looking for guidance if (and I think there will be) media contact regarding the below video.

<http://hotair.com/archives/2010/07/19/breitbart-hits-naacp-with-promised-video-of-racism/>

Looking for guidance on how you would like to prepare and handle any inquiries that result.

Thanks.

Timothy J. McNeilly | Director, Legislative and Public Affairs Rural Development U.S.
Department of Agriculture 1400 Independence Ave., S.W. | Washington, D.C. 20250
Phone: 202.720.1019 | Fax: 202.690.4083

www.rurdev.usda.gov

"Committed to the future of rural communities"

"Estamos dedicados al futuro de las comunidades rurales"

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:33 PM
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Fw: Georgia

Importance: High

Sarah just checked nexus. It aired yesterday on FOX - Geraldo. TV Eyes did not pick it up. CBS News in NY just ran a story.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Maloney, Wayne
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Zaina, Lisa
Sent: Mon Jul 19 13:55:40 2010
Subject: FW: Georgia

Chris,

I was just informed of a video of the Georgia State Director that was posted on the Internet earlier this afternoon. It speaks for itself and you need to watch it right away.

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www.rurdev.usda.gov

"Committed to the future of rural communities"

"Estamos dedicados al futuro de las comunidades rurales"

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:34 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: Georgia

Can I call Rep Bishop and Chambliss?

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:33:07 2010
Subject: Fw: Georgia

Sarah just checked nexus. It aired yesterday on FOX - Geraldo. TV Eyes did not pick it up. CBS News in NY just ran a story.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Maloney, Wayne
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Zaina, Lisa
Sent: Mon Jul 19 13:55:40 2010
Subject: FW: Georgia

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Timothy J. McNeilly | Director, Legislative and Public Affairs Rural Development U.S.
Department of Agriculture 1400 Independence Ave., S.W. | Washington, D.C. 20250
Phone: 202.720.1019 | Fax: 202.690.4083

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Berge, John
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:00 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta
Subject: RE: WCBS story on Sherod

Any talkers yet?

We are teed up to call the GA delegation, Governor of GA and the State Director of Agriculture of GA.

Should we talk to authorizers and appropriators?

Waiting for talkers and green light.

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:52 PM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Subject: Fw: WCBS story on Sherod

FYI
Chris Mather

From: Maloney, Wayne
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: Zaina, Lisa; Cook, Cheryl; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:31:29 2010
Subject: WCBS story on Sherod

SHOCK: Video Suggests Racism At NAACP Event

NEW YORK (CBS) —



[to enlarge](#)

1 of 1

Shirley Sherrod, USDA Rural Development Georgia State Director

Last Tuesday, the NAACP passed a resolution condemning racism in the Tea Party movement. The organization's delegates called on Tea Party leaders to "repudiate those in their ranks who use racist language in their signs and speeches."

Tea Party members and supporters saw the resolution as a condemnation of the group itself, which calls for fiscal responsibility, restrictions on governmental power, and backs political candidates who claim the same.

The NAACP's action caught the attention of Andrew Breitbart of BigGovernment.com, who said the controversy was "absolutely manufactured for political gain," in a summer "in which the economy is the number one issue affecting blacks and whites in this country. This country can ill afford the schism of race to be exploited the way [he is] based upon the false premise of the Tea Party being racist."

He also claimed to possess recorded evidence of racism from the NAACP.

On Monday, Breitbart posted a video of a speech by Shirley Sherrod, USDA Rural Development Georgia State Director, delivered at the NAACP's 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet.

The video shows Sherrod speaking of racial considerations being a factor for how much help she would give.

"The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking but he was trying to show me he was superior to me. I know what he was doing, but he had come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was, I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," Sherrod said.

"I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough," Sherrod said. "So that when he, I assumed the Department of Agriculture had sent him to me, either that or the Georgia Department of Agriculture, and he needed to go back and report that I did try to help him."

In the video, Sherrod also spoke of referring the white farmer to a white lawyer, thinking the latter would be more sympathetic because of race. "So I took him to a white lawyer that had attended some of training that we had provided because Chapter 12 bankruptcy had just been enacted for the family farm. So I figured if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him."

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Tonsager, Dallas
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:04 PM
To: [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Cc: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin
Subject: Shirley Sherrod

Dear Mr. Secretary

We have just seen the video of Georgia State Director Shirley Sherrod and are deeply disturbed. Cheryl has put her on administrative leave pending a full investigation. Of course, the video suggests that this is about a farm loan, and those programs were transferred to the Farm Service Agency in 1995.

Shirley explained to Cheryl that this piece of tape shows only one small part of a longer story she told of her personal transformation beyond race, and is about a farmer who came to see her in 1986 when she was working as a farm advocate. The rest of the story apparently explains how she came to assist this farmer and many other white farmers during this time period. She said there is a copy of the entire speech, and Cheryl asked her to provide it as quickly as possible.

Dallas and Cheryl

Dallas Tonsager | Under Secretary
Rural Development
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W. | Washington, D.C. 20250
Phone: 202.720.4581 | Fax: 202.720.2080
www.rurdev.usda.gov

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:16 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Berge, John; O'Brien, Doug
Subject: Re: WCBS story on Sherod

This is awful. If he can right out fire her he will or ask for her resignation. How soon can he move?

From: Mather, Chris
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:52:19 2010
Subject: Fw: WCBS story on Sherod

FYI
Chris Mather

From: Maloney, Wayne
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: Zaina, Lisa; Cook, Cheryl; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:31:29 2010
Subject: WCBS story on Sherod

SHOCK: Video Suggests Racism At NAACP Event

NEW YORK (CBS) —



[to enlarge](#)

1 of 1

Shirley Sherrod, USDA Rural Development Georgia State Director
Last Tuesday, the NAACP passed a resolution condemning racism in the Tea Party movement. The organization's delegates called on Tea Party leaders to "repudiate those in their ranks who use racist language in their signs and speeches."

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The video shows Sherrod speaking of racial considerations being a factor for how much help she would give.

"The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking but he was trying to show me he was superior to me. I know what he was doing, but he had come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was, I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," Sherrod said.

"I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough," Sherrod said. "So that when he, I assumed the Department of Agriculture had sent him to me, either that or the Georgia Department of Agriculture, and he needed to go back and report that I did try to help him."

In the video, Sherrod also spoke of referring the white farmer to a white lawyer, thinking the latter would be more sympathetic because of race. "So I took him to a white lawyer that had attended some of training that we had provided because Chapter 12 bankruptcy had just been enacted for the family farm. So I figured if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him."

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:54 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Washo, Kevin; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Fw: Transcript

Thanks Sarah.
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:42:36 2010
Subject: Transcript
Chris, please see below for transcript

Video: [Link](#)

On July 25, 2009 Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack appointed Shirley Sherrod as Georgia Director of Rural Development. USDA Rural Development spends over \$1.2 Billion in the state of Georgia each year. On March 27, 2010, while speaking at the NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet, Ms. Sherrod admits that in her federally appointed position, overseeing over a billion dollars, she discriminates against people due to their race.

Shirley Sherrod: The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking but he was trying to show me he was superior to me, I know what he was doing. But he had to come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me, was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him. I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land. And here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So, I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough. So that when he, I assumed the Department of Agriculture had sent him to me, either that or the Georgia Department of Agriculture. And he needed to go back and report that I did try and help him. So I took him to a white lawyer that had attended some of the training that we had provided because of Chapter 12 bankruptcy had just been enacted for the family farm. So I figured if I take him to one of them that his own kind would take care of him. That's when it was revealed to me that its about poor versus those who have. It's not so much about white...it is about white and black. It is about white and black but its not you know...it opened my eyes because I took him to one of his own.

Fox News Clip:

Geraldo Rivera: Do you denounce in the way that you ask the Tea Parties denounce racists within your ranks?
Hilary Shelton: Yes we do, we repudiate racists within our ranks.

Back to Shirley Sherrod Clip:

I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farm land and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: (202) 256-8626

Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Berge, John
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:57 PM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; Jett, Carole; DeJong, Justin; Jett, Carole
Subject: RE: Georgia

Yes. RD. Mission area has been in the loop. Looping Carole to let her explain whole story to you.

-----Original Message-----

From: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:49 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Jett, Carole; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: Georgia

Has anyone had direct conversation with the USDA staff to hear her explanation? Is this FSA or RD? Has mission area talked to her?

Karen Ross
Chief of Staff
Office of the Secretary

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:33:07 2010
Subject: Fw: Georgia

Sarah just checked nexus. It aired yesterday on FOX - Geraldo. TV Eyes did not pick it up. CBS News in NY just ran a story.

Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Maloney, Wayne
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Zaina, Lisa
Sent: Mon Jul 19 13:55:40 2010
Subject: FW: Georgia

Chris,

I was just informed of a video of the Georgia State Director that was posted on the Internet earlier this afternoon. It speaks for itself and you need to watch it right away.

I have discussed this with Tim McNeilly. He has instructed the PIC and the State Director not to respond to media without checking with us first. We have not been contacted by any media outlet but expect that we will.

Tim has been asked by me to draft a statement for our review to be issued if necessary.

Wayne
###

Georgia PIC just called to alert us to a campaign underway involving Shirley Sherrod vs. the Tea Party people. I understand that this may have been brought to your attention already, but

in case it hasn't..... The PIC is looking for guidance if (and I think there will be) media contact regarding the below video.

<http://hotair.com/archives/2010/07/19/breitbart-hits-naacp-with-promised-video-of-racism/>

Looking for guidance on how you would like to prepare and handle any inquiries that result.

Thanks.

Timothy J. McNeilly | Director, Legislative and Public Affairs Rural Development U.S.
Department of Agriculture 1400 Independence Ave., S.W. | Washington, D.C. 20250
Phone: 202.720.1019 | Fax: 202.690.4083

www.rurdev.usda.gov

"Committed to the future of rural communities"

"Estamos dedicados al futuro de las comunidades rurales"

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:58 PM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: Georgia

Yes to all. It is RD. I will call you.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

----- Original Message -----

From: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Jett, Carole; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:48:33 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia

Has anyone had direct conversation with the USDA staff to hear her explanation? Is this FSA or RD? Has mission area talked to her?

Karen Ross
Chief of Staff
Office of the Secretary

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:33:07 2010
Subject: Fw: Georgia

Sarah just checked nexus. It aired yesterday on FOX - Geraldo. TV Eyes did not pick it up. CBS News in NY just ran a story.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Maloney, Wayne
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Zaina, Lisa
Sent: Mon Jul 19 13:55:40 2010
Subject: FW: Georgia

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"Committed to the future of rural communities"

"Estamos dedicados al futuro de las comunidades rurales"

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:04 PM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: Re: Shirley Sherrod

We have been on phone with krysta and ppo. Call when you can.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
To: Exemption (b)(6)
Cc: Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:50:47 2010
Subject: Fw: Shirley Sherrod

Mr Secretary
Not sure you received the original from Dallas regarding the story being carried today.
Karen Ross
Chief of Staff
Office of the Secretary

From: Tonsager, Dallas
To: Exemption (b)(6)
Cc: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:04:06 2010
Subject: Shirley Sherrod

Dear Mr. Secretary

We have just seen the video of Georgia State Director Shirley Sherrod and are deeply disturbed. Cheryl has put her on administrative leave pending a full investigation. Of course, the video suggests that this is about a farm loan, and those programs were transferred to the Farm Service Agency in 1995.

Shirley explained to Cheryl that this piece of tape shows only one small part of a longer story she told of her personal transformation beyond race, and is about a farmer who came to see her in 1986 when she was working as a farm advocate. The rest of the story apparently explains how she came to assist this farmer and many other white farmers during this time period. She said there is a copy of the entire speech, and Cheryl asked her to provide it as quickly as possible.

Dallas and Cheryl

Dallas Tonsager | Under Secretary

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Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:38 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; Weaver, Caleb
Subject: Re: final

We're good on our end.

From: Mather, Chris
To: Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:35:49 2010
Subject: Fw: final

Will push send shortly.
Chris Mather

From: Gavin, Tom
To: Mather, Chris; chrismather@gmail.com
Cc: Cherlin, Reid H.
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:32:13 2010
Subject: final
Chris --

Exemption b5

Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:01 AM
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Sherrod story

CNN just called me, after reaching out to WH.

Exemption b5

Exemption b5

How early can we talk.

CHRIS MATHER

Exemption b5

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:04 AM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Mather, Chris
Subject: Fw: Google Alert - usda

Flagging ajc article re sherrod.

From: googlealerts-noreply@google.com
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 06:58:11 2010
Subject: Google Alert - usda

News [3 new results for usda](#)

Resigned USDA official says racial story misconstrued

Atlanta Journal Constitution

By Marcus K. Garner The USDA's rural development director for Georgia says she was forced out of her federally appointed job after a "snippet" of a speech ...

[See all stories on this topic »](#)

Nationwide Recall Issued On Frozen Chicken Nuggets

WFMY News 2

National-- Monday, the USDA announced that Perdue Farms, Inc. out of Perry, GA announced it is recalling about 91872 pounds of frozen chicken nugget ...

[See all stories on this topic »](#)

Look! Black People Are Totally Racist Too!

Feministe (blog)

Apparently someone was able to dig up a video of a black USDA worker telling an audience of other black people about having to help a white farmer keep his ...

[See all stories on this topic »](#)

Tip: Use a plus sign (+) to match a term in your query exactly as is.. [Learn more.](#)

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[Manage your alerts.](#)

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:10 AM
To: Exemption (b)(6) Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Mather, Chris
Subject: Re: Today

Will work with Mather on it this am.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA
202-409-7911

----- Original Message -----

From: TJV
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Mather, Chris
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:21:30 2010
Subject: Today

I would like an email to every employee at USDA that reaffirms our commitment to a USDA that has no tolerance for discrimination in any form by anyone. I also want to remind every employee that as a USDA employee they have a unique and important individual responsibility to represent USDA well in all their official actions, statements, and public presentations and that all of us are held to a high standard. You may have to explain in the email what happened yesterday in general terms to provide a context for this email. If doing an email is cumbersome I suggest at a minimum a prominent web posting.

TV

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:18 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Washo, Kevin; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: Re: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

I sent to S.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Mather, Chris
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:08:20 2010
Subject: Fw: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

CNN American Morning talked to Sherrod. Transcript below.
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:46:21 2010
Subject: Fw: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

Rest of the transcript.

I'm trying to see if I can find the clip online. Esp interested in hearing the full response from this response-

Shirley Sherrod: IF I TRIED TO FIGHT IT AND DIDN'T HAVE ANY SUPPORT FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, WHAT -- WHAT.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Exemption (b)(6)
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

From: Kaplan, Karrah
To: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:37:13 2010
Subject: FW: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

updated

From: McCandless, Brittany
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:37 AM
To: Kraft, James; Dalberto, Emily; Manning, Regina; Kaplan, Karrah
Subject: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

MISSING PART BELOW IN RED:

American Morning transcript

Kiran Chetry and John Roberts interview **Shirley Sherrod**, a black Agriculture Department employee, who resigned Monday after conservative media outlets aired a video of her telling an audience she had not given a white farmer "the full force of what I could do" to help him save the family farm. She says the charges of racism are wrong

MISSING PART BELOW IN RED:

Kiran Chetry: THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ACCEPTS THE RESIGNATION OF AN EMPLOYEE AFTER A VIDEO SURFACED SHOWING HER TELLING AN AUDIENCE THAT SHE WITHHELD ASSISTANCE TO A WHITE FARMER BECAUSE OF HIS RACE. LET'S LISTEN TO WHAT SHE TOLD THE NAACP. DOES THAT VIDEO TELL THE WHOLE STORY? JOINING US NOW ON THE PHONE FROM ALBANY, GEORGIA, SHERRI SHERROD HERSELF. THANKS FOR BEING WITH US THIS MORNING, SHIRLEY.

Shirley Sherrod: THANK YOU.

Kiran Chetry: YOU SAY THIS WAS PART OF THE STORY AND THAT IT WAS PART THAT WAS SPLICED ENOUGH TO SHOW YOU IN A BAD LIGHT, THAT THIS ISN'T THE WHOLE STORY. WILL YOU FINISH FOR US HOW THIS ENED?

Shirley Sherrod: OKAY. I WAS SPEAKING TO THAT GROUP LIKE I'VE DONE MANY GROUPS AND I TELL THEM ABOUT A TIME WHEN I THOUGHT THE ISSUE WAS RACE AND RACE ONLY. AND I TELL THEM THE STORY OF HOW I WORKED WITH A WHITE FARMER BACK IN 1986. I WAS NOT WORKING FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE. I WAS WORKING WITH AND NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION ASSISTING FARMERS THROUGHOUT SOUTH GEORGIA AND THE SOUTHEAST. AND THIS FARMER CAME TO ME FOR HELP. I WAS TELLING THE STORY ABOUT HOW WORKING WITH HIM HELPED ME TO SEE THAT THE ISSUE IS NOT ABOUT RACE, IT'S ABOUT THOSE WHO HAVE VERSUS THOSE WHO DO NOT HAVE. AND I TELL HOW I TOOK HIM TO A LAWYER WHO I THOUGHT WOULD HELP HIM. IN THE END, THAT LAWYER DIDN'T. IN THE END, I HAD TO FRANTICLY LOOK FOR A LAWYER BECAUSE WHEN USDA LIFTED -- I'M SORRY. WHEN THE COURTS LIFTED THE INJUNCTION AGAINST USDA IN MAY OF 1987, THIS WHITE FARMER WAS 1 OF 13 THAT WAS FORECLOSED ON BY THE STATE OF GEORGIA. I HAD TO FRANTICLY FIND A LAWYER WHO WOULD FILE A CHAPTER 11 TO STOP THE FORECLOSURE. HE COULDN'T -- AT THAT TIME WE HAD UP TO 12 --

Kiran Chetry: BUT LET ME SAID -- YOU SAID YOU DIDN'T KNOW ENOUGH, DIDN'T GIVE HIM THE FULL FORCE OF WHAT YOU COULD DO. YOU SAID YOU REFERRED HIM TO THE LAWYER WHO WAS WHITE AND PERHAPS HE COULD HELP HIM. WHAT DID YOU MEAN BY THAT?

Shirley Sherrod: WHAT I MEANT WAS, I DIDN'T KNOW ANYONE ELSE, I DIDN'T KNOW ANOTHER LAWYER AT THAT TIME WHO WAS LOCAL, WHO KNEW SOMETHING ABOUT CHAPTER 12. BUT I THOUGHT IF I TOOK HIM TO A WHITE LAWYER, HE WOULD DEFINITELY DO ALL THAT HE COULD TO HELP SAVE HIS FARM.

John Roberts: MS. SHERROD LET'S MAKE IT CLEAR THOUGH. THIS HAPPENED 24 YEARS AGO. YOU EVENTUALLY WORKED WITH THIS WHITE FARMER, YOU EVENTUALL BECAME FRIENDS, YOU SAY, WITH THE FARMER AND HIS WIFE. SO THE QUESTION I HAVE IS, WHEN THE US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE CAME TO YOU AND SAID YOU HAVE TO STEP DOWN, WHY DIDN'T YOU JUST SAY WAIT A MINUTE, YOU DON'T KNOW THE FULL STORY, HERE'S THE FULL STORY, WHY SHOULD I STEP DOWN?

Shirley Sherrod: I DID SAY THAT. BUT THEY FOR SOME REASON, THE STUFF THAT FOX AND THE TEA PARTY DOES IS SCARING THE ADMINISTRATION. I TOLD... I TOLD THEM GET THE WHOLE TAPE AND LOOK AT HOW I TELL PEOPLE WE HAVE TO GET BEYOND RACE AND START WORKING TOGETHER.

John Roberts: I THINK THAT MANY PEOPLE AT HOME MIGHT BE THINKING, IF YOU'RE RECOUNTING AN OLD STORY, WHY DID YOU SUCCUMB TO PRESSURE TO STEP DOWN, WHY DIDN'T YOU TRY TO FIGHT THIS?

Shirley Sherrod: IF I TRIED TO FIGHT IT AND DIDN'T HAVE ANY SUPPORT FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, WHAT -- WHAT.

Kiran Chetry: BEN JEALOUS REFERRED TO YOU AND THIS SURFACING OF THE TAPE, "HER ACTIONS WERE SHAMEFUL. WHILE SHE WENT ON TO EXPLAIN IN THE STORY, SHE ULTIMATELY REALIZED HER MISTAKE AS

WELL AS THE COMMON PREDICAMENT OF WORKING PEOPLE OF ALL RACES. SHE GAVE NO INDICATION SHE HAD ATTEMPTED TO RIGHT THE WRONG SHE HAD DONE TO THIS MAN." AND THE REACTION FROM MANY IN THE AUDIENCE IS DISTURBING. THIS IS FROM BEN JEALOUS. DID YOU TRY TO CLARIFY WITH THE NAACP YOUR STORY?

Shirley Sherrod: NO, I HAVEN'T HAD A CHANCE TO TALK TO ANYONE. ALL OF THIS WAS HAPPENING SO FAST. AND IT'S UNFORTUNATE THAT THE NAACP WOULD MAKE A STATEMENT WITHOUT EVEN CHECKING TO SEE WHAT HAPPENED. THIS WAS 24 YEARS AGO AND I'M TELLING A STORY TO TRY TO UNITE PEOPLE WITH THAT NOW.

John Roberts: CERTAINLY YOU'RE COMING OUT AND TELLING YOUR STORY NOW TAKES IT TO A DIFFERENT LEVEL AND OBVIOUSLY WE'RE GOING TO KEEP FOLLOWING THIS. IT IS GOOD TO GET YOUR SIDE OF IT. SHERRI SH SHERLY SHERROD, FORMER DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE OFFICIAL. PERHAPS WE CAN GET YOU BACK ON AGAIN, GET YOUR FACE ON TV AS WELL AND TALK TO YOU MORE ABOUT THIS AS THIS STORY CONTINUES TO DEVELOP.

Shirley Sherrod: I DON'T MIND.

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:52 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: FW: Shirley Sherrod on CNN

Another one.

-----Original Message-----

From: Green, Valerie E. [mailto: [REDACTED] Exemption (b)(6)]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:49 AM
To: Washo, Kevin
Subject: Fw: Shirley Sherrod on CNN

Sent using BlackBerry

----- Original Message -----

From: Bates, Andrew J.
To: Bates, Andrew J.; Pfeiffer, Dan; Hogan, Nancy D.; Gavin, Tom
Cc: Messina, Jim; Green, Valerie E.
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:54:14 2010
Subject: RE: Shirley Sherrod on CNN

And FOX News:

<http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2010/07/19/clip-shows-usda-official-admitting-withheld-help-white-farmer/?test=latestnews>

Video Shows USDA Official Saying She Didn't Give 'Full Force' of Help to White Farmer

Published July 20, 2010
| FoxNews.com

Days after the NAACP clashed with Tea Party members over allegations of racism, a video has surfaced showing an Agriculture Department official regaling an NAACP audience with a story about how she withheld help to a white farmer facing bankruptcy -- video that now has forced the official to resign.

Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, is shown in the clip describing "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." Sherrod, who is black, claimed the farmer took a long time trying to show he was "superior" to her. The audience laughed as she described how she determined his fate.

"He had to come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," she said. "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land -- so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough."

The Agriculture Department announced Monday, shortly after FoxNews.com published its initial report on the video, that Sherrod had resigned.

"There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person," Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a written statement. "We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously."

The NAACP released a statement late Monday condemning Sherrod's admission.

"We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers," the statement said.

"Her actions were shameful," it continued. "While she went on to explain in the story that she ultimately realized her mistake, as well as the common predicament of working people of all races, she gave no indication she had attempted to right the wrong she had done to this man."

Sherrod explained in the video that, at the time, she assumed the state or national Department of Agriculture had referred the white farmer to her. In order to ensure that the farmer could report back that she was indeed helpful, she said she took him to see "one of his own" -- a white lawyer.

"I figured that if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him," she said.

The point of the story wasn't entirely clear; only an excerpt of the speech is included in the video clip.

"It was revealed to me that it's about poor versus those who have," she said, suggesting she had learned that race is less important.

The video clip was first posted by BigGovernment.com. The clip is dated March 27 from an NAACP Freedom Fund banquet.

The clip adds to the firestorm of debate over the NAACP's decision to approve a resolution at its convention last week accusing some Tea Party activists of racism -- a charge Tea Party leaders deny.

In a second clip from the same event posted online, Sherrod appeared to urge black job seekers to find work at the Department of Agriculture because the federal government won't lay people off.

"There are jobs at USDA and many times there are no people of color to fill those jobs because we shy away from agriculture. We hear the word agriculture and think, why are we working in the fields?" she said. "You've heard of a lot of layoffs. Have you heard of anybody in the federal government losing their job? That's all I need to say."

-----Original Message-----

From: Bates, Andrew J.

Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:53 AM

To: Bates, Andrew J.; Pfeiffer, Dan; Hogan, Nancy D.; Gavin, Tom

Cc: Messina, Jim; Green, Valerie E.

Subject: RE: Shirley Sherrod on CNN

Here's an Atlanta Journal Constitution blog post with full tape of her comments:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WrNww7TGkjo&feature=player_embedded

http://blogs.ajc.com/jay-bookman-blog/2010/07/20/in-the-curious-case-of-shirley-sherrod-lets-see-the-whole-tape/?cxntfid=blogs_jay_bookman_blog

Jay Bookman In the curious case of Shirley Sherrod, let's see the whole tape
7:31 am July 20, 2010, by Jay

A couple of folks in comments yesterday brought up the case of USDA official Shirley Sherrod, a black woman caught on tape at an NAACP meeting here in Georgia apparently bragging about being less than diligent in helping a white farmer. The folks at Big Government posted a portion of her speech as part of the running feud between the NAACP and the Tea Party over which organization is more racist.

By the end of the day Monday, Sherrod had been forced to resign her post, and NAACP President Ben Jealous had released a statement agreeing with the forced resignation:

“Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race.

We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers.

Her actions were shameful. While she went on to explain in the story that she ultimately realized her mistake, as well as the common predicament of working people of all races, she gave no indication she had attempted to right the wrong she had done to this man.”

After watching the video Monday evening, I wrote in comments that “what Sherrod says in that video – and what she apparently did – are deeply troubling... She might very well have earned a firing. But I'd like to see that rest of that video as well, because at the point it abruptly ends, she appears to be saying that it's wrong to think in terms of black and white, that she came to see things as more accurately divided between poor and rich than by race.”

As I also noted, the folks at Big Government seem to have the whole video, since they also posted another segment, and it would be useful to see the rest of it.

Sherrod gets a chance to tell her side of the story in an AJC story by Marcus Garner:

“But Tuesday morning, Sherrod said what online viewers weren't told in reports posted throughout the day Monday was that the tale she told at the banquet happened 24 years ago – before she got the USDA job – when she worked with the Georgia field office for the Federation of Southern Cooperative/Land Assistance Fund.

Sherrod said the short video clip excluded the breadth of the story about how she eventually worked with the man over a two-year period to help ward off foreclosure of his farm, and how she eventually became friends with the farmer and his wife.

“And I went on to work with many more white farmers,” she said. “The story helped me realize that race is not the issue, it's about the people who have and the people who don't. When I speak to groups, I try to speak about getting beyond the issue of race.”

So let's see the rest of the tape, Big Government. Was Sherrod giggling among black folk about the time she put it to the white man, as the leaked excerpt suggests, or was the tape a

deceptively edited excerpt of a longer story about getting beyond the issue of race, as she claims?

Let's see the tape. The evidence apparently exists to settle the question. Cough it up.

-----Original Message-----

From: Bates, Andrew J.

Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:50 AM

To: Bates, Andrew J.; Pfeiffer, Dan; Hogan, Nancy D.; Gavin, Tom

Cc: Messina, Jim; Green, Valerie E.

Subject: RE: Shirley Sherrod on CNN

Here's trans. It's near verbatim, but went with rough for speed:

<http://www.shadowtv.com/redirect/notification.jsp?vid=86e15cb25493301e7aee306262074d24>

JOHN ROBERTS: The U.S. Department of Agriculture accepts the resignation of an employee after a video surfaced showing her telling an audience that she withheld assistance to a white farmer because of his race. Let's listen to what she told the NAACP.

[BEGIN VIDEO]

SHIRLEY SHERROD: I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land. And here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So, I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough

[END VIDEO]

KIRAN CHETRY: Does that video tell the whole story? Joining us now on the phone from Albany, Georgia is Shirley Sherrod herself. Thanks for being with us this morning, Shirley.

SHERROD: Thank you.

CHETRY: You say this was part of the story and that it was part that was spliced enough to show you in a bad light, that this isn't the whole story. Will you finish for us how this ended?

SHERROD: Okay. I was speaking to that group like I've done many groups and I tell them about a time when I thought the issue was race and race only. And I tell them the story of how I worked with a white farmer back in 1986. I was not working for the Department of Agriculture. I was working with and non-profit organization assisting farmers throughout south Georgia and the southeast. And this farmer came to me for help. I was telling the story about how working with him helped me to see that the issue is not about race, it's about those who have versus those who do not have. And I tell how I took him to a lawyer who I thought would help him. In the end, that lawyer didn't. In the end, I had to frantically look for a lawyer because when USDA lifted - I'm sorry, when the court lifted the injunction against USDA in may of 1987, this white farmer was 1 of 13 that was foreclosed on by the state of Georgia. I had to frantically find a lawyer who would file a chapter 11 to stop the foreclosure. He couldn't - at that time we had chapter 12 -

CHETRY: Yes, but let me said - you said you didn't know enough, didn't give him the full force of what you could do. You said you did enough, and then you referred to the race of the lawyer as well, saying that perhaps because the lawyer was white that perhaps he could help him. What did you mean by that?

SHERROD: What I meant was, I didn't know anyone else. I didn't know another lawyer at that time who was local, who knew something about chapter 12. But I thought if I took him to a white lawyer, he would definitely do all that he could to help save his farm.

ROBERTS: Miss Sherrod, let's make it clear though, this happened 24 years ago. You eventually worked with this white farmer. You eventually became friends, you say, with the farmer and his wife.

SHERROD: Yes.

ROBERTS: So the question I have is, when the U.S. Department of Agriculture came to you and said you have to step down, why didn't you just say, "Wait a minute, you don't know the full story. Here's the full story, why should I step down?"

SHERROD: I did say that. But they, for some reason, the stuff that FOX and the Tea Party does is scaring the administration. I told them, get the whole tape and look at the whole tape and look at how I tell people we have to get beyond race and start working together.

ROBERTS: Many people at home might be thinking, well, if you're recounting an old story, why did you succumb to pressure to step down? Why didn't you try to fight this?

SHERROD: If I tried to fight it and didn't have any support from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, what would I do?

CHETRY: Let me ask you this. Did you talk to the NAACP about it? Because I just want to read for our audience what Ben Jealous, the president, said. He said, referring to you and this surfacing of the tape, "Her actions were shameful. While she went on to explain in the story, she ultimately realized her mistake, as well as the common predicament of working people of all races. She gave no indication she had attempted to right the wrong she had done to this man, and the reaction from many in the audience is disturbing." This is from Ben Jealous. Did you try to clarify with the NAACP your story?

SHERROD: No, I haven't had had a chance to talk to anyone. All of this was happening so fast. And it's unfortunate that the NAACP would make a statement without even checking to see what happened. This was 24 years ago, and I'm telling a story to try to unite people with that now.

ROBERTS: Certainly you're coming out and telling your story now takes it to a different level, and obviously we're going to keep following this. It is good to get your side of it. Sherri Sherrod, former Agriculture Department official. Perhaps we can get you back on again, get your face on TV as well and talk to you more about this as this story continues to develop.

SHERROD: I don't mind.

ROBERTS: Thanks a lot.

-----Original Message-----

From: Bates, Andrew J.

Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:39 AM

To: Bates, Andrew J.; Pfeiffer, Dan; Hogan, Nancy D.; Gavin, Tom

Cc: Messina, Jim; Green, Valerie E.

Subject: RE: Shirley Sherrod on CNN

Here's video. I'm doing the transcript now.

<http://www.shadowtv.com/redirect/notification.jsp?vid=86e15cb25493301e7aee306262074d24>

-----Original Message-----

From: Bates, Andrew J.
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:33 AM
To: Pfeiffer, Dan; Hogan, Nancy D.; Gavin, Tom
Cc: Messina, Jim; Green, Valerie E.
Subject: RE: Shirley Sherrod on CNN

Sure thing, I'll get it

-----Original Message-----

From: Pfeiffer, Dan
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:27 AM
To: Hogan, Nancy D.; Gavin, Tom
Cc: Messina, Jim; Green, Valerie E.; Bates, Andrew J.
Subject: RE: Shirley Sherrod on CNN

Looping bates

-----Original Message-----

From: Hogan, Nancy D.
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:27 AM
To: Gavin, Tom
Cc: Messina, Jim; Pfeiffer, Dan; Green, Valerie E.
Subject: FW: Shirley Sherrod on CNN

Shirley Sherrod is the USDA regional from last evening. I have not seen yet. Gavin, can someone from your team get transcript?

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Lu, Christopher P. [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:55 AM
To: Jett, Carole; Greenawalt, Andrei M.; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: RE: final

Karen/Carole – Just wanted you to know that this dismissal came up at our morning senior staff meeting today. Everyone complimented USDA on how quickly you took this action. It's an unpleasant story, but getting on top of this fast blunts any traction it will get. Thanks for the great efforts.

--Chris

From: Lu, Christopher P.
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:32 AM
To: 'Jett@osec.usda.gov'; Greenawalt, Andrei M.
Subject: Re: final

We got looped in from WH press. We're all good. Thanks for dealing with this so quickly.

From: Jett, Carole <[Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*>
To: Lu, Christopher P.; Greenawalt, Andrei M.
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:30:27 2010
Subject: FW: final

Sorry if we missed loop with you. Three messages coming on this resignation of Shirley Sherrod.

From: Gavin, Tom
To: Mather, Chris; [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Cc: Cherlin, Reid H.
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:32:13 2010
Subject: final
Chris –

We are good with this version on this end. Counsel has cleared the language. Only change is in the first sentence.

Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:39 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Mather, Chris
Subject: Hey

Secy just talked with Chris Lu and others at WH. He is talking with Gibbs now. Justin is here as well as Doug.

He us telling them about the email he has not seen.

Chad is going to the office to get the email. Charlie has not seen it either.

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:51 PM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff, Harden, Krysta
Subject: Fw: Cheryl Cook

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption 'b)(6)

----- Original Message -----

From: Heard, Robin
To: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tue Jul 20 21:46:55 2010
Subject: Fw: Cheryl Cook

----- Original Message -----

From: Maddux, Sheryl -USDA
To: Kammeri; Heard, Robin; Repass, Todd; Lescallett, Kenneth
Sent: Tue Jul 20 21:23:53 2010
Subject: Cheryl Cook

Cheryl made it safely home and her neighbor told her that the PA State Police had driven by a couple of times.

Sheryl K. Maddux

USDA Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Coordination.

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:17 PM
To: Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Thanks Chad provided a copy. The S's address has a typo so that is why he did not get it.

From: Washo, Kevin
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:14:36 2010
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Carole/John per our discussion this was the email she referenced to me tonight at 8

From: Jett, Carole
To: Washo, Kevin; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:09:45 2010
Subject: Fw: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Maisel, Chad
To: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:08:21 2010
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

This afternoon

From: Jett, Carole
To: Maisel, Chad
Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:07:24 2010
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

No worries. When did you let the Deputy Secretary know about it?

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Maisel, Chad
To: Jett, Carole; Eve, Malcolm; Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:06:14 2010
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

On Thursday. With this email account I sometimes wait to see how the email exchanges develop so that I can best decide who to send it along to. I wish I had forwarded it right away.

From: Jett, Carole
To: Maisel, Chad; Eve, Malcolm; Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 21:58:40 2010
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Chad. When did you discover this message?

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Maisel, Chad
To: Eve, Malcolm; Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 21:40:38 2010
Subject: FW: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet
Email train from 7/15 with DS' public account (kathleen.merrigan@usda.gov) cced

From: Exemption (b)(6) [mailto:Exemption (b)(6)]
Sent: Thursday, July 15, 2010 7:07 PM
To: georgeko@gmail.com
Cc: senator@isakson.senate.gov; webmail@chambliss-iq.senate.gov; Donnie.Thomas@one.usda.gov; [Tom.Vilsack\(a\)usda.gov](mailto:Tom.Vilsack(a)usda.gov); Merrigan, Kathleen
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

My words were taken out of context. I told about something that happened in 1986 when I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm. When so many black farmers were losing their. My point was that I initially did not do all that I could but in the process realized it was not about black versus white but about poor people or those who have versus those who do not.

If they will use all that I said you see that I talked about what I did to save that white farmers farm and from there went to help hundreds of other white farmers

I use the story to try to get people to move beyond race and work together

I feel deeply hurt that someone would take my words out of context and try to make them mean something else

My record of work for others for 45 years will show my love for people and for fairness

Shirley Sherrod

Sent using BlackBerry

From: George Ko <Exemption (b)(6)>
To: Sherrod, Shirley - Athens, GA
Cc: Exemption (b)(6); Merrigan, Kathleen (OSEC); Exemption (b)(6); Thomas, Donnie - Athens, GA
Sent: Thu Jul 15 15:33:41 2010
Subject: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Dear Ms. Sherrod:

I recently came across a video of your speech at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet in Douglas Coffee County, GA: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=62hPa37v2J4>

In the video, you stated that you did not help a white farmer with the "full force of what [you] could do" when he sought your help. From the context of your speech, you seem to imply that the "amount" of help you provided was due to the color of his skin (white) and because of your sympathy and preference for black farmers.

Are your comments and the context of the comments in your speech correct? As Georgia's USDA Rural Development State Director, do you believe your comments were appropriate?

Thank you,

George Ko

--

George Ko

Exemption (b)(6)

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:25 AM
To: Berge, John; Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Washo, Kevin
Cc: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: Re: Draft email from Secretary

Looping in karen.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Berge, John
To: Jett, Carole; Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 10:15:06 2010
Subject: Draft email from Secretary
Thoughts? We have to decide if we need to add the following to the top: You may have seen some news stories about USDA this morning. Also, who else needs to be in this loop.

Dear employee:

I want to reiterate my commitment and that of the leadership at USDA to civil rights. We all must work to ensure that we are treating our customers and employees equally and fairly and we all should have zero tolerance for discrimination.

I also want to remind all of you that you have a unique and important individual responsibility to represent this sentiment in your official actions, statements, and public presentations. We are lucky to have the opportunity to work for the American people and we owe it to them to instill confidence in our leadership.

John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:30 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen - ChiefOfStaff
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: FOX: Gingrich Responds to Discrimination at USDA

Gingrich Responds to Discrimination at USDA

Tuesday, July 20, 2010

FOX NEWS

ADVERTISEMENT

This is a rush transcript from "Hannity," July 19, 2010. This copy may not be in its final form and may be updated.

SEAN HANNITY, HOST: And this is a Fox News alert. An Obama administration official resigned just a short time ago after she was caught on tape appearing to tell an audience that she had used her position to racially discriminate against white farmers.

Now the woman, Shirley Sherrod, was the Georgia state director at the Department of Agricultural. Now the president's Agricultural Secretary Tom Vilsack just released a statement saying the USDA has a zero tolerance policy against discrimination.

Here's part of the shocking video that ignited this controversy.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

SHIRLEY SHERROD, FORMER USDA GA STATE DIRECTOR: The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking but he was trying to show me he was superior to me.

I know what he was doing. But he had come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him.

(END OF VIDEO CLIP)

HANNITY: Now details on the official sudden resignation are still coming in. We'll have more on this story including more video coming up in this hour. That's all straight ahead.

But also, meanwhile the debate in Washington raged today over whether or not unemployment insurance should be extended yet again for American struggling to find work. Now earlier President Obama addressed the issue from the Rose Garden.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA: It's time to stop holding workers laid off in this recession hostage to Washington politics. It's time to do what is right. Not for the next election, but for the middle class.

We've got to stop blocking emergency relief for Americans who are out of work. We've got to extend unemployment insurance.

(END OF VIDEO CLIP)

HANNITY: All right, now the president did not bother to mention that the only reason the extension may be necessary is because his stimulus was a complete and utter failure.

Now since the recovery plan was passed more than three million Americans have lost their jobs.

Now this morning the GOP leader in the House came out swinging saying, quote, "The president knows Republicans support extending unemployment insurance and doing it in a fiscally responsible way by cutting spending elsewhere in the \$3 trillion federal budget."

But the White House isn't interested in finding a way to actually pay for the extension. It's a whole lot easier to simply drive America deeper into debt.

And joining me now with analysis is the former speaker of the House, Fox News contributor, co-host of the documentary along with his wife Calista, "Nine Days That Changed the World," which you can find at Newt.org, is former speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich.

Mr. Speaker, welcome back.

NEWT GINGRICH, FORMER SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE: It's good to be with you.

HANNITY: All right. A lot — a lot obviously going on here. The — this woman on tape saying these racially charged things that she didn't want to help farmers, in particular white farmer. That she said she wanted him to go out and deal with one of his own and she put him in touch with a white lawyer.

Just the latest in a series of racial incidents. What do you think of this?

GINGRICH: Well, let me say, first of all, Secretary Vilsack did exactly the right thing. I mean I often disagree with this administration. But firing her after that kind of viciously racist attitude was exactly the right thing to do. And the fact that we have to be genuinely colorblind.

You know you can't be a black racist any more than you can be a white racist. And I just think it'd be good for those of us who are often critical of the administration to recognize that here's a case where Secretary Vilsack did exactly the right thing, moved very promptly, and fired somebody who frankly shouldn't be serving the American people because they clearly had a set of attitudes inappropriate for a federal official.

HANNITY: All right, my only thing is they weren't the ones that caught it. It was on Breitbart.com and it happened some time ago. So it's interesting that it took the new media to expose this.

Here's my next question, though. There's another twist to the story, and that is that, this was — these comments were made at an NAACP banquet. Now in light of the NAACP accusing the Tea Party of being a racist movement last week, do you think the NAACP should be held to account for the very standard they were demanding from the Tea Party?

GINGRICH: Of course. Clearly the national — and I suspect, Sean, if you contact them — the national leadership of the NAACP — I'm sure will feel honor-bound to apologize for having had that kind of a racist comment said at a meeting I suspect they didn't know about it, just as I suspect Secretary Vilsack didn't.

But now that it's there and it's clearly obvious, because it's on tape, I would hope that national NAACP would apologize for having that kind of racist comment at one of their meetings.

HANNITY: Well, I've tried to reach out to Ben Jealous. He has yet to return my phone call and he's invited on this program if he would like to discuss it. I'd like to have him on.

But it's interesting. A lot of people contacted me last week. Apparently you had sent out a tweet. By the way I'm glad that you are up on tweeting, which by the way, I have a Twitter account as well at @SeanHannity.

But you have your own Twitter account. And you offered to basically broker a meeting —

GINGRICH: No, no.

HANNITY: Well, hang on.

GINGRICH: No, I — no, I didn't say that. That was a misinterpretation by the Huffington Post.

HANNITY: OK.

GINGRICH: What I said was —

HANNITY: I didn't read the tweet. Go ahead.

GINGRICH: Right. But what I said was local Tea Party groups — because Tea Parties don't have a hierarchy. They don't have a national organization. Local Tea Party groups ought to reach out to local NAACP chapters and offer to have joint town hall meetings.

For example, about job creation. I mean there's a clear difference between job creators and job killers. It would be great to get Americans of all backgrounds in the same room talking about whether they ought to follow policies that you and I believe in which create jobs.

And I suspect most African-Americans at the local level in the local NAACP chapter would be surprised at how much they have in common with Tea Party members, a number of whom, by the way, are African-American, Latino and Asians. They're not — the Tea Parties are not white organizations. They're open to all Americans.

So my point was, if somebody wants to start a conversation, instead of yelling at them, what if we invite them in the room and let's have a conversation about America's future together.

And I'm told by Adam Waldeck at American Solutions who coordinates this that a number of local Tea Party groups are reaching out to local NAACP chapters on their own to have this kind of a dialogue.

HANNITY: I don't know what the right answer is. But I would find it very hard to sit down with the NAACP back in 2000. They ran this James Byrd ad when George Bush supported the death penalty for the person — the people responsible for that James Byrd dragging death.

You can't have a worse penalty. And that ad was particularly hard hitting. It was as if my father was killed all over again, if you remember that ad. And then in this particular case, this happened with this woman at this NAACP banquet.

I'm not saying not to have a dialogue. I am saying you can also talk about their associations. They've been — Ben Jealous was at a meeting with Louis Farrakhan. Should we not have certain standards prior to any meeting?

GINGRICH: Yes. We can also say let's agree that we should condemn racism wherever it occurs. Now we hope that the NAACP will apply that standard to somebody who is at one of its banquets.

But I think it's good for the country to see that we are not afraid to reach out and talk to people and to try to focus the conversation in a positive way. African-American unemployment is higher under the Obama administration than under any administration in a very longtime.

African-Americans want their schools to work so their children go to college and not to prison. We have lots of things you and I could talk about in local meetings. And I said local meetings where local people get together.

And I think you'd find that at the local level, not the professional, you know, left-wing activist level. At the local level there are an awful lot of very decent people in the NAACP who would suddenly find out they have an awful lot in common with their local Tea Party neighbors.

HANNITY: But I found the chart — the things that were said about the Tea Party so inaccurate, so over-the-top, so lacking in evidence, it is almost hard to begin a dialogue when everything is predicated on false charges and a false statement.

I didn't even bring up the issue of the New Black Panther Party and the Department of Justice and Eric Holder. What did you —

GINGRICH: Well, look —

HANNITY: Go ahead.

GINGRICH: First of all, Eric Holder should resign for national security reasons. He should certainly resign over the racism inherent in the Black Panther case. I mean I'm happy to say that Eric Holder shouldn't be attorney general and is not doing the job correctly.

But I'd certainly go back to your point for a second, Sean. Maybe this makes me different, OK? The New York Times often runs editorials that are totally dishonest. Their attack on the Arizona state law, for example — on immigration — was a totally dishonest attack.

I still talk to New York Times reporters all the time. I think it's important to reach out. It's important to try to be positive.

HANNITY: By the way, just for the record I do not return the calls of anybody from The New York Times. They don't call anymore because I won't return their calls.

GINGRICH: Now our audience — now our audience can see the difference in our two styles.

HANNITY: Yes, well — look, what do I know? I made — perhaps you're right.

Look, I'm not saying we ought not have a dialogue. I think a dialogue is important. But I think a dialogue has got to be — the foundation of which has got to start in a fair way.

GINGRICH: Right.

HANNITY: And it's almost like if you begin a dialogue with OK, the Tea Party is racist, the Tea Party, you know — the Tea Party members uttered these racial epithets when there's no evidence, seems to me that you're starting out at a decided disadvantage.

GINGRICH: Sure.

HANNITY: If you don't demand honesty up front and an apology before the dialogue begins.

GINGRICH: Well, I like to — I think we have a nice test that came on your show tonight. Do they have the courage — the NAACP — to apologize for the racism in this person's comments at an NAACP banquet? Pretty good test.

HANNITY: All right. We'll come back. We have a lot more with former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, coming up after the break.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

HANNITY: And we continue now with former Speaker of the House, Fox News contributor, Newt Gingrich is with us.

All right, Mr. Speaker, we had the NAACP. We had what they said about the Tea Party. I think obviously an attempt — they support the Democratic Party — 106 days out of an election to energize the base.

The president. He went out and he'd started referring to the GOP as being the party of the rich because he says Republicans don't want to extend unemployment benefits. The reality is Republicans do support extending unemployment benefits. They want it paid for. They've already supported an extension for 99 weeks.

And by the way, the president doesn't need any Republican votes to pass the bill anyway. So is this — is this what we can expect for the next 106 days?

GINGRICH: Sure. Look, if you watch what Harry Reid is trying to do to Sharron Angle in Nevada. What you're going to see everywhere in the country is desperately dishonest, and I think consistently demagogue attacks, because they know that if there's any kind of a fair fight they're going to get badly defeated.

The president sadly is the opposite of Ronald Reagan. Ronald Reagan led by telling the American people the truth, by rallying them to the facts and by encouraging their better instincts.

The president seems to have a really unusual desire to divide the country and a really deep need to blame somebody else for his own failures. And as a result, you get this kind of Rose Garden comment.

HANNITY: Yes.

GINGRICH: The fact is, if this president cared about getting money to the unemployed, all he has to agree to is a one percent reduction in his budget across the board and that would pay for —

HANNITY: Yes.

GINGRICH: — everything he wants to send. But he does — what he wants to do is borrow from your children and your grandchildren so that we will pay interest on the debt forever, so that he can send out money that is unpaid for, that increases the federal deficit even beyond the already gigantic amounts.

HANNITY: All right, so —

GINGRICH: And I think that's just fundamentally, morally wrong.

HANNITY: So what you're saying for the next 106 days we can expect a ton of class warfare rhetoric, demagoguery as you just pointed out, and demonization, et cetera, character assassination, maybe some supportive groups playing the race card because they can't run on their record? That's what's the next 106 days are going to be like? This is going to be all we see?

GINGRICH: Look — I think the Democratic Party counterattack — to use the language you just kind of packaged nicely. If you assume dishonesty, distortion and demagoguery, you have a reasonably good idea what Harry Reid's campaign is going to be like.

Because of the election choice in Nevada at 14.5 percent unemployment is between a job killing Harry Reid record and a job creating Sharron Angle proposal. He's going to get beat so badly that you won't even be able to see him.

Therefore he is — he's raising — he just went to Canada to raise money from trial lawyers in an international meeting.

HANNITY: All right, so —

GINGRICH: This guy is going to pour on negative ads. Every Democrat in the country will imitate Harry Reid.

HANNITY: Yes. I agree and I have a friend of mine running for Congress and he's already experiencing it. Guy votes with Nancy Pelosi 99 percent of the time, the only thing he wants to do is attack you and me and Mark Levin and anybody else, which is interesting.

The question is, will this tactic be successful?

GINGRICH: No. No.

HANNITY: And — and how do you recommend — you're great at politics. How do you recommend Republicans counter that?

GINGRICH: First of all, Sean.

HANNITY: Yes?

GINGRICH: If you voted 99 percent with Nancy Pelosi —

HANNITY: Yes?

GINGRICH: Wouldn't you want to be attacking all day every day?

HANNITY: Yes.

GINGRICH: I mean do you want to defend that record?

HANNITY: No.

GINGRICH: I — I was out last week in — for Brad Zaun in Des Moines. His opponent voted 98 percent with Nancy Pelosi and all he has to say is, you know, San Francisco doesn't deserve an Iowa representative. Iowa needs an Iowa representative. And that's the whole campaign.

HANNITY: I think that's the whole campaign. I agree.

GINGRICH: I believe the key to the fail election is very simple. There are job creators and there are job killers. We absolute proof that from the time Pelosi and Reid took over in January of 2007 the Democratic Congress has been killing jobs. It continues to kill jobs. This economy is not going to recover. We just saw a — we just saw a huge oil rig leave the Gulf to go to Egypt with high paying jobs. We had a company announce over the weekend — think about this quote — "because of political instability in the United States, we are moving our rig to the Congo —

HANNITY: Yes.

GINGRICH: ...to drill for oil." So the president is exporting jobs. He's doing a great job of creating jobs for China. The president has done a great job creating jobs for Egypt and the Congo. He just isn't doing a great job creating jobs for Americans.

HANNITY: No, we're losing those jobs. All right, but then —

GINGRICH: So that's the choice. You want to be job creator or a job killer. If you want to be a job killer, vote Democrat. If you want a job creator, vote Republican. I think that's the fall campaign.

HANNITY: All right. I agree with you. Don't think that I didn't notice you dropped in Des Moines, Iowa, and your latest trip to the great state of Iowa. And in between I know you snuck in a trip to New Hampshire. And I think I saw your schedule, you're going back to South Carolina.

GINGRICH: I was in South Carolina Friday a week ago —

HANNITY: Now hang on a second. Now wait a minute, we've been friends a long time. You have given more direct answers to people in the liberal media than to me. I want to know what's Newt Gingrich's plan.

GINGRICH: Our plan is for Calista and me to sit down with our family in February or March.

HANNITY: That's not the answer I want.

GINGRICH: And make a decision. But I promise you, Sean —

HANNITY: Well, how come —

(CROSSTALK)

GINGRICH: Because they printed the same thing I've said to you for nine months. What can I tell you? But I think it had — because it had AP Des Moines.

HANNITY: Yes.

GINGRICH: It suddenly got bigger coverage. I mean if it had said AP Long Island it wouldn't had been the same effect.

HANNITY: It would said, Newt and Hannity, it probably wouldn't had been the same. But then again maybe they're mad at me at The New York Times because I don't respond to their phone calls. You do.

GINGRICH: Yes, I guessed that could be the whole problem.

HANNITY: That's could be the whole thing right there. All right.

GINGRICH: But I promise you in February or March, I'll be on the show. We'll talk about it.

HANNITY: And you'll announce here, either way?

GINGRICH: Well I'll certainly talk about it.

(LAUGHTER)

HANNITY: I love being able to pin you down. All right. Former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich.

— *Watch "Hannity" weeknights at 9 p.m. ET!*

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: (202) 256-8626
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:33 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen - ChiefOfStaff
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: CNN Transcript: Shirley Sherrod Discussion

Station: CNN
Date: 07/20/2010 10:02:52 - 10:12:52 AM

the u.s. department of agriculture shunned by the naacp. we're pushing forward on the story of **shirley** sherrod. she's telling us we don't have the whole story. she used to be the rule development director for georgia until a youtube clip of her went viral from an naacp dinner march.

so many black people had lost their farmland and here i was faced with a white person needing to save their land. so i didn't give him the full force of what i could do. i did enough.

well, here is part of the statement from agriculture secretary tom vilsack. there's zero tolerance for discrimination at usda, and i strongly condemn any act of discrimination from any person. from ben jealous from the naacp, racism is about the abuse of power. we are appalled by her axes just as we are against the power of farmers of color and female farmers. sherrod says, hold on, there's no context with that clip and that it doesn't tell the entire story. she called cnn's american morning this morning to give her side of the story and talked with john roberts. he joins us from new york and cnn's political analyst roland martin is in chicago and he will weigh in as well. let's listen to your interview with shirry sherrod from earlier and then comment.

i was speaking to the group like i've done many groups, and i tell them about a time when i thought the issue was race and race only. and i tell them the story of how i worked with the white farmer back in 1986. i was not working for the department of agriculture. i was working with the nonprofit organization assisting farmers throughout south georgia and the southeast. and this farmer came to me for help. i was telling the story about how working with him helped me to see that the issue is it not about race. it's about those who have versus those who do not have.

john, what's your take?

well, we had her on this morning. when you take a look at that video clip, it looks like, oh, my goodness, this is something she did while in a position of authority at the u.s. department of graul. she said this was 24 years ago, this was a learning experience for her. in the job she was in with this nonprofit cooperative organization dealing with farmers in southeastern georgia had a preconceived notion of what it was all about, about white and black, and she said, no, i learned from that it was not about race. it was about the haves versus the have-nots, and she has not only told this speech before this organization back on march the 27th, but more than six months earlier than that, on the 15th of october, she gave what she told us this morning was exactly the same speech at albany state university and was played over and over again on local television in albany and nobody said anything about this. this was put up on a website, the latest one from march 27th, and that's when it came to the attention of the u.s. department of agriculture and the naacp. when you take a look at ben jealous' statement, it looks as though he perceived this was something she did while she was at the u.s. department of agriculture, which others have told us would indeed be wrong, but is it wrong if she was telling a story that happened 26 years ago saying this is something that changed my perspective on the whole issue? that's what's being debated now.

roland, is this action taken by the right wingers to just pick whatever sound bites from this speech and put it out of context and put it on youtube without seeing the whole thing?

well, first of all, i want to address the right wingers perspective second. i believe that the statement by the naacp was a correct statement because you're speaking to the issue of being in power, and you actually making a determination based upon race. i talked to john boyd with the national black farmers association, and he supports their decision, even though, as she said, this took place prior to her coming to the usda. it shows when you're in a position of power -- we also know there are individuals who work for the department of agriculture who cost the american taxpayers 1 billion-plus dollars and think of not been fired and denied opportunities to hispanics, blacks and whites and based upon gender, so i hope the right wing conservatives would talk to those individuals as well. she has to understand that her position was going to be, frankly, difficult, because the question would then have come into would other folks can you deny opportunities to? what else happened? any politically charged environment, like it or not, this is going happen.

wasn't she just telling the story of redemption? she feels she was telling a story of redemption that more than 20 years ago -

as a political appointee, one has to recognize in these times today, when folks do play gotcha, when you do have videotape, how things can be used against you. so i would question frankly even telling that particular story publicly, knowing full well how it could be used against you, used against your superiors, used against the president, whom ever. that's the environment we are now living in whether we like it or not.

we have all been victim of that. how many times have we given speeches or interviews and stein people take snippets. it's happened to all three of us, in fact, and it's pretty heart wrenching.

the motives are clear.

the point could be made that robert byrd's affiliation with the ku klux klan. it stayed with him for his life and was mentioned when he passed away recently but people allowed him to take a different point of view when he came to it. i'm not defending this woman but she came to a different point of view, and she's talking about that now and is that a fireable offense?

roland?

again, though, you begin to speak to the issue in terms of what will be the perception, will it be a political fire storm and will the controversy get in the way of you actually doing your job? weefb's seen this on multiple occasions.

roland, that's a great point. we don't know, at least at this point -- i don't know. do you know, john?

we don't have her record, but from talking to her this morning -- we do not have her record, but from talking to her this morning, she said that episode in her life during which he worked very closely with this farmer and became friends with both him and his wife, it taught her how to do her job better, so it would appear on the surface -- not defending her, just telling you will what she said -- that this was a learning experience. she was in her job at a nonprofit with a different perspective than she has now and this helped her to see the light.

we need to hear from the usda. john reached out to the usda. we reached out to the usda. now that we are getting more context regarding this speech and she has spoken to us live on cnn, we need to hear from the usda and say, well, did she explain this to you and why did you accept her resignation.

sure, and, kyra, look, we also have to recognize that when you're operating in a political fire storm, when you are operating in a situation where just last week naacp went after tea party folks, racist elements. truly, that was the motive of andrew brightbart. that was the motive, what is the context, what are you exposing. but from a political standpoint, whether you like it or not, you have to make decisions before somebody may resign or get forced out because it could impede your actual work moving forward if it continues and the drumbeats get louder and louder. you cut it off at the pass. you may not like it, but that's the reality in 2010.

that's right true. once it's on the internet it never goes away. final thought, john.

it would be nice to see the entire tape in its context so we could all take a look at it and say, oh, this is what she said, and you can continue to hold the same opinion or change it based on what she said.

there you go. let's ask the usda for the entire tape.

i would like to know, too, if the naacp had the benefit of having this in context before it came forward with its statement.

i say, yes.

i talked to ben jealous in terms of it did not have her comments on that, but, again, you are looking at a situation of a national organize that fought racism on the surface. when you hear comments, what's your reaction going to be?

roland, did ben jealous say he saw the entire speech?

no one has seen the whole tape. this wasn't a national organization. this was a local chapter, not a national organization.

it would be good to see the whole tape.

I wonder for those who released the sound bites, if they saw the whole tape, too. I'm getting a big, fat wrap. We will stay on it. Roland, let us know if you hear more.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED] Exemption (b)(6)

Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:42 AM
To: Jett, Carole; Berge, John; Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; Weaver, Caleb; Washo, Kevin
Cc: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: Re: Draft email from Secretary

Just flagging that we should expect that this email will end up in hands of press.

From: Jett, Carole
To: Berge, John; Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Washo, Kevin
Cc: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tue Jul 20 10:25:20 2010
Subject: Re: Draft email from Secretary

Looping in karen.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Berge, John
To: Jett, Carole; Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 10:15:06 2010
Subject: Draft email from Secretary

Thoughts? We have to decide if we need to add the following to the top: You may have seen some news stories about USDA this morning. Also, who else needs to be in this loop.

Dear employee:

I want to reiterate my commitment and that of the leadership at USDA to civil rights. We all must work to ensure that we are treating our customers and employees equally and fairly and we all should have zero tolerance for discrimination.

I also want to remind all of you that you have a unique and important individual responsibility to represent this sentiment in your official actions, statements, and public presentations. We are lucky to have the opportunity to work for the American people and we owe it to them to instill confidence in our leadership.

John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:03 AM
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Final TPs

Ex (b)(5)

Talking Points

- Yesterday, Secretary Vilsack accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation.
- There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA and we strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person.
- We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.
- We don't want this issue to distract our efforts to do so.

Question and Answer

But it happened 30 years ago, it was taken out of context...

- We have a duty to ensure that when we provide services to the American people we do so in an equitable manner.
- But equally important is our duty to instill confidence in the American people that we are fair service providers.
- Comments made by Mrs. Sherrod, even if taken out of context, undermine that trust.

Did she explain the real story to you?

- She said it was taken out of context but we have not seen the entire video.
- We have a duty to instill confidence in the American people that we are fair service providers.
- Comments made by Mrs. Sherrod, even if taken out of context, undermine that trust.

Why did you accept her resignation?

- We have a duty to ensure that when we provide services to the American people we do so in an equitable manner.
- But equally important is our duty to instill confidence in the American people that we are fair service providers.
- Comments made by Mrs. Sherrod, even if taken out of context, undermine that trust.

Have you fired any white employees for discrimination?

- We cannot discuss private personnel matters.

What have you done to right the wrongs of the past?

- We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.
- There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA and we strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person and we have made significant progress in doing so.

Chris Mather
Director of Communications
USDA
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 402A
Washington, DC 20250

Exemption (b)(6)

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:04 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen - ChiefOfStaff
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: Fox News (Ron Mitchell): Shirley Sherrod Video, Glen Beck interview

FYI- FOX news just followed up with us looking for comment on resignation

Stephanie,

Shirley Sherrod just told CNN that she was asked to resign by the USDA. She actually was very specific – that Dep. Under Secretary Cheryl Cook told her that the White House wanted her out because she was "going to be on Glenn Beck."

Does the USDA have any comment on that?

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Exemption (b)(6)

Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:08 PM
To: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Maloney, Wayne
Subject: RE: Fox News (Ron Mitchell): Shirley Sherrod Video

Looping Wayne-

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Exemption (b)(6)

Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:14 PM
To: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Subject: RE: Fox News (Ron Mitchell): Shirley Sherrod Video

Looping in John and Krysta-

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Exemption (b)(6)

Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:13 PM
To: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris
Subject: Fox News (Ron Mitchell): Shirley Sherrod Video

Bill O'Reilly show will be mentioning this tonight. They would like USDA statement on the video. Who else should I be looping in on these inquiries?

Fox News- Ron Mitchell
NY 212-301-3697
Ron.mitchell@foxnews.com

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

Exemption (b)(6)

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:51 PM
To: Harden, Krysta; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Mather, Chris; Washo, Kevin
Subject: Fw: Shirley Sherrod

----- Original Message -----

From: Wilson, Denise R. <[REDACTED]> *Exemption (b)(6)*
To: Berge, John; Stoneman, Shelly O. <[REDACTED]> *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Wed Jul 21 10:51:38 2010
Subject: Shirley Sherrod

Just had a conversation with Ron Stroman of the Oversight committee. Towns is very worried that USDA took action against Ms Sherrod w/o learning the facts which resulted in her being directed to resign. He has directed his staff to prepare a letter to Vilsak along this line. Ron said that Ranking Member Issa is expected to play into the media accounts that the WH was behind the move to take action against a black woman-and that Issa will play the race card against USDA and the WH -highlighting the fact that we took action before the facts were in. According to Ron, (who is in touch with her) Ms Sherrod does not appear to plan on coming back to USDA because she feels so unfairly treated.

Denise Wilson
Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:21 PM
To: Cluthe, Sally; Berge, John; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Cc: Mather, Chris
Subject: Calls

So far all calls with Hill have been supportive

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:31 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Subject: WH and S approved

Sending soon

Yesterday, I asked for and accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation for two reasons. First, for the past 18 months, we have been working to turn the page on the sordid civil rights record at USDA and this controversy could make it more difficult to move forward on correcting injustices. Second, state rural development directors make many decisions and are often called to use their discretion. The controversy surrounding her comments would create situations where her decisions, rightly or wrongly, would be called into question making it difficult for her to bring jobs to Georgia.

Our policy is clear. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA and we strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have a duty to ensure that when we provide services to the American people we do so in an equitable manner. But equally important is our duty to instill confidence in the American people that we are fair service providers.

Chris Mather
Director of Communications
USDA
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 402A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0060
chris.mather@usda.gov

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Diephouse, Greg
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:58 PM
To: Fromstein, Charles; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Mather, Chris
Subject: RE: Shirley Sherrod's Dismissal

Getting lots of phone calls (over 70) on this subject now too. I think an operator somewhere is sending the calls our way.

Anything sent to the AGSEC@usda.gov account goes to us - no need to forward. Thanks.

Greg Diephouse
Director
Office of the Executive Secretariat
USDA - 202-720-7100

-----Original Message-----

From: Fromstein, Charles
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:51 PM
To: Diephouse, Greg
Subject: FW: Shirley Sherrod's Dismissal

Hey Greg,

I believe you are logging these complaints. Just wanted to pass this on so you have the record.

-Charlie

-----Original Message-----

From: ENNIS BRECKENRIDGE [mailto: Exemption (b)(6)]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:49 PM
To: King, David; Renee Brown; Eric Holden; Scott, Denise -OSEC; Wright, Lloyd; Porto, Stacy; PRESIDENT BARACK; AGSEC -USDA
Subject: Shirley Sherrod's Dismissal

Dear USDA

This is Ennis Breckenridge very,very,very upset at the pressure your Administration has put on Shirley Sherrod to vacate her office. What about the other USDA employees who Blakeley ADMITTING doing THE BLACK FARMERS wrong in court and before GOD !!! They got pay raises and new positions. Maybe if we contacted a larger ORDINANCE we might see some JUSTICE!!! Something is wrong, very wrong!!! Ennis

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:55 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Washo, Kevin
Subject: Fw: CNN: "president fully supports the decision"

Chris Mather

From: Misailidis, Sarah
To: Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris
Sent: Tue Jul 20 19:50:13 2010
Subject: Re: CNN: "president fully supports the decision"

This is in the clips I just sent out.

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Tue Jul 20 19:46:18 2010
Subject: CNN: "president fully supports the decision"
CNN (11 min ago)- Is this what you were referring to?

NAACP 'snookered' over video of former USDA employee

... Vilsack told CNN on Tuesday that he "didn't speak to anyone at the White House. ... I made this decision, it's my decision. Nobody from the White House contacted me about this at all."

A White House official also told CNN that "the White House did not pressure her or the USDA over the resignation. It was the secretary's decision, as he has said."

President Barack Obama was briefed on the situation after Vilsack decided to seek Sherrod's resignation, according to a White House official, who said the president fully supports the decision....

FULL STORY:

The NAACP has retracted its original statement condemning comments made by a former Agriculture Department official who resigned after a video clip surfaced of her discussing a white farmer.

The NAACP said in a statement Tuesday that it was "snookered by Fox News" and conservative website publisher Andrew Breitbart.

"Having reviewed the full tape by Shirley Sherrod, who is the woman who was fired by the Department of Agriculture, and most importantly heard the testimony of the white farmers mentioned in this story, we now believe that the organization that edited the documents did so with the intention of deceiving millions of Americans," the statement from NAACP President Benjamin Jealous said.

The organization also urged Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack to reconsider Sherrod's resignation from her post as the department's director of rural development for Georgia.

Breitbart originally posted the video, which was quickly picked up by Fox News.

In the video, Sherrod, can be heard telling an audience at a March 27, 2009, appearance before a local chapter of the NAACP that she had not given a white farmer "the full force of what I could do" to help him save the family farm.

Conservative media outlets tied the video to the NAACP's recent resolution calling on the Tea Party movement to repudiate racist elements within it that have displayed such items as images of President Obama with a bone through his nose and the White House with a lawn full of watermelons. The controversy has led one Tea Party group to oust another because of a blog posting by the second group's leader.

Tea Party Express leader Mark Williams posted on his blog a faux letter from Jealous to President Abraham Lincoln in which Williams ridicules the organization's use of "colored" in its historic name and uses multiple stereotypes to bolster his point. The National Tea Party Foundation expelled Williams' organization from its coalition as a result.

Breitbart told CNN's "John King USA" on Tuesday that releasing the video was "not about Shirley Sherrod."

"This was about the NAACP attacking the Tea Party, and this is showing racism at an NAACP event," he said. "I did not ask for Shirley Sherrod to be fired."

Sherrod defended herself in a number of interviews Tuesday, saying her controversial comments were taken out of context.

She insisted she "went all out" to help the man keep his farm and said she resigned only under pressure from the Obama administration, telling CNN she received four phone calls Monday telling her the White House wanted her to step down.

"They asked me to resign, and in fact they harassed me as I was driving back to the state office from West Point, Georgia, yesterday," she said. The last call "asked me to pull to the side of the road and do it [resign]," she said.

Vilsack told CNN on Tuesday that he "didn't speak to anyone at the White House. ... I made this decision, it's my decision. Nobody from the White House contacted me about this at all."

A White House official also told CNN that "the White House did not pressure her or the USDA over the resignation. It was the secretary's decision, as he has said."

President Barack Obama was briefed on the situation after Vilsack decided to seek Sherrod's resignation, according to a White House official, who said the president fully supports the decision.

Sherrod said Tuesday that the incident with the farmer in 1986 occurred before she started work for the USDA and was working at the nonprofit Federation of Southern Cooperatives. She said the experience helped her learn to move beyond race and she tells the story to audiences to make that point.

Meanwhile, the farmer referenced in the clip told CNN he credits Sherrod with helping his family save their farm.

"I don't know what brought up the racist mess," Roger Spooner told CNN's "Rick's List." "They just want to stir up some trouble, it sounds to me in my opinion."

Spooner says Sherrod accompanied him and his wife to a lawyer in Americus, Georgia, who was able to help them file for Chapter 11 bankruptcy, which ultimately saved their farm.

"If it hadn't been for her, we would've never known who to see or what to do," he said. "She led us right to our success."

Spooner's wife, Eloise, remembered Sherrod as "nice-mannered, thoughtful, friendly; a good person."

She said that when she saw the story of the tape and Sherrod's resignation on television, "I said, 'That ain't right. They have not treated her right.'"

The poor-quality video shows Sherrod telling her audience that the farmer she was working with "took a long time ... trying to show me he was superior to me." As a result, she said, she "didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough."

To prove she had done her job, she said, she took him to a white lawyer. "I figured that if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him," she said.

But that lawyer failed to help, she said. "I did not discriminate against [the farmer]. And, in fact, I went all out to frantically look for a lawyer at the last minute because the first lawyer we went to was not doing anything to really help him. In fact, that lawyer suggested they should just let the farm go." She was able to find an attorney to file Chapter 11 bankruptcy to help the family stay on the farm, she said.

Sherrod said she first heard of the possible controversy when someone e-mailed her Thursday to taunt her about her comments. She immediately forwarded the e-mail to the USDA so the agency would be aware. She was told that someone would look into it.

She said it wasn't until Monday that she heard back, and by then, she was being asked for her resignation.

Sherrod said she got four calls Monday from Cheryl Cook, the USDA rural development undersecretary. In the first, she said, she was told she was being put on administrative leave. In the second, she said, she was told she needed to resign.

Asked if she felt she had an opportunity to explain, Sherrod said, "No, I didn't. The administration, they were not interested in hearing the truth. No one wanted to hear the truth."

Vilsack said Tuesday that the controversy, regardless of the context of her comments, "compromises the director's ability to do her job."

"This isn't a situation where we are necessarily judgmental about the content of the statement, that's not the issue here. I don't believe this woman is a racist at all," he said. "She's a political appointee, and her job is basically to focus on job growth in Georgia, and I have deep concern about her ability to do her job without her judgments being second-guessed."

Ralph Paige, executive director of the nonprofit Sherrod worked for before being appointed to the USDA job in 2009, told CNN on Tuesday that she garnered only praise and there were never any claims of discrimination against her.

"I can't praise Shirley enough," he said. "She holds no malice in her heart."

Vilsack issued a statement Monday announcing he had accepted Sherrod's resignation, noting a "zero tolerance" policy for discrimination at the USDA, adding, "I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person."

The first statement that the NAACP issued late Monday backed Vilsack's decision.

"Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race," Jealous said. "We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers."

Sherrod said the NAACP did not contact her before issuing the first statement. She said she got a phone call from an NAACP representative in Washington on Tuesday afternoon telling her another statement would be issued once the full tape was reviewed.

"I told him I was highly disappointed that they would make a statement without even looking into it," she said.

In the statement issued Tuesday evening, the NAACP reversed its condemnation after viewing the full video.

"She was sharing this account as part of a story of transformation and redemption," the statement said. "In the full video, Ms. Sherrod says she realized that the dislocation of farmers is about 'haves and have nots.' 'It's not just about black people, it's about poor people,' says Sherrod in the speech. 'We have to get to the point where race exists but it doesn't matter.'"

Earlier Tuesday, Sherrod called the NAACP "the reason why this happened. They got into a fight with the Tea Party, and all of this came out as a result of that."

She called the ensuing controversy "unbelievable."

"I think any moment I'm going to wake up and none of this is happening, but it is," she said.

"When you spend your life helping others and see people try to turn that around to try to make it look like you're a racist when that's not been what your life has been about -- that doesn't feel good."

Older stories...

5 p.m.

Official: No White House pressure on Sherrod

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack this afternoon took responsibility for firing an official, Shirley Sherrod, whose **appearance** on video recalling her behavior toward a white farmer drew charges of racism, and whose immediate firing drew **suggestions** that the administration had over-reacted to an edited video clip.

A White House official told me just now that the White House backs Vilsack's decision -- but that it was Vilsack's alone.

The official said the White House -- contrary to the Sherrod's charge -- did not pressure the Department to fire her.

Vilsack's statement:

Yesterday, I asked for and accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation for two reasons. First, for the past 18 months, we have been working to turn the page on the sordid civil rights record at USDA and this controversy could make it more difficult to move forward on correcting injustices. Second, state rural development directors make many decisions and are often called to use their discretion. The controversy surrounding her comments would create situations where her decisions, rightly or wrongly, would be called into question making it difficult for her to bring jobs to Georgia.

Our policy is clear. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA and we strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have a duty to ensure that when we provide services to the American people we do so in an equitable manner. But equally important is our duty to instill confidence in the American people that we are fair service providers.

4:30

White House official: We didn't push for Sherrod's firing

A White House official insists that the White House didn't pressure Shirley Sherrod to resign, or pressure USDA chief Tom Vilsack to fire her, over the Andrew Breitbart video allegedly showing her claiming she didn't help a white farmer 24 years ago because of racial reasons.

"We did not pressure USDA or Ms. Sherrod," the White House official emails me. Ben Smith was told something similar.

Separately, Vilsack, who fired Sherrod while declaring zero tolerance for "discrimination," released a statement that seemed to take ownership of the firing, without quite clarifying whether the White House had any role:

Yesterday, I asked for and accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation for two reasons. First, for the past 18 months, we have been working to turn the page on the sordid civil rights record at USDA and this controversy could make it more difficult to move forward on correcting injustices. Second, state rural development directors make many decisions and are often called to use their discretion. The controversy surrounding her comments would create situations where her decisions, rightly or wrongly, would be called into question making it difficult for her to bring jobs to Georgia.

Our policy is clear. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA and we strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have a duty to ensure that when we provide services to the American people we do so in an equitable manner. But equally important is our duty to instill confidence in the American people that we are fair service providers.

Some have been claiming that the firing shows the White House allowed itself to be led around by the nose by Breitbart. And this quote from a White House official may not quiet the criticism, perhaps understandably, since it's anonymous.

Whatever the White House role, if Vilsack canned this woman based on the strength of the Breitbart video alone, before the facts were in -- and we don't know for certain that it happened this way, though it certainly appears so -- that's appalling on its own.

UPDATE, 6:17 p.m.: Much more in the way of reactions to this [right here](#).

UPDATE, 6:30 p.m.: The NAACP admits to [having been snookered by Breitbart and Fox](#).

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Desk: (202) 720-5555 Exemption (b)(6)
Stephanie.chan@oc.usau.gov

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:16 PM
To: O'Brien, Doug
Cc: Berge, John; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: Re: Jesse Jackson

Secy talking with The Rev now

----- Original Message -----

From: O'Brien, Doug
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 19:49:19 2010
Subject: Jesse Jackson

John Mitchell with rev jackson just called my number.

He can connect the secr to rev jackson anytime. I think he expects it tonight.

Exemption (b)(6)

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:35 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Mather, Chris
Cc: Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: Re: Jesse Jackson

Rahm calling Secy now

----- Original Message -----

From: Jett, Carole
To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Cc: Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:27:36 2010
Subject: Re: Jesse Jackson

Looping in Mather.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: O'Brien, Doug
Cc: Berge, John; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:15:32 2010
Subject: Re: Jesse Jackson

Secy talking with The Rev now

----- Original Message -----

From: O'Brien, Doug
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 19:49:19 2010
Subject: Jesse Jackson

John Mitchell with rev jackson just called my number.

He can connect the secr to rev jackson anytime. I think he expects it tonight.

Exemption (b)(6)

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Lu, Christopher P. <Exemption (b)(6)>
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:38 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole
Subject: Re: Can someone call me?

Perfect. Thanks much.

From: Mather, Chris <Exemption (b)(6)>
To: Lu, Christopher P.; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff <Exemption (b)(6)>; Jett, Carole <Exemption (b)(6)>
Sent: Wed Jul 21 21:02:53 2010
Subject: Re: Can someone call me?

Personal Cell:

Exemption (b)(6)

Work cell:

Exemption (b)(6)

Home:

Exemption (b)(6)

Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Lu, Christopher P. <Exemption (b)(6)>
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole
Sent: Wed Jul 21 20:43:34 2010
Subject: Can someone call me?

Potus is trying to reach Sherrod and we're having the same problems you had getting her. I'm at 503-5716. Thanks.

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:50 PM
To: Harden, Krysta; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Mather, Chris; Washo, Kevin
Subject: Re: Hey

Looping in Washo.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Mather, Chris
Sent: Tue Jul 20 21:38:35 2010
Subject: Hey

Secy just talked with Chris Lu and others at WH. He is talking with Gibbs now. Justin is here as well as Doug.
He us telling them about the email he has not seen.
Chad is going to the office to get the email. Charlie has not seen it either.

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:15 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Carole/John per our discussion this was the email she referenced to me tonight at 8

From: Jett, Carole
To: Washo, Kevin; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:09:45 2010
Subject: Fw: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Maisel, Chad
To: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:08:21 2010
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

This afternoon

From: Jett, Carole
To: Maisel, Chad
Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:07:24 2010
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

No worries. When did you let the Deputy Secretary know about it?
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Maisel, Chad
To: Jett, Carole; Eve, Malcolm; Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:06:14 2010
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

On Thursday. With this email account I sometimes wait to see how the email exchanges develop so that I can best decide who to send it along to. I wish I had forwarded it right away.

From: Jett, Carole
To: Maisel, Chad; Eve, Malcolm; Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 21:58:40 2010
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Chad. When did you discover this message?

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Maisel, Chad
To: Eve, Malcolm; Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 21:40:38 2010
Subject: FW: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet
Email train from 7/15 with DS' public account (kathleen.merrigan@usda.gov) cced

From: Exemption (b)(6) [mailto:Exemption (b)(6)]
Sent: Thursday, July 15, 2010 7:07 PM
To: Exemption (b)(6)
CC: Tom.Vilsack Exemption (b)(6) Merrigan, Kathleen
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

My words were taken out of context. I told about something that happened in 1986 when I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm. When so many black farmers were losing their. My point was that I initially did not do all that I could but in the process realized it was not about black versus white but about poor people or those who have versus those who do not.

If they will use all that I said you see that I talked about what I did to save that white farmers farm and from there went to help hundreds of other white farmers

I use the story to try to get people to move beyond race and work together

I feel deeply hurt that someone would take my words out of context and try to make them mean something else

My record of work for others for 45 years will show my love for people and for fairness

Shirley Sherrod

Sent using BlackBerry

From: George Ko <Exemption (b)(6)>
To: Sherrod, Shirley - Athens, GA
CC: Tom.Vilsack Exemption (b)(6) Merrigan, Kathleen (OSEC) Exemption (b)(6); Thomas, Donnie - Athens, GA
Sent: Thu Jul 15 15:33:41 2010
Subject: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Dear Ms. Sherrod:

I recently came across a video of your speech at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet in Douglas Coffee County, GA: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=62hPa37v2J4>

In the video, you stated that you did not help a white farmer with the "full force of what [you] could do" when he sought your help. From the context of your speech, you seem to imply that the "amount" of help you provided was due to the color of his skin (white) and because of your sympathy and preference for black farmers.Â

Are your comments and the context of the comments in your speech correct? As Georgia's USDA Rural Development State Director, do you believe your comments were appropriate?

Thank you,

George Ko

--

George Ko

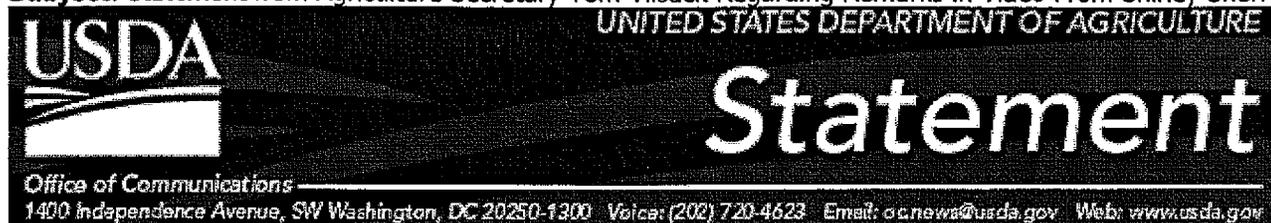
Exemption (b)(6)

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:18 AM
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Subject: Fw: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

This went at 2
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wed Jul 21 02:07:06 2010
Subject: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod



Release No. PENDING

Contact:
USDA Office of Communications
(202) 720-4623

Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

WASHINGTON, July 21, 2010 - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack tonight released the following statement in response to the release of remarks in video from Shirley Sherrod:

"I am of course willing and will conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts to ensure to the American people we are providing services in a fair and equitable manner."

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice), or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: Exemption (b)(6)
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:24 AM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: Fw: Federal Eye: Tom Vilsack, USDA and civil rights

Sarah, for top clips. Tx.

From: ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com
Sent: Wed Jul 21 07:12:16 2010
Subject: Federal Eye: Tom Vilsack, USDA and civil rights

http://voices.washingtonpost.com/federal-eye/2010/07/tom_vilsack_usda_and_civil_rig.html

Tom Vilsack, USDA and civil rights

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said early Wednesday morning that he's willing to reconsider his decision to force Shirley Sherrod's resignation.

"I am of course willing and will conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts to ensure to the American people we are providing services in a fair and equitable manner," Vilsack said in a statement that arrived in inboxes after 2 a.m.

But to understand why he sought Sherrod's resignation so quickly, let's go back to February 2009. That's when Vilsack publicly vowed to tackle USDA's troubled civil rights history by ensuring that employees fairly treated minority and women farmers.

"Some folks refer to USDA as the last plantation, and it has a pretty poor history of taking care of people of color," Vilsack said at the time. "You've got outright bias and discrimination."

"Also you've got good people who don't even know that they're discriminating," said Vilsack. "It's necessary to begin the process of reeducating people."

Vilsack made those comments in Albany, Ga., Sherrod's home town. And he said them at a conference hosted by the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund, the same group Sherrod worked for in 1986 when she first met white farmer Roger Spooner.

Reeducating employees required an \$8 million consulting contract with Jackson Lewis Corporate Diversity Counseling Group. And it required reviewing tens of thousands of complaints leveled against USDA during George W. Bush's presidency. The review has been led by a 34-year USDA veteran whom Vilsack coaxed out of retirement.

"When this department was established in 1862 by Abraham Lincoln, he referred to it as the people's department," Vilsack told colleague Krissah Thompson in February. "In order to be consistent with that legacy, it's necessary that our programs and our approach reflect an appreciation for everyone's rights. We took a look at [these] prior issues and are in the process of trying to address each of them."

The efforts received little national news coverage until this week when a three-minute clip of Sherrod's now-infamous speech surfaced. Her message -- that Americans need to see beyond a person's skin color -- was tainted by an impolitic delivery White House officials consider too damaging.

"This controversy could make it more difficult to move forward on correcting injustices," Vilsack said Tuesday, adding later that, "The controversy surrounding [Sherrod's] comments would create situations where her decisions, rightly or wrongly, would be called into question making it difficult for her to bring jobs to Georgia."

"Our policy is clear," he continued. "There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA and we strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have a duty to ensure that when we provide services to the American people we do so in an

equitable manner. But equally important is our duty to instill confidence in the American people that we are fair service providers."

Did Vilsack make the right decision, or did he overreact at the mercy of the web and cable news cycle? Or did he have to accept Sherrod's resignation in order to reinforce his work on civil rights? It's a question many in Washington will continue asking today.

Continue reading the Wednesday Eye Opener: http://voices.washingtonpost.com/federal-eye/2010/07/tom_vilsack_usda_and_civil_rig.html

Ed O'Keefe
The Federal Eye
The Washington Post
ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com

Exemption (b)(6) (c)

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:26 AM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: FW: tracking sec email

The Sherrod message did not get to OSEC. See below.

From: Smith, Christopher L. -OCIO
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:07 AM
To: Jett, Carole; Heard, Robin
Cc: Fromstein, Charles
Subject: Re: tracking sec email

No. This is not a valid address in our system.

From: Jett, Carole
To: Heard, Robin
Cc: Smith, Christopher L. -OCIO; Fromstein, Charles
Sent: Wed Jul 21 08:23:51 2010
Subject: tracking sec email

Can you tell me if Tom.Vilsack@usda.gov is in our email book and if anyone picks up those emails?

This may be a duplicate request that COS made.

Carole Jett

Deputy Chief of Staff

USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Diephouse, Greg
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:19 AM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: RE: Meeting at 5:00

Management Services (WCTS) or Chris Smith would need to participate only if there were changes that we need to make in the routing of these emails.

I'll have my written summary by 3pm and will take with me at 5. The summary will only include the account we monitor and have access to though, which is the agsec@usda.gov account. We don't see the tom.vilsack@usda.gov account in OES.

Greg

Greg Diephouse
Director
Office of the Executive Secretariat
USDA -  Exemption (b)(6)

From: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:30 AM
To: Diephouse, Greg; Maisel, Chad; Fromstein, Charles
Subject: Meeting at 5:00

Can you put together a written summary of your part of the process of monitoring general mailbox for Secretary and Deputy. Do we need Chris Smith to be part of the meeting?

Karen Ross
Chief of Staff
Office of the Secretary

 Exemption (b)(6)

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Lu, Christopher P. [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:30 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: Are you guys available now for a call?

Don't have Chris Mather's email but she should be on the call. I can also call the Secretary directly if he's free.

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:10 PM
To: Semaan, Jillian; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Cc: Fromstein, Charles
Subject: Re: Call with Reveren Al Sharpton

Thank you

From: Semaan, Jillian
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Harden, Krysta
Cc: Fromstein, Charles
Sent: Wed Jul 21 12:28:55 2010
Subject: FW: Call with Reveren Al Sharpton
Just an FYI – Charlie is on it.

-jillian

From: LaQuanda Taylor [mailto:ltaylor@nationalactionnetwork.net]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:50 AM
To: Scheduling
Subject: Call with Reveren Al Sharpton

Hi,

Reverend Al Sharpton would like to have a call with Secretary Sack today. If at all possible the secretary can call Reverend Sharpton direct on his cell at **Exemption (b)(6)**

Please advise if this call is possible. I can be reached (LaQuanda Taylor - Executive Assistant to Reverend Al Sharpton at **Exemption (b)(6)**

Exemption (b)...

All the best,

LaQuanda Taylor
Executive Assistant to Reverend Al Sharpton
National Action Network
106 W. 145th Street
New York, NY 10039
212-690-3070 Phone
212-690-3081 Fax

Exemption (b)(6)

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Michael Harris [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:22 AM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Subject: RE: Black Agriculture Summit 2010

Karen, the Black Agriculture Summit 2010 was wonderful. Excellent conversations and good energy, we are well on our way to a Black Agriculture Agenda roll out in September.

I am hot on the phone building consensus for a positive outcome to the drama unfolding in Georgia over my dear friend Shirley Sherrod resignation as director of Georgia Rural Development.

Professor Valerie Grim, Indiana University has agreed to help facilitate a positive outcome that will focus on the positive possibilities.

http://www.indiana.edu/~afroamer/faculty/popups/vitae/grim_cv.pdf

She is a saint and a soft gentle spiritual women. Why the NAACP and some folks moved quickly without the facts is interesting, I recall well Shirley and Secretary Vilsack sitting side by side in a positive early meeting in Washington.

A National Black Agriculture Roundtable August 6-7 meeting is in the planning stage, Washington D.C.

Karen, together we can bridge the chaos and strengthen the good works happening everyday to make the USDA truly the people's department.

Be well and know that a blessing is on the way out of this unfortunate situation.

Finally, Shirley's husband Rev. Sherrod will give a wonderful sermon this coming Sunday.

They are a powerful American success story, unique to the African experience in America.

The deep Southern experience in Albany Georgia is fierce, even today.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m22eXuYNbkY>

Michael

[Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 3:20 PM
To: [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Subject: Trying to Reach Mrs. Sherrod

Dear Rev. Sherrod,

Secretary Vilsack has been trying all afternoon to reach Mrs. Sherrod. Her personal cell phone voice mailbox is full and not accepting messages. The Secretary is very anxious to have a personal, heartfelt conversation with her and apologize. We have tried your home number and we did leave a message on her USDA BB.

You may reach me on my direct line: [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6) Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Karen

Karen Ross
Chief of Staff
Office of the Secretary
[Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
karen.ross@osec.usda.gov

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Finberg, Max
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:27 PM
To: [REDACTED] Exemption (b)(6) Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff, Mather, Chris
Subject: Re: Potential Black Pastor validators

Thanks Joshua. Karen, can you and Chris chat about this and get back with Joshua either way?
Thanks and I'll check back in tomorrow, Max

From: DuBois, Joshua P.
To: Finberg, Max; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Wed Jul 21 17:24:53 2010
Subject: RE: Potential Black Pastor validators
Absolutely Max. Let me know how I can help. I can call Rev. Hunter and a couple others, incl some folks who came to the briefing last month. Would you then pitch them to press? Just let me know what you need.
Joshua

From: Finberg, Max [mailto:Max.Finberg@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:17 PM
To: DuBois, Joshua P.; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: Potential Black Pastor validators

Joshua-
Hope the directors meeting is going well, my best to all from the airport.
As you know, USDA is dealing with a very tricky situation with our former employee in Georgia.
Karen Ross is our chief of staff and I offered your help in identifying a few African-American pastors who might be able to help with this situation, if desired. Vilsack has met personally with AME Pastor Hunter in LA, the Bishop who joined us late at the 5 loaves and 2 fish meeting, Jesse Jackson and a couple others.
Karen, as you remember from the WH Easter Prayer Breakfast, Joshua DuBois is Spec Assistant to the Pres and Director of the Faith-based and N'hood Partnership office. If you want this kind of help, there is no one better.
On a plane now, but will be available tomorrow.
Blessings, Max

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:20 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Harden, Krysta
Cc: Mather, Chris
Subject: RE: THE e-mail

Should OSEC or OC be point in making this happen?

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548

Exemption (b)(6) cell)

justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:16 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Harden, Krysta
Cc: Mather, Chris
Subject: RE: THE e-mail

Good idea.

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:15 PM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta
Cc: Mather, Chris
Subject: THE e-mail

Hi all,

I'm thinking we should begin preparing Shirley's e-mail for release, redacting in accordance with FOIA/PI requirements, etc. I'm guessing we will be asked for this, and we should be prepared.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548

Exemption (b)(6) cell)

justin.dejong@usda.gov

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Fromstein, Charles
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:02 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole; Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: RE: ASAP

The cell phone number we reached her at is [Exemption (b)(6)]

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:59 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Fromstein, Charles
Subject: ASAP

Who has Shirley number?

From: Lesser, Eric P. [mailto:[Exemption (b)(6)]]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:58 PM
To: [Exemption (b)(6)] Mather, Chris
Subject: phone number for Shirley Sherrod

Hi Chris,

Do you have the phone numbers for Shirley Sherrod? (We need them if the President decides to call her).

Thanks,

Eric Lesser
Special Assistant to Senior Advisor David Axelrod
The White House

[Exemption (b)(6)]

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 8:08 AM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin
Subject: Fw: NBC Today Show 7 AM

Was he supposed to email something? If so, we need to send soon so this story goes away.
Chris Mather

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To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Purchia, Liz; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
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"yeah. I haven't seen the offer, you know. the secretary said he would e-mail it to me. I have not seen it yet. so before I say no totally, I would like to look at that to weigh in."

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It is a decision that she is mulling over this morning after Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack admitted he should have done a better job of investigating the video that started the controversy. So is she ready to put it all behind her? Does the President himself owe her a personal apology? Well, she's sitting right over there. I'm going to talk with Shirley Sherrod right ahead.

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and plus-sized and proud. The model who is furious that recent pictures of her were altered to make her appear thinner than she actually is.

But we begin on this Thursday morning with the fallout over the premature firing of an Agriculture Department official named Shirley Sherrod. We'll talk to her in a moment. But first, NBC's Savannah Guthrie is at the White House with the latest on the story. Savannah, good morning to you.

Reporter: Good morning, Matt. Well the White House is hoping to move past this chapter, now that the Agriculture Secretary has come forward to offer Miss Sherrod a new job with the agency, and to apologize. Under fire for the firing of a USDA worker, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack faced the cameras.

This is a good woman. She's been put through hell. And I could have done and should have done a better job.

Reporter: Vilsack said he personally called Sherrod to apologize.

I asked for Shirley's forgiveness and she was gracious enough to extend it to me. And for that I am thankful.

reporter: at the white house wednesday, it was also all apologies.

i think without a doubt miss sherrod is owed an apology. a disservice was done for which we apologize. and on behalf of the administration, i offer our apologies.

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how did we not ask the right questions? how did you all not ask the right questions? how did other people not ask the right questions?

reporter: watching the apologies as they were issued, live on cable tv, shirley sherrod herself later reacted.

i'm just wondering how will my grandchildren look at this when they read about this in later years, and their grandmother being the first black person to be state director of rural development in georgia, was asked to resign by the first black president.

reporter: as for andrew breitbart, the conservative blogger who posted the video, he acknowledged he put it online without seeing the full content of the remarks. but he didn't apologize for posting it. though he did say he has sympathy for sherrod.

i feel bad that they made this about her and i feel sorry that they made this about her. i'm not sure if that was done because they rushed to judgment, or whether they wanted to make it about shirley versus me. because that's what it's become.

well, there's one issue outstanding. senior aides here at the white house insist they did not push the agriculture secretary to fire ms. sherrod, that it was a decision made at agriculture and they were, frankly, looped in essentially after it had been done. on the other hand, miss sherrod has said repeatedly it was her impression, based on her conversation with an agriculture department official, that it was the white house who wanted her to resign. so that's one of those issues of fact that a lot of people will be talking about today, meredith.

all right, savannah guthrie, thank you very much. shirley sherrod is with us again this morning. ms. sherrod, thank you so much for joining us.

thank you.

you have now received apologies from the usda, the white house and the naacp for their rush to judgment. you've accepted those apologies. you really are a woman, as the secretary put it, who has been through hell. how are you feeling right now?

you know, i've gone from being at such a low on monday, as this was unfolding, and thinking, this is so unreal, to feeling so great about the support i've received from around the country. it's encouraging. it makes me feel that there are many others out there who think like i do, and so many who do not think like the individual who started this in the first place.

let's talk about that. i want to talk about it in a minute. but first of all, do you think that you deserve a phone call from president obama?

i think i do.

you do?

mm-hmm.

an apology?

well, you know, he is the president of the united states of america. i received the apologies that are important. ~~i really would not want the president to apologize to me. i'd love to have a conversation with him, though.~~

and what would you say to him?

you know, i'd like to talk to him a little bit about the experience of people like me. people at the grassroots level. people who live out there in rural america, people who live in the south. i know he does not have that kind of experience. let me help him a little bit with how we think, how we live, and the things that are happening.

what do you think he doesn't understand and a lot of the rest of the country doesn't understand about people like you and the way you live and what you're faced with?

you know, we are people who struggle every day, who do the best we can in our community. who love this country. we love him. we want him to be successful, because we feel things, in some ways, like we do. and we think that's good for the country. yes, there are issues out there that we are faced with. issues of poverty. issues that i worked so hard on these last 11 months at rural development to try to really have an impact on, mainly because that's me. but the other thing, i want everything to reflect, i want a good reflection for him as the first black president.

but why do you think when it comes to this topic of race, it just presses people's buttons? people are so quick to react without thinking. you're in the center of a storm here. why do you think that is?

you know, this has gone on for years and years, and i thought we were getting to a place where we really could talk about it. but we can't deal with it until we can face each other. that's the whole point i make when i talk. the things that are being done by the gentleman who started this, and i can't even think of his name --

andrew breitbart.

yes. i didn't know of him before this happened. but the things he's doing, being done more to divide us so we can't move on.

but i guess his point was that this is not him versus you. he was trying to point out racism within the membership of the naacp. that when you told that story about being reluctant to help a white farmer, before he realized this was about poverty, that there was acceptance within the crowd, people who are yeah, you're right, what he was trying to say was there's racism in the naacp, the same way they claim there might be racism within the tea party. is there room for debate, for discussion about that?

you know, there's always room for debate and discussion. because that's what will get us to a point where we can tolerate each other. people were not laughing in that audience. and he knew that his actions would take shirley sherrod down. he didn't mind doing that. he thought, i think, he probably hoped, it would also deal with the naacp. but what he did was getting me. and that, i cannot -- well, he's never offered to apologize for what he's done. but that, you know, it would be hard for me to forgive him at this point.

but at some point the white house could have checked and seen the whole video, the usda could have seen the whole video, the naacp could have seen the whole video before going on the attack with you. the white house has said they had nothing to do with your ouster. you have said that you had three phone calls on monday from your superiors saying that the white house was behind it, they wanted you to resign. do you stand by that?

i stand by that. because i asked what has happened? you know, i just couldn't -- it was so -- you know, the first call i received said we're putting you on administrative leave. i had to explain to my leadership staff that we were quite a ways from the office, in a meeting, that i explained what happened, and i told them, i have to leave and go turn this government car in and get my car and go home. you know, i asked -- so first they were putting me on administrative leave. the next call was shirley, we're going to have to ask you to resign. and then the white house wants you to resign. because i'm asking them, what happened? this is just so unbelievable. it was one thing for them to put me on an administrative leave and then look into it. but they went from administrative leave directly into asking me to resign.

so obviously you still feel the white house has some explaining to do. meanwhile the usda, the secretary of agriculture has offered you a new job that you're thinking about. what can you tell us about this job?

you know, it's -- it's discrimination happens in the usda. that's why there are lawsuits by black farmers, hispanic farmers, native american farmers, women farmers. and they're because the agency that never deals with the people who call it. no one lost their job because they're discriminated against a black farmer or a native american farmer or a hispanic farmer or a female farmer. those individuals, many of them, some have retired, but many of them are still there. i would not want to be that individual that the department and everyone is looking to to solve the issue of racism in usda. it takes a lot more to get that job done.

so i'm just asking very quickly, what is the job exactly that they'd like you to do?

they talked about the office about me dealing with discrimination within the agency.

and you're inclined to say no to that?

at this moment, i would think i would be.

so as far as you're concerned at this point you're out of the usda for good?

yeah. i haven't seen the offer, you know. the secretary said he would e-mail it to me. i have not seen it yet. so before i say no totally, i would like to look at that to weigh in.

ms. sherrod we appreciate very much you coming in.

thank you.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: Exemption (b)(6)

Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

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Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 8:38 AM
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U.S. Department of Agriculture

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And plus-sized and proud. The model who is furious that recent pictures of her were altered to make her appear thinner than she actually is.

But we begin on this Thursday morning with the fallout over the premature firing of an Agriculture Department official named Shirley Sherrod. We'll talk to her in a moment. But first, NBC's Savannah Guthrie is at the White House with the latest on the story. Savannah, good morning to you.

Reporter: Good morning, Matt. Well the White House is hoping to move past this chapter, now that the Agriculture Secretary has come forward to offer Miss Sherrod a new job with the agency, and to apologize. Under fire for the firing of a USDA worker, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack faced the cameras.

This is a good woman. She's been put through hell. And I could have done and should have done a better job.

Reporter: Vilsack said he personally called Sherrod to apologize.

I asked for Shirley's forgiveness and she was gracious enough to extend it to me. And for that I am thankful.

Reporter: At the White House Wednesday, it was also all apologies.

I think without a doubt Miss Sherrod is owed an apology. A disservice was done for which we apologize. And on behalf of the administration, I offer our apologies.

Reporter: After initially standing by the Agriculture Secretary's decision to fire Sherrod, the White House now acknowledges it was a rush to judgment. A USDA official called Sherrod Monday afternoon, in her car, asked her to pull over and resign by BlackBerry. This, after video surfaced online of Sherrod making racially charged comments that turned out to be selectively edited.

How did we not ask the right questions? How did you all not ask the right questions? How did other people not ask the right questions?

reporter: watching the apologies as they were issued, live on cable tv, shirley sherrod herself later reacted.

i'm just wondering how will my grandchildren look at this when they read about this in later years, and their grandmother being the first black person to be state director of rural development in georgia, was asked to resign by the first black president.

reporter: as for andrew Breitbart, the conservative blogger who posted the video, he acknowledged he put it online without seeing the full content of the remarks. but he didn't apologize for posting it. though he did say he has sympathy for sherrrod.

i feel bad that they made this about her and i feel sorry that they made this about her. i'm not sure if that was done because they rushed to judgment, or whether they wanted to make it about shirley versus me. because that's what it's become.

well, there's one issue outstanding. senior aides here at the white house insist they did not push the agriculture secretary to fire ms. sherrod, that it was a decision made at agriculture and they were, frankly, looped in essentially after it had been done. on the other hand, miss sherrod has said repeatedly it was her impression, based on her conversation with an agriculture department official, that it was the white house who wanted her to resign. so that's one of those issues of fact that a lot of people will be talking about today, meredith.

all right, savannah guthrie, thank you very much. shirley sherrod is with us again this morning. ms. sherrod, thank you so much for joining us.

thank you.

you have now received apologies from the usda, the white house and the naacp for their rush to judgment. you've accepted those apologies. you really are a woman, as the secretary put it, who has been through hell. how are you feeling right now?

you know, i've gone from being at such a low on monday, as this was unfolding, and thinking, this is so unreal, to feeling so great about the support i've received from around the country. it's encouraging. it makes me feel that there are many others out there who think like i do, and so many who do not think like the individual who started this in the first place.

let's talk about that. i want to talk about it in a minute. but first of all, do you think that you deserve a phone call from president obama?

i think i do.

you do?

mm-hmm.

an apology?

well, you know, he is the president of the united states of america. i received the apologies that are important. ~~i really would not want the president to apologize to me. i'd love to have a conversation with him, though.~~

and what would you say to him?

you know, i'd like to talk to him a little bit about the experience of people like me. people at the grassroots level. people who live out there in rural america, people who live in the south. i know he does not have that kind of experience. let me help him a little bit with how we think, how we live, and the things that are happening.

what do you think he doesn't understand and a lot of the rest of the country doesn't understand about people like you and the way you live and what you're faced with?

you know, we are people who struggle every day, who do the best we can in our community. who love this country. we love him. we want him to be successful, because we feel thinks, in some ways, like we do. and we think that's good for the country. yes, there are issues out there that we are faced with. issues of poverty. issues that i worked so hard on these last 11 months at rural development to try to really have an impact on, mainly because that's me. but the other thing, i want everything to reflect, i want a good reflection for him as the first black president.

but why do you think when it comes to this topic of race, it just presses people's buttons? people are so quick to react without thinking. you're in the center of a storm here. why do you think that is?

you know, this has gone on for years and years, and i thought we were getting to a place where we really could talk about it. but we can't deal with it until we can face each other. that's the whole point i make when i talk. the things that are being done by the gentleman who started this, and i can't even think of his name --

andrew Breitbart.

yes. i didn't know of him before this happened. but the things he's doing, being done more to divide us so we can't move on.

but i guess his point was that this is not him versus you. he was trying to point out racism within the membership of the naacp. that when you told that story about being reluctant to help a white farmer, before he realized this was about poverty, that there was acceptance within the crowd, people who are yeah, you're right, what he was trying to say was there's racism in the naacp, the same way they claim there might be racism within the tea party. is there room for debate, for discussion about that?

you know, there's always room for debate and discussion. because that's what will get us to a point where we can tolerate each other. people were not laughing in that audience. and he knew that his actions would take Shirley Sherrod down. he didn't mind doing that. he thought, i think, he probably hoped, it would also deal with the naacp. but what he did was getting me. and that, i cannot -- well, he's never offered to apologize for what he's done. but that, you know, it would be hard for me to forgive him at this point.

but at some point the white house could have checked and seen the whole video, the usda could have seen the whole video, the naacp could have seen the whole video before going on the attack with you. the white house has said they had nothing to do with your ouster. you have said that you had three phone calls on monday from your superiors saying that the white house was behind it, they wanted you to resign. do you stand by that?

i stand by that. because i asked what has happened? you know, i just couldn't -- it was so -- you know, the first call i received said we're putting you on administrative leave. i had to explain to my leadership staff that we were quite a ways from the office, in a meeting, that i explained what happened, and i told them, i have to leave and go turn this government car in and get my car and go home. you know, i asked -- so first they were putting me on administrative leave. the next call was Shirley, we're going to have to ask you to resign. and then the white house wants you to resign. because i'm asking them, what happened? this is just so unbelievable. it was one thing for them to put me on administrative leave and then look into it. but they went from administrative leave directly into asking me to resign.

so obviously you still feel the white house has some explaining to do. meanwhile the usda, the secretary of agriculture has offered you a new job that you're thinking about. what can you tell us about this job?

you know, it's -- it's discrimination happens in the usda. that's why there are lawsuits by black farmers, hispanic farmers, native american farmers, women farmers. and they're because the agency that never deals with the people who call it. no one lost their job because they're discriminated against a black farmer or a native american farmer or a hispanic farmer or a female farmer. those individuals, many of them, some have retired, but many of them are still there. i would not want to be that individual that the department and everyone is looking to solve the issue of racism in usda. it takes a lot more to get that job done.

so i'm just asking very quickly, what is the job exactly that they'd like you to do?

they talked about the office about me dealing with discrimination within the agency.

and you're inclined to say no to that?

at this moment, i would think i would be.

so as far as you're concerned at this point you're out of the usda for good?

yeah. i haven't seen the offer, you know, the secretary said he would e-mail it to me. i have not seen it yet. so before i say no totally, i would like to look at that to weigh in.

ms. Sherrod we appreciate very much you coming in.

thank you.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: Exemption (b)(6)

Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Paradis, Julie [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 1:19 PM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: FW: Message from Secretary Vilsack

Karen – I have removed all identifying text from this message that I received this morning. Hope the Secretary is getting many messages like this one!

Julie

Subject: RE: Message from Secretary Vilsack

Good Morning Julie –

I feel compelled to send a message.

As I have watched the news over the last few days, it is unfortunate and *unfair* that Secretary Vilsack is being portrayed negatively, due to the vileness of politics. I am an African-American female and it has not been easy working for USDA FNS. However, over the last few months I have become more hopeful about the changes in the horizon - thanks to efforts put forth by Secretary Vilsack, and of course you. I know that his commitment to making USDA a workplace in which everyone, regardless race, is equally welcomed, is genuine.

As difficult as it may be, this moment was no accident, but rather an opportunity for USDA to continue along the path to conquering inequalities in the workplace and with consumers - but now with even more vigor and determination. I know that my words in no way can take away the sting of being "beat up" by the media over the last few days – but I just wanted him to know, as a black woman working for USDA, I appreciate him. Secretary Vilsack is an honorable and outstanding human being and I am grateful for all that he has done and will do. Thank you.

Sincerely,

From: Paradis, Julie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:22 AM
To: All FNS National Office Employees; All FNS Regional Office Employees; All CNPP Employees
Subject: Message from Secretary Vilsack

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250**

Dear employee:

Some of you may have seen the news stories about USDA today. I want to reiterate my commitment and that of the leadership at USDA to civil rights. We all must work to ensure that we are treating our customers and employees equally and fairly and we all should have zero tolerance for discrimination.

I also want to remind all of you that you have a unique and important individual responsibility to represent this sentiment in your official actions, statements, and public presentations. We are lucky to have the opportunity to work for the American people and we owe it to them to instill confidence in our leadership. Our words and actions matter.

We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and I thank you for your service and efforts to achieve this goal,

Secretary Vilsack

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Elder, Fitzhugh (Appropriations) [Redacted]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 1:41 PM
To: Harden, Krysta; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Cc: Fountain, Galen (Appropriations)
Subject: Shirley Sherrod

Exemption (b)(6)

Krysta and Karen,

I know that the last couple of days have been difficult. I certainly wish the circumstances were different. As I am certain you will understand, what transpired with regard to Ms. Sherrod has raised many questions. At this point, I am particularly interested in knowing what happened, when it happened, and who was involved. Please compile this information for me. A timeline of events would also be useful and should be included with the information you send me. I would like the information sent to me as soon as possible and I would like the information to be as specific as possible.

Also, I sent an email message to Chris Mather yesterday and never received a response. I would like the courtesy of an answer to my question.

Thank you.

Fitzhugh Elder IV
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate

Exemption (b)(6) (telephone)

Exemption (b)(6)

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Elder, Fitzhugh (Appropriations) [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 1:45 PM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Harden, Krysta
Cc: Fountain, Galen (Appropriations)
Subject: RE: Shirley Sherrod

Thank you very much.

Fitz Elder
202.224.1522 (telephone)
Fitzhugh_Elder@appro.senate.gov

From: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff [mailto:Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 1:45 PM
To: Elder, Fitzhugh (Appropriations); Harden, Krysta
Cc: Fountain, Galen (Appropriations)
Subject: Re: Shirley Sherrod

Fitz
We are happy to provide the information you requested and started putting together information yesterday. I will follow up with Chris. Thank you.
Karen Ross
Chief of Staff
Office of the Secretary

From: Elder, Fitzhugh (Appropriations)
To: Harden, Krysta; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Cc: Fountain, Galen (Appropriations)
Sent: Thu Jul 22 13:40:43 2010
Subject: Shirley Sherrod
Krysta and Karen,

I know that the last couple of days have been difficult. I certainly wish the circumstances were different. As I am certain you will understand, what transpired with regard to Ms. Sherrod has raised many questions. At this point, I am particularly interested in knowing what happened, when it happened, and who was involved. Please compile this information for me. A timeline of events would also be useful and should be included with the information you send me. I would like the information sent to me as soon as possible and I would like the information to be as specific as possible.

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Thank you.

Fitzhugh Elder IV
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate

Exemption (b)(6) (telephone)

Exemption (b)(6)

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 1:55 PM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Cc: Jett, Carole
Subject: Fw: Today's clips

We send top clips to hill, not all clips. And we send clips that highlight our efforts and programs here. If you have to respond, I would say that clearly, those were not clips we had to send since it was the biggest story of the two days and there were hundreds of pages of clips that all said the same thing.
Chris Mather

From: [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: wed Jul 21 13:03:47 2010
Subject: Today's clips
Chris,

Will you please explain to me why today's clips did not have any mention of the Sherrod case?

Fitzhugh Elder IV
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate

[Redacted] Exemption (b)(6) (telephone)
[Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 6:57 PM
To: [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Subject: USDA Position

Good evening, Mrs. Sherrod,

Just wanted to confirm you received my e-mail earlier today with the position description attached. Our Assistant Secretary for Departmental Management, Pearlie Reed, tried to reach you today to provide further information.

You must be exhausted after the trying week you have had and I hope you have an opportunity to get a good night's rest.

Sincerely,
Karen

Karen Ross
Chief of Staff
Office of the Secretary

[Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Reed, Pearlie
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 7:45 PM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: RE: Call to Shirley Sherrod

Karen, I have not been able to reach Ms. Sherrod.
Pearlie

From: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 9:47 AM
To: Reed, Pearlie
Subject: Call to Shirley Sherrod

Mr. Reed,

Thank you for agreeing to call Mrs. Sherrod today. The Secretary wants to be sure she has a good understanding of the position as part of Department Management across the entire agency – the budget and positions that make the office meaningful – and its importance to Members of Congress.

Her cell phone number is *Exemption (b)(6)*

Her home number is:

Her e-mail address is: *Exemption (b)(6)*

Karen Ross
Chief of Staff
Office of the Secretary

Exemption (b)(6)

Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 5:40 PM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole
Cc: Mather, Chris

For political appointees?

As you know, while the Secretary answered many questions from the press about Shirley Sherrod as well as the White House and USDA's press shop, the media is still interested in talking about this. If you are contacted by the media, please send the request to the Office of Communications using the following contact information:

Exemption (b)(6)

Some of you have asked about what to say if approached by the press in person. If you have to talk to them, let the press know that the Secretary answered these questions at his press briefing and that any further questions should go to the Office of Communications.

Information Regarding USDA's Actions

On Monday afternoon we learned about an online video showing Mrs. Sherrod saying things that we thought would make it hard to turn the page on civil rights abuses at USDA.

We immediately put her on administrative leave then asked if she was willing to resign, to which she said yes. We called her twice to ask for a letter of resignation so that we could respond to press inquiries about her status.

On Tuesday, the entire tape of the speech she gave was released by the NAACP and after watching it, we determined we had acted without all of the information.

The Secretary spoke to Shirley Sherrod on Wednesday and apologized. He also told her I was sorry for the pain this caused her and her family and friends. That same day, the Secretary did a press briefing and spoke to the Congressional Black Caucus.

We have discussed with Mrs. Sherrod a unique opportunity at USDA and asked her to return to the Department. With all that she has seen, endured and accomplished, it would be invaluable to have her experience, commitment and record of service at USDA. And if she wants her old job back, she can have it.

We admit we reacted too quickly and should have taken the time to listen and learn.

The White House did not direct the Secretary to do this, it was USDA's decision.

We continue to review the circumstances that brought us to this day to ensure that nothing like this happens again.

Chris Mather
Director of Communications
USDA

1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 402A
Washington, DC 20250

Exemption (b)(6)

1 - (45 instances) Exs (b)(2), (b)(6)

2 - (4 instances) Exemption 5

3 - (1 instance) Non-Responsive

No redactions applied

Jett, Carole

From: Maisel, Chad
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:41 PM
To: Eve, Malcolm; Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin
Subject: FW: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Email train from 7/15 with DS' public account (kathleen.merrigan@usda.gov) cced

From: [Exemption (b)(6)] [mailto:[Exemption (b)(6)]]
Sent: Thursday, July 15, 2010 7:07 PM
To: [Exs (b)(6)]
Cc: [Exs (b)(6)] Donnie.Thomas@one.usda.gov; Tom.Vilsack([Exemption (b)(6)]) Merrigan, Kathleen
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

My words were taken out of context. I told about something that happened in 1986 when I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm. When so many black farmers were losing their. My point was that I initially did not do all that I could but in the process realized it was not about black versus white but about poor people or those who have versus those who do not.

If they will use all that I said you see that I talked about what I did to save that white farmers farm and from there went to help hundreds of other white farmers

I use the story to try to get people to move beyond race and work together

I feel deeply hurt that someone would take my words out of context and try to make them mean something else

My record of work for others for 45 years will show my love for people and for fairness

Shirley Sherrod

Sent using BlackBerry

From: George Ko [Exs (b)(6)]
To: Sherrod, Shirley - Athens, GA
Cc: Tom.Vilsack([Exemption (b)(6)]) <Tom.Vilsack([Exemption (b)(6)]) Merrigan, Kathleen (OSEC) [Exs (b)(6)]
[Exs (b)(6)] webmail@chambliss-ig.senate.gov <webmail@chambliss-ig.senate.gov>; Thomas, Donnie - Athens, GA
Sent: Thu Jul 15 15:33:41 2010
Subject: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Dear Ms. Sherrod:

I recently came across a video of your speech at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet in Douglas Coffee County, GA: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=62hPa37v2J4>

In the video, you stated that you did not help a white farmer with the "full force of what [you] could do" when he sought your help. From the context of your speech, you seem to imply that the "amount" of help you provided was due to the color of his skin (white) and because of your sympathy and preference for black farmers.

Are your comments and the context of the comments in your speech correct? As Georgia's USDA Rural Development State Director, do you believe your comments were appropriate?

Thank you,

George Ko

--

George Ko

Exs (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: Eve, Malcolm
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:04 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

I just spoke with chad. It appears this hit the deputy's public email on thursday and the deputy saw it today. I informed the secretary and he has read the message.

Malcolm Eve
Lead Advance for Secretary Vilsack

Exs (b)(6)

From: Jett, Carole
To: Maisel, Chad; Eve, Malcolm; Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 21:58:40 2010
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Chad. When did you discover this message?

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exs (b)(6)

From: Maisel, Chad
To: Eve, Malcolm; Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 21:40:38 2010
Subject: FW: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet
Email train from 7/15 with DS' public account (kathleen.merrigan@usda.gov) cced

From: Exemption (b)(6) mailto: Exemption (b)(6)
Sent: Thursday, July 15, 2010 7:07 PM
To: Exs (b)(6)
CC: Exs (b)(6); webmail@chambliss-ig.senate.gov; Donnie.Thomas@one.usda.gov; Tom.Vilsack; Exemption (b)(6); Merrigan, Kathleen
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

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I feel deeply hurt that someone would take my words out of context and try to make them mean something else

My record of work for others for 45 years will show my love for people and for fairness

Shirley Sherrod

Sent using BlackBerry

From: George Ko [Redacted] Exs (b)(6)
To: Sherrod, Shirley - Athens, GA
Cc: Tom.Vilsac Exemption (b)(6) Tom.Vilsac Exemption (b)(6) Merrigan, Kathleen (OSEC) [Redacted] Exs (b)(6)
[Redacted] Exs (b)(6) webmail@chambliss-ig.senate.gov <webmail@chambliss-ig.senate.gov>; Thomas,
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Are your comments and the context of the comments in your speech correct? As Georgia's USDA Rural Development State Director, do you believe your comments were appropriate?

Thank you,

George Ko

--

George Ko

[Redacted] Exs (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: [REDACTED] *Exs (b)(6)*
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:39 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: SHIRLEY SHERROD

Jeff: I have known and worked with Shirley Sherrod for the past 15 years. There is no one more honorable than Charles and Shirley Sherrod. She is the Chairman of the Board for Rural Development Leadership Network that helps people in rural areas get master and doctorate degrees in Rural Economic Development. I am a Native American in Montana and I can tell you there is no prejudice in her body. I can also tell you the number of Native American, Latino, Black, Appalachian people she has helped through this program.

I am appalled by what is happening to her. Please let Obama know that what his staff did is wrong. And what is up with USDA. Come on.

Nancy Gaynor

[REDACTED] *Exs (b)(6)*

"I Was Here" and I Made a Difference

Jett, Carole

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:55 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Washo, Kevin
Subject: Fw: CNN: "president fully supports the decision"

Chris Mather

From: Misailidis, Sarah
To: Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris
Sent: Tue Jul 20 19:50:13 2010
Subject: Re: CNN: "president fully supports the decision"

This is in the clips I just sent out.

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Tue Jul 20 19:46:18 2010
Subject: CNN: "president fully supports the decision"
CNN (11 min ago)- Is this what you were referring to?

NAACP 'snookered' over video of former USDA employee

...Vilsack told CNN on Tuesday that he "didn't speak to anyone at the White House. ... I made this decision, it's my decision. Nobody from the White House contacted me about this at all."

A White House official also told CNN that "the White House did not pressure her or the USDA over the resignation. It was the secretary's decision, as he has said."

President Barack Obama was briefed on the situation after Vilsack decided to seek Sherrod's resignation, according to a White House official, who said the president fully supports the decision....

FULL STORY:

The NAACP has retracted its original statement condemning comments made by a former Agriculture Department official who resigned after a video clip surfaced of her discussing a white farmer.

The NAACP said in a statement Tuesday that it was "snookered by Fox News" and conservative website publisher Andrew Breitbart.

"Having reviewed the full tape by Shirley Sherrod, who is the woman who was fired by the Department of Agriculture, and most importantly heard the testimony of the white farmers mentioned in this story, we now believe that the organization that edited the documents did so with the intention of deceiving millions of Americans," the statement from NAACP President Benjamin Jealous said.

The organization also urged Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack to reconsider Sherrod's resignation from her post as the department's director of rural development for Georgia.

Breitbart originally posted the video, which was quickly picked up by Fox News.

In the video, Sherrod, can be heard telling an audience at a March 27, 2009, appearance before a local chapter of the NAACP that she had not given a white farmer "the full force of what I could do" to help him save the family farm.

Conservative media outlets tied the video to the NAACP's recent resolution calling on the Tea Party movement to repudiate racist elements within it that have displayed such items as images of President Obama with a bone through his nose and the White House with a lawn full of watermelons. The controversy has led one Tea Party group to oust another because of a blog posting by the second group's leader.

Tea Party Express leader Mark Williams posted on his blog a faux letter from Jealous to President Abraham Lincoln in which Williams ridicules the organization's use of "colored" in its historic name and uses multiple stereotypes to bolster his point. The National Tea Party Foundation expelled Williams' organization from its coalition as a result. Breitbart told CNN's "John King USA" on Tuesday that releasing the video was "not about Shirley Sherrod." "This was about the NAACP attacking the Tea Party, and this is showing racism at an NAACP event," he said. "I did not ask for Shirley Sherrod to be fired."

Sherrod defended herself in a number of interviews Tuesday, saying her controversial comments were taken out of context.

She insisted she "went all out" to help the man keep his farm and said she resigned only under pressure from the Obama administration, telling CNN she received four phone calls Monday telling her the White House wanted her to step down.

"They asked me to resign, and in fact they harassed me as I was driving back to the state office from West Point, Georgia, yesterday," she said. The last call "asked me to pull to the side of the road and do it [resign]," she said. Vilsack told CNN on Tuesday that he "didn't speak to anyone at the White House. ... I made this decision, it's my decision. Nobody from the White House contacted me about this at all."

A White House official also told CNN that "the White House did not pressure her or the USDA over the resignation. It was the secretary's decision, as he has said."

President Barack Obama was briefed on the situation after Vilsack decided to seek Sherrod's resignation, according to a White House official, who said the president fully supports the decision.

Sherrod said Tuesday that the incident with the farmer in 1986 occurred before she started work for the USDA and was working at the nonprofit Federation of Southern Cooperatives. She said the experience helped her learn to move beyond race and she tells the story to audiences to make that point.

Meanwhile, the farmer referenced in the clip told CNN he credits Sherrod with helping his family save their farm. "I don't know what brought up the racist mess," Roger Spooner told CNN's "Rick's List." "They just want to stir up some trouble, it sounds to me in my opinion."

Spooner says Sherrod accompanied him and his wife to a lawyer in Americus, Georgia, who was able to help them file for Chapter 11 bankruptcy, which ultimately saved their farm.

"If it hadn't been for her, we would've never known who to see or what to do," he said. "She led us right to our success."

Spooner's wife, Eloise, remembered Sherrod as "nice-mannered, thoughtful, friendly; a good person."

She said that when she saw the story of the tape and Sherrod's resignation on television, "I said, 'That ain't right. They have not treated her right.'"

The poor-quality video shows Sherrod telling her audience that the farmer she was working with "took a long time ... trying to show me he was superior to me." As a result, she said, she "didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough."

To prove she had done her job, she said, she took him to a white lawyer. "I figured that if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him," she said.

But that lawyer failed to help, she said. "I did not discriminate against [the farmer]. And, in fact, I went all out to frantically look for a lawyer at the last minute because the first lawyer we went to was not doing anything to really help him. In fact, that lawyer suggested they should just let the farm go." She was able to find an attorney to file Chapter 11 bankruptcy to help the family stay on the farm, she said.

Sherrod said she first heard of the possible controversy when someone e-mailed her Thursday to taunt her about her comments. She immediately forwarded the e-mail to the USDA so the agency would be aware. She was told that someone would look into it.

She said it wasn't until Monday that she heard back, and by then, she was being asked for her resignation.

Sherrod said she got four calls Monday from Cheryl Cook, the USDA rural development undersecretary. In the first, she said, she was told she was being put on administrative leave. In the second, she said, she was told she needed to resign.

Asked if she felt she had an opportunity to explain, Sherrod said, "No, I didn't. The administration, they were not interested in hearing the truth. No one wanted to hear the truth."

Vilsack said Tuesday that the controversy, regardless of the context of her comments, "compromises the director's ability to do her job."

"This isn't a situation where we are necessarily judgmental about the content of the statement, that's not the issue here. I don't believe this woman is a racist at all," he said. "She's a political appointee, and her job is basically to focus on job growth in Georgia, and I have deep concern about her ability to do her job without her judgments being second-guessed."

Ralph Paige, executive director of the nonprofit Sherrod worked for before being appointed to the USDA job in 2009, told CNN on Tuesday that she garnered only praise and there were never any claims of discrimination against her.

"I can't praise Shirley enough," he said. "She holds no malice in her heart."

Vilsack issued a statement Monday announcing he had accepted Sherrod's resignation, noting a "zero tolerance" policy for discrimination at the USDA, adding, "I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person."

The first statement that the NAACP issued late Monday backed Vilsack's decision.

"Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race," Jealous said. "We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers."

Sherrod said the NAACP did not contact her before issuing the first statement. She said she got a phone call from an NAACP representative in Washington on Tuesday afternoon telling her another statement would be issued once the full tape was reviewed.

"I told him I was highly disappointed that they would make a statement without even looking into it," she said.

In the statement issued Tuesday evening, the NAACP reversed its condemnation after viewing the full video.

"She was sharing this account as part of a story of transformation and redemption," the statement said. "In the full video, Ms. Sherrod says she realized that the dislocation of farmers is about 'haves and have nots.' 'It's not just about black people, it's about poor people,' says Sherrod in the speech. 'We have to get to the point where race exists but it doesn't matter.' "

Earlier Tuesday, Sherrod called the NAACP "the reason why this happened. They got into a fight with the Tea Party, and all of this came out as a result of that."

She called the ensuing controversy "unbelievable."

"I think any moment I'm going to wake up and none of this is happening, but it is," she said.

"When you spend your life helping others and see people try to turn that around to try to make it look like you're a racist when that's not been what your life has been about -- that doesn't feel good."

Older stories...

5 p.m.

Official: No White House pressure on Sherrod

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack this afternoon took responsibility for firing an official, Shirley Sherrod, whose **appearance** on video recalling her behavior toward a white farmer drew charges of racism, and whose immediate firing drew **suggestions** that the administration had over-reacted to an edited video clip.

A White House official told me just now that the White House backs Vilsack's decision -- but that it was Vilsack's alone.

The official said the White House -- contrary to the Sherrod's charge -- did not pressure the Department to fire her.

Vilsack's statement:

Yesterday, I asked for and accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation for two reasons. First, for the past 18 months, we have been working to turn the page on the sordid civil rights record at USDA and this controversy could make it more difficult to move forward on correcting injustices. Second, state rural development directors make many decisions and are often called to use their discretion. The controversy surrounding her comments would create situations where her decisions, rightly or wrongly, would be called into question making it difficult for her to bring jobs to Georgia.

Our policy is clear. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA and we strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have a duty to ensure that when we provide services to the American people we do so in an equitable manner. But equally important is our duty to instill confidence in the American people that we are fair service providers.

4:30

White House official: We didn't push for Sherrod's firing

A White House official insists that the White House didn't pressure Shirley Sherrod to resign, or pressure USDA chief Tom Vilsack to fire her, over the Andrew Breitbart video allegedly showing her claiming she didn't help a white farmer 24 years ago because of racial reasons.

"We did not pressure USDA or Ms. Sherrod," the White House official emails me. Ben Smith was told something similar.

Separately, Vilsack, who fired Sherrod while declaring zero tolerance for "discrimination," released a statement that seemed to take ownership of the firing, without quite clarifying whether the White House had any role:

Yesterday, I asked for and accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation for two reasons. First, for the past 18 months, we have been working to turn the page on the sordid civil rights record at USDA and this controversy could make it more difficult to move forward on correcting injustices. Second, state rural development directors make many decisions and are often called to use their discretion. The controversy surrounding her comments would create situations where her decisions, rightly or wrongly, would be called into question making it difficult for her to bring jobs to Georgia.

Our policy is clear. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA and we strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have a duty to ensure that when we provide services to the American people we do so in an equitable manner. But equally important is our duty to instill confidence in the American people that we are fair service providers.

Some have been claiming that the firing shows the White House allowed itself to be led around by the nose by Breitbart. And this quote from a White House official may not quiet the criticism, perhaps understandably, since it's anonymous.

Whatever the White House role, if Vilsack canned this woman based on the strength of the Breitbart video alone, before the facts were in -- and we don't know for certain that it happened this way, though it certainly appears so -- that's appalling on its own.

UPDATE, 6:17 p.m.: Much more in the way of reactions to this [right here](#).

UPDATE, 6:30 p.m.: The NAACP admits to [having been snookered by Breitbart and Fox](#).

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Exemption (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: Frederick.Pfaeffle@OGC.USDA.GOV
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:50 PM
To: Jett, Carole; McNeil, Mary; Leonard, Joe
Cc: Silverman, Steve; INGA.BUMBARY-LANGSTON@OGC.USDA.GOV;
ARLEAN.LELAND@OGC.USDA.GOV
Subject: RE: Help [Sherrod Track B Decision]

Confidential Attorney-Client Communication

Exs (b)(6)

Exs (b)(6)

I will provide further info when we hear back from the Department of Justice

COMMITTEE.

Jett, Carole

From: ARLEAN.LELAND@OGC.USDA.GOV
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:54 PM
To: ARLEAN.LELAND@OGC.USDA.GOV; Jett, Carole; McNeil, Mary; Leonard, Joe
Cc: Silverman, Steve; INGA.BUMBARY-LANGSTON@OGC.USDA.GOV; Frederick.Pfaeffle@OGC.USDA.GOV
Subject: RE: Help [REDACTED] Exs (b)(6)
Importance: High

Ms. Jett, Dr. Leonard and Ms. McNeil:

Please note that Inga left a copy of the decision for Fred with Connie Smith in the GC's front office. Take care,

Arlean Leland

-----Original Message-----

From: Leland, Arlean
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:48 PM
To: Jett, Carole; McNeil, Mary; Leonard, Joe
Subject: FW: Help

-----Original Message-----

From: BUMBARY-LANGSTON, INGA
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:19 PM
To: Pfaeffle, Frederick; Leland, Arlean
Subject: RE: Help

I am not aware of a settlement agreement. [REDACTED]

Exs (b)(6)

[REDACTED]
Exs (b)(6)

-----Original Message-----

From: Pfaeffle, Frederick
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 5:56 PM
To: Pfaeffle, Frederick; Leland, Arlean
Cc: BUMBARY-LANGSTON, INGA
Subject: RE: Help

Can I get a copy of the settlement agreement?

-----Original Message-----

From: Pfaeffle, Frederick
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 5:52 PM
To: Leland, Arlean
Cc: BUMBARY-LANGSTON, INGA
Subject: RE: Help

Arlean, is this what you were referring to earlier today at the meeting?

-----Original Message-----

From: McNeil, Mary [mailto:Mary.McNeil@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 5:50 PM
To: Pfaeffle, Frederick; BUMBARY-LANGSTON, INGA
Subject: FW: Help

Exs (b)(6)

Mary

-----Original Message-----

From: McNeil, Mary
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 5:41 PM
To: 'Pfaeffle, Frederick'
Subject: FW: Help

Can you check to see if you have any records regarding email exchange. Thanks.

Exs (b)(6)

See

-----Original Message-----

From: Jeanquart, Bobbi
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 5:25 PM
To: McNeil, Mary
Subject: Fw: Help

Can you help get this info or follow up with dr leonard

----- Original Message -----

From: Jett, Carole
To: Heard, Robin; Jeanquart, Bobbi; Leonard, Joe
Cc: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tue Jul 20 17:23:42 2010
Subject: Help

I need to get the facts around the [redacted] go last year.

Exs (b)(6)

Mather needs for press inquiries tonight.

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:37 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: Fw: POLITICO Breaking News

From: breakingnews@politico.com
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 18:35:31 2010
Subject: POLITICO Breaking News
POLITICO Breaking News:

The NAACP on Tuesday said □we were snookered□ by Fox News and conservative Internet entrepreneur Andrew Breitbart into criticizing former USDA official Shirley Sherrod, who was captured on videotape saying she once withheld assistance to a white farmer. □The tape of Ms. Sherrod□s speech at an NAACP banquet was deliberately edited to create a false impression of racial bias, and to create a controversy where none existed,□ the group said in a statement.

For more information...<http://www.politico.com>

To stop alerts, visit:
http://dyn.politico.com/Unsubscribe_auto.cfm?email=justin.dejong@usda.gov&uuid=EA3B34A9-188B-4976-D10CEC82C5230B02&alertID=1

Jett, Carole

From: Jeanquart, Bobbi
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:13 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Mather, Chris
Cc: Reed, Pearlie
Subject: calls - fyi

We got a couple calls saying the firing of Shirley Sherrod was not fair.

bobbi

Jett, Carole

From: Heard, Robin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 5:51 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Jeanquart, Bobbi; Leonard, Joe
Cc: Mather, Chris
Subject: Re: Help

Mary mcneil is trying to get it from ogc fred pfaeffle etal. We think it was paid from doj judgement fund--court case? We r working on it.

----- Original Message -----

From: Jett, Carole
To: Heard, Robin; Jeanquart, Bobbi; Leonard, Joe
Cc: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tue Jul 20 17:23:42 2010
Subject: Help

I need to get the facts around the [REDACTED] *Exs (b)(6)* go last year.

Mather needs for press inquiries tonight.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

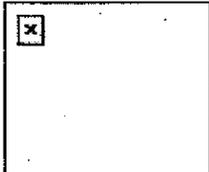
[REDACTED] *Exemption (b)(6)*

Jett, Carole

From: [REDACTED] Exs (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 5:23 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: Shirley Sherrod Resignation Injustice

**RURAL DEVELOPMENT LEADERSHIP
NETWORK**

rdln@ruraldevelopment.org <http://www.ruraldevelopment.org>
P.O. Box 98 Prince St. Station, New York, NY 10012
Phone (212)777-9137 FAX (212)777-9137



July 20, 2010

Support for Shirley Sherrod

I am writing today to urge you to reinstate Shirley Sherrod and that an investigation be launched to determine how this injustice happened. I have interacted and known Shirley Sherrod over the last 10 years through the RDLN and have always found her to be a person deeply dedicated to humanity and to have sterling integrity.

Shirley Sherrod, who has devoted her life to racial justice, was forced to resign yesterday as Georgia State Director of Rural Development for the United States Department of Agriculture, caught in the crossfire of discrimination charges between the Tea Party and the National Association of Colored People (NAACP). On July 13, the NAACP charged elements of the Tea Party with racism. On July 18, Fox News began playing a video clip circulated by a conservative activist that was framed to show Ms. Sherrod telling an NAACP audience last March that she was reluctant to help a white farmer, whereas the point of the story she was telling was that her experience with this farmer opened her eyes to the fact that poor white farmers could be ill treated also. Its not just black and white, she said, even on the part of the speech that was shown, Its about the poor versus those who have.

The story is presented on the internet with a text panel stating that Ms. Sherrod admits that in her federally appointed position, overseeing over a billion dollars, she discriminates against people due to their race. This statement is false, but apparently was accepted at face value by Fox News, MSNBC, the Department of Agriculture, the White House and the NAACP.

The events in the story she was told in her speech about how her eyes were opened, actually took place twenty-four years ago, when she worked for a nonprofit organization that grew out of the Civil Rights movement with a mission to save black-owned land. In that capacity, she did in fact help the white farmer in question. She worked hard, as she related in a phone conversation and as the full story would have shown, on an emergency basis over a Memorial Day weekend, finding a more responsive lawyer than the one initially contacted, and she actually was successful in saving this white farmers farm. She and the family became so close that the farmer and his wife drove four hours to a meeting in Atlanta several months later to attend a conference on saving black-owned land. Mrs. Eloise Spooner, the farmers wife, spoke by phone to CNN this morning and testified to the familys friendship with Ms. Sherrod and their gratitude toward her.

Ms. Sherrod understands discrimination well. When she was sixteen, her father was murdered by a white man, who, although he was known in the community, was not brought to justice.

As the first African-American Georgia State Director for Rural Development, USDA, Ms. Sherrod was in a position to help many people of all races, and she was reaching out to many under-served communities to do just that.

In the 1960s, Ms. Sherrod and her husband, Charles, the first field secretary for the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) withdrew from SNCC and formed the Southwest Georgia Project in response to SNCC's new policy, under Stokely Carmichael's leadership, that white people could no longer be members of SNCC.

In 1985, Ms. Sherrod became a participant in the Rural Development Leadership Network, a national, multicultural social change organization. She earned her masters degree from Antioch University through RDLN and became Vice Chair of our Board of Directors, working closely with our white President, our diverse Board, which includes white members, and helping to orient each new group of participants who have been black, American Indian, Latina/o, Asian, and white.

Ms. Sherrod has worked constructively with a number of other organizations with white staff and constituencies, including the Farmers Legal Action Group based in Minnesota.

In announcing Ms. Sherrod's resignation, Secretary Vilsack stated that the Department has zero tolerance for discrimination. We are disappointed that the Department of Agriculture, the Obama Administration, the NAACP, and several news outlets did not look into the facts and did not stand up for Ms. Sherrod.

We call upon Secretary Vilsack to reinstate Ms. Sherrod and investigate how this injustice was allowed to happen.

Suzanne Kinkade

RDLN Leader-Flathead Indian Reservation, Montana

RDLN Board of Directors

Moises Loza, Chairman, Executive Director, Housing Assistance Council

John Zippert, Director of Program Operations, Federation of Southern Cooperatives (AL)

G. David Singleton, California Native American Heritage Commission; Applied Development Economics (CA)

Twila Martin-Kekahbah, United Tribes Technical College; former chair, Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians (ND)

Anita LaRan, Collaborative Visions; President, Sangre de Cristo Livestock Growers Assoc. (NM)

Mily Trevio-Sauceda, President Emerita, Lideeres Campesinas (CA)

Starry Krueger, President (NY)

--

Suzanne Kinkade

Salish Kootenai College

Student Housing/Auxiliary Services

Exs (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 5:14 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: FW: CNN Transcript: Reading of USDA Statement

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:55 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Cc: JIC4, OC -USDA
Subject: RE: CNN Transcript: Reading of USDA Statement

We are working on it ☺

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Exemption (b)(6)

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:53 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Subject: Re: CNN Transcript: Reading of USDA Statement

Do we have transcript of the segment the secretary aired?

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:48:50 2010
Subject: Re: CNN Transcript: Reading of USDA Statement

Btw, cnn is taping the meeting (open press). But it is not going on satellite live.

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:36:17 2010
Subject: CNN Transcript: Reading of USDA Statement
Station: CNN
Date: 07/20/2010 15:43:25 - 3:53:25 PM

shirley sherrod has said that the department of agriculture was pressured by the white house to ask her to resign. that's essentially what she told my colleague, tony harris, earlier today. we've been waiting for government to respond to her accusations and we just got that in, in the form of a statement. we expect we might get more. but here's the first statement as i read it to you, literally fresh off the press. this is from tom vilsack, agriculture secretary from the united states of america. yesterday, i asked for and accepted ms. sherrod's resignation for two reasons. first, for the past 18 months we have been working to turn a page on the sordid civil rights record at the usd and that controversy could make it more difficult to move forward. second, state directors are often called to use their discretion. the controversy surrounding her comments

Jett, Carole

From: Zaina, Lisa
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:33 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: Re: Secretary statement

Thanks. You ok?
Lisa Zaina

----- Original Message -----

From: Jett, Carole
To: Tonsager, Dallas; Cook, Cheryl; Vasquez, Victor
Cc: Zaina, Lisa
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:22:14 2010
Subject: Secretary statement

Yesterday, I asked for and accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation for two reasons. First, for the past 18 months, we have been working to turn the page on the sordid civil rights record at USDA and this controversy could make it more difficult to move forward on correcting injustices.

Second, state rural development directors make many decisions and are often called to use their discretion. The controversy surrounding her comments would create situations where her decisions, rightly or wrongly, would be called into question making it difficult for her to bring jobs to Georgia.

Our policy is clear. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA and we strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have a duty to ensure that when we provide services to the American people we do so in an equitable manner. But equally important is our duty to instill confidence in the American people that we are fair service providers. Carole Jett Deputy Chief of Staff USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:31 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Subject: WH and S approved

Sending soon

Yesterday, I asked for and accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation for two reasons. First, for the past 18 months, we have been working to turn the page on the sordid civil rights record at USDA and this controversy could make it more difficult to move forward on correcting injustices. Second, state rural development directors make many decisions and are often called to use their discretion. The controversy surrounding her comments would create situations where her decisions, rightly or wrongly, would be called into question making it difficult for her to bring jobs to Georgia.

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Chris Mather
Director of Communications
USDA
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 402A
Washington, DC 20250

Exemption (b)(6)

would create situations where her situations, rightly or wrongly, would be called into question, making it difficult for her to bring jobs to georgia. now, remember, ms. sherrod is saying here on cnn, if you took it in context, if you listen to the totality of what i actually said in this speech and not just the edited portions of it, you would understand that i was trying to make a point that says discrimination is not good. but the usda, her boss, tom vilsack, secretary of agriculture, does not appearing to be buying that or even giving her reconsideration. why? let me read on. our policy is clear, he writes, there is zero tolerance for discrimination at usda and we strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. we have a duty to ensure that when we provide services to the american people, we do so in an equitable manner. but equally important is our duty to instill confidence in the american people that we are fair service providers. this comes from a stephanie chan, press secretary, press assistant office of communication, u.s. department of agriculture. says here a statement by agriculture secretary tom vilsack. just got this. it's the reaction to the accusation from shirley sherrod saying, look, i was taken out of context. if you listen to me in totality, you will understand i was trying to say something else. reconsider your decision. we just reported the naacp is apparently reconsidering. we'll hear from them soon. as far as the government goes, it doesn't look like they are. we'll be right back. granola nut clusters 100% natural nuts and granola in bite sized clusters. it's a little bit of nature... a little bit better. and nature approves. granola nut clusters from nature valley. dan malloy has helped my business expand and created a lot of jobs. green jobs and high tech jobs and i have a job because of dan malloy dan malloy has put a lot of people to work helping create jobs that was my job as mayor of stamford and i'll do the same as governor by investing in high tech and clean energy holding down property taxes and lowering electric rates so people want to live here and businesses can afford to stay here that's how we'll turn connecticut's economy around dan malloy has got the experience that money can't buy approve this message i'm dan malloy and i

we're getting a lot of people talking about this shirley sherrod story. a lot of you saying, she's falsely accused. some of you saying, no, she should have been fired. so back and forth we go. we'll continue bringing you the details. they are still coming in, folks.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Exemption (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: Diephouse, Greg
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:58 PM
To: Fromstein, Charles; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Mather, Chris
Subject: RE: Shirley Sherrod's Dismissal

Getting lots of phone calls (over 70) on this subject now too. I think an operator somewhere is sending the calls our way.

Anything sent to the AGSEC@usda.gov account goes to us - no need to forward. Thanks.

Greg Diephouse
Director
Office of the Executive Secretariat
USDA - 202-720-7100

-----Original Message-----
From: Fromstein, Charles
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:51 PM
To: Diephouse, Greg
Subject: FW: Shirley Sherrod's Dismissal

Hey Greg,

I believe you are logging these complaints. Just wanted to pass this on so you have the record.

-Charlie

-----Original Message-----
From: ENNIS BRECKENRIDGE [mailto:ennislb@yahoo.com]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:49 PM
To: King, David; Renee Brown; Eric Holden; Scott, Denise -OSEC; Wright, Lloyd; Porto, Stacy; PRESIDENT BARACK; AGSEC -USDA
Subject: Shirley Sherrod's Dismissal

Dear USDA

This is Ennis Breckenridge very,very,very upset at the pressure your Administration has put on Shirley Sherrod to vacate her office. What about the other USDA employees who Blakeley ADMITTING doing THE BLACK FARMERS wrong in court and before GOD !!! They got pay raises and new positions. Maybe if we contacted a larger ORDINANCE we might see some JUSTICE!!! Something is wrong, very wrong!!! Ennis

Office of Communications (202) 720-4623

USDA Clips

Tuesday, July 20, 2010

USDA Clips are intended for use by authorized government personnel only. Redistribution by any means to any unauthorized person violates copyright on the source material.

Rural Development clips

USDA worker quits over racism charge from video (AP 7/20)

A black federal worker has resigned from a Georgia agricultural job after a video clip showed her saying she had not helped a farmer as much as she could have because he was white. U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a statement Tuesday he had accepted the resignation of Shirley Sherrod. Vilsack says the USDA has no tolerance for discrimination. Sherrod told the Atlanta-Journal Constitution she was forced out of her job as the USDA's rural development director for Georgia. She said the two-minute, 38-second video posted online Monday misconstrued her message. Sherrod's taped remarks were from a local meeting of the civil rights group NAACP. National NAACP President Benjamin Todd Jealous welcomed the resignation because the group opposes racism of all kinds. [Link](#)

Dismissed employee blames media (UPI 7/20)

An employee of the U.S. Department of Agriculture says she lost her job because the media misconstrued a speech she gave at an NAACP banquet. Shirley Sherrod, who was forced out as the USDA's rural development director for Georgia, is seen on a video admitting she didn't do everything she could to help a white farmer who needed aid, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported Tuesday. What the media didn't report, Sherrod says, was that the incident she was relating on the video happened 24 years ago when she was working for another organization, not the federal government. Also left out, Sherrod says, is the part where she says she was trying to figure out how to help someone who was condescending. [Link](#)

Ex-worker: USDA 'wasn't interested in hearing the truth' (CNN 7/20)

A former USDA employee who resigned after a video surfaced of her talking about a white farmer told CNN on Tuesday that the administration "wasn't interested in hearing the truth." Shirley Sherrod, who resigned Monday as the department's state director of rural development for Georgia, told CNN she had four calls telling her the White House wanted her to resign. She said she was driving at the time, and the last call asked her to pull to the side of the road and offer her resignation. Sherrod's resignation came after media outlets aired the video, in which she tells an audience she did not give the white farmer "the full force of what I could do" to help him avoid foreclosure. [Link](#)

USDA employee says statements on white farmer misconstrued (CNN 7/20)

A black Agriculture Department employee who resigned after a video clip showed her talking about a white farmer said Tuesday her remarks were taken out of context. Shirley Sherrod, the department's former state director of rural development for Georgia, told CNN on Tuesday the incident she discusses in the clip took place more than two decades ago -- and she recounted it to an audience to make the point that people should move beyond race. "I was speaking to that group, like I've done many groups, and I tell them about a time when I thought the issue was race and race only," Sherrod told CNN's "American Morning" from her home in Albany, Georgia. The incident took place in 1986, while she worked for a nonprofit and before she worked for the USDA, she said. "I was telling the story of how working with him helped me to see the issue is not about race. It's about those who have versus those who do not have."

[Link](#)

Race remarks cost USDA official her job (CNN Blog 7/20)

An African-American Agriculture Department worker resigns over her handling of a white Georgia farmer's case when she worked for a nonprofit group in 1986. It came to light when Shirley Sherrod talked about the case at an NAACP banquet earlier this year. Were her remarks a teaching moment that backfired, or evidence of racism? Sherrod says her comments were taken out of context -- that the point of her story was to unite people. Tony Harris will be talking to Sherrod at 11:00am ET on CNN, and we'll post that interview here. Watch some of her speech and phone interview with CNN's American Morning below, then tell us what you think. We'll share some of your comments on air in the CNN Newsroom, 11:00am -- 1:00pm ET. [Link](#)

Ex-Ag Official Says Video Showing 'White Farmer' Story Excludes Key Context (Fox News 7/20)

The Department of Agriculture official who resigned Monday night over comments she made at an NAACP dinner in March is claiming that the video clip that caused the firestorm excluded critical context. Shirley Sherrod said the Obama administration got scared after the YouTube clip surfaced. In the video, the department's ex-Georgia director of Rural Development is shown telling the story about how she withheld help to a white farmer in trouble. But Sherrod, in an interview overnight with The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, said she was telling a story about events that happened 24 years when she was working for a local non-profit group. [Link](#)

Video Shows USDA Official Saying She Didn't Give 'Full Force' of Help to White Farmer (FOX News 7/20)

Days after the NAACP clashed with Tea Party members over allegations of racism, a video has surfaced showing an Agriculture Department official regaling an NAACP audience with a story about how she withheld help to a white farmer facing bankruptcy -- video that now has forced the official to resign. Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, is shown in the clip describing "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." Sherrod, who is black, claimed the farmer took a long time trying to show he was "superior" to her. The audience laughed as she described how she determined his fate... "There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person," Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a written statement. "We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously. [Link](#)

Gingrich Responds to Discrimination at USDA (Fox News 7/20)

SEAN HANNITY, HOST: And this is a Fox News alert. An Obama administration official resigned just a short time ago after she was caught on tape appearing to tell an audience that she had used her position to racially discriminate against white farmers. Now the woman, Shirley Sherrod, was the Georgia state director at the Department of Agricultural. Now the president's Agricultural Secretary Tom Vilsack just released a statement saying the USDA has a zero tolerance policy against discrimination. Here's part of the shocking video that ignited this controversy. (BEGIN VIDEO CLIP) SHIRLEY SHERROD, FORMER USDA GA STATE DIRECTOR: The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking but he was trying to show me he was superior to me. I know what he was doing. But he had come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him. [Request Story](#)

Black USDA official resigns after admitting she only 'did enough' for white farmer (MSNBC 7/20)

A black USDA official in Georgia has resigned after publicly admitting she didn't help a white man trying to save his farm to the "full force" of her power and instead referred him to "one of his own." Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said he had accepted Shirley Sherrod's resignation, saying there was "zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA." The NAACP, which recently condemned racism in tea party groups, also issued a statement Monday night saying: "Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race." [Link](#)

Morning Joe (MSNBC 7/20)

Well, another story of reverse discrimination comes out today. This one is really interesting. I'm thinking that this woman regrets this comment. A USDA official in Georgia has resigned after a YouTube clip shows her admitting that race helped determine how much aid would be given to a white farmer. You're not supposed to do that, are you? I mean, I'm not --it's probably not a good idea. for being so stupid. It's not even -- well, how about you just don't do it. Anyway, the state's director of rural development apparently made the comments during an NAACP banquet in March. Take a listen. The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking, but he was trying to show me he was superior to me. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time to show me he was superior to me was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him. I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So, I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. [Request Story](#)

Shirley Sherrod Resigns Over USDA Race Remark Furor (CBS News 7/20)

A high-ranking black employee of the U.S. Department of Agriculture has resigned after remarks she made about race were distributed by conservative web sites and aired on Fox News. A video clip of Shirley Sherrod, the USDA's Georgia State Director of Rural Development, was circulated by conservative blogger Andrew Breitbart and his site, biggovernment.com, in which Sherrod talked of withholding help to a white man facing the loss of his family farm. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack released a statement Tuesday saying he had accepted Sherrod's resignation, and added that the department has no tolerance for discrimination. [Link](#)

USDA worker quits over 1986 racial incident (The Washington Post 7/20)

A U.S. Agriculture Department official from Georgia resigned late Monday after she was caught on tape admitting that she had not helped a farmer as much as she could have because he was white. Shirley Sherrod, USDA state director of rural development, made the remarks on March 27 at an NAACP Freedom Fund banquet. Her videotaped remarks surfaced on YouTube on Monday. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack accepted Sherrod's resignation, saying, "There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously." NAACP President and Benjamin Jealous called Sherrod's actions shameful and agreed with the decision to fire her. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod: Racist or scapegoat? (Washington Post Blog 7/20)

Were the administration and the NAACP too hasty in their reactions to Shirley Sherrod, the Department of Agriculture employee who resigned (i.e., was fired) for allegedly racist comments? A video clip posted online Monday shows Sherrod delivering a speech at a March NAACP banquet, where she talks about her failure to help a white farmer who was in danger of losing his farm. Her suggestion: If he'd been black, she would have moved heaven and earth to help him. "There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, in accepting Sherrod's resignation. The NAACP, which last week accused the Tea Party of racism, rushed out a searing condemnation of Sherrod: "We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers," said NAACP president Benjamin Jealous. [Link](#)

USDA Official Resigns in Racial Flap (TIME 7/20)

A U.S. Department of Agriculture official who is African American has resigned after a tape of discriminatory comments she made at an NAACP event was posted to the web. Shirley Sherrod, who had been Georgia's state director of rural development told CNN the video, first shown by conservative web publisher Andrew Breitbart, was taken out of context. In the clip, Sherrod describes how in 1986 she

didn't offer her "full force" of help to a white farmer. Sherrod told CNN that at the time of the incident, she was not working for the USDA, but for a nonprofit organization and that she had been trying to help the farmer who had been foreclosed on. "I was telling the story of how working with him helped me to see the issue is not about race," she said "It's about those who have versus those who do not have." [Link](#)

Farmer's wife says fired USDA official helped save their land (Atlanta Journal Constitution 7/20)

The wife of the white farmer allegedly discriminated against by the USDA's rural development director for Georgia said Shirley Sherrod "kept us out of bankruptcy." Eloise Spooner, 82, awoke Tuesday to discover that Sherrod had lost her job after videotaped comments she made in March at a local NAACP banquet surfaced on the web. Sherrod, who is black, told the crowd she didn't do everything she could to help a white farmer whom she said was condescending when he came to her for aid. She said the video was selectively edited but regardless U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack was adamant that she resign. [Link](#)

Resigned USDA official says racial story misconstrued (Atlanta Journal Constitution 7/20)

The USDA's rural development director for Georgia says she was forced out of her federally appointed job after a "snippet" of a speech she gave in March appeared to show her admission to only half-heartedly aiding a struggling white farmer because of his race. But in a phone interview from her home in Albany early Tuesday morning, Shirley Sherrod told the Atlanta-Journal Constitution that the two-minute, 38-second video posted online Monday by biggovernment.com and reported on by FoxNews.com and the AJC completely misconstrued the message she was trying to convey. Sherrod, 62, insisted her statements in the video were not racist. "For Fox to take a spin on this like they have done, and know it's not the truth ... it's very upsetting," she said. [Link](#)

In the curious case of Shirley Sherrod, let's see the whole tape (Atlanta Journal Constitution Blog 7/20)

A couple of folks in comments yesterday brought up the case of USDA official Shirley Sherrod, a black woman caught on tape at an NAACP meeting here in Georgia apparently bragging about being less than diligent in helping a white farmer. The folks at Big Government posted a portion of her speech as part of the running feud between the NAACP and the Tea Party over which organization is more racist. By the end of the day Monday, Sherrod had been forced to resign her post, and NAACP President Ben Jealous had released a statement agreeing with the forced resignation: "Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race." [Link](#)

Georgia family defends USDA official (Politico Blog 7/20)

The family involved in a 24-year-old incident that resulted in a Department of Agriculture official resigning Monday night is speaking out on her behalf. Shirley Sherrod stepped down from her post as Georgia director of rural development Monday night, two days after a video surfaced in which she explains to an audience at the NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet in March that she did not do everything she could have to help a struggling farmer because he was white. In the video, Sherrod describes the incident, that took place when she was working with the Georgia field office for the Federation of Southern Cooperative/Land Assistance Fund. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Resigns USDA Job After Admitting Use Of Racial Preference During NAACP Banquet (VIDEO) (The Huffington Post 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod, who resigned Monday from the USDA. 756 Shirley Sherrod, a USDA official in Georgia, has resigned after publicly admitting that race played a factor in her decision to limit how much aid would be given to a white farmer. Sherrod, who is African American, made the comments during a local NAACP banquet on March 27, according to information displayed on the video. A clip of her speech first appeared Monday morning on BigGovernment.com and aired that evening on Fox News. Her resignation as the agency's state director of rural development was quickly accepted by U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. He cited a zero-tolerance policy and told CNN that he was working to "reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department." In her controversial speech, Sherrod discussed the first time she was "faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." She claimed that during the conversation, the man "was trying to show me he was superior to me." [Link](#)

Black USDA Official Resigns in Flap Over White Farmer (AOL News 7/20)

A black USDA official who was pressured to resign over comments she made about not helping a struggling white farmer as much as she could have says the agency didn't know the whole story and succumbed to political pressure. Shirley Sherrod resigned Monday as the USDA's rural development director for Georgia after a clip of the speech was posted online by conservative outlets, biggovernment.com and later FoxNews. [Link](#)

NAACP Slams Shirley Sherrod's Actions As 'Shameful' (My Fox New York 7/20)

The actions of a black U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) official who admitted withholding help to a white farmer facing bankruptcy were late Monday described as "shameful" by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, was exposed in a video recorded at an NAACP banquet describing "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." Sherrod claimed the farmer took a long time trying to show he was "superior" to her. "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land -- so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough," she said in the video. The Agriculture Department announced Monday, shortly after FOXNews.com published its initial report on the video, that Sherrod had resigned. [Link](#)

Ga. USDA Official Resigns Over Comments (My Fox Atlanta 7/19)

Racially charged comments have led to the abrupt resignation of an agriculture department official. Shirley Sherrod was the top official who oversaw rural development in the state of Georgia. According to FOX News, Sherrod, the director of the USDA's rural development agency, resigned over comments she made at an NAACP meeting. FOX News obtained taped comments from an NAACP meeting that took place in Douglas, Georgia in March. According to FOX News, Sherrod is seen talking about how she withheld help to a white farmer who was facing bankruptcy. "I didn't give him the full force of what I could do, I did enough," Sherrod said during the meeting. In the video, Sherrod said she was struggling with the fact so many black people have lost their farmland and she was faced with having to help a white person save their land. Sherrod said she took him to see a white lawyer. "I figured if I took him to one of them his own kind, [they] would take care of him," said Sherrod. According to FOX News, the agriculture department announced Monday that Sherrod had resigned. [Link](#)

USDA big quits in bias-boast shock (The New York Post 7/20)

A black official in the US Agriculture Department resigned yesterday after a video surfaced of her bragging to the NAACP that she didn't do everything she could to help a white farmer facing bankruptcy. Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, told the audience at a March banquet in Atlanta that she claimed the man felt "superior" to her, according to FoxNews.com. "He had come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was talking all that time, trying to show me he was superior to me, was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," Sherrod said. "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land -- so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do." "I did enough," she said. [Link](#)

NAACP 'appalled' by black USDA official's racial discrimination (Daily Caller 7/20)

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People President Benjamin Todd Jealous said late Monday he was "appalled" by the actions of U.S. Department of Agriculture official Shirley Sherrod, who resigned earlier in the day after video surfaced of her speaking at an NAACP event about discriminating against a white farmer seeking government help. Jealous also promised to look into why members of the audience at an NAACP fundraiser in Georgia this past March reacted, as shown in the video, by nodding and in some cases laughing at Sherrod's remarks. But Jealous distanced the national NAACP from the incident. Coming just days after the NAACP condemned racist elements inside the Tea Party movement, Sherrod's remarks place the storied civil rights organization in an uncomfortable position. "Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race," Jealous said. "We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers." "Her actions were shameful. While she went on to explain in the story that she ultimately realized her mistake, as well as the common predicament of working people of all races, she gave no indication she had attempted to right the wrong she had done to this man," Jealous said (read his full statement below). [Link](#)

BREAKING: Racist Obama administration member resigns (Manhattan Conservative Examiner 7/19)

Shirley Sherrod of the USDA's Georgia Rural Development office has resigned following the airing of overtly racist remarks she made in a speech before—of all organizations—the NAACP. At a local NAACP meeting in March of 2010, Sherrod boasted of withholding assistance to a farmer based on the color of his skin, which happened to be white. Sherrod (surprise!) is black. In her comments, which are captured in the video below, Sherrod freely admits to "struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land." She further confesses to abusing her position by refusing to "give him the full force of what I could do." The remarks conclude with a racist gem: "I took him to a white lawyer... I figured that if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him." [Link](#)

USDA Official Implicated in NAACP Racism Flap (Buckeye Ag Network 7/20)

Days after the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) denounced the Conservative Tea Party movement on allegations of racism, the organization was itself implicated in charges of racism involving a USDA official. In a video released at BigGovernment.com, USDA's Director of Rural Development in Georgia Shirley Sherrod was depicted acknowledging discriminating against white farmers. The video, of a speech Sherrod gave to the NAACP's Freedom Fund banquet in March of this year, stirred quite a controversy on the internet this week, forcing Sherrod's resignation from the department Monday. Sherrod's remarks in the NAACP speech indicated that she "didn't give [a white farmer] the full force of what I could do," because "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land." [Link](#)

The rest of the story (Arkansas Times Blog 7/20)

The right-wing echo chamber has been beating the drums for a couple of days now about a supposedly racist (black) USDA worker, promptly sacked by Ag Secretary Tom Vilsack on the strength of Fox reporting of her supposedly offensive remarks. The rest of the story is instructive. Hardly what Fox News or the odious Andrew Breitbart reported. The full video apparently will back up her account, in the appropriate fuller context, of what she said and did TWENTY-FOUR YEARS AGO. It is Acorn Faux reporting redux. It occurs to me that Sen. Blanche Lincoln could score some courage points here. No breath being held. [Link](#)

Breitbart's Skilled Editing (The Atlantic Blog 7/20)

The quotes that former USDA worker Shirley Sherrod gave on the edited tapes disseminated by Andrew Breitbart are indeed indefensible, but is it not fair to provide some kind of context? To wit: Sherrod said the short video clip excluded the breadth of the story about how she eventually worked with the man over a two-year period to help ward off foreclosure of his farm, and how she eventually became friends with him and his wife. "And I went on to work with many more white farmers," she said. "The story helped me realize that race is not the issue, it's about the people who have and the people who don't. When I speak to groups, I try to speak about getting beyond the issue of race." [Link](#)

USDA worker quits over racism charge from video (Salon 7/20)

A black federal worker has resigned from a Georgia agricultural job after a video clip showed her saying she had not helped a farmer as much as she could have because he was white. U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a statement Tuesday he had accepted the resignation of Shirley Sherrod. Vilsack says the USDA has no tolerance for discrimination. Sherrod told the Atlanta-Journal Constitution she was forced out of her job as the USDA's rural development director for Georgia. She said the two-minute, 38-second video posted online Monday misconstrued her message. [Link](#)

Justice Not Only Obama Department Not Equally Enforcing Law (Heritage Foundation Blog 7/20)

This morning we reviewed the still unfolding New Black Panther Party scandal at the Department of Justice where a whistle blower, testifying under oath, quoted Deputy Assistant Attorney General Julie Fernandes as saying that "the Voting Section will never or will not, at least while she is there, bring any more cases against blacks or other national minorities." In other words, Fernandes has reportedly admitted that the Obama Justice Department is not enforcing the nation's civil rights law equally and in a race-neutral manner. The Obama Justice Department has refused to confirm or deny that Fernandes made this statement. Now Andrew Breitbart has unearthed a very similar statement from another Obama political

appointee, this time from the Department of Agriculture. In the video, U.S. Department of Agriculture Director of Rural Development for Georgia Shirley Sherrod tells an NAACP audience . . . First Justice. Now Agriculture. How many other Obama Department's are refusing to enforce our nation's laws equally? [Link](#)

NAACP meeting calmly listened to racist remarks from black fed official (American Thinker 7/20)

Andrew Breitbart has scored another bullseye, revealing hypocrisy of the highest order on the part of another leftist establishment organization, the NAACP. On March 27 of this year, speaking before an NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet, Shirley Sherrod, the Department of Agriculture director for the State of Georgia -- responsible for over a billion dollars a year in spending -- boasts of denying a white farmer her full efforts because of his race. The audience does not react with shock or disapproval, but rather just sits there. So much for NAACP President Ben Jealous denouncing the tea parties for tolerating racists. Only after Breitbart gave the incriminating video national exposure did the NAACP issue the obligatory denunciation, to prevent further embarrassment. But when nobody was looking, the NAACP audience was totally cool with the racism expressed by their speaker. [Link](#)

Another Win For Andrew Breitbart (National Review Blog 7/20)

The USDA official who admitted to discrimination against a white farmer, exposed in this video on Big Government, has resigned: Days after the NAACP clashed with Tea Party members over allegations of racism, a video has surfaced showing an Agriculture Department official regaling an NAACP audience with a story about how she withheld help to a white farmer facing bankruptcy -- video that now has forced the official to resign. Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, is shown in the clip describing "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." Sherrod, who is black, claimed the farmer took a long time trying to show he was "superior" to her. The audience laughed as she described how she determined his fate. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Comments Results in Resignation (Lalate Blog 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod has resigned following her comments about a white farmer. Shirley Sherrod's remarks appeared in a video from BigGovernment.com, dated by the website as March 27. Shirley Sherrod has been the USDA's Georgia director of Rural Development. In the video, Sherrod addresses an NAACP banquet stating "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land -- so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough". Late Monday the USDA announced Sherrod had resigned. NAACP President and CEO Benjamin Todd Jealous issued a statement against Sherrod's comments. [Link](#)

USDA's Shirley Sherrod Disputes Clip of 'Racist' NAACP Banquet Comments (Mediaite 7/20)

In the latest in a series of racially-charged summer shark-week stories, USDA official Shirley Sherrod has resigned over a Breitbart-promoted YouTube clip that shows a portion of her March 27 speech at an NAACP banquet. In the clip, Sherrod talks about resenting a white farmer's condescending attitude, and as a result, not giving him "the full force of what I could do." The NAACP and the Secretary of Agriculture have weighed in, but there may be more to this story than meets YouTube's 2-minute eye. [Link](#)

USDA Official Resigns After Racial Comments Surface; NAACP Calls Comments "Shameful" (Mediaite 7/20)

An edited two-minute clip of an African American United States Department of Agriculture official has brought about her resignation after BigGovernment.com published it yesterday. Shirley Sherrod has resigned, the NAACP has condemned her "shameful" comments about withholding help for a white farmer and Sherrod has said she was taken out of context. In the video clip, put out by Andrew Breitbart's site and a speech she gave at a March NAACP banquet, she describes an interaction with a white farmer... [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod of USDA resigns (Buzz Tab 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod, USDA's black employee has resigned from her post on Monday in the wake of outburst of a video at conservative media outlets in which Shirley Sherrod is shown telling one of the audience that she had not given a white farmer the full force of what I could do to help him save his family farm. Tom Vilsack, the Agriculture Secretary said that he had accepted Shirley Sherrod's resignation. Shirley Sherrod was working as USDA's State Director of Rural Development for Georgia. Agriculture Secretary Tom

Vilsack said he had accepted the resignation of Shirley Sherrod, the department's state director of rural development for Georgia. Tom Vilsack further added that in USDA, they are following a zero tolerance for discrimination. He said that being Secretary Agriculture he condemns any discriminatory act against any person. He further added that at USDA, they are working hard for past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history and they are taking fairness and equality as a serious matter at USDA. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Has Officially Resigned From Her Job Due To Racial Preference! (Moms Word Blog 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod, who is known as a USDA official in Georgia, has finally resigned after publicly admitting that race played a factor in her decision to limit how much aid would be given to a white farmer. Sherrod, who is African American, made the comments during an NAACP banquet on March 27, according to the information in the video above. In fact a clip of her speech was being aired on BigGovernment.com and also Fox News Monday morning. Sherrod said during the now famous speech about the first time she was "faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." She claims that during the conversation, the man "was trying to show me he was superior to me." "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland," Sherrod told the crowd. "And here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land." [Link](#)

*Sarah Misailidis
Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
(202) 720-4691
Sarah.Misailidis@oc.usda.gov*

Jett, Carole

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:44 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Cc: DeJong, Justin; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole
Subject: RE: CNN NewsroomAM w/Tony Harris...

Will pass on to press shop. Thanks

From: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:41 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole
Subject: FW: CNN NewsroomAM w/Tony Harris...

Chris, is this program on the list to receive a call from OC?

From: Durham, Diane [mailto:Exs (b)(6)]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:33 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: CNN NewsroomAM w/Tony Harris...

Ms. Cook, CNN NewsroomAM w/Tony Harris is requesting a live interview as soon as possible with you regarding Shirley Sherrod's dismissal. Please call me so we might discuss the possibility of this interview. Thank you.

Diane Durham
Editorial Producer/NewsroomAM
404-827-4102

Exs (b)(6) cell

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Diane Durham
Editorial Producer/NewsroomAM
404-827-4102

Exs (b)(6) cell

Jett, Carole

From: The Office of the Secretary
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:14 PM
To: ALL-USDA-2K
Subject: Message from Secretary Vilsack

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250**

Dear employee:

Some of you may have seen the news stories about USDA today. I want to reiterate my commitment and that of the leadership at USDA to civil rights. We all must work to ensure that we are treating our customers and employees equally and fairly and we all should have zero tolerance for discrimination.

I also want to remind all of you that you have a unique and important individual responsibility to represent this sentiment in your official actions, statements, and public presentations. We are lucky to have the opportunity to work for the American people and we owe it to them to instill confidence in our leadership. Our words and actions matter.

We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and I thank you for your service and efforts to achieve this goal,

Secretary Vilsack

Jett, Carole

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:52 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: Re: If we need to talk

Ok he is still on with Chris

----- Original Message -----

From: Jett, Carole
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 12:49:33 2010
Subject: If we need to talk

We are all in John's office - mather, me, washo, berge Carole Jett Deputy Chief of Staff USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:46 PM
To: Fromstein, Charles; Jett, Carole
Subject: On phone with CL now

Jett, Carole

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:41 PM
To: Fromstein, Charles; Jett, Carole
Subject: Re: heads up

Just called and Chris Lu is calling back

From: Fromstein, Charles
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 12:38:14 2010
Subject: RE: heads up
K. Change of phone number:

Have him call **Exemption (b)(6)** In case that doesn't work, Chris' s cell phone is **Exemption (b)(6)**

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:34 PM
To: Fromstein, Charles
Subject: Re: heads up

Yes let him know in 10 min

From: Fromstein, Charles
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 12:28:57 2010
Subject: heads up

Chris Lu from the White House is trying to get in touch with the Secretary. I think Chris has been trying the Secretary's cell phone. If they don't connect soon, can you help with the connection?

Chris's phone number is **Exemption (b)(6)** thanks.

Jett, Carole

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:35 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Subject: NPR All Things Considered (Chelsea Jone): Interview with Secretary on Shirly Sherrod Video

Just making sure the rest of the group saw this request for an interview with the Secretary

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Exemption (b)(6)

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:25 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Cc: Mather, Chris
Subject: Fw: All Things Considered interview with Secretary Vilsack?

From: CJones@npr.org
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 12:19:58 2010
Subject: All Things Considered interview with Secretary Vilsack?
Hi Justin,

Chelsea Jones here from NPR's *All Things Considered*...we're interested in an interview with the Secretary today about the Shirley Sherrod/NAACP video. Is he commenting at all on this? If so, let me know.

Thanks so much,

Chelsea

NPR | Chelsea Jones | *All Things Considered* | cjones@npr.org | 202 513 2108

Jett, Carole

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:31 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Subject: FOX (Abigail Emerson, 1 p.m.): Duties of Georgia State Director

FYI- they are requesting information on the specific duties of the GA state director.

FOX: Abigail Emerson
Abigail.emerson@foxnews.com
212-301-5520

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Exemption (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: Fromstein, Charles
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:31 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: heads up

Christopher Lu from the White House is trying to get a hold of the Secretary to talk about what is going on. Thought you should know.

Jett, Carole

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:24 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Subject: CNN Campbell Brown (Allison Gilbert): Interview request for Secretary tonight re: Shirley Sherrod

FYI- CNN is requesting a live interview with Secretary Vilsack tonight at 8 p.m. for the Campbell Brown show (it's one of her last shows).

CNN: Allison Gilbert
212-275-8080
Allison.gilbert@turner.com

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Exemption (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: Lu, Christopher P. [Christopher_P._Lu@who.eop.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:12 PM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole
Cc: Greenawalt, Andrei M.
Subject: Ignore my emails

Valerie Green is running point on this issue. No need to call me.

Jett, Carole

From: Bates, Andrew J. [Andrew_J_Bates@who.eop.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:11 PM
To: Misailidis, Sarah; Gavin, Tom; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Justin, DeJong; Chan, Stephanie; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen - ChiefOfStaff
Subject: RE: Rural Development summary clips
Attachments: image001.jpg

AP Update

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5hvdRMs5hKNrXK9GHagILBpYrD8AD9H2SEJO0>

USDA worker quits over racism charge from video
By BEN EVANS and MARY CLARE JALONICK (AP)

WASHINGTON — A black employee who resigned from the Agriculture Department over comments at a Georgia NAACP meeting said Tuesday the White House forced her out of her job over a manufactured racial controversy.

Shirley Sherrod said she was on the road Monday after an event in rural Georgia when USDA deputy undersecretary Cheryl Cook called her and told her the White House wanted her to resign. "They called me twice," Sherrod told The Associated Press in an interview. "The last time they asked me to pull over the side of the road and submit my resignation on my Blackberry, and that's what I did."

The controversy began Monday when the conservative website biggovernment.com posted a two-minute, 38-second video clip of Sherrod's remarks to a local NAACP chapter.

In the video, she says the first time a white farmer came in for help, he was acting "superior" to her and that she struggled to decide how much help to provide him when so many black farmers were struggling. She said she didn't give him the full force of help she could have, but gave him enough.

The website called it proof that the NAACP — which recently accused the Tea Party of including racist elements — condones racism.

Sherrod said her comments to the local NAACP group that she withheld support some 24 years ago from a farmer because he was white are really part of a story of racial reconciliation. She said she ultimately became friends with the farmer and worked closely with him for two years to keep him from losing his farm. At the time, she worked for a nonprofit farm aid group.

"My point in telling that story is that working with him helped me to see that it wasn't just a black and white issue," she told The AP. "It was about those who have and those who do not. That's why I take the time to tell that story is to tell people we need to get beyond it and work together."

Hours after her resignation, Sherrod accused administration officials of lacking backbone. A USDA spokesman would not comment on whether the White House was involved.

Secretary Tom Vilsack issued a statement saying the agency has no tolerance for discrimination.

"We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously," the statement said.

National NAACP President Benjamin Todd Jealous issued a statement Monday night — before Sherrod's explanation — supporting the resignation. Jealous said the group opposes racism of all kinds.

"According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race," she said. "We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers."

From: Bates, Andrew J.

Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:52 AM

To: Misailidis, Sarah; Gavin, Tom; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Justin, DeJong; Chan, Stephanie

Cc: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

Subject: RE: Rural Development summary clips

Full rough transcript & video

<http://www.shadowtv.com/redirect/notification.jsp?vid=f9a43c4a2746dbe5d8a2c6ec2d76317d>

<http://www.shadowtv.com/redirect/notification.jsp?vid=36ced10c7e8095c5487cf1bbc27393a5>

<http://www.shadowtv.com/redirect/notification.jsp?vid=d329d73be7f05d01ba585c41238d2a6b>

<http://www.shadowtv.com/redirect/notification.jsp?vid=d294212084d738d6e41147e2f150d8d4>

TONY HARRIS: And Shirley Sherrod is with me now from Albany, Georgia. And, Shirley, let's take our time and walk through this together. Is that okay with you?

SHIRLEY SHERROD: Yes.

HARRIS: Okay. Shirley, just a straightforward, fundamental question here. Did you discriminate against this white farmer, Roger Spooner? He was facing foreclosure 24 years ago and, again, this was before you were working for the United States Department of Agriculture. Did you discriminate against him?

SHERROD: No, I did not discriminate against him. And, in fact, I went all out. I had to frantically look for a lawyer at the last minute because the first lawyer we went to was not doing anything to really help him. In fact, that lawyer suggested they should just let the farm go. All of that process – that's why I tell it, because everything that happened in dealing with him – he was the first white farmer that had come to me for help. Everything that I did working with him helped me to see that it wasn't about race. It's about those who have and those who don't. The farmer's home had done something to him that I hadn't seen them do to any black farmer. They had actually rented his land to someone else, when they didn't have a right to do that. He still had title to the land. That's why he couldn't qualify to file chapter 12 bankruptcy. That's why in the end we had to try to file chapter 11 bankruptcy to stop the forced sale the first Tuesday in June.

HARRIS: I'm going to ask it again slightly differently. Did you discriminate against this white farmer 24 years ago, when you were, I guess, about 38 years old, because he brought you what you described in your March NAACP Speech as a "superior attitude?"

SHERROD: You know, initially – and that's why I say that. I took the time to weave what was happening there. He did come with a superior attitude, but I didn't discriminate. If I had discriminated against him, I would not have given him any help at all because I wasn't obligated by anyone. I wasn't working for the government. I didn't have to help him, but I did. And I went on – that was the first white farmer I helped. I went on to help hundreds of others through the years.

HARRIS: Was your -- I'm trying to understand your reaction to what you described as a "superior attitude." Was your reaction, perhaps, "Look, why are you taking this attitude with me? I sit here in a position to help you, and yet you bring this attitude to me." Did that cross your mind at all and did you act upon those feelings?

SHERROD: Certainly, I didn't act upon it. You know, I'm from the South. I've lived in the South all my life, and I know how black people were treated by white people during those years. My own father was murdered by one. But I didn't let

that get in the way of trying to help. I don't know why it's so difficult to see. I didn't have to help that farmer. I could have sent him out the door without giving him any help at all. But in the end we became very good friends, and that friendship lasted for some years.

HARRIS: Explain the statement in the recording that goes, "So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do."

SHERROD: You know, I could have tried to rally other farmers in support of him. I didn't know of any black farmers who would come out to try to support a white farmer at that point. That's something I could have done for black farmers. This was my first time trying to help a white farmer save his land. I wasn't really sure what I could do, because I thought at that time they had the advantages. I learned that that was not the case in working with this farmer.

HARRIS: And then you went on to say, "I did enough." What was "enough" in the case of Roger Spooner?

SHERROD: I took him -- you mean initially? I took him to a lawyer who had attended some training for lawyers on chapter 12 bankruptcy. But in the end, that lawyer wasn't doing anything. And when the Spooners said that he wasn't, I jumped into action. It took me a couple of hours calling everyone I knew. I even called to other states trying to find a lawyer who would file a chapter 11 bankruptcy to stop the sale of his land at the courthouse steps. I was successful in the end.

HARRIS: During your time with the USDA was there ever a discrimination claim filed against you?

SHERROD: No, never. I went out of my way to -- you know, and we didn't work directly with farmers at Rural Development. We were working with cities, with sewer problems, with police cars, with health centers, with housing. That agency is the one agency, so we say, that could build a city. I didn't do any work -- and I didn't discriminate and I went out of my way to make sure no one who came to the agency was discriminated against. And, in fact, during my tenure there, I targeted nine of the poorest counties in the state to do outreach work. I had outreach meetings in all of those counties. I even started working with other USDA agencies and state agencies so that we could coordinate our efforts in these areas, and, in fact, this coming Thursday was the first meeting where we were going to pilot that, and that was in a county here in southwest Georgia, Calhoun county.

HARRIS: So, Shirley, if you didn't discriminate during your time at USDA and at least no one filed such a claim, do you accept the statement from agriculture secretary Tom Vilsack that there is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA?

SHERROD: I don't know, but I'm assuming there is. I know I didn't discriminate, and I made it very clear to the staff there at USDA that it wouldn't be tolerated during my tenure. I said it over and over again.

HARRIS: So why are you out?

SHERROD: Pardon?

HARRIS: Why are you out?

SHERROD: Why am I out? They asked me to resign, and, in fact, they harassed me as I was driving back to the state office from west point, Georgia yesterday. I had at least three calls telling me the White House wanted me to resign.

HARRIS: So the pressure came from the White House?

SHERROD: And the last one asked me to pull over to the side of the road and do it.

HARRIS: Are you willing to name names?

SHERROD: That's what I did.

HARRIS: Are you willing to name names.

SHERROD: That was Cheryl cook, the deputy undersecretary. She called me and I said, Cheryl, I have a 3 1/2 hour ride to get into Athens. She called me a second time, where are you now? I said I'm just going through Atlanta. She call me again and I said, I'm at least 45 minutes to an hour from Athens. She said, well, Shirley, they want you to pull over to the side of the road and do it because you're going to be on Glenn Beck tonight.

HARRIS: Wow. So the administration pressured you out?

SHERROD: Yes.

HARRIS: How do you feel about that?

SHERROD: I don't feel good about it because I know I didn't do anything wrong, and I know during my time at USDA I gave it all I had. I worked when I didn't feel like it. I pushed the staff to get out there in places they had not been into before. Like I said, the nine counties I targeted, I asked them shortly after getting there, tell me what rural development has been doing in these areas, and when they did that, there were zeros in a lot of places, and I knew this was an area where we needed to target. We needed to get programs out into some of these areas that need it, just like some other areas that had gotten the funding over and over again.

HARRIS: I So I want to be really specific here and I apologize. I just have to do it. You get, one, two, three calls from miss cook, and at the point that it is made clear to you that you need to go, how does that conversation go?

SHERROD: Yes.

HARRIS: What is said to you?

SHERROD: The very first one -- I guess there were like four calls because the very first one was before I got in my car to go to Athens. She said I was being put on administrative leave. The next call after I sat waiting and waiting because she told me she would call me right back, the next call said that they're going to have to ask me to resign.

HARRIS: Do you feel as though you had an opportunity to state your side of the story?

SHERROD: No, I didn't. The administration, they were not interested in hearing the truth. No one wanted to hear the truth.

HARRIS: The NAACP released a statement late last night saying in part we are appalled by her actions. That is an opportunity to explain what happened 24 years ago. Do you feel as though you got the opportunity, even in a phone call with the NAACP?

SHERROD: No, I didn't. The NAACP has not tried to contact me one time, and they are the reason why this happened they got into a fight with the tea party, and all of this came out as a result of that.

HARRIS: Your reaction --

SHERROD: I would have appreciated -- when you look at my history of civil rights, I would have appreciated having the NAACP at least contact me and Roland martin, too, contact me to try to get the truth about what happened.

HARRIS: The reaction to your reaction to essentially being condemned by the NAACP?

SHERROD: That hurts. Because if you look at my history, that's what I'm saying -- I've done more to advance the causes of civil rights in this area than some of them who are sitting in those positions now with the NAACP. They need to learn something about me. Ey need to know about my work. They need to know what I've contributed through the years.

HARRIS: What was the point of the story you were telling to the NAACP in March? What was the point?

SHERROD: The point was to get them to understand we need to look beyond race; to look at working together. I've said to audiences here, not just that one – in fact, I spoke at a housing conference in a county just south of here, and I said, look, we need to get beyond the Civil War. I tell them, there are good things about history from the white side and good things about history and culture from the black side. People love to come into this part of the state to see that. I tell them, we need to make the most of it, and if we work together, can do that.

HARRIS: Do you believe as a principle – do you believe black people in power can make or have the ability – can make race-based discriminatory decisions?

SHERROD: I'm sure that can happen. I can tell you I didn't do it.

HARRIS: Okay, that was my follow-up.

SHERROD: And you could go to any of the communities that I worked with and if the staff were free to tell you, you could talk to any of the people I've worked with since I've been at USDA, and they can tell you what my record is.

HARRIS: Shirley, stay right there. I have someone who wants to speak to this whole controversy. Her name is Eloise Spooner. She is Roger Spooner's wife – widow this point.

SHERROD: Yes.

HARRIS: Widow at this point.

SHERROD: Yes.

HARRIS: Eloise, thanks for taking the time to talk to me.

ELOISE SPOONER: Thank you.

HARRIS: What do you think of this whole controversy? First of all, what do you think of Shirley?

SPOONER: She's a good friend.

HARRIS: Describe your relationship with her through the years.

SPOONER: She helped us save our farm.

How did she do that?

SPOONER: By getting in there and doing all she could do to help us.

What did your husband, your late husband, think of Shirley?

SPOONER: He's not dead. He's very much alive.

HARRIS: Really?

SPOONER: He's 87 and he's on his peterbuilt truck this morning.

HARRIS: Then I apologize. I've got incorrect information from one of the newspapers writing on this. I apologize for that.

SPOONER: That's okay.

HARRIS: Is he aware of the controversy swirling around?

SPOONER: Yes, our son, he came up and said, mama, turn on the TV to CNN and he said, it's about your friend Shirley Sherrod. And I said, what. I listened and said, that's not right. They have not treated her right because she's the one that I give credit for helping us save our farm.

HARRIS: Some of the story is that you met in the '80s, and it was a bad time?

SPOONER: Mm-hmm.

HARRIS: It was a bad time in the family's life at the time. Tell me why you were in trouble with the farm.

SPOONER: Well, we had a lot of dry weather, and we had to run the irrigation a lot. And when you'd make a good crop, you wouldn't get a good price. And just a number of things together caused it.

HARRIS: Do you remember your first interaction with Shirley?

SPOONER: Yeah. At first I looked into -- it was the market bulletin from Atlanta that we get. We've gotten it for years and years and years, and it said, if you were having trouble and about to lose your farm torque get with them. And I said, by George, I'm going to try that. And so I did, and he told us to go see a lawyer in Cairo. He said, you all might as well just go ahead and do what Diane said to do. And I was so mad when we came home. So, anyway, a few weeks later, the guy from Atlanta, the Market Bulletin, he said, what happened over in Cairo? And I said, exactly nothing. He didn't help us at all. He said, well, I'm going to get you with somebody that will help you, I think. And that's when he told us to call Shirley. And we did, and we started right then. She said there's too lawyers, there's a black lawyer and there's a white lawyer, and one -- the black lawyer is in Albany and the white lawyer is in [inaudible]. So I said, he's closer, so maybe we'll try him, the black one. We went through him for months and months and months and paid him some money, which was hard to scrape up. And he finally got with the lawyer in Donaldsonville that I had talked to, and he called and told me at the lawyer in Albany, called and told me that he could not handle us anymore, that he had this client that he had had for ten years, and he was going to have to spend a lot of time on that. He couldn't help us.

HARRIS: Hey, Eloise, a couple of quick questions here about this relationship.

SPOONER: Okay.

HARRIS: I'm just trying to establish this relationship. Explain to me -- I have a line here that says that you guys picked a bunch of tomatoes?

SPOONER: Yeah. One year, after things kind of settled down, I had a really pretty garden that year, and we going up to Albany for some reason, so I told Roger I was going to pick Shirley some tomatoes. And I did, and we carried them by to her and had a good visit.

HARRIS: You know, what do you think of the statement that's on the tape. It's undeniable, it is there, where Shirley essentially says, so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do.

SPOONER: Well, she gave enough that it helped us save our farm. And she went two trips -- after the lawyer in Albany did us like he did, well, then I called Shirley and told her, and she said, you're kidding me. I said, no, I'm not. That's the words she told me. She said, well, do you want us to try the one in Easterland? I said, yes, get us an appointment and we'll be ready to go.

HARRIS: Eloise, thank you for your time.

SHERROD: Please tell her want -- can you -- I don't know that she can hear me, but I haven't talked to here in years, and I'm so happy to hear that both of them are still living. And Miss Spooner, I definitely want to contact you. It's great to hear.

SPOONER: When we heard about it we tried to call you, but Roger couldn't get ahold of you.

SHERROD: Okay. Maybe you can get him.

Office of Communications (202) 720-4623

USDA Clips

Tuesday, July 20, 2010

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Rural Development clips

USDA worker quits over racism charge from video (AP 7/20)

A black federal worker has resigned from a Georgia agricultural job after a video clip showed her saying she had not helped a farmer as much as she could have because he was white. U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a statement Tuesday he had accepted the resignation of Shirley Sherrod. Vilsack says the USDA has no tolerance for discrimination. Sherrod told the Atlanta-Journal Constitution she was forced out of her job as the USDA's rural development director for Georgia. She said the two-minute, 38-second video posted online Monday misconstrued her message. Sherrod's taped remarks were from a local meeting of the civil rights group NAACP. National NAACP President Benjamin Todd Jealous welcomed the resignation because the group opposes racism of all kinds. [Link](#)

Dismissed employee blames media (UPI 7/20)

An employee of the U.S. Department of Agriculture says she lost her job because the media misconstrued a speech she gave at an NAACP banquet. Shirley Sherrod, who was forced out as the USDA's rural development director for Georgia, is seen on a video admitting she didn't do everything she could to help a white farmer who needed aid, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported Tuesday. What the media didn't report, Sherrod says, was that the incident she was relating on the video happened 24 years ago when she was working for another organization, not the federal government. Also left out, Sherrod says, is the part where she says she was trying to figure out how to help someone who was condescending. [Link](#)

USDA employee says statements on white farmer misconstrued (CNN 7/20)

A black Agriculture Department employee who resigned after a video clip showed her talking about a white farmer said Tuesday her remarks were taken out of context. Shirley Sherrod, the department's former state director of rural development for Georgia, told CNN on Tuesday the incident she discusses in the clip

took place more than two decades ago -- and she recounted it to an audience to make the point that people should move beyond race. "I was speaking to that group, like I've done many groups, and I tell them about a time when I thought the issue was race and race only," Sherrod told CNN's "American Morning" from her home in Albany, Georgia. The incident took place in 1986, while she worked for a nonprofit and before she worked for the USDA, she said. "I was telling the story of how working with him helped me to see the issue is not about race. It's about those who have versus those who do not have." [Link](#)

Race remarks cost USDA official her job (CNN Blog 7/20)

An African-American Agriculture Department worker resigns over her handling of a white Georgia farmer's case when she worked for a nonprofit group in 1986. It came to light when Shirley Sherrod talked about the case at an NAACP banquet earlier this year. Were her remarks a teaching moment that backfired, or evidence of racism? Sherrod says her comments were taken out of context -- that the point of her story was to unite people. Tony Harris will be talking to Sherrod at 11:00am ET on CNN, and we'll post that interview here. Watch some of her speech and phone interview with CNN's American Morning below, then tell us what you think. We'll share some of your comments on air in the CNN Newsroom, 11:00am - 1:00pm ET. [Link](#)

Video Shows USDA Official Saying She Didn't Give 'Full Force' of Help to White Farmer (FOX News 7/20)

Days after the NAACP clashed with Tea Party members over allegations of racism, a video has surfaced showing an Agriculture Department official regaling an NAACP audience with a story about how she withheld help to a white farmer facing bankruptcy -- video that now has forced the official to resign. Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, is shown in the clip describing "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." Sherrod, who is black, claimed the farmer took a long time trying to show he was "superior" to her. The audience laughed as she described how she determined his fate... "There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person," Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a written statement. "We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously." [Link](#)

Gingrich Responds to Discrimination at USDA (Fox News 7/20)

SEAN HANNITY, HOST: And this is a Fox News alert. An Obama administration official resigned just a short time ago after she was caught on tape appearing to tell an audience that she had used her position to racially discriminate against white farmers. Now the woman, Shirley Sherrod, was the Georgia state director at the Department of Agricultural. Now the president's Agricultural Secretary Tom Vilsack just released a statement saying the USDA has a zero tolerance policy against discrimination. Here's part of the shocking video that ignited this controversy. (BEGIN VIDEO CLIP) SHIRLEY SHERROD, FORMER USDA GA STATE DIRECTOR: The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking but he was trying to show me he was superior to me. I know what he was doing. But he had come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him. [Request Story](#)

Black USDA official resigns after admitting she only 'did enough' for white farmer (MSNBC 7/20)

A black USDA official in Georgia has resigned after publicly admitting she didn't help a white man trying to save his farm to the "full force" of her power and instead referred him to "one of his own." Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said he had accepted Shirley Sherrod's resignation, saying there was "zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA." The NAACP, which recently condemned racism in tea party groups, also issued a statement Monday night saying: "Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race." [Link](#)

Morning Joe (MSNBC 7/20)

Well, another story of reverse discrimination comes out today. This one is really interesting. I'm thinking that this woman regrets this comment. A USDA official in Georgia has resigned after a YouTube clip shows her admitting that race helped determine how much aid would be given to a white farmer. You're not supposed to do that, are you? I mean, I'm not -- it's probably not a good idea for being so stupid. It's not

even -- well, how about you just don't do it. Anyway, the state's director of rural development apparently made the comments during an NAACP banquet in March. Take a listen. The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking, but he was trying to show me he was superior to me. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time to show me he was superior to me was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him. I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So, I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. [Request Story](#)

Shirley Sherrod Resigns Over USDA Race Remark Furor (CBS News 7/20)

A high-ranking black employee of the U.S. Department of Agriculture has resigned after remarks she made about race were distributed by conservative web sites and aired on Fox News. A video clip of Shirley Sherrod, the USDA's Georgia State Director of Rural Development, was circulated by conservative blogger Andrew Breitbart and his site, [biggovernment.com](#), in which Sherrod talked of withholding help to a white man facing the loss of his family farm. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack released a statement Tuesday saying he had accepted Sherrod's resignation, and added that the department has no tolerance for discrimination. [Link](#)

USDA worker quits over 1986 racial incident (The Washington Post 7/20)

A U.S. Agriculture Department official from Georgia resigned late Monday after she was caught on tape admitting that she had not helped a farmer as much as she could have because he was white. Shirley Sherrod, USDA state director of rural development, made the remarks on March 27 at an NAACP Freedom Fund banquet. Her videotaped remarks surfaced on YouTube on Monday. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack accepted Sherrod's resignation, saying, "There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously." NAACP President and Benjamin Jealous called Sherrod's actions shameful and agreed with the decision to fire her. [Link](#)

In the curious case of Shirley Sherrod, let's see the whole tape (Atlanta Journal Constitution 7/20)

A couple of folks in comments yesterday brought up the case of USDA official Shirley Sherrod, a black woman caught on tape at an NAACP meeting here in Georgia apparently bragging about being less than diligent in helping a white farmer. The folks at Big Government posted a portion of her speech as part of the running feud between the NAACP and the Tea Party over which organization is more racist. By the end of the day Monday, Sherrod had been forced to resign her post, and NAACP President Ben Jealous had released a statement agreeing with the forced resignation: "Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race. [Link](#)

Resigned USDA official says racial story misconstrued (Atlanta Journal Constitution 7/20)

The USDA's rural development director for Georgia says she was forced out of her federally appointed job after a "snippet" of a speech she gave in March appeared to show her admission to only half-heartedly aiding a struggling white farmer because of his race. But in a phone interview from her home in Albany early Tuesday morning, Shirley Sherrod told the Atlanta-Journal Constitution that the two-minute, 38-second video posted online Monday by [biggovernment.com](#) and reported on by [FoxNews.com](#) and the AJC completely misconstrued the message she was trying to convey. Sherrod, 62, insisted her statements in the video were not racist. "For Fox to take a spin on this like they have done, and know it's not the truth ... it's very upsetting," she said. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Resigns USDA Job After Admitting Use Of Racial Preference During NAACP Banquet (VIDEO) (The Huffington Post 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod, who resigned Monday from the USDA. 756 Shirley Sherrod, a USDA official in Georgia, has resigned after publicly admitting that race played a factor in her decision to limit how much aid would be given to a white farmer. Sherrod, who is African American, made the comments during a local NAACP banquet on March 27, according to information displayed on the video. A clip of her speech first appeared Monday morning on [BigGovernment.com](#) and aired that evening on Fox News. Her resignation as the agency's state director of rural development was quickly accepted by U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. He cited a zero-tolerance policy and told CNN that he was working to "reverse the checkered civil

rights history at the department." In her controversial speech, Sherrod discussed the first time she was "faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." She claimed that during the conversation, the man "was trying to show me he was superior to me." [Link](#)

NAACP Slams Shirley Sherrod's Actions As 'Shameful' (My Fox New York 7/20)

The actions of a black U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) official who admitted withholding help to a white farmer facing bankruptcy were late Monday described as "shameful" by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, was exposed in a video recorded at an NAACP banquet describing "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." Sherrod claimed the farmer took a long time trying to show he was "superior" to her. "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land -- so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough," she said in the video. The Agriculture Department announced Monday, shortly after FOXNews.com published its initial report on the video, that Sherrod had resigned. [Link](#)

Ga. USDA Official Resigns Over Comments (My Fox Atlanta 7/19)

Racially charged comments have led to the abrupt resignation of an agriculture department official. Shirley Sherrod was the top official who oversaw rural development in the state of Georgia. According to FOX News, Sherrod, the director of the USDA's rural development agency, resigned over comments she made at an NAACP meeting. FOX News obtained taped comments from an NAACP meeting that took place in Douglas, Georgia in March. According to FOX News, Sherrod is seen talking about how she withheld help to a white farmer who was facing bankruptcy. "I didn't give him the full force of what I could do, I did enough," Sherrod said during the meeting. In the video, Sherrod said she was struggling with the fact so many black people have lost their farmland and she was faced with having to help a white person save their land. Sherrod said she took him to see a white lawyer. "I figured if I took him to one of them his own kind, [they] would take care of him," said Sherrod. According to FOX News, the agriculture department announced Monday that Sherrod had resigned. [Link](#)

USDA big quits in bias-boast shock (The New York Post 7/20)

A black official in the US Agriculture Department resigned yesterday after a video surfaced of her bragging to the NAACP that she didn't do everything she could to help a white farmer facing bankruptcy. Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, told the audience at a March banquet in Atlanta that she claimed the man felt "superior" to her, according to FoxNews.com. "He had come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was talking all that time, trying to show me he was superior to me, was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," Sherrod said. "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land -- so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do." "I did enough," she said. [Link](#)

NAACP 'appalled' by black USDA official's racial discrimination (Daily Caller 7/20)

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People President Benjamin Todd Jealous said late Monday he was "appalled" by the actions of U.S. Department of Agriculture official Shirley Sherrod, who resigned earlier in the day after video surfaced of her speaking at an NAACP event about discriminating against a white farmer seeking government help. Jealous also promised to look into why members of the audience at an NAACP fundraiser in Georgia this past March reacted, as shown in the video, by nodding and in some cases laughing at Sherrod's remarks. But Jealous distanced the national NAACP from the incident. Coming just days after the NAACP condemned racist elements inside the Tea Party movement, Sherrod's remarks place the storied civil rights organization in an uncomfortable position. "Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race," Jealous said. "We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers." "Her actions were shameful. While she went on to explain in the story that she ultimately realized her mistake, as well as the common predicament of working people of all races, she gave no indication she had attempted to right the wrong she had done to this man," Jealous said (read his full statement below). [Link](#)

BREAKING: Racist Obama administration member resigns (Manhattan Conservative Examiner 7/19)

Shirley Sherrod of the USDA's Georgia Rural Development office has resigned following the airing of overtly racist remarks she made in a speech before—of all organizations—the NAACP. At a local NAACP meeting in March of 2010, Sherrod boasted of withholding assistance to a farmer based on the color of his skin, which happened to be white. Sherrod (surprise!) is black. In her comments, which are captured in the video below, Sherrod freely admits to "struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land." She further confesses to abusing her position by refusing to "give him the full force of what I could do." The remarks conclude with a racist gem: "I took him to a white lawyer... I figured that if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him." [Link](#)

USDA Official Implicated in NAACP Racism Flap (Buckeye Ag Network 7/20)

Days after the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) denounced the Conservative Tea Party movement on allegations of racism, the organization was itself implicated in charges of racism involving a USDA official. In a video released at BigGovernment.com, USDA's Director of Rural Development in Georgia Shirley Sherrod was depicted acknowledging discriminating against white farmers. The video, of a speech Sherrod gave to the NAACP's Freedom Fund banquet in March of this year, stirred quite a controversy on the internet this week, forcing Sherrod's resignation from the department Monday. Sherrod's remarks in the NAACP speech indicated that she "didn't give [a white farmer] the full force of what I could do," because "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land." [Link](#)

USDA worker quits over racism charge from video (Salon 7/20)

A black federal worker has resigned from a Georgia agricultural job after a video clip showed her saying she had not helped a farmer as much as she could have because he was white. U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a statement Tuesday he had accepted the resignation of Shirley Sherrod. Vilsack says the USDA has no tolerance for discrimination. Sherrod told the Atlanta-Journal Constitution she was forced out of her job as the USDA's rural development director for Georgia. She said the two-minute, 38-second video posted online Monday misconstrued her message. [Link](#)

Justice Not Only Obama Department Not Equally Enforcing Law (Heritage Foundation Blog 7/20)

This morning we reviewed the still unfolding New Black Panther Party scandal at the Department of Justice where a whistle blower, testifying under oath, quoted Deputy Assistant Attorney General Julie Fernandes as saying that "the Voting Section will never or will not, at least while she is there, bring any more cases against blacks or other national minorities." In other words, Fernandes has reportedly admitted that the Obama Justice Department is not enforcing the nation's civil rights law equally and in a race-neutral manner. The Obama Justice Department has refused to confirm or deny that Fernandes made this statement. Now Andrew Breitbart has unearthed a very similar statement from another Obama political appointee, this time from the Department of Agriculture. In the video, U.S. Department of Agriculture Director of Rural Development for Georgia Shirley Sherrod tells an NAACP audience . . . First Justice. Now Agriculture. How many other Obama Department's are refusing to enforce our nation's laws equally? [Link](#)

NAACP meeting calmly listened to racist remarks from black fed official (American Thinker 7/20)

Andrew Breitbart has scored another bullseye, revealing hypocrisy of the highest order on the part of another leftist establishment organization, the NAACP. On March 27 of this year, speaking before an NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet, Shirley Sherrod, the Department of Agriculture director for the State of Georgia -- responsible for over a billion dollars a year in spending -- boasts of denying a white farmer her full efforts because of his race. The audience does not react with shock or disapproval, but rather just sits there. So much for NAACP President Ben Jealous denouncing the tea parties for tolerating racists. Only after Breitbart gave the incriminating video national exposure did the NAACP issue the obligatory denunciation, to prevent further embarrassment. But when nobody was looking, the NAACP audience was totally cool with the racism expressed by their speaker. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Comments Results in Resignation (Lalate Blog 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod has resigned following her comments about a white farmer. Shirley Sherrod's remarks appeared in a video from BigGovernment.com, dated by the website as March 27. Shirley Sherrod has been the USDA's Georgia director of Rural Development. In the video, Sherrod addresses an NAACP

banquet stating "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land — so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough". Late Monday the USDA announced Sherrod had resigned. NAACP President and CEO Benjamin Todd Jealous issued a statement against Sherrod's comments. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod of USDA resigns (Buzz Tab 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod, USDA's black employee has resigned from her post on Monday in the wake of outburst of a video at conservative media outlets in which Shirley Sherrod is shown telling one of the audience that she had not given a white framer the full force of what I could do to help him save his family farm. Tom Vilsack, the Agriculture Secretary said that he had accepted Shirley Sherrod's resignation. Shirley Sherrod was working as USDA's State Director of Rural Development for Georgia. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said he had accepted the resignation of Shirley Sherrod, the department's state director of rural development for Georgia. Tom Vilsack further added that in USDA, they are following a zero tolerance for discrimination. He said that being Secretary Agriculture he condemns any discriminatory act against any person. He further added that at USDA, they are working hard for past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history and they are taking fairness and equality as a serious matter at USDA. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Has Officially Resigned From Her Job Due To Racial Preference! (Moms Word Blog 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod, who is known as a USDA official in Georgia, has finally resigned after publicly admitting that race played a factor in her decision to limit how much aid would be given to a white farmer. Sherrod, who is African American, made the comments during an NAACP banquet on March 27, according to the information in the video above. In fact a clip of her speech was being aired on BigGovernment.com and also Fox News Monday morning. Sherrod said during the now famous speech about the first time she was "faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." She claims that during the conversation, the man "was trying to show me he was superior to me." "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland," Sherrod told the crowd. "And here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land." [Link](#)

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Jett, Carole

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:56 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen - ChiefOfStaff
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Misailidis, Sarah; JIC4, OC -USDA
Subject: CNN Transcript: Shirley Sherrod Interview

Thanks for Sammi for putting this together-

Station: CNN

Date: 11:01-11:29 AM

first, her comments about a white farmer cost a u.s. department of agriculture official her job, but shirley, sherrod, who is african-american says her comments were taken out of context and referred to an incident that happened 24 years ago. we will talk with shirley sherr lod and just a minute but first the comments that set off the controversy. this is the longest portion of the video we have been able to locate and it is unedited.

the first time i was faced with helping a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking, but he was trying to show me he was superior to me. i know what he was doing, but he had come to me for help. what he didn't know is while he was taking all that time trying to show me she was superior to me, i was trying to show him i was superior to him. so many black people had lost their farmland and here i was faced with having to help a white person save their land. so i didn't give him the full force of what i could do. i did enough so that when he -- i assumed the department of agriculture had sent him to me, either that or the georgia department of agriculture, and he needed to go back and floort i did try and help. so i took him to a white lawyer that we had -- that had attended some of the training that we had provided because chapter 12 bankruptcy had just been enacted for the family farmer, so i figured by taking him there, his own kind would take care of him. that's when it was revealed to me that it's about those who have versus those who don't. it's not about white and black. it opened my eyes because i took him to one of his own.

so what did she mean and what was the purpose of her comments? shirley sherrod meeting me from albany, georgia. shirley, good to see you. first of all, i'm going to dive right into this with you. the direct question is did you discriminate against his white farmer? we don't have her yet. we don't have her yet. okay. how close are we? any idea? all right. shirley was a guest on ""american morning."" here is what she had to say on that program.

you say that this was part of a story and that it was part that was spliced enough to show new a bad light, that this isn't the whole story. will you finish for us how this ended?

okay, i was speaking to that group like i do many groups, and i was telling them about a time when i thought that the issue was race and race only, and i tell them the story of how i worked with a white farmer back in 1986. i was not working for the department of agriculture. i was working with a nonprofit organization assisting farmers throughout south georgia and the southeast, and this farmer came to me for help. i was telling the story about how working with him helped me to see that the issue is not about race. it's about those who have versus those who do not have.

you said you didn't give him the full force of what you could do. you said you did enough. and then you referred to the race of the lawyer as well, saying that perhaps because the lawyer was white that he would help him. so what did you mean by that?

well, what i meant was that i didn't know anyone else. i didn't know another lawyer at that time who was local, who knew something about chapter 12, but i thought if i took him to a white lawyer, he would definitely do all that he could to help save his farm.

when the u.s. department of agriculture came to you and said you have to step down, why didn't you just say, wait a minute, you don't know the whole story? here's the full story, why should i step down?

i did say that, but they for some reason, the stuff that fox and the tea party does is scaring the administration. i told them, get the whole tape and look at the whole tape and look at how i tell people we have to get beyond race and start working together.

and shirley sherrod is with me now from albany, georgia, and, shirley, let's take our time and walk through this together. is that okay with you?

yes.

okay. shirley, just a straightforward, fundamental question here. did you discriminate against this white farmer, roger spooner? he was facing foreclosure 24 years ago and this was again before you were working for the united states department of agriculture. did you discriminate against him?

no, i did not discriminate against him. and, in fact, i went all out. i had to frantically look for a lawyer at the last minute because the first lawyer we went to was not doing anything to really help him. in fact, that lawyer suggested they should just let the farm go. all of that process -- that's why i tell it because everything that happened in dealing with him. he was the first white farmer that had come to me for help. everything that i did working with him helped me to see that it wasn't about race. it's about those who have and those who don't. the farmer's home had done something to him that i hadn't seen them do to any black farmer. they had actually rented his land to someone else when they didn't have a right to do that. he still had title to the land. that's why he couldn't qualify to file chapter 12 bankruptcy. that's why in the end we had to try to file chapter 11 bankruptcy to stop the forced sale the first tuesday in june.

i'm going to ask it again slightly differently again. did you discriminate against this white farmer 24 years ago, when you were, i guess, about 38 years old because he brought you what you described in your march naacp speech as a superior attitude?

you know, initially -- and that's why i said that. i took the time to weave what was happening there. he did come with a superior attitude, but i didn't discriminate. if i had discriminated against him, i would not have given him any help at all because i wasn't obligated to do it by anyone. i wasn't working for the government. i didn't have to help him, but i did. and i went on -- that was the first white farmer i helped. i went on to help hundreds of others through the years.

was your -- i'm trying to understand your reaction to what you described as a superior attitude. was your reaction, perhaps, look, why are you taking this attitude with me? i sit here in a position to help you, and yet you bring this attitude to me. did that cross your mind at all and did you act upon those feelings?

certainly i didn't act upon it. you know, i'm from the south. i've lived in the south all my life, and i know how black people were treated by white people during those years. my own father was murdered by one. i didn't let that get in the way of trying to help. i don't know why it's so difficult to see. i didn't have to help that farmer. i could have sent him out the door without giving him any help at all. but in the end, we became very good friends. and that friendship lasted for some years.

explain the statement in the recording that goes -- so i didn't give him the full force of what i could do.

you know, i could have tried to rally other farmers in support of him. i didn't know of any black farmers who would come out to try to support a white farmer at that point. that's something i could have done for a black farmer. i didn't know -- this was my first time dealing with trying to help save a -- help a white farmer save his land. i wasn't really sure of what i could do because at that time, i thought they had the advantages. i learned that that was not the case in working with this farmer.

and then you went on say, i did enough. what was enough in the case of roger spooner?

i took it to someone -- i took him -- you mean initially? i took him to a lawyer who had attended some training for lawyers on chapter 12 bankruptcy. but in the end, that lawyer wasn't doing anything, and when the spooners called me and said he wasn't, then i jumped into action. it took me a couple of hours calling everyone i knew. i even called to other states trying to find a lawyer who would file a chapter 11 bankruptcy to stop the sale of his land at the courthouse steps. i was successful in the end.

during your time with the USDA was there ever a discrimination claim filed against you?

no. never. i went out of my way to -- you know, we didn't work directly with farmers at rural development. we were working with cities, with sewer problems, with police cars, with health centers, with housing. that agency is the one agency, so we say, that could build a city. i didn't do any work -- and i didn't discriminate and i went out of my way to make sure no one who came to the agency was discriminated against. and, in fact, during my tenure there, i targeted nine of the poorest counties in the state to do outreach work. i had outreach meetings in all of those counties. i even started working with other USDA agencies and state agencies so that we could coordinate our efforts in these areas, and, in fact, this coming thursday was the first meeting where we were going to pilot that, and that was in a county here in southwest georgia, calhoun county.

so, shirley, if you didn't discriminate during your time at USDA and at least no one filed such a claim, do you accept the statement from agriculture secretary tom vilsack that there is zero tolerance for dis discrimination at USDA?

i don't know, but i'm assuming there is. i know i didn't discriminate, and i made it very clear to the staff there at USDA that it wouldn't be tolerated during my tenure. i said it over and over again.

so why are you out?

pardon?

why are you out?

why am i out? they asked me to resign, and, in fact, they harassed me as i was driving back to the state office from west point, georgia yesterday. i had at least three calls telling me the white house wanted me to resign.

so the pressure came from the white house?

and the last one asked me to pull over to the side of the road and do it.

are you withing to name names?

that's what i did.

are you willing to name name ys.

that was cheryl cook, the deputy undersecretary. she called me and i said, cheryl, i have a 3 1/2 hour ride to get into athens. she called me a second time, where are you now? i said i'm just going through atlanta. she call me again and i said, i'm at least 45 minutes to an hour from athens. she said, well, shirley, they want you to pull over to the side of the road and do it because you're going to be on glen beck tonight.

wow. so the administration pressured you out?

yes.

how do you feel about that?

i don't feel good about it because i know i didn't do anything wrong, and i know during my time at USDA i gave it all i had. i worked when i didn't feel like it. i pushed the staff to get out there in places they had not been into before. like i said, the nine counties i targeted, i asked them shortly after getting there, tell me what rural development has been doing in these areas, and when they did that, there were zeros in a lot of places, and i knew this was an area where we needed to target. we needed to get programs out into some of these areas that need it, just like some other areas that had gotten the funding over and over again.

so i want to be really specific here and i apologize. i just have to do it. you get, one, two, three calls from miss cook, and at the point that you have the conversation, that it is made clear to you that you need to go, how does that conversation go?

yes.

what is said to you?

the very first one -- i guess there were like four calls because the very first one was before i got in my car to go to athens. she said i was being put on administrative leave. the next call after i sat waiting and waiting because she told me she would call me right back,

the next call said that they're going to have to ask me to resign.

do you feel as though you had an opportunity to state your side of the story?

no, i didn't. the administration, they were not interested in hearing the truth. no one wanted to hear the truth.

the naacp released a statement late last night saying in part we are appalled by her actions. that is an opportunity to explain what happened 24 years ago. do you feel as though you got that opportunity, even in a phone call with the naacp?

no, i didn't. the naacp has not tried to contact me one time, and they are the reason why this happened. they got into a fight with the tea party, and all of this came out as a result of that.

your reaction --

i would have appreciated -- when you look at my history of civil rights, i would have appreciated having the naacp at least contact me and roland martin, too, contact me to try to get the truth about what happened.

the reaction to your reaction to essentially being condemned by the naacp?

that hurts. because if you look at my history, that's what i'm saying -- i've done more to advance the causes of civil rights in this area than some of them who are sitting in those positions now with the naacp. they need to learn something about me. they need to know about my work. they need to know what i've contributed through the years.

what was the point of the story you were telling to the naacp in march? what was the point?

the point was to get them to understand we need to look beyond race. to look at working together. i've said to audiences here, not just that one -- in fact, i spoke at a housing conference in a county just south of here, and i said, look, we need to get beyond the civil war. i tell them, there are good things about history from the white side and good things about history and culture from the black side. people love to come into this part of the state to see that. i tell them, we need to make the most of it, and if we work together, we can do that.

do you believe as a principle -- do you believe black people in power can make or have the ability -- can make race-based discriminatory decisions?

i'm sure that can happen. i can tell you i didn't do it.

okay. that was my follow-up.

and you could go to any of the communities that i worked with and if the staff were free to tell you, you could talk to any of the people i've worked with since i've been at USDA, and they can tell you what my record is.

shirley, stay right there. i have someone who wants to speak to this whole controversy. her name is eloise spooner. she is roger spooner's wife, widow at this point.

yes.

widow at this point.

yes.

eloise, thanks for taking the time to talk to me.

thank you.

what do you think of this whole controversy? first of all, what do you think of shirley?

she's a good friend.

describe your relationship with her through the years.

she helped us save our farm.

how does she do that?

getting in there and doing all she could do to help us.

what did your husband, your late husband, think of shirley.

he's not dead. he's 87 and he's on inn his peterbuilt truck this morning.

i apologize. i got incorrect information from one of the papers writing on this. i apologize for that.

that's okay.

is he aware of the controversy swirling around?

our son, he came up and said, mama, turn on the tv to cnn and he said, it's about your friend shirley sherrod and i said, what. i listened and said, great days, that's not right. they have not treated her right because she's the one that i get credit for helping us save our farm.

some of the story is that you met in the '80s, and it was a bad time.

mm-hmm.

it was a bad time in the family's life at the time. tell me why you were in trouble with the farm?

well, we had a lot of dry weather, and we had to run the irrigation a lot, and when you make a good crop, you wouldn't get a good price, and just a number of things together caused it.

do you remember your first interaction with shirley?

yeah. at first i looked into -- it was the market bulletin from atlanta that we get. we've gotten it for years and years and years, and it said, if you were having trouble and about to lose your farm torque get with them. i said, by george, i'm going to try that, and so i did, and he told us to go see a lawyer. he said, you all might as well just go ahead and do what diane said to do. and i was so mad when we came home. so, anyway, a few weeks later, the guy from atlanta, the market bulletin, he said, what happened over in karo, and i said, exactly nothing. he didn't help us at all. he said, well, i'm going to get you with somebody that will lp you, i think, and that's when he told us to call shirley and we did, and we started right then. she said there's too lawyers, there's a black lawyer and there's a white lawyer, and one -- the black lawyer is in one city and the white lawyer is in albany. so i said, he's closer, so maybe we'll try him, the black one. we went through him for months and months and months and paid him some money which was hard to scrape up and he finally got with the lawyer in donaldsonvill that i had talked to, and he called and told me that the lawyer in albany called and told me that he could not handle us anymore, that he had this client that he had had for ten years, and he was going to have to spend a lot of time on that. he couldn't help us.

hey, eloise, a couple of quick questions here about this relationship.

okay.

i'm just trying to establish this relationship. explain to me -- i have a line here that says that you guys picked a bunch of tomatoes?

yeah. one year, after things kind of settled down, i had a really pretty garden that year, and we were going up to all ban mi for some reason, so i told roger, i was going to pick shirley some tomatoes, and i did, and we carried them by to her and had a good visit.

you know, what do you think of the statement that's on the tape. it's undeniable. it is there, where shirley essentially says, so i didn't give him the full force of what i could do.

well, she gave enough that it helped us save our farm. and she went two trips -- after the lawyer in albany did us like he did, well, then i called shirley and told her, and she said, you're kidding me. i said, no, i'm not. that's the words she told me. she said, well, do you want us to try the one in easterland? i said, yes, get us an point and we'll be ready to go.

eloise, thank you for your time.

please tell her i want -- can you -- i don't know that she can hear me, but i haven't talked to here in years, and i'm so happy to hear that both of them are still living, and miss spooner, i definitely want to contact you. it's great to hear.

we tried to call you, but roger couldn't get ahold of you.

oh, okay. maybe you can get him.

we will make the connection. how's that? we will make that happen?

thank you so much. it is so great to hear your voice.

and, shirley, thanks to you. thanks for your time, and a fuller explanation of your comments. appreciate it.

thank you so much.

shirley's story has a lot of people talking, obviously about race, power, politics. i want to hear from you on this, if you would, send us your comments to cnn.com/tony and we'll read your comments in the next hour.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Exemption (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: Bates, Andrew J. [Andrew_J_Bates@who.eop.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:52 AM
To: Misailidis, Sarah; Gavin, Tom; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Justin, DeJong; Chan, Stephanie
Cc: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: RE: Rural Development summary clips
Attachments: image001.jpg.

Full rough transcript & video

<http://www.shadowtv.com/redirect/notification.jsp?vid=f9a43c4a2746dbe5d8a2c6ec2d76317d>

<http://www.shadowtv.com/redirect/notification.jsp?vid=36ced10c7e8095c5487cf1bbc27393a5>

<http://www.shadowtv.com/redirect/notification.jsp?vid=d329d73be7f05d01ba585c41238d2a6b>

<http://www.shadowtv.com/redirect/notification.jsp?vid=d294212084d738d6e41147e2f150d8d4>

TONY HARRIS: And Shirley Sherrod is with me now from Albany, Georgia. And, Shirley, let's take our time and walk through this together. Is that okay with you?

SHIRLEY SHERROD: Yes.

HARRIS: Okay. Shirley, just a straightforward, fundamental question here. Did you discriminate against this white farmer, Roger Spooner? He was facing foreclosure 24 years ago and, again, this was before you were working for the united states Department of Agriculture. Did you discriminate against him?

SHERROD: No, I did not discriminate against him. And, in fact, I went all out. I had to frantically look for a lawyer at the last minute because the first lawyer we went to was not doing anything to really help him. In fact, that lawyer suggested they should just let the farm go. All of that process – that's why I tell it, because everything that happened in dealing with him – he was the first white farmer that had come to me for help. Everything that I did working with him helped me to see that it wasn't about race. It's about those who have and those who don't. The farmer's home had done something to him that I hadn't seen them do to any black farmer. They had actually rented his land to someone else, when they didn't are a right to do that. He still had title to the land. That's why he couldn't qualify to file chapter 12 bankruptcy. That's why in the end we had to try to file chapter 11 bankruptcy to stop the forced sale the first Tuesday in June.

HARRIS: I'm going to ask it again slightly differently. Did you discriminate against this white farmer 24 years ago, when you were, I guess, about 38 years old, because he brought you what you described in your March NAACP Speech as a "superior attitude?"

SHERROD: You know, initially – and that's why I say that. I took the time to weave what was happening there. He did come with a superior attitude, but I didn't discriminate. If I had discriminated against him, I would not have given him any help at all because I wasn't obligated by anyone. I wasn't working for the government. I didn't have to help him, but I did. And I went on – that was the first white farmer I helped. I went on to help hundreds of others through the years.

HARRIS: Was your -- I'm trying to understand your reaction to what you described as a "superior attitude." Was your reaction, perhaps, "Look, why are you taking this attitude with me? I sit here in a position to help you, and yet you bring this attitude to me." Did that cross your mind at all and did you act upon those feelings?

SHERROD: Certainly, I didn't act upon it. You know, I'm from the South. I've lived in the South all my life, and I know how black people were treated by white people during those years. My own father was murdered by one. But I didn't let

that get in the way of trying to help. I don't know why it's so difficult to see. I didn't have to help that farmer. I could have sent him out the door without giving him any help at all. But in the end we became very good friends, and that friendship lasted for some years.

HARRIS: Explain the statement in the recording that goes, "So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do."

SHERROD: You know, I could have tried to rally other farmers in support of him. I didn't know of any black farmers who would come out to try to support a white farmer at that point. That's something I could have done for black farmers. This was my first time trying to help a white farmer save his land. I wasn't really sure what I could do, because I thought at that time they had the advantages. I learned that that was not the case in working with this farmer.

HARRIS: And then you went on to say, "I did enough." What was "enough" in the case of Roger Spooner?

SHERROD: I took him – you mean initially? I took him to a lawyer who had attended some training for lawyers on chapter 12 bankruptcy. But in the end, that lawyer wasn't doing anything. And when the Spooners said that he wasn't, I jumped into action. It took me a couple of hours calling everyone I knew. I even called to other states trying to find a lawyer who would file a chapter 11 bankruptcy to stop the sale of his land at the courthouse steps. I was successful in the end.

HARRIS: During your time with the USDA was there ever a discrimination claim filed against you?

SHERROD: No, never. I went out of my way to – you know, and we didn't work directly with farmers at Rural Development. We were working with cities, with sewer problems, with police cars, with health centers, with housing. That agency is the one agency, so we say, that could build a city. I didn't do any work -- and I didn't discriminate and I went out of my way to make sure no one who came to the agency was discriminated against. And, in fact, during my tenure there, I targeted nine of the poorest counties in the state to do outreach work. I had outreach meetings in all of those counties. I even started working with other USDA agencies and state agencies so that we could coordinate our efforts in these areas, and, in fact, this coming Thursday was the first meeting where we were going to pilot that, and that was in a county here in southwest Georgia, Calhoun county.

HARRIS: So, Shirley, if you didn't discriminate during your time at USDA and at least no one filed such a claim, do you accept the statement from agriculture secretary Tom Vilsack that there is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA?

SHERROD: I don't know, but I'm assuming there is. I know I didn't discriminate, and I made it very clear to the staff there at USDA that it wouldn't be tolerated during my tenure. I said it over and over again.

HARRIS: So why are you out?

SHERROD: Pardon?

HARRIS: Why are you out?

SHERROD: Why am I out? They asked me to resign, and, in fact, they harassed me as I was driving back to the state office from west point, Georgia yesterday. I had a least three calls telling me the White House wanted me to resign.

HARRIS: So the pressure came from the White House?

SHERROD: And the last one asked me to pull over to the side of the road and do it.

HARRIS: Are you willing to name names?

SHERROD: That's what I did.

HARRIS: Are you willing to name names.

SHERROD: That was Cheryl cook, the deputy undersecretary. She called me and I said, Cheryl, I have a 3 1/2 hour ride to get into Athens. She called me a second time, where are you now? I said I'm just going through Atlanta. She call me again and I said, I'm at least 45 minutes to an hour from Athens. She said, well, Shirley, they want you to pull over to the side of the road and do it because you're going to be on Glenn Beck tonight.

HARRIS: Wow. So the administration pressured you out?

SHERROD: Yes.

HARRIS: How do you feel about that?

SHERROD: I don't feel good about it because I know I didn't do anything wrong, and I know during my time at USDA I gave it all I had. I worked when I didn't feel like it. I pushed the staff to get out there in places they had not been into before. Like I said, the nine counties I targeted, I asked them shortly after getting there, tell me what rural development has been doing in these areas, and when they did that, there were zeros in a lot of places, and I knew this was an area where we needed to target. We needed to get programs out into some of these areas that need it, just like some other areas that had gotten the funding over and over again.

HARRIS: I So I want to be really specific here and I apologize. I just have to do it. You get, one, two, three calls from miss cook, and at the point that it is made clear to you that you need to go, how does that conversation go?

SHERROD: Yes.

HARRIS: What is said to you?

SHERROD: The very first one -- I guess there were like four calls because the very first one was before I got in my car to go to Athens. She said I was being put on administrative leave. The next call after I sat waiting and waiting because she told me she would call me right back, the next call said that they're going to have to ask me to resign.

HARRIS: Do you feel as though you had an opportunity to state your side of the story?

SHERROD: No, I didn't. The administration, they were not interested in hearing the truth. No one wanted to hear the truth.

HARRIS: The NAACP released a statement late last night saying in part we are appalled by her actions. That is an opportunity to explain what happened 24 years ago. Do you feel as though you got the opportunity, even in a phone call with the NAACP?

SHERROD: No, I didn't. The NAACP has not tried to contact me one time, and they are the reason why this happened they got into a fight with the tea party, and all of this came out as a result of that.

HARRIS: Your reaction --

SHERROD: I would have appreciated -- when you look at my history of civil rights, I would have appreciated having the NAACP at least contact me and Roland martin, too, contact me to try to get the truth about what happened.

HARRIS: The reaction to your reaction to essentially being condemned by the NAACP?

SHERROD: That hurts. Because if you look at my history, that's what I'm saying -- I've done more to advance the causes of civil rights in this area than some of them who are sitting in those positions now with the NAACP. They need to learn something about me. Ey need to know about my work. They need to know what I've contributed through the years.

HARRIS: What was the point of the story you were telling to the NAACP in March? What was the point?

SHERROD: The point was to get them to understand we need to look beyond race; to look at working together. I've said to audiences here, not just that one – in fact, I spoke at a housing conference in a county just south of here, and I said, look, we need to get beyond the Civil War. I tell them, there are good things about history from the white side and good things about history and culture from the black side. People love to come into this part of the state to see that. I tell them, we need to make the most of it, and if we work together, can do that.

HARRIS: Do you believe as a principle -- do you believe black people in power can make or have the ability -- can make race-based discriminatory decisions?

SHERROD: I'm sure that can happen. I can tell you I didn't do it.

HARRIS: Okay, that was my follow-up.

SHERROD: And you could go to any of the communities that I worked with and if the staff were free to tell you, you could talk to any of the people I've worked with since I've been at USDA, and they can tell you what my record is.

HARRIS: Shirley, stay right there. I have someone who wants to speak to this whole controversy. Her name is Eloise Spooner. She is Roger Spooner's wife – widow this point.

SHERROD: Yes.

HARRIS: Widow at this point.

SHERROD: Yes.

HARRIS: Eloise, thanks for taking the time to talk to me.

ELOISE SPOONER: Thank you.

HARRIS: What do you think of this whole controversy? First of all, what do you think of Shirley?

SPOONER: She's a good friend.

HARRIS: Describe your relationship with her through the years.

SPOONER: She helped us save our farm.

How did she do that?

SPOONER: By getting in there and doing all she could do to help us.

What did your husband, your late husband, think of Shirley?

SPOONER: He's not dead. He's very much alive.

HARRIS: Really?

SPOONER: He's 87 and he's on his peterbuilt truck this morning.

HARRIS: Then I apologize. I've got incorrect information from one of the newspapers writing on this. I apologize for that.

SPOONER: That's okay.

HARRIS: Is he aware of the controversy swirling around?

SPOONER: Yes, our son, he came up and said, mama, turn on the TV to CNN and he said, it's about your friend Shirley Sherrod. And I said, what. I listened and said, that's not right. They have not treated her right because she's the one that I give credit for helping us save our farm.

HARRIS: Some of the story is that you met in the '80s, and it was a bad time?

SPOONER: Mm-hmm.

HARRIS: It was a bad time in the family's life at the time. Tell me why you were in trouble with the farm.

SPOONER: Well, we had a lot of dry weather, and we had to run the irrigation a lot. And when you'd make a good crop, you wouldn't get a good price. And just a number of things together caused it.

HARRIS: Do you remember your first interaction with Shirley?

SPOONER: Yeah. At first I looked into -- it was the market bulletin from Atlanta that we get. We've gotten it for years and years and years, and it said, if you were having trouble and about to lose your farm torque get with them. And I said, by George, I'm going to try that. And so I did, and he told us to go see a lawyer in Cairo. He said, you all might as well just go ahead and do what Diane said to do. And I was so mad when we came home. So, anyway, a few weeks later, the guy from Atlanta, the Market Bulletin, he said, what happened over in Cairo? And I said, exactly nothing. He didn't help us at all. He said, well, I'm going to get you with somebody that will help you, I think. And that's when he told us to call Shirley. And we did, and we started right then. She said there's too lawyers, there's a black lawyer and there's a white lawyer, and one -- the black lawyer is in Albany and the white lawyer is in [inaudible]. So I said, he's closer, so maybe we'll try him, the black one. We went through him for months and months and months and paid him some money, which was hard to scrape up. And he finally got with the lawyer in Donaldsonville that I had talked to, and he called and told me at the lawyer in Albany, called and told me that he could not handle us anymore, that he had this client that he had had for ten years, and he was going to have to spend a lot of time on that. He couldn't help us.

HARRIS: Hey, Eloise, a couple of quick questions here about this relationship.

SPOONER: Okay.

HARRIS: I'm just trying to establish this relationship. Explain to me -- I have a line here that says that you guys picked a bunch of tomatoes?

SPOONER: Yeah. One year, after things kind of settled down, I had a really pretty garden that year, and we going up to Albany for some reason, so I told Roger I was going to pick Shirley some tomatoes. And I did, and we carried them by to her and had a good visit.

HARRIS: You know, what do you think of the statement that's on the tape. It's undeniable, it is there, where Shirley essentially says, so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do.

SPOONER: Well, she gave enough that it helped us save our farm. And she went two trips -- after the lawyer in Albany did us like he did, well, then I called Shirley and told her, and she said, you're kidding me. I said, no, I'm not. That's the words she told me. She said, well, do you want us to try the one in Easterland? I said, yes, get us an appointment and we'll be ready to go.

HARRIS: Eloise, thank you for your time.

SHERROD: Please tell her want -- can you -- I don't know that she can hear me, but I haven't talked to here in years, and I'm so happy to hear that both of them are still living. And Miss Spooner, I definitely want to contact you. It's great to hear.

SPOONER: When we heard about it we tried to call you, but Roger couldn't get ahold of you.

SHERROD: Okay. Maybe you can get him.

Office of Communications (202) 720-4623

USDA Clips

Tuesday, July 20, 2010

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Rural Development clips

USDA worker quits over racism charge from video (AP 7/20)

A black federal worker has resigned from a Georgia agricultural job after a video clip showed her saying she had not helped a farmer as much as she could have because he was white. U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a statement Tuesday he had accepted the resignation of Shirley Sherrod. Vilsack says the USDA has no tolerance for discrimination. Sherrod told the Atlanta-Journal Constitution she was forced out of her job as the USDA's rural development director for Georgia. She said the two-minute, 38-second video posted online Monday misconstrued her message. Sherrod's taped remarks were from a local meeting of the civil rights group NAACP. National NAACP President Benjamin Todd Jealous welcomed the resignation because the group opposes racism of all kinds. [Link](#)

Dismissed employee blames media (UPI 7/20)

An employee of the U.S. Department of Agriculture says she lost her job because the media misconstrued a speech she gave at an NAACP banquet. Shirley Sherrod, who was forced out as the USDA's rural development director for Georgia, is seen on a video admitting she didn't do everything she could to help a white farmer who needed aid, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported Tuesday. What the media didn't report, Sherrod says, was that the incident she was relating on the video happened 24 years ago when she was working for another organization, not the federal government. Also left out, Sherrod says, is the part where she says she was trying to figure out how to help someone who was condescending. [Link](#)

USDA employee says statements on white farmer misconstrued (CNN 7/20)

A black Agriculture Department employee who resigned after a video clip showed her talking about a white farmer said Tuesday her remarks were taken out of context. Shirley Sherrod, the department's former state director of rural development for Georgia, told CNN on Tuesday the incident she discusses in the clip

took place more than two decades ago -- and she recounted it to an audience to make the point that people should move beyond race. "I was speaking to that group, like I've done many groups, and I tell them about a time when I thought the issue was race and race only," Sherrod told CNN's "American Morning" from her home in Albany, Georgia. The incident took place in 1986, while she worked for a nonprofit and before she worked for the USDA, she said. "I was telling the story of how working with him helped me to see the issue is not about race. It's about those who have versus those who do not have." [Link](#)

Race remarks cost USDA official her job (CNN Blog 7/20)

An African-American Agriculture Department worker resigns over her handling of a white Georgia farmer's case when she worked for a nonprofit group in 1986. It came to light when Shirley Sherrod talked about the case at an NAACP banquet earlier this year. Were her remarks a teaching moment that backfired, or evidence of racism? Sherrod says her comments were taken out of context -- that the point of her story was to unite people. Tony Harris will be talking to Sherrod at 11:00am ET on CNN, and we'll post that interview here. Watch some of her speech and phone interview with CNN's American Morning below, then tell us what you think. We'll share some of your comments on air in the CNN Newsroom, 11:00am -- 1:00pm ET. [Link](#)

Video Shows USDA Official Saying She Didn't Give 'Full Force' of Help to White Farmer (FOX News 7/20)

Days after the NAACP clashed with Tea Party members over allegations of racism, a video has surfaced showing an Agriculture Department official regaling an NAACP audience with a story about how she withheld help to a white farmer facing bankruptcy -- video that now has forced the official to resign. Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, is shown in the clip describing "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." Sherrod, who is black, claimed the farmer took a long time trying to show he was "superior" to her. The audience laughed as she described how she determined his fate... "There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person," Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a written statement. "We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously." [Link](#)

Gingrich Responds to Discrimination at USDA (Fox News 7/20)

SEAN HANNITY, HOST: And this is a Fox News alert. An Obama administration official resigned just a short time ago after she was caught on tape appearing to tell an audience that she had used her position to racially discriminate against white farmers. Now the woman, Shirley Sherrod, was the Georgia state director at the Department of Agricultural. Now the president's Agricultural Secretary Tom Vilsack just released a statement saying the USDA has a zero tolerance policy against discrimination. Here's part of the shocking video that ignited this controversy. (BEGIN VIDEO CLIP) SHIRLEY SHERROD, FORMER USDA GA STATE DIRECTOR: The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking but he was trying to show me he was superior to me. I know what he was doing. But he had come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him. [Request Story](#)

Black USDA official resigns after admitting she only 'did enough' for white farmer (MSNBC 7/20)

A black USDA official in Georgia has resigned after publicly admitting she didn't help a white man trying to save his farm to the "full force" of her power and instead referred him to "one of his own." Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said he had accepted Shirley Sherrod's resignation, saying there was "zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA." The NAACP, which recently condemned racism in tea party groups, also issued a statement Monday night saying: "Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race." [Link](#)

Morning Joe (MSNBC 7/20)

Well, another story of reverse discrimination comes out today. This one is really interesting. I'm thinking that this woman regrets this comment. a USDA official in Georgia has resigned after I YouTube clip shows her admitting that race helped determine how much aid would be given to a white farmer. You're not supposed to do that, are you? I mean, I'm not --it's probably not a good idea. for being so stupid. It's not

even -- well, how about you just don't do it. Anyway, the state's director of rural development apparently made the comments during an NAACP banquet in March. Take a listen. The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking, but he was trying to show me he was superior to me. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time to show me he was superior to me was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him. I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So, I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. [Request Story](#)

Shirley Sherrod Resigns Over USDA Race Remark Furor (CBS News 7/20)

A high-ranking black employee of the U.S. Department of Agriculture has resigned after remarks she made about race were distributed by conservative web sites and aired on Fox News. A video clip of Shirley Sherrod, the USDA's Georgia State Director of Rural Development, was circulated by conservative blogger Andrew Breitbart and his site, biggovernment.com, in which Sherrod talked of withholding help to a white man facing the loss of his family farm. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack released a statement Tuesday saying he had accepted Sherrod's resignation, and added that the department has no tolerance for discrimination. [Link](#)

USDA worker quits over 1986 racial incident (The Washington Post 7/20)

A U.S. Agriculture Department official from Georgia resigned late Monday after she was caught on tape admitting that she had not helped a farmer as much as she could have because he was white. Shirley Sherrod, USDA state director of rural development, made the remarks on March 27 at an NAACP Freedom Fund banquet. Her videotaped remarks surfaced on YouTube on Monday. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack accepted Sherrod's resignation, saying, "There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously." NAACP President and Benjamin Jealous called Sherrod's actions shameful and agreed with the decision to fire her. [Link](#)

In the curious case of Shirley Sherrod, let's see the whole tape (Atlanta Journal Constitution 7/20)

A couple of folks in comments yesterday brought up the case of USDA official Shirley Sherrod, a black woman caught on tape at an NAACP meeting here in Georgia apparently bragging about being less than diligent in helping a white farmer. The folks at Big Government posted a portion of her speech as part of the running feud between the NAACP and the Tea Party over which organization is more racist. By the end of the day Monday, Sherrod had been forced to resign her post, and NAACP President Ben Jealous had released a statement agreeing with the forced resignation: "Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race. [Link](#)

Resigned USDA official says racial story misconstrued (Atlanta Journal Constitution 7/20)

The USDA's rural development director for Georgia says she was forced out of her federally appointed job after a "snippet" of a speech she gave in March appeared to show her admission to only half-heartedly aiding a struggling white farmer because of his race. But in a phone interview from her home in Albany early Tuesday morning, Shirley Sherrod told the Atlanta-Journal Constitution that the two-minute, 38-second video posted online Monday by biggovernment.com and reported on by FoxNews.com and the AJC completely misconstrued the message she was trying to convey. Sherrod, 62, insisted her statements in the video were not racist. "For Fox to take a spin on this like they have done, and know it's not the truth ... it's very upsetting," she said. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Resigns USDA Job After Admitting Use Of Racial Preference During NAACP Banquet (VIDEO) (The Huffington Post 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod, who resigned Monday from the USDA. 756 Shirley Sherrod, a USDA official in Georgia, has resigned after publicly admitting that race played a factor in her decision to limit how much aid would be given to a white farmer. Sherrod, who is African American, made the comments during a local NAACP banquet on March 27, according to information displayed on the video. A clip of her speech first appeared Monday morning on BigGovernment.com and aired that evening on Fox News. Her resignation as the agency's state director of rural development was quickly accepted by U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. He cited a zero-tolerance policy and told CNN that he was working to "reverse the checkered civil

rights history at the department." In her controversial speech, Sherrod discussed the first time she was "faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." She claimed that during the conversation, the man "was trying to show me he was superior to me." [Link](#)

NAACP Slams Shirley Sherrod's Actions As 'Shameful' (My Fox New York 7/20)

The actions of a black U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) official who admitted withholding help to a white farmer facing bankruptcy were late Monday described as "shameful" by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, was exposed in a video recorded at an NAACP banquet describing "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." Sherrod claimed the farmer took a long time trying to show he was "superior" to her. "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land -- so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough," she said in the video. The Agriculture Department announced Monday, shortly after FOXNews.com published its initial report on the video, that Sherrod had resigned. [Link](#)

Ga. USDA Official Resigns Over Comments (My Fox Atlanta 7/19)

Racially charged comments have led to the abrupt resignation of an agriculture department official. Shirley Sherrod was the top official who oversaw rural development in the state of Georgia. According to FOX News, Sherrod, the director of the USDA's rural development agency, resigned over comments she made at an NAACP meeting. FOX News obtained taped comments from an NAACP meeting that took place in Douglas, Georgia in March. According to FOX News, Sherrod is seen talking about how she withheld help to a white farmer who was facing bankruptcy. "I didn't give him the full force of what I could do, I did enough," Sherrod said during the meeting. In the video, Sherrod said she was struggling with the fact so many black people have lost their farmland and she was faced with having to help a white person save their land. Sherrod said she took him to see a white lawyer. "I figured if I took him to one of them his own kind, [they] would take care of him," said Sherrod. According to FOX News, the agriculture department announced Monday that Sherrod had resigned. [Link](#)

USDA big quits in bias-boast shock (The New York Post 7/20)

A black official in the US Agriculture Department resigned yesterday after a video surfaced of her bragging to the NAACP that she didn't do everything she could to help a white farmer facing bankruptcy. Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, told the audience at a March banquet in Atlanta that she claimed the man felt "superior" to her, according to FoxNews.com. "He had come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was talking all that time, trying to show me he was superior to me, was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," Sherrod said. "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land -- so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do." "I did enough," she said. [Link](#)

NAACP 'appalled' by black USDA official's racial discrimination (Daily Caller 7/20)

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People President Benjamin Todd Jealous said late Monday he was "appalled" by the actions of U.S. Department of Agriculture official Shirley Sherrod, who resigned earlier in the day after video surfaced of her speaking at an NAACP event about discriminating against a white farmer seeking government help. Jealous also promised to look into why members of the audience at an NAACP fundraiser in Georgia this past March reacted, as shown in the video, by nodding and in some cases laughing at Sherrod's remarks. But Jealous distanced the national NAACP from the incident. Coming just days after the NAACP condemned racist elements inside the Tea Party movement, Sherrod's remarks place the storied civil rights organization in an uncomfortable position. "Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race," Jealous said. "We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers." "Her actions were shameful. While she went on to explain in the story that she ultimately realized her mistake, as well as the common predicament of working people of all races, she gave no indication she had attempted to right the wrong she had done to this man," Jealous said (read his full statement below). [Link](#)

BREAKING: Racist Obama administration member resigns (Manhattan Conservative Examiner 7/19)

Shirley Sherrod of the USDA's Georgia Rural Development office has resigned following the airing of overtly racist remarks she made in a speech before—of all organizations—the NAACP. At a local NAACP meeting in March of 2010, Sherrod boasted of withholding assistance to a farmer based on the color of his skin, which happened to be white. Sherrod (surprise!) is black. In her comments, which are captured in the video below, Sherrod freely admits to "struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land." She further confesses to abusing her position by refusing to "give him the full force of what I could do." The remarks conclude with a racist gem: "I took him to a white lawyer... I figured that if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him." [Link](#)

USDA Official Implicated in NAACP Racism Flap (Buckeye Ag Network 7/20)

Days after the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) denounced the Conservative Tea Party movement on allegations of racism, the organization was itself implicated in charges of racism involving a USDA official. In a video released at BigGovernment.com, USDA's Director of Rural Development in Georgia Shirley Sherrod was depicted acknowledging discriminating against white farmers. The video, of a speech Sherrod gave to the NAACP's Freedom Fund banquet in March of this year, stirred quite a controversy on the internet this week, forcing Sherrod's resignation from the department Monday. Sherrod's remarks in the NAACP speech indicated that she "didn't give [a white farmer] the full force of what I could do," because "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land." [Link](#)

USDA worker quits over racism charge from video (Salon 7/20)

A black federal worker has resigned from a Georgia agricultural job after a video clip showed her saying she had not helped a farmer as much as she could have because he was white. U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a statement Tuesday he had accepted the resignation of Shirley Sherrod. Vilsack says the USDA has no tolerance for discrimination. Sherrod told the Atlanta-Journal Constitution she was forced out of her job as the USDA's rural development director for Georgia. She said the two-minute, 38-second video posted online Monday misconstrued her message. [Link](#)

Justice Not Only Obama Department Not Equally Enforcing Law (Heritage Foundation Blog 7/20)

This morning we reviewed the still unfolding New Black Panther Party scandal at the Department of Justice where a whistle blower, testifying under oath, quoted Deputy Assistant Attorney General Julie Fernandes as saying that "the Voting Section will never or will not, at least while she is there, bring any more cases against blacks or other national minorities." In other words, Fernandes has reportedly admitted that the Obama Justice Department is not enforcing the nation's civil rights law equally and in a race-neutral manner. The Obama Justice Department has refused to confirm or deny that Fernandes made this statement. Now Andrew Breitbart has unearthed a very similar statement from another Obama political appointee, this time from the Department of Agriculture. In the video, U.S. Department of Agriculture Director of Rural Development for Georgia Shirley Sherrod tells an NAACP audience . . . First Justice. Now Agriculture. How many other Obama Department's are refusing to enforce our nation's laws equally? [Link](#)

NAACP meeting calmly listened to racist remarks from black fed official (American Thinker 7/20)

Andrew Breitbart has scored another bullseye, revealing hypocrisy of the highest order on the part of another leftist establishment organization, the NAACP. On March 27 of this year, speaking before an NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet, Shirley Sherrod, the Department of Agriculture director for the State of Georgia -- responsible for over a billion dollars a year in spending -- boasts of denying a white farmer her full efforts because of his race. The audience does not react with shock or disapproval, but rather just sits there. So much for NAACP President Ben Jealous denouncing the tea parties for tolerating racists. Only after Breitbart gave the incriminating video national exposure did the NAACP issue the obligatory denunciation, to prevent further embarrassment. But when nobody was looking, the NAACP audience was totally cool with the racism expressed by their speaker. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Comments Results in Resignation (Lalate Blog 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod has resigned following her comments about a white farmer. Shirley Sherrod's remarks appeared in a video from BigGovernment.com, dated by the website as March 27. Shirley Sherrod has been the USDA's Georgia director of Rural Development. In the video, Sherrod addresses an NAACP

banquet stating "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land — so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough". Late Monday the USDA announced Sherrod had resigned. NAACP President and CEO Benjamin Todd Jealous issued a statement against Sherrod's comments. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod of USDA resigns (Buzz Tab 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod, USDA's black employee has resigned from her post on Monday in the wake of outburst of a video at conservative media outlets in which Shirley Sherrod is shown telling one of the audience that she had not given a white farmer the full force of what I could do to help him save his family farm. Tom Vilsack, the Agriculture Secretary said that he had accepted Shirley Sherrod's resignation. Shirley Sherrod was working as USDA's State Director of Rural Development for Georgia. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said he had accepted the resignation of Shirley Sherrod, the department's state director of rural development for Georgia. Tom Vilsack further added that in USDA, they are following a zero tolerance for discrimination. He said that being Secretary Agriculture he condemns any discriminatory act against any person. He further added that at USDA, they are working hard for past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history and they are taking fairness and equality as a serious matter at USDA. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Has Officially Resigned From Her Job Due To Racial Preference! (Moms Word Blog 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod, who is known as a USDA official in Georgia, has finally resigned after publicly admitting that race played a factor in her decision to limit how much aid would be given to a white farmer. Sherrod, who is African American, made the comments during an NAACP banquet on March 27, according to the information in the video above. In fact a clip of her speech was being aired on BigGovernment.com and also Fox News Monday morning. Sherrod said during the now famous speech about the first time she was "faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." She claims that during the conversation, the man "was trying to show me he was superior to me." "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland," Sherrod told the crowd. "And here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land." [Link](#)

*Sarah Misailidis
Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
(202) 720-4691
Sarah.Misailidis@oc.usda.gov*

Jett, Carole

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:44 AM
To: Cook, Cheryl; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole
Cc: 'Timothy.McNeilly@wdc.usda.gov'
Subject: Re: Cheryl - John Roberts at CNN here..

We don't want to make the story last any longer. Hope still is that this is one day story.
Chris Mather

From: Cook, Cheryl
To: Mather, Chris; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole
Cc: 'Timothy.McNeilly@wdc.usda.gov'
Sent: Tue Jul 20 11:29:40 2010
Subject: Fw: Cheryl - John Roberts at CNN here..

From: Roberts, John
To: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Tue Jul 20 11:16:33 2010
Subject: Cheryl - John Roberts at CNN here..

Cheryl,

It's my understanding that you were the USDA official who asked Shirley Sherrod to resign. Was the decision based solely on the snippet of video that is on the internet, or did you have more information regarding Ms. Sherrod's record?

Thanks very much,
John Roberts
CNN

Jett, Carole

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:32 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen - ChiefOfStaff
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Subject: CNN American Morning (Karrah Kaplan): Statement in response to confirmation that Shirley helped

FYI- CNN American Morning also wants to know if we can respond to the statements from the farmer's wife stating that Shirley **did** help the family.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Kaplan, Karrah [mailto:Karrah.Kaplan@turner.com]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:26 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Cc: Roberts, John
Subject: Re: URGENT REQUEST -- CNN AMERICAN MORNING STATEMENT

Stephanie,
We just had on the wife of the farmer on air confirming Shirley helped them. On CNN now.
Can you offer somebody to respond to this?
Thanks!
Karrah

From: Chan, Stephanie <Stephanie.Chan@oc.usda.gov>
To: Kaplan, Karrah
Sent: Tue Jul 20 10:49:31 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT REQUEST -- CNN AMERICAN MORNING STATEMENT

Thanks

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Kaplan, Karrah [mailto:Exs (b)(6)]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:45 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Re: URGENT REQUEST -- CNN AMERICAN MORNING STATEMENT

Thanks! The farmer's wife backs shirley up

From: Chan, Stephanie <Stephanie.Chan@oc.usda.gov>
To: Kaplan, Karrah
Sent: Tue Jul 20 10:44:07 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT REQUEST -- CNN AMERICAN MORNING STATEMENT

Karrah,

Thanks for the reminder. I will let you know if I hear of anything.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Kaplan, Karrah [mailto:Exs (b)(6)]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:10 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Cc: Streitfeld, Rachel; Smith, Tristan
Subject: RE: URGENT REQUEST -- CNN AMERICAN MORNING STATEMENT
Importance: High

Hi Stephanie!
Any updates?
Thank you!

From: Chan, Stephanie [mailto:Stephanie.Chan@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:31 AM
To: Kaplan, Karrah
Subject: Re: URGENT REQUEST -- CNN AMERICAN MORNING STATEMENT

Thank you for sending this over.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Kaplan, Karrah
To: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:30:03 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT REQUEST -- CNN AMERICAN MORNING STATEMENT
HERE IS THE TRANSCRIPT:

American Morning transcript

Kiran Chetry and **John Roberts** interview **Shirley Sherrod**, a black Agriculture Department employee, who resigned Monday after conservative media outlets aired a video of her telling an audience she had not given a white farmer "the full force of what I could do" to help him save the family farm. She says the charges of racism are wrong

Kiran Chetry: THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ACCEPTS THE RESIGNATION OF AN EMPLOYEE AFTER A VIDEO SURFACED SHOWING HER TELLING AN AUDIENCE THAT SHE WITHHELD ASSISTANCE TO A WHITE FARMER BECAUSE OF HIS RACE. LET'S LISTEN TO WHAT SHE TOLD THE NAACP. DOES THAT VIDEO TELL THE WHOLE STORY? JOINING US NOW ON THE PHONE FROM ALBANY, GEORGIA, SHERRI SHERROD HERSELF. THANKS FOR BEING WITH US THIS MORNING, SHIRLEY.

Shirley Sherrod: THANK YOU.

Kiran Chetry: YOU SAY THIS WAS PART OF THE STORY AND THAT IT WAS PART THAT WAS SPLICED ENOUGH TO SHOW YOU IN A BAD LIGHT, THAT THIS ISN'T THE WHOLE STORY. WILL YOU FINISH FOR US HOW THIS ENDED?

Shirley Sherrod: OKAY. I WAS SPEAKING TO THAT GROUP LIKE I'VE DONE MANY GROUPS AND I TELL THEM ABOUT A TIME WHEN I THOUGHT THE ISSUE WAS RACE AND RACE ONLY. AND I TELL THEM THE STORY OF HOW I WORKED WITH A WHITE FARMER BACK IN 1986. I WAS NOT WORKING FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE. I WAS WORKING WITH AND NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION ASSISTING FARMERS THROUGHOUT SOUTH GEORGIA AND THE SOUTHEAST. AND THIS FARMER CAME TO ME FOR HELP. I WAS TELLING THE STORY ABOUT HOW WORKING WITH HIM HELPED ME TO SEE THAT THE ISSUE IS NOT ABOUT RACE, IT'S ABOUT THOSE WHO HAVE VERSUS THOSE WHO DO NOT HAVE. AND I TELL HOW I TOOK HIM TO A LAWYER WHO I THOUGHT WOULD HELP HIM. IN THE END, THAT LAWYER DIDN'T. IN THE END, I HAD TO FRANTICLY LOOK FOR A LAWYER BECAUSE WHEN USDA LIFTED -- I'M SORRY. WHEN THE COURTS LIFTED THE INJUNCTION AGAINST USDA IN MAY OF 1987, THIS WHITE FARMER WAS 1 OF 13 THAT WAS FORECLOSED ON BY THE STATE OF GEORGIA. I HAD TO FRANTICLY FIND A LAWYER WHO WOULD FILE A CHAPTER 11 TO STOP THE FORECLOSURE. HE COULDN'T -- AT THAT TIME WE HAD UP TO 12 --

Kiran Chetry: BUT LET ME SAID -- YOU SAID YOU DIDN'T KNOW ENOUGH, DIDN'T GIVE HIM THE FULL FORCE OF WHAT YOU COULD DO. YOU SAID YOU REFERRED HIM TO THE LAWYER WHO WAS WHITE AND PERHAPS HE COULD HELP HIM. WHAT DID YOU MEAN BY THAT?

Shirley Sherrod: WHAT I MEANT WAS, I DIDN'T KNOW ANYONE ELSE, I DIDN'T KNOW ANOTHER LAWYER AT THAT TIME WHO WAS LOCAL, WHO KNEW SOMETHING ABOUT CHAPTER 12. BUT I THOUGHT IF I TOOK HIM TO A WHITE LAWYER, HE WOULD DEFINITELY DO ALL THAT HE COULD TO HELP SAVE HIS FARM.

John Roberts: MS. SHERROD LET'S MAKE IT CLEAR THOUGH. THIS HAPPENED 24 YEARS AGO. YOU EVENTUALLY WORKED WITH THIS WHITE FARMER, YOU EVENTUALLY BECAME FRIENDS.

[The rest of John's question is cut off from the closed captioning and the aircheck, as is her response]

John Roberts:[cut off] THINKING IF YOU'RE RECOUNTING AN OLD STORY, WHY DID YOU SUCCUMB TO PRESSURE TO STEP DOWN, WHY DIDN'T YOU TRY TO FIGHT THIS?

Shirley Sherrod: IF I TRIED TO FIGHT IT AND DIDN'T HAVE ANY SUPPORT FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, WHAT -- WHAT.

Kiran Chetry: BEN JEALOUS REFERRED TO YOU AND THIS SURFACING OF THE TAPE, "HER ACTIONS WERE SHAMEFUL. WHILE SHE WENT ON TO EXPLAIN IN THE STORY, SHE ULTIMATELY REALIZED HER MISTAKE AS WELL AS THE COMMON PREDICAMENT OF WORKING PEOPLE OF ALL RACES. SHE GAVE NO INDICATION SHE HAD ATTEMPTED TO RIGHT THE WRONG SHE HAD DONE TO THIS MAN." AND THE REACTION FROM MANY IN THE AUDIENCE IS DISTURBING. THIS IS FROM BEN JEALOUS. DID YOU TRY TO CLARIFY WITH THE NAACP YOUR STORY?

Shirley Sherrod: NO, I HAVEN'T HAD A CHANCE TO TALK TO ANYONE. ALL OF THIS WAS HAPPENING SO FAST. AND IT'S UNFORTUNATE THAT THE NAACP WOULD MAKE A STATEMENT WITHOUT EVEN CHECKING TO SEE WHAT HAPPENED. THIS WAS 24 YEARS AGO AND I'M TELLING A STORY TO TRY TO UNITE PEOPLE WITH THAT NOW.

John Roberts: CERTAINLY YOU'RE COMING OUT AND TELLING YOUR STORY NOW TAKES IT TO A DIFFERENT LEVEL AND OBVIOUSLY WE'RE GOING TO KEEP FOLLOWING THIS. IT IS GOOD TO GET YOUR SIDE OF IT. SHERRI SH SHERLY SHERROD, FORMER DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE OFFICIAL. PERHAPS WE CAN GET YOU BACK ON AGAIN, GET YOUR FACE ON TV AS WELL AND TALK TO YOU MORE ABOUT THIS AS THIS STORY CONTINUES TO DEVELOP.

Shirley Sherrod: I DON'T MIND.

From: Chan, Stephanie [mailto: [redacted] Exemption (b)(6)]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:21 AM
To: Kaplan, Karrah
Subject: Re: URGENT REQUEST -- CNN AMERICAN MORNING STATEMENT

Karrah, thanks for sending this over. I am checking on this but please refer to our statement in the meantime.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture

[redacted] Exemption (b)(6)

From: Kaplan, Karrah
To: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:19:38 2010
Subject: URGENT REQUEST -- CNN AMERICAN MORNING STATEMENT
Thanks for taking my call just now Stephanie!

As mentioned we had Shirley Sherrod on this morning and she said that the video was of her recounting an old story of her and a farmer she befriended in 1986.

Our anchor, John Roberts, wants to know why she was asked to resign for recounting an old story.

I will send the transcript of the interview shortly.

In the meantime, what is your official USDA response?

Thank you very much,
Karrah Kaplan
Producer, CNN American Morning

[redacted] Exs (b)(6) cell
212-215-7000 main

Jett, Carole

From: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:30 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole
Cc: 'Timothy.McNeilly@wdc.usda.gov'
Subject: Fw: Cheryl - John Roberts at CNN here..

From: Roberts, John
To: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Tue Jul 20 11:16:33 2010
Subject: Cheryl - John Roberts at CNN here..

Cheryl,

It's my understanding that you were the USDA official who asked Shirley Sherrod to resign. Was the decision based solely on the snippet of video that is on the internet, or did you have more information regarding Ms. Sherrod's record?

Thanks very much,
John Roberts
CNN

Jett, Carole

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:03 AM
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Final TPs

Key here is to say as little as possible. This story will go away unless there is a reason for press to talk about it more. We do not want to create news. These TPs are for OCR. Do we need to get to sub-cabinet?

Talking Points

- Yesterday, Secretary Vilsack accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation.
- There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA and we strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person.
- We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.
- We don't want this issue to distract our efforts to do so.

Question and Answer

But it happened 30 years ago, it was taken out of context...

- We have a duty to ensure that when we provide services to the American people we do so in an equitable manner.
- But equally important is our duty to instill confidence in the American people that we are fair service providers.
- Comments made by Mrs. Sherrod, even if taken out of context, undermine that trust.

Did she explain the real story to you?

- She said it was taken out of context but we have not seen the entire video.
- We have a duty to instill confidence in the American people that we are fair service providers.
- Comments made by Mrs. Sherrod, even if taken out of context, undermine that trust.

Why did you accept her resignation?

- We have a duty to ensure that when we provide services to the American people we do so in an equitable manner.
- But equally important is our duty to instill confidence in the American people that we are fair service providers.
- Comments made by Mrs. Sherrod, even if taken out of context, undermine that trust.

Have you fired any white employees for discrimination?

- We cannot discuss private personnel matters.

What have you done to right the wrongs of the past?

- We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.
- There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA and we strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person and we have made significant progress in doing so.

Chris Mather
Director of Communications
USDA
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 402A
Washington, DC 20250

Exemption (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:01 AM
To: 'Andrew_J_Bates@who.eop.gov'; 'Thomas_E_Gavin@who.eop.gov'; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; 'Justin_DeJong'; Chan, Stephanie
Cc: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: Rural Development summary clips
Attachments: 7.20.10_ShirleySherrodclips.doc; image001.jpg



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE

Office of Communications (202) 720-4623

USDA Clips

Tuesday, July 20, 2010

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Rural Development clips

USDA worker quits over racism charge from video (AP 7/20)

A black federal worker has resigned from a Georgia agricultural job after a video clip showed her saying she had not helped a farmer as much as she could have because he was white. U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a statement Tuesday he had accepted the resignation of Shirley Sherrod. Vilsack says the USDA has no tolerance for discrimination. Sherrod told the Atlanta-Journal Constitution she was forced out of her job as the USDA's rural development director for Georgia. She said the two-minute, 38-second video posted online Monday misconstrued her message. Sherrod's taped remarks were from a local meeting of the civil rights group NAACP. National NAACP President Benjamin Todd Jealous welcomed the resignation because the group opposes racism of all kinds. [Link](#)

Dismissed employee blames media (UPI 7/20)

An employee of the U.S. Department of Agriculture says she lost her job because the media misconstrued a speech she gave at an NAACP banquet. Shirley Sherrod, who was forced out as the USDA's rural development director for Georgia, is seen on a video admitting she didn't do everything she could to help a white farmer who needed aid, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported Tuesday. What the media didn't report, Sherrod says, was that the incident she was relating on the video happened 24 years ago when she was working for another organization, not the federal government. Also left out, Sherrod says, is the part where she says she was trying to figure out how to help someone who was condescending. [Link](#)

USDA employee says statements on white farmer misconstrued (CNN 7/20)

A black Agriculture Department employee who resigned after a video clip showed her talking about a white farmer said Tuesday her remarks were taken out of context. Shirley Sherrod, the department's former state director of rural development for Georgia, told CNN on Tuesday the incident she discusses in the clip took place more than two decades ago -- and she recounted it to an audience to make the point that people should move beyond race. "I was speaking to that group, like I've done many groups, and I tell them about a time when I thought the issue was race and race only," Sherrod told CNN's "American Morning" from her home in Albany, Georgia. The incident took place in 1986, while she worked for a nonprofit and before she worked for the USDA, she said. "I was telling the story of how working with him

helped me to see the issue is not about race. It's about those who have versus those who do not have." [Link](#)

Race remarks cost USDA official her job (CNN Blog 7/20)

An African-American Agriculture Department worker resigns over her handling of a white Georgia farmer's case when she worked for a nonprofit group in 1986. It came to light when Shirley Sherrod talked about the case at an NAACP banquet earlier this year. Were her remarks a teaching moment that backfired, or evidence of racism? Sherrod says her comments were taken out of context – that the point of her story was to unite people. Tony Harris will be talking to Sherrod at 11:00am ET on CNN, and we'll post that interview here. Watch some of her speech and phone interview with CNN's American Morning below, then tell us what you think. We'll share some of your comments on air in the CNN Newsroom, 11:00am – 1:00pm ET. [Link](#)

Video Shows USDA Official Saying She Didn't Give 'Full Force' of Help to White Farmer (FOX News 7/20)

Days after the NAACP clashed with Tea Party members over allegations of racism, a video has surfaced showing an Agriculture Department official regaling an NAACP audience with a story about how she withheld help to a white farmer facing bankruptcy -- video that now has forced the official to resign. Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, is shown in the clip describing "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." Sherrod, who is black, claimed the farmer took a long time trying to show he was "superior" to her. The audience laughed as she described how she determined his fate..."There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person," Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a written statement. "We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously. [Link](#)

Gingrich Responds to Discrimination at USDA (Fox News 7/20)

SEAN HANNITY, HOST: And this is a Fox News alert. An Obama administration official resigned just a short time ago after she was caught on tape appearing to tell an audience that she had used her position to racially discriminate against white farmers. Now the woman, Shirley Sherrod, was the Georgia state director at the Department of Agricultural. Now the president's Agricultural Secretary Tom Vilsack just released a statement saying the USDA has a zero tolerance policy against discrimination. Here's part of the shocking video that ignited this controversy. (BEGIN VIDEO CLIP) SHIRLEY SHERROD, FORMER USDA GA STATE DIRECTOR: The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking but he was trying to show me he was superior to me. I know what he was doing. But he had come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him. [Request Story](#)

Black USDA official resigns after admitting she only 'did enough' for white farmer (MSNBC 7/20)

A black USDA official in Georgia has resigned after publicly admitting she didn't help a white man trying to save his farm to the "full force" of her power and instead referred him to "one of his own." Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said he had accepted Shirley Sherrod's resignation, saying there was "zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA." The NAACP, which recently condemned racism in tea party groups, also issued a statement Monday night saying: "Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race." [Link](#)

Morning Joe (MSNBC 7/20)

Well, another story of reverse discrimination comes out today. This one is really interesting. I'm thinking that this woman regrets this comment. a USDA official in Georgia has resigned after I YouTube clip shows her admitting that race helped determine how much aid would be given to a white farmer. You're not supposed to do that, are you? I mean, I'm not --it's probably not a good idea. for being so stupid. It's not even -- well, how about you just don't do it. Anyway, the state's director of rural development apparently made the comments during an NAACP banquet in March. Take a listen. The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking, but he was trying to show me he was superior to me. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time to show me he was superior to me was i was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him. I was struggling with the fact

that so many black people had lost their farmland, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So, I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. [Request Story](#)

Shirley Sherrod Resigns Over USDA Race Remark Furor (CBS News 7/20)

A high-ranking black employee of the U.S. Department of Agriculture has resigned after remarks she made about race were distributed by conservative web sites and aired on Fox News. A video clip of Shirley Sherrod, the USDA's Georgia State Director of Rural Development, was circulated by conservative blogger Andrew Breitbart and his site, biggovernment.com, in which Sherrod talked of withholding help to a white man facing the loss of his family farm. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack released a statement Tuesday saying he had accepted Sherrod's resignation, and added that the department has no tolerance for discrimination. [Link](#)

USDA worker quits over 1986 racial incident (The Washington Post 7/20)

A U.S. Agriculture Department official from Georgia resigned late Monday after she was caught on tape admitting that she had not helped a farmer as much as she could have because he was white. Shirley Sherrod, USDA state director of rural development, made the remarks on March 27 at an NAACP Freedom Fund banquet. Her videotaped remarks surfaced on YouTube on Monday. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack accepted Sherrod's resignation, saying, "There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously." NAACP President and Benjamin Jealous called Sherrod's actions shameful and agreed with the decision to fire her. [Link](#)

In the curious case of Shirley Sherrod, let's see the whole tape (Atlanta Journal Constitution 7/20)

A couple of folks in comments yesterday brought up the case of USDA official Shirley Sherrod, a black woman caught on tape at an NAACP meeting here in Georgia apparently bragging about being less than diligent in helping a white farmer. The folks at Big Government posted a portion of her speech as part of the running feud between the NAACP and the Tea Party over which organization is more racist. By the end of the day Monday, Sherrod had been forced to resign her post, and NAACP President Ben Jealous had released a statement agreeing with the forced resignation: "Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race. [Link](#)

Resigned USDA official says racial story misconstrued (Atlanta Journal Constitution 7/20)

The USDA's rural development director for Georgia says she was forced out of her federally appointed job after a "snippet" of a speech she gave in March appeared to show her admission to only half-heartedly aiding a struggling white farmer because of his race. But in a phone interview from her home in Albany early Tuesday morning, Shirley Sherrod told the Atlanta-Journal Constitution that the two-minute, 38-second video posted online Monday by biggovernment.com and reported on by FoxNews.com and the AJC completely misconstrued the message she was trying to convey. Sherrod, 62, insisted her statements in the video were not racist. "For Fox to take a spin on this like they have done, and know it's not the truth ... it's very upsetting," she said. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Resigns USDA Job After Admitting Use Of Racial Preference During NAACP Banquet (VIDEO) (The Huffington Post 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod, who resigned Monday from the USDA. 756 Shirley Sherrod, a USDA official in Georgia, has resigned after publicly admitting that race played a factor in her decision to limit how much aid would be given to a white farmer. Sherrod, who is African American, made the comments during a local NAACP banquet on March 27, according to information displayed on the video. A clip of her speech first appeared Monday morning on BigGovernment.com and aired that evening on Fox News. Her resignation as the agency's state director of rural development was quickly accepted by U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. He cited a zero-tolerance policy and told CNN that he was working to "reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department." In her controversial speech, Sherrod discussed the first time she was "faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." She claimed that during the conversation, the man "was trying to show me he was superior to me." [Link](#)

NAACP Slams Shirley Sherrod's Actions As 'Shameful' (My Fox New York 7/20)

The actions of a black U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) official who admitted withholding help to a white farmer facing bankruptcy were late Monday described as "shameful" by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, was exposed in a video recorded at an NAACP banquet describing "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." Sherrod claimed the farmer took a long time trying to show he was "superior" to her. "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land -- so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough," she said in the video. The Agriculture Department announced Monday, shortly after FOXNews.com published its initial report on the video, that Sherrod had resigned. [Link](#)

Ga. USDA Official Resigns Over Comments (My Fox Atlanta 7/19)

Racially charged comments have led to the abrupt resignation of an agriculture department official. Shirley Sherrod was the top official who oversaw rural development in the state of Georgia. According to FOX News, Sherrod, the director of the USDA's rural development agency, resigned over comments she made at an NAACP meeting. FOX News obtained taped comments from an NAACP meeting that took place in Douglas, Georgia in March. According to FOX News, Sherrod is seen talking about how she withheld help to a white farmer who was facing bankruptcy. "I didn't give him the full force of what I could do, I did enough," Sherrod said during the meeting. In the video, Sherrod said she was struggling with the fact so many black people have lost their farmland and she was faced with having to help a white person save their land. Sherrod said she took him to see a white lawyer. "I figured if I took him to one of them his own kind, [they] would take care of him," said Sherrod. According to FOX News, the agriculture department announced Monday that Sherrod had resigned. [Link](#)

USDA big quits in bias-boast shock (The New York Post 7/20)

A black official in the US Agriculture Department resigned yesterday after a video surfaced of her bragging to the NAACP that she didn't do everything she could to help a white farmer facing bankruptcy. Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, told the audience at a March banquet in Atlanta that she claimed the man felt "superior" to her, according to FoxNews.com. "He had come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was talking all that time, trying to show me he was superior to me, was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," Sherrod said. "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land -- so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do." "I did enough," she said. [Link](#)

NAACP 'appalled' by black USDA official's racial discrimination (Daily Caller 7/20)

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People President Benjamin Todd Jealous said late Monday he was "appalled" by the actions of U.S. Department of Agriculture official Shirley Sherrod, who resigned earlier in the day after video surfaced of her speaking at an NAACP event about discriminating against a white farmer seeking government help. Jealous also promised to look into why members of the audience at an NAACP fundraiser in Georgia this past March reacted, as shown in the video, by nodding and in some cases laughing at Sherrod's remarks. But Jealous distanced the national NAACP from the incident. Coming just days after the NAACP condemned racist elements inside the Tea Party movement, Sherrod's remarks place the storied civil rights organization in an uncomfortable position. "Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race," Jealous said. "We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers." "Her actions were shameful. While she went on to explain in the story that she ultimately realized her mistake, as well as the common predicament of working people of all races, she gave no indication she had attempted to right the wrong she had done to this man," Jealous said (read his full statement below). [Link](#)

BREAKING: Racist Obama administration member resigns (Manhattan Conservative Examiner 7/19)

Shirley Sherrod of the USDA's Georgia Rural Development office has resigned following the airing of overtly racist remarks she made in a speech before—of all organizations—the NAACP. At a local NAACP meeting in March of 2010, Sherrod boasted of withholding assistance to a farmer based on the color of his skin, which happened to be white. Sherrod (surprise!) is black. In her comments, which are captured in the video below, Sherrod freely admits to "struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost

their farm land, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land." She further confesses to abusing her position by refusing to "give him the full force of what I could do." The remarks conclude with a racist gem: "I took him to a white lawyer... I figured that if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him." [Link](#)

USDA Official Implicated in NAACP Racism Flap (Buckeye Ag Network 7/20)

Days after the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) denounced the Conservative Tea Party movement on allegations of racism, the organization was itself implicated in charges of racism involving a USDA official. In a video released at BigGovernment.com, USDA's Director of Rural Development in Georgia Shirley Sherrod was depicted acknowledging discriminating against white farmers. The video, of a speech Sherrod gave to the NAACP's Freedom Fund banquet in March of this year, stirred quite a controversy on the internet this week, forcing Sherrod's resignation from the department Monday. Sherrod's remarks in the NAACP speech indicated that she "didn't give [a white farmer] the full force of what I could do," because "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land." [Link](#)

USDA worker quits over racism charge from video (Salon 7/20)

A black federal worker has resigned from a Georgia agricultural job after a video clip showed her saying she had not helped a farmer as much as she could have because he was white. U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a statement Tuesday he had accepted the resignation of Shirley Sherrod. Vilsack says the USDA has no tolerance for discrimination. Sherrod told the Atlanta-Journal Constitution she was forced out of her job as the USDA's rural development director for Georgia. She said the two-minute, 38-second video posted online Monday misconstrued her message. [Link](#)

Justice Not Only Obama Department Not Equally Enforcing Law (Heritage Foundation Blog 7/20)

This morning we reviewed the still unfolding New Black Panther Party scandal at the Department of Justice where a whistle blower, testifying under oath, quoted Deputy Assistant Attorney General Julie Fernandes as saying that "the Voting Section will never or will not, at least while she is there, bring any more cases against blacks or other national minorities." In other words, Fernandes has reportedly admitted that the Obama Justice Department is not enforcing the nation's civil rights law equally and in a race-neutral manner. The Obama Justice Department has refused to confirm or deny that Fernandes made this statement. Now Andrew Breitbart has unearthed a very similar statement from another Obama political appointee, this time from the Department of Agriculture. In the video, U.S. Department of Agriculture Director of Rural Development for Georgia Shirley Sherrod tells an NAACP audience . . . First Justice. Now Agriculture. How many other Obama Department's are refusing to enforce our nation's laws equally? [Link](#)

NAACP meeting calmly listened to racist remarks from black fed official (American Thinker 7/20)

Andrew Breitbart has scored another bullseye, revealing hypocrisy of the highest order on the part of another leftist establishment organization, the NAACP. On March 27 of this year, speaking before an NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet, Shirley Sherrod, the Department of Agriculture director for the State of Georgia -- responsible for over a billion dollars a year in spending -- boasts of denying a white farmer her full efforts because of his race. The audience does not react with shock or disapproval, but rather just sits there. So much for NAACP President Ben Jealous denouncing the tea parties for tolerating racists. Only after Breitbart gave the incriminating video national exposure did the NAACP issue the obligatory denunciation, to prevent further embarrassment. But when nobody was looking, the NAACP audience was totally cool with the racism expressed by their speaker. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Comments Results in Resignation (Lalate Blog 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod has resigned following her comments about a white farmer. Shirley Sherrod's remarks appeared in a video from BigGovernment.com, dated by the website as March 27. Shirley Sherrod has been the USDA's Georgia director of Rural Development. In the video, Sherrod addresses an NAACP banquet stating "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land -- so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough". Late Monday the USDA announced Sherrod had resigned. NAACP President and CEO Benjamin Todd Jealous issued a statement against Sherrod's comments. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod of USDA resigns (Buzz Tab 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod, USDA's black employee has resigned from her post on Monday in the wake of outburst of a video at conservative media outlets in which Shirley Sherrod is shown telling one of the audience that she had not given a white farmer the full force of what I could do to help him save his family farm. Tom Vilsack, the Agriculture Secretary said that he had accepted Shirley Sherrod's resignation. Shirley Sherrod was working as USDA's State Director of Rural Development for Georgia. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said he had accepted the resignation of Shirley Sherrod, the department's state director of rural development for Georgia. Tom Vilsack further added that in USDA, they are following a zero tolerance for discrimination. He said that being Secretary Agriculture he condemns any discriminatory act against any person. He further added that at USDA, they are working hard for past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history and they are taking fairness and equality as a serious matter at USDA. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Has Officially Resigned From Her Job Due To Racial Preference! (Moms Word Blog 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod, who is known as a USDA official in Georgia, has finally resigned after publicly admitting that race played a factor in her decision to limit how much aid would be given to a white farmer. Sherrod, who is African American, made the comments during an NAACP banquet on March 27, according to the information in the video above. In fact a clip of her speech was being aired on BigGovernment.com and also Fox News Monday morning. Sherrod said during the now famous speech about the first time she was "faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." She claims that during the conversation, the man "was trying to show me he was superior to me." "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland," Sherrod told the crowd. "And here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land." [Link](#)

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Jett, Carole

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:33 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen - ChiefOfStaff
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: CNN Transcript: Shirley Sherrod Discussion

Station: CNN

Date: 07/20/2010 10:02:52 - 10:12:52 AM

the u.s. department of agriculture shunned by the naacp. we're pushing forward on the story of **shirley** sherrod. she's telling us we don't have the whole story. she used to be the rule development director for georgia until a youtube clip of her went viral from an naacp dinner march.

so many black people had lost their farmland and here i was faced with a white person needing to save their land. so i didn't give him the full force of what i could do. i did enough.

well, here is part of the statement from agriculture secretary tom vilsack. there's zero tolerance for discrimination at usda, and i strongly condemn any act of discrimination from any person. from ben jealous from the naacp, racism is about the abuse of power. we are appalled by her axes just as we are against the power of farmers of color and female farmers. sherrod says, hold on, there's no context with that clip and that it doesn't tell the entire story. she called cnn's american morning this morning to give her side of the story and talked with john roberts. he joins us from new york and cnn's political analyst roland martin is in chicago and he will weigh in as well. let's listen to your interview with shirley sherrod from earlier and then comment.

i was speaking to the group like i've done many groups, and i tell them about a time when i thought the issue was race and race only. and i tell them the story of how i worked with the white farmer back in 1986. i was not working for the department of agriculture. i was working with the nonprofit organization assisting farmers throughout south georgia and the southeast. and this farmer came to me for help. i was telling the story about how working with him helped me to see that the issue is it not about race. it's about those who have versus those who do not have.

john, what's your take?

well, we had her on this morning. when you take a look at that video clip, it looks like, oh, my goodness, this is something she did while in a position of authority at the u.s. department of agriculture. she said this was 24 years ago, this was a learning experience for her. in the job she was in with this nonprofit cooperative organization dealing with farmers in southeastern georgia had a preconceived notion of what it was all about, about white and black, and she said, no, i learned from that it was not about race. it was about the haves versus the have-nots, and she has not only told this speech before this organization back on march the 27th, but more than six months earlier than that, on the 15th of october, she gave what she told us this morning was exactly the same speech at albany state university and was played over and over again on local television in albany and nobody said anything about this. this was put up on a website, the latest one from march 27th, and that's when it came to the attention of the u.s. department of agriculture and the naacp. when you take a look at ben jealous' statement, it looks as though he perceived this was something she did while she was at the u.s. department of agriculture, which others have told us would indeed be wrong, but is it wrong if she was telling a story that happened 26 years ago saying this is something that changed my perspective on the whole issue? that's what's being debated now.

roland, is this action taken by the right wingers to just pick whatever sound bites from this speech and put it out of context and put it on youtube without seeing the whole thing?

well, first of all, i want to address the right wingers perspective second. i believe that the statement by the naacp was a correct statement because you're speaking to the issue of being in power, and you actually making a determination based upon race. i talked to john boyd with the national black farmers association, and he supports their decision, even though, as she said, this took place prior to her coming to the usda. it shows when you're in a position of power -- we also know there are individuals who work for the department of agriculture who cost the american taxpayers 1 billion-plus dollars and think of not been fired and denied opportunities to hispanics, blacks and whites and based upon gender, so i hope the right wing conservatives would talk to those individuals as well. she has to understand that her position was going to be, frankly, difficult, because the question would then have come into would other folks can you deny opportunities to? what else happened? any politically charged environment, like it or not, this is going happen.

wasn't she just telling the story of redemption? she feels she was telling a story of redemption that more than 20 years ago -

as a political appointee, one has to recognize in these times today, when folks do play gotcha, when you do have videotape, how things can be used against you. so i would question frankly even telling that particular story publicly, knowing full well how it could be used against you, used against your superiors, used against the president, whom ever. that's the environment we are now living in whether we like it or not.

we have all been victim of that. how many times have we given speeches or interviews and stein people take snippets. it's happened to all three of us, in fact, and it's pretty heart wrenching.

the motives are clear.

the point could be made that robert byrd's affiliation with the ku klux klan. it stayed with him for his life and was mentioned when he passed away recently but people allowed him to take a different point of view when he came to it. i'm not defending this woman but she came to a different point of view, and she's talking about that now and is that a fireable offense?

roland?

again, though, you begin to speak to the issue in terms of what will be the perception, will it be a political fire storm and will the controversy get in the way of you actually doing your job? weefb's seen this on multiple occasions.

roland, that's a great point. we don't know, at least at this point -- i don't know. do you know, john?

we don't have her record, but from talking to her this morning -- we do not have her record, but from talking to her this morning, she said that episode in her life during which he worked very closely with this farmer and became friends with both him and his wife, it taught her how to do her job better, so it would appear on the surface -- not defending her, just telling you what she said -- that this was a learning experience. she was in her job at a nonprofit with a different perspective than she has now and this helped her to see the light.

we need to hear from the usda. john reached out to the usda. we reached out to the usda. now that we are getting more context regarding this speech and she has spoken to us live on cnn, we need to hear from the usda and say, well, did she explain this to you and why did you accept her resignation.

sure, and, kyra, look, we also have to recognize that when you're operating in a political fire storm, when you are operating in a situation where just last week naacp went after tea party folks, racist elements. truly, that was the motive of andrew brightbart. that was the motive, what is the context, what are you exposing. but from a political standpoint, whether you like it or not, you have to make decisions before somebody may resign or get forced out because it could impede your actual work moving forward if it continues and the drumbeats get louder and louder. you cut it off at the pass. you may not like it, but that's the reality in 2010.

that's right true. once it's on the internet it never goes away. final thought, john.

it would be nice to see the entire tape in its context so we could all take a look at it and say, oh, this is what she said, and you can continue to hold the same opinion or change it based on what she said.

there you go. let's ask the usda for the entire tape.

i would like to know, too, if the naacp had the benefit of having this in context before it came forward with its statement.

i say, yes.

i talked to ben jealous in terms of it did not have her comments on that, but, again, you are looking at a situation of a national organize that fought racism on the surface. when you hear comments, what's your reaction going to be?

roland, did ben jealous say he saw the entire speech?

no one has seen the whole tape. this wasn't a national organization. this was a local chapter, not a national organization.

it would be good to see the whole tape.

i wonder for those who released the sound bites, if they saw the whole tape, too. i'm getting a big, fat wrap. we will stay on it. roland, let us know if you hear more.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Exemption (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:30 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen - ChiefOfStaff
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: FOX: Gingrich Responds to Discrimination at USDA
Attachments: image001.gif

Gingrich Responds to Discrimination at USDA

Tuesday, July 20, 2010

FOX NEWS

ADVERTISEMENT

This is a rush transcript from "Hannity," July 19, 2010. This copy may not be in its final form and may be updated.

SEAN HANNITY, HOST: And this is a Fox News alert. An Obama administration official resigned just a short time ago after she was caught on tape appearing to tell an audience that she had used her position to racially discriminate against white farmers.

Now the woman, Shirley Sherrod, was the Georgia state director at the Department of Agricultural. Now the president's Agricultural Secretary Tom Vilsack just released a statement saying the USDA has a zero tolerance policy against discrimination.

Here's part of the shocking video that ignited this controversy.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

SHIRLEY SHERROD, FORMER USDA GA STATE DIRECTOR: The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking but he was trying to show me he was superior to me.

I know what he was doing. But he had come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him.

(END OF VIDEO CLIP)

HANNITY: Now details on the official sudden resignation are still coming in. We'll have more on this story including more video coming up in this hour. That's all straight ahead.

But also, meanwhile the debate in Washington raged today over whether or not unemployment insurance should be extended yet again for American struggling to find work. Now earlier President Obama addressed the issue from the Rose Garden.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA: It's time to stop holding workers laid off in this recession hostage to Washington politics. It's time to do what is right. Not for the next election, but for the middle class.

We've got to stop blocking emergency relief for Americans who are out of work. We've got to extend unemployment insurance.

(END OF VIDEO CLIP)

HANNITY: All right, now the president did not bother to mention that the only reason the extension may be necessary is because his stimulus was a complete and utter failure.

Now since the recovery plan was passed more than three million Americans have lost their jobs.

Now this morning the GOP leader in the House came out swinging saying, quote, "The president knows Republicans support extending unemployment insurance and doing it in a fiscally responsible way by cutting spending elsewhere in the \$3 trillion federal budget."

But the White House isn't interested in finding a way to actually pay for the extension. It's a whole lot easier to simply drive America deeper into debt.

And joining me now with analysis is the former speaker of the House, Fox News contributor, co-host of the documentary along with his wife Calista, "Nine Days That Changed the World," which you can find at Newt.org, is former speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich.

Mr. Speaker, welcome back.

NEWT GINGRICH, FORMER SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE: It's good to be with you.

HANNITY: All right. A lot — a lot obviously going on here. The — this woman on tape saying these racially charged things that she didn't want to help farmers, in particular white farmer. That she said she wanted him to go out and deal with one of his own and she put him in touch with a white lawyer.

Just the latest in a series of racial incidents. What do you think of this?

GINGRICH: Well, let me say, first of all, Secretary Vilsack did exactly the right thing. I mean I often disagree with this administration. But firing her after that kind of viciously racist attitude was exactly the right thing to do. And the fact that we have to be genuinely colorblind.

You know you can't be a black racist any more than you can be a white racist. And I just think it'd be good for those of us who are often critical of the administration to recognize that here's a case where Secretary Vilsack did exactly the right thing, moved very promptly, and fired somebody who frankly shouldn't be serving the American people because they clearly had a set of attitudes inappropriate for a federal official.

HANNITY: All right, my only thing is they weren't the ones that caught it. It was on Breitbart.com and it happened some time ago. So it's interesting that it took the new media to expose this.

Here's my next question, though. There's another twist to the story, and that is that, this was — these comments were made at an NAACP banquet. Now in light of the NAACP accusing the Tea Party of being a racist movement last week, do you think the NAACP should be held to account for the very standard they were demanding from the Tea Party?

GINGRICH: Of course. Clearly the national — and I suspect, Sean, if you contact them — the national leadership of the NAACP — I'm sure will feel honor-bound to apologize for having had that kind of a racist comment said at a meeting I suspect they didn't know about it, just as I suspect Secretary Vilsack didn't.

But now that it's there and it's clearly obvious, because it's on tape, I would hope that national NAACP would apologize for having that kind of racist comment at one of their meetings.

HANNITY: Well, I've tried to reach out to Ben Jealous. He has yet to return my phone call and he's invited on this program if he would like to discuss it. I'd like to have him on.

But it's interesting. A lot of people contacted me last week. Apparently you had sent out a tweet. By the way I'm glad that you are up on tweeting, which by the way, I have a Twitter account as well at @SeanHannity.

But you have your own Twitter account. And you offered to basically broker a meeting —

GINGRICH: No, no.

HANNITY: Well, hang on.

GINGRICH: No, I — no, I didn't say that. That was a misinterpretation by the Huffington Post.

HANNITY: OK.

GINGRICH: What I said was —

HANNITY: I didn't read the tweet. Go ahead.

GINGRICH: Right. But what I said was local Tea Party groups — because Tea Parties don't have a hierarchy. They don't have a national organization. Local Tea Party groups ought to reach out to local NAACP chapters and offer to have joint town hall meetings.

For example, about job creation. I mean there's a clear difference between job creators and job killers. It would be great to get Americans of all backgrounds in the same room talking about whether they ought to follow policies that you and I believe in which create jobs.

And I suspect most African-Americans at the local level in the local NAACP chapter would be surprised at how much they have in common with Tea Party members, a number of whom, by the way, are African-American, Latino and Asians. They're not — the Tea Parties are not white organizations. They're open to all Americans.

So my point was, if somebody wants to start a conversation, instead of yelling at them, what if we invite them in the room and let's have a conversation about America's future together.

And I'm told by Adam Waldeck at American Solutions who coordinates this that a number of local Tea Party groups are reaching out to local NAACP chapters on their own to have this kind of a dialogue.

HANNITY: I don't know what the right answer is. But I would find it very hard to sit down with the NAACP back in 2000. They ran this James Byrd ad when George Bush supported the death penalty for the person — the people responsible for that James Byrd dragging death.

You can't have a worse penalty. And that ad was particularly hard hitting. It was as if my father was killed all over again, if you remember that ad. And then in this particular case, this happened with this woman at this NAACP banquet.

I'm not saying not to have a dialogue. I am saying you can also talk about their associations. They've been — Ben Jealous was at a meeting with Louis Farrakhan. Should we not have certain standards prior to any meeting?

GINGRICH: Yes. We can also say let's agree that we should condemn racism wherever it occurs. Now we hope that the NAACP will apply that standard to somebody who is at one of its banquets.

But I think it's good for the country to see that we are not afraid to reach out and talk to people and to try to focus the conversation in a positive way. African-American unemployment is higher under the Obama administration than under any administration in a very longtime.

African-Americans want their schools to work so their children go to college and not to prison. We have lots of things you and I could talk about in local meetings. And I said local meetings where local people get together.

And I think you'd find that at the local level, not the professional, you know, left-wing activist level. At the local level there are an awful lot of very decent people in the NAACP who would suddenly find out they have an awful lot in common with their local Tea Party neighbors.

HANNITY: But I found the chart — the things that were said about the Tea Party so inaccurate, so over-the-top, so lacking in evidence, it is almost hard to begin a dialogue when everything is predicated on false charges and a false statement.

I didn't even bring up the issue of the New Black Panther Party and the Department of Justice and Eric Holder. What did you —

GINGRICH: Well, look —

HANNITY: Go ahead.

GINGRICH: First of all, Eric Holder should resign for national security reasons. He should certainly resign over the racism inherent in the Black Panther case. I mean I'm happy to say that Eric Holder shouldn't be attorney general and is not doing the job correctly.

But I'd certainly go back to your point for a second, Sean. Maybe this makes me different, OK? The New York Times often runs editorials that are totally dishonest. Their attack on the Arizona state law, for example — on immigration — was a totally dishonest attack.

I still talk to New York Times reporters all the time. I think it's important to reach out. It's important to try to be positive.

HANNITY: By the way, just for the record I do not return the calls of anybody from The New York Times. They don't call anymore because I won't return their calls.

GINGRICH: Now our audience — now our audience can see the difference in our two styles.

HANNITY: Yes, well — look, what do I know? I made — perhaps you're right.

Look, I'm not saying we ought not have a dialogue. I think a dialogue is important. But I think a dialogue has got to be — the foundation of which has got to start in a fair way.

GINGRICH: Right.

HANNITY: And it's almost like if you begin a dialogue with OK, the Tea Party is racist, the Tea Party, you know — the Tea Party members uttered these racial epithets when there's no evidence, seems to me that you're starting out at a decided disadvantage.

GINGRICH: Sure.

HANNITY: If you don't demand honesty up front and an apology before the dialogue begins.

GINGRICH: Well, I like to — I think we have a nice test that came on your show tonight. Do they have the courage — the NAACP — to apologize for the racism in this person's comments at an NAACP banquet? Pretty good test.

HANNITY: All right. We'll come back. We have a lot more with former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, coming up after the break.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

HANNITY: And we continue now with former Speaker of the House, Fox News contributor, Newt Gingrich is with us.

All right, Mr. Speaker, we had the NAACP. We had what they said about the Tea Party. I think obviously an attempt — they support the Democratic Party — 106 days out of an election to energize the base.

The president. He went out and he'd started referring to the GOP as being the party of the rich because he says Republicans don't want to extend unemployment benefits. The reality is Republicans do support extending unemployment benefits. They want it paid for. They've already supported an extension for 99 weeks.

And by the way, the president doesn't need any Republican votes to pass the bill anyway. So is this — is this what we can expect for the next 106 days?

GINGRICH: Sure. Look, if you watch what Harry Reid is trying to do to Sharron Angle in Nevada. What you're going to see everywhere in the country is desperately dishonest, and I think consistently demagogue attacks, because they know that if there's any kind of a fair fight they're going to get badly defeated.

The president sadly is the opposite of Ronald Reagan. Ronald Reagan led by telling the American people the truth, by rallying them to the facts and by encouraging their better instincts.

The president seems to have a really unusual desire to divide the country and a really deep need to blame somebody else for his own failures. And as a result, you get this kind of Rose Garden comment.

HANNITY: Yes.

GINGRICH: The fact is, if this president cared about getting money to the unemployed, all he has to agree to is a one percent reduction in his budget across the board and that would pay for —

HANNITY: Yes.

GINGRICH: — everything he wants to send. But he does — what he wants to do is borrow from your children and your grandchildren so that we will pay interest on the debt forever, so that he can send out money that is unpaid for, that increases the federal deficit even beyond the already gigantic amounts.

HANNITY: All right, so —

GINGRICH: And I think that's just fundamentally, morally wrong.

HANNITY: So what you're saying for the next 106 days we can expect a ton of class warfare rhetoric, demagoguery as you just pointed out, and demonization, et cetera, character assassination, maybe some supportive groups playing the race card because they can't run on their record? That's what's the next 106 days are going to be like? This is going to be all we see?

GINGRICH: Look — I think the Democratic Party counterattack — to use the language you just kind of packaged nicely. If you assume dishonesty, distortion and demagoguery, you have a reasonably good idea what Harry Reid's campaign is going to be like.

Because of the election choice in Nevada at 14.5 percent unemployment is between a job killing Harry Reid record and a job creating Sharron Angle proposal. He's going to get beat so badly that you won't even be able to see him.

Therefore he is — he's raising — he just went to Canada to raise money from trial lawyers in an international meeting.

HANNITY: All right, so —

GINGRICH: This guy is going to pour on negative ads. Every Democrat in the country will imitate Harry Reid.

HANNITY: Yes. I agree and I have a friend of mine running for Congress and he's already experiencing it. Guy votes with Nancy Pelosi 99 percent of the time, the only thing he wants to do is attack you and me and Mark Levin and anybody else, which is interesting.

The question is, will this tactic be successful?

GINGRICH: No. No.

HANNITY: And — and how do you recommend — you're great at politics. How do you recommend Republicans counter that?

GINGRICH: First of all, Sean.

HANNITY: Yes?

GINGRICH: If you voted 99 percent with Nancy Pelosi —

HANNITY: Yes?

GINGRICH: Wouldn't you want to be attacking all day every day?

HANNITY: Yes.

GINGRICH: I mean do you want to defend that record?

HANNITY: No.

GINGRICH: I — I was out last week in — for Brad Zaun in Des Moines. His opponent voted 98 percent with Nancy Pelosi and all he has to say is, you know, San Francisco doesn't deserve an Iowa representative. Iowa needs an Iowa representative. And that's the whole campaign.

HANNITY: I think that's the whole campaign. I agree.

GINGRICH: I believe the key to the fall election is very simple. There are job creators and there are job killers. We absolute proof that from the time Pelosi and Reid took over in January of 2007 the Democratic Congress has been killing jobs. It continues to kill jobs. This economy is not going to recover. We just saw a — we just saw a huge oil rig leave the Gulf to go to Egypt with high paying jobs. We had a company announce over the weekend — think about this quote — "because of political instability in the United States, we are moving our rig to the Congo —

HANNITY: Yes.

GINGRICH: ...to drill for oil." So the president is exporting jobs. He's doing a great job of creating jobs for China. The president has done a great job creating jobs for Egypt and the Congo. He just isn't doing a great job creating jobs for Americans.

HANNITY: No, we're losing those jobs. All right, but then —

GINGRICH: So that's the choice. You want to be job creator or a job killer. If you want to be a job killer, vote Democrat. If you want a job creator, vote Republican. I think that's the fall campaign.

HANNITY: All right. I agree with you. Don't think that I didn't notice you dropped in Des Moines, Iowa, and your latest trip to the great state of Iowa. And in between I know you snuck in a trip to New Hampshire. And I think I saw your schedule, you're going back to South Carolina.

GINGRICH: I was in South Carolina Friday a week ago —

HANNITY: Now hang on a second. Now wait a minute, we've been friends a long time. You have given more direct answers to people in the liberal media than to me. I want to know what's Newt Gingrich's plan.

GINGRICH: Our plan is for Calista and me to sit down with our family in February or March.

HANNITY: That's not the answer I want.

GINGRICH: And make a decision. But I promise you, Sean —

HANNITY: Well, how come —

(CROSSTALK)

GINGRICH: Because they printed the same thing I've said to you for nine months. What can I tell you? But I think it had — because it had AP Des Moines.

HANNITY: Yes.

GINGRICH: It suddenly got bigger coverage. I mean if it had said AP Long Island it wouldn't had been the same effect.

HANNITY: It would said, Newt and Hannity, it probably wouldn't had been the same. But then again maybe they're mad at me at The New York Times because I don't respond to their phone calls. You do.

GINGRICH: Yes, I guessed that could be the whole problem.

HANNITY: That's could be the whole thing right there. All right.

GINGRICH: But I promise you in February or March, I'll be on the show. We'll talk about it.

HANNITY: And you'll announce here, either way?

GINGRICH: Well I'll certainly talk about it.

(LAUGHTER)

HANNITY: I love being able to pin you down. All right. Former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich.

— Watch "Hannity" weeknights at 9 p.m. ET!

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: (202) 256-8626
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

Carole

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:25 AM
To: Jett, Carole; Cluthe, Sally
Cc: Berge, John
Subject: Re: Secretary schedule

It is going to be hard but he will have car time later.

----- Original Message -----

From: Jett, Carole
To: Cluthe, Sally
Cc: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 10:05:35 2010
Subject: Secretary schedule

Sally

We likely need a couple hours carved out for Secretary to make calls related to shirley sherrod issue.

Berge is getting a list of who, why and numbers.

Carole Jett

Deputy Chief of Staff

USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:19 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen - ChiefOfStaff
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: CBS: USDA Race Remark Furor: Not So Black-and-White

Nothing really new in this story. Most comes from the AJC article

CBS: USDA Race Remark Furor: Not So Black-and-White

A high-ranking black employee of the U.S. Department of Agriculture has resigned after remarks she made about race were distributed by conservative web sites and aired on Fox News.

A video clip of Shirley Sherrod, the USDA's Georgia State Director of Rural Development, was circulated by conservative blogger Andrew Breitbart and his site, biggovernment.com, in which Sherrod talked of withholding help to a white man facing the loss of his family farm.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack released a statement Tuesday saying he had accepted Sherrod's resignation, and added that the department has no tolerance for discrimination.

The remarks was purportedly from a speech Sherrod gave at an NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet on March 27, 2010, in Douglas, Ga. The video clip has inflamed innumerable conservative bloggers and has lit up YouTube.

The news came a week after the NAACP and the Tea Party movement each became embroiled in accusations of racism and bigotry within the other group, and after **a high-ranking Tea Party spokesperson was expelled by other movement officials** after he published a blog about slavery that was deemed racist.

In a statement released Monday, NAACP President Benjamin Jealous said that the organization concurred with Vilsack accepting Sherrod's resignation, adding, "Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race."

But in an interview with the Atlanta Journal Constitution, Sherrod said the clip doesn't tell the whole story. And indeed, it is a story that pre-dates her tenure at the USDA by more than two decades.

Sherrod is a graduate of Albany State University in Albany, Ga., with a masters degree in Community Development from Antioch University in Ohio. Beginning in 1985 she served as Director of the Georgia State Office for the **Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund**, which works to help family farmers retain and develop their property.

Last July **Vilsack appointed her** to head the USDA's Rural Development office in Georgia.

In the video clip (click on the embedded viewer below to watch), Sherrod is heard telling a story about a white man who came to her for help:

"The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking, but he was trying to show me he was superior to me. I know what he was doing. But he had come to me for help.

"What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was, I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him. I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough, so that when he - I assumed the Department of Agriculture had sent him to me, either that or the Georgia Department of Agriculture, and he needed to go back and report that I did try to help him.

"So I took him to a white lawyer that had attended some of the training that we had provided because Chapter 12 bankruptcy had just been enacted for the family farm. So I figured if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him.

"That's when it was revealed to me that it's about poor versus those who have. It's not so much about white — It IS about white and black, because I took him to one of his own . . ."

The clip ends just as Sherrod has begun talking about a realization that it is class — not race — that is the issue, which is ironic given how Sherrod's critics are trying to take her remarks to prove racism exists.

What's more, Sherrod told the Journal-Constitution, the encounter she's relating occurred 24 years ago, long before she was a government employee. [Indeed, Chapter 12 bankruptcy, which she says in the video had just been enacted, was instituted for family farmers in 1986.]

Sherrod also told the paper that the video excerpt did not include the full story of her relationship with the farmer, working with him for two years to help his fight off foreclosure and keep his land, and even becoming friends with him and his wife.

"And I went on to work with many more white farmers," she said. "The story helped me realize that race is not the issue, it's about the people who have and the people who don't. When I speak to groups, I try to speak about getting beyond the issue of race."

Resigned USDA Official Says Racial Story Misconstrued

Sherrod told the paper the USDA forced her out of her position because "They were just looking at what the Tea Party and what Fox said, and thought it was too (politically) dangerous for them."

The Journal-Constitution, the Huffington Post and other media outlets have called for a release of the complete tape, in order to better judge the context of Sherrod's remarks. There is more recording available, as Breitbart has managed to release a second clip in which Sherrod discusses the paucity of black employees in government positions relating to agriculture.

Sherrod suggests it would be a good career move, even in hard economic times: "You've heard of a lot of lay-offs. Have you heard of anybody in the federal government losing their job?"

Well . . . yeah.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Exemption (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: Cluthe, Sally
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:17 AM
To: Jett, Carole
Cc: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Subject: Re: Secretary schedule

There are a couple of long driving stretches today.

- 10:00-11:20am - cell service becomes spotty about 11am
- 2:00-3:45pm - cell service is spotty on Verizon
- 5:00-5:40pm - cell service is spotty on Verizon

I think it would be best to do these without the Gov. in the car so we might want to pick one time to get them all done - I'm thinking 2-3:45pm since it will give us time to set them up.

Any objections to that?

Krysta - Is it possible for Gov. to ride on his own during that time?

----- Original Message -----

From: Jett, Carole
To: Cluthe, Sally
Cc: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 10:05:35 2010
Subject: Secretary schedule

Sally

We likely need a couple hours carved out for Secretary to make calls related to shirley sherrod issue.

Berge is getting a list of who, why and numbers.

Carole Jett

Deputy Chief of Staff

USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:17 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen - ChiefOfStaff
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: HuffPo: Shirley Sherrod Resigns USDA Job After Admitting Use Of Racial Preference During NAACP Banquet (VIDEO)

This is one the homepage but is a few stories down.

HuffPo: Shirley Sherrod Resigns USDA Job After Admitting Use Of Racial Preference During NAACP Banquet (VIDEO)

Shirley Sherrod, a USDA official in Georgia, has resigned after publicly admitting that race played a factor in her decision to limit how much aid would be given to a white farmer.

Sherrod, who is African American, made the comments during a local NAACP banquet on March 27, according to information displayed on the video. A clip of her speech first appeared Monday morning on BigGovernment.com and aired that evening on Fox News.

Her resignation as the agency's state director of rural development was quickly accepted by U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. He cited a zero-tolerance policy and told CNN that he was working to "reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department."

In her controversial speech, Sherrod discussed the first time she was "faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." She claimed that during the conversation, the man "was trying to show me he was superior to me."

"I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland," Sherrod told the crowd. "And here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land."

"I didn't give him the full force of what I could do."

During the portion of her speech posted online, she mentioned that Chapter 12 bankruptcy had just been enacted for family farmers. That protection started in 1986, more than two decades before Sherrod joined the USDA. She added that the incident "opened my eyes."

The website for the department Sherrod last oversaw has a notice clearly stating that the USDA "prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status."

Sherrod appears to have a long record in the civil rights movement prior to her USDA appointment, which came almost exactly a year ago. It's possible that she has been on the other side of the "checkered history" that Vilsack referred to.

The Rural Development Leadership Network lists her as a board member and has a page congratulating her on the appointment. In that announcement, they state that Sherrod and her husband, Charles, were part of a multi-million dollar settlement against the USDA based on civil rights claims from the 1980s. The case wouldn't be settled until May 12, 2009. She was appointed to her USDA job two months later.

A picture on the RDLN website shows her standing with her husband next to a sign for the Charles M. Sherrod Civil Rights Park in their hometown of Albany, GA.

NAACP President Benjamin Jealous issued a statement late on Monday saying his organization was appalled by Sherrod's "shameful" actions.

The NAACP has recently been embroiled in a heated debate after passing a resolution condemning the tea party movement for tolerating bigotry. Mark Williams, spokesperson for the Tea Party Express, responded by calling the

NAACP racist and was later expelled from the National Tea Party Federation for a racially charged blog post. Tea party activists are now planning a summit to combat racism.

According to the Atlanta-Journal Constitution, the local chapter of the NAACP has also firmly rejected Sherrod's comments. They further report:

Sherrod, 62, lives in Albany. She was appointed to her position in by Obama in July 2009 to manage more than 40 housing, business and community infrastructure and facility programs, and more than \$114 billion in federal loans.

Before that, she had served as director of the Georgia field office for the Federation of Southern Cooperative/Land Assistance Fund.

FULL STATEMENT FROM NAACP PRESIDENT BENJAMIN JEALOUS:

Since our founding in 1909, the NAACP has been a multi-racial, multi-faith organization that-- while generally rooted in African American communities-- fights to end racial discrimination against all Americans.

We concur with US Agriculture Secretary Vilsack in accepting the resignation of Shirley Sherrod for her remarks at a local NAACP Freedom Fund banquet.

Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race.

We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers.

Her actions were shameful. While she went on to explain in the story that she ultimately realized her mistake, as well as the common predicament of working people of all races, she gave no indication she had attempted to right the wrong she had done to this man.

The reaction from many in the audience is disturbing. We will be looking into the behavior of NAACP representatives at this local event and take any appropriate action.

We thank those who brought this to our national office's attention, as there are hundreds of local fundraising dinners each year.

Sherrod's behavior is even more intolerable in light of the US Department of Agriculture's well documented history of denying opportunities to African American, Latino, Asian American, and Native American farmers, as well as female farmers of all races. Currently, justice for many of these farmers is being held up by Congress. We would hope all who share our outrage at Sherrod's statements would join us in pushing for these cases to be remedied.

The NAACP will continue to advance the ideals of America and fight for freedom, justice and fairness for all Americans.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Exemption (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:16 AM
To: Jett, Carole; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Mather, Chris
Subject: Draft TPs

Talking Points

- Yesterday, Secretary Vilsack accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation.
- There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA and we strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person.
- We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.
- We don't want this issue to distract our efforts to do so.

But it happened 30 years ago, it was taken out of context, etc....

- We have a duty to ensure that when we provide services to the American people in an equitable manner.
- But equally important is our duty to instill confidence in the American people that we are fair service providers.
- Comments made by Mrs. Brown undermine that trust.

John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Jett, Carole

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:07 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen - ChiefOfStaff
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: UPDATED Washington Post: USDA worker quits over racism charge

With updates including her appointment information and details on the fact that this video was from over 20 years ago.

USDA worker quits over 1986 racial incident

[VIDEO EMBEDDED]

Updated 10:02 a.m. ET

By Ed O'Keefe and Krissah Thompson

A U.S. Agriculture Department official from Georgia resigned late Monday after she was caught on tape admitting that 24 years ago she did not help a white farmer as much as she could have because of his race.

Shirley Sherrod, USDA state director of rural development, made the remarks on March 27 at an NAACP Freedom Fund banquet. Her videotaped remarks surfaced online on Monday.

Sherrod reminded the crowd that Black farmers have faced years of discrimination and difficulty saving their farmland. She recounted the story of a white farmer who visited her asking for assistance keeping his farm.

"Here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land," she said (see above). "So, I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough so that when he, I assumed the Department of Agriculture had sent him to me. Either that or the Georgia Department of Agriculture. He needed to go back and report that I did try to help him."

As Sherrod tells the story of denying aid to the white farmer, she explains that she ultimately realized her mistake, but did not give any indication that she had rectified the situation.

The incident took place in 1986 when she was working for a nonprofit group and long before she joined USDA, Sherrod said Tuesday.

"I was speaking to that group, like I've done many groups, and I tell them about a time when I thought the issue was race and race only," she said in an interview on CNN. "I was telling the story of how working with him helped me to see the issue is not about race. It's about those who have versus those who do not have."

The white farmer, his wife and Sherrod later wound up as friends, she said.

Agriculture Secretary **Tom Vilsack** appointed Sherrod to her post in July 2009 and accepted her resignation on Monday.

"There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person," Vilsack said in a statement. "We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously."

It was not immediately clear if Sherrod was given an opportunity to explain her remarks to USDA officials or Vilsack before she resigned. A USDA spokesman did not immediately return requests for further clarification.

NAACP President and **Benjamin Jealous** issued a strongly worded statement condemning Sherrod Monday night, before she told CNN that the incident occurred before she worked for USDA.

"Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race," Jealous said.

"We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers," he added.

Jealous said Sherrod's behavior "is even more intolerable in light of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's well documented history of denying opportunities to African American, Latino, Asian American, and Native American farmers, as well as female farmers of all races."

The NAACP's comments come days after it denounced what it called "racist elements" of the Tea Party movement.

Black, Hispanic, Native American and female farmers have large discrimination lawsuits pending against USDA. Black farmers have been awarded a settlement worth \$1 billion for similar claims of discrimination.

Sherrod previously served as Georgia director of the Southern Cooperative/Land Assistance Fund and has worked with other rural and women's groups. Her office is part of USDA's Rural Development program, which administers more than \$114 billion in loans and loan guarantees. It is part of a larger network that manages more than 40 housing, business and community infrastructure programs at about 500 state, local and federal offices nationwide.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:31 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: Washington Post: USDA worker quits over racism charge

<http://voices.washingtonpost.com/federal-eye/2010/07/usda-worker-quits-over-racism.html>

USDA worker quits over racism charge

[VIDEO EMBEDDED]

By Ed O'Keefe and Krissah Thompson.

A U.S. Agriculture Department official from Georgia resigned late Monday after she was caught on tape admitting that she had not helped a farmer as much as she could have because he was white.

Shirley Sherrod, USDA state director of rural development, made the remarks on March 27 at an NAACP Freedom Fund banquet. Her videotaped remarks surfaced on YouTube on Monday.

Agriculture Secretary **Tom Vilsack** accepted Sherrod's resignation, saying, "There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously."

NAACP President and **Benjamin Jealous** called Sherrod's actions shameful and agreed with the decision to fire her.

"Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race," Jealous said in a statement Monday night.

"We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers," he added.

As Sherrod tells the story of denying aid to the white farmer, she explains that she ultimately realized her mistake, but did not give any indication that she had rectified the situation.

Jealous said Sherrod's behavior "is even more intolerable in light of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's well documented history of denying opportunities to African American, Latino, Asian American, and Native American farmers, as well as female farmers of all races."

The NAACP's comments come days after it denounced what it called "racist elements" of the Tea Party movement.

Black, Hispanic, Native American and female farmers have large discrimination lawsuits pending against the Agriculture department. Black farmers have previously been awarded a settlement worth \$1 billion for similar claims of discrimination.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Exemption (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:51 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen - ChiefOfStaff
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: Updated CNN: USDA employee says statements on white farmer misconstrued

Updated story with info on her appointment and statement from Federation of Southern Cooperatives/ Land Assistance Fund:

Addition:

Sherrod was appointed in July 2009 to serve as the rural development Georgia state director for USDA, according to a statement posted on the website of her former employer, the nonprofit Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund. She had worked for the federation since 1985, the statement said.

"We are proud that Shirley has been appointed to this position ... not just because she is the first African-American in Georgia to hold the post, but also because of her vast experience in agriculture and rural development," Ralph Paige, executive director of the nonprofit, said in the statement.

CNN: USDA employee says statements on white farmer misconstrued

July 20, 2010 -- Updated 1302 GMT (2102 HKT)

(CNN) -- A black Agriculture Department employee who resigned after a video clip showed her talking about a white farmer said Tuesday her remarks were taken out of context.

Shirley Sherrod, the department's former state director of rural development for Georgia, told CNN on Tuesday the incident she discusses in the clip took place more than two decades ago -- and she recounted it to an audience to make the point that people should move beyond race.

"I was speaking to that group, like I've done many groups, and I tell them about a time when I thought the issue was race and race only," Sherrod told CNN's "American Morning" from her home in Albany, Georgia. The incident took place in 1986, while she worked for a nonprofit and before she worked for the USDA, she said. "I was telling the story of how working with him helped me to see the issue is not about race. It's about those who have versus those who do not have."

Sherrod resigned Monday after conservative media outlets aired the video, in which she says she did not give the white farmer "the full force of what I could do" to help him avoid foreclosure.

Conservative website publisher Andrew Breitbart originally posted the video, which was quickly picked up by Fox News. The video claims Sherrod's remarks were delivered March 27 to an NAACP Freedom Fund banquet, but it is not clear that is the case, nor is it clear where the event was held or how many people were in attendance. The poor-quality video shows Sherrod telling her audience that the farmer she was working with "took a long time ... trying to show me he was superior to me." As a result, she said, she "didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough."

To prove she had done her job, she said, she took him to a white lawyer.

"I figured that if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him," she said.

Sherrod mentioned that the lawyer would help the farmer with a bankruptcy filing but did not say in the clip whether his farm was saved.

She told CNN that at the time, she was working with a nonprofit association aimed at assisting farmers in Georgia and the Southeast. In the end, she said, the lawyer did not help the farmer and she "had to frantically find a lawyer who would file a Chapter 11 to stop the foreclosure."

She said she, the farmer and his wife wound up being friends.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said Monday he had accepted Sherrod's resignation.

"There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person," Vilsack said. "We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously."

Sherrod told the Atlanta Journal-Constitution there were white people, including a mayor, at the banquet where she spoke. "Why would I do something racist if they were there?"

The NAACP issued a statement late Monday backing Vilsack's decision.

"Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race," said Benjamin Todd Jealous, president and CEO of the civil rights group. "We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers."

"Her actions were shameful," Jealous continued. "While she went on to explain in the story that she ultimately realized her mistake, as well as the common predicament of working people of all races, she gave no indication she had attempted to right the wrong she had done to this man."

Sherrod said Tuesday that it was "unfortunate that the NAACP would make a statement without even checking to see what happened. This was 24 years ago, and I'm telling a story to try to unite people."

She said she tried to explain to USDA officials, "but for some reason, the stuff Fox and the Tea Party does is scaring the administration. I told them to get the whole tape and look at the whole tape and see how I tell people we have to get beyond race and work together."

Asked why did she resigned instead of fighting, Sherrod said, "I didn't have any support from USDA. What would I do?"

James Peterson, assistant professor of English and Africana studies at Bucknell University in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, called the clip "a textbook case of institutional racism. Historically, it's been white against black, or white against whatever person of color is in question, but this is still institutional racism. We can't endorse it."

But he said, given later remarks made by Sherrod in the clip, "it's clear that this is an anecdote ... It is clear she is using this as an anecdote to talk about how she's progressed from this moment, and we can't let the weight of historical issues with race shape our individual issues.

"I think she is using this an anecdote to work through her own issues but also to show the audience we can move beyond and transcend some of these circumstances," he said.

Sherrod was appointed in July 2009 to serve as the rural development Georgia state director for USDA, according to a statement posted on the website of her former employer, the nonprofit Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund. She had worked for the federation since 1985, the statement said.

"We are proud that Shirley has been appointed to this position ... not just because she is the first African-American in Georgia to hold the post, but also because of her vast experience in agriculture and rural development," Ralph Paige, executive director of the nonprofit, said in the statement.

The conservative media outlets tied the video to the NAACP's recent resolution calling on the Tea Party movement to repudiate racist elements within it that have displayed such items as images of President Barack Obama with a bone through his nose and the White House with a lawn full of watermelons. The controversy has led one Tea Party group to oust another because of a blog posting by the second group's leader.

Tea Party Express leader Mark Williams posted on his blog a faux letter from NAACP president Benjamin Jealous to President Abraham Lincoln in which Williams ridicules the organization's use of "colored" in its historic name and uses multiple other stereotypes to bolster his point.

The National Tea Party Foundation expelled Williams' organization from its coalition as a result.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Exemption (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: Cluthe, Sally
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:32 AM
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Jett, Carole
Subject: RE:

There are a couple of long driving stretches today.

- 10:00-11:20am - cell service becomes spotty about 11am
- 2:00-3:45pm - cell service is spotty on Verizon
- 5:00-5:40pm - cell service is spotty on Verizon

I think it would be best to do these without the Gov. in the car so we might want to pick one time to get them all done - I'm thinking 2-3:45pm since it will give us time to set them up.

Any objections to that?

Krysta - Is it possible for Gov. to ride on his own during that time?

-----Original Message-----

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:25 AM
To: Harden, Krysta; Jett, Carole; Cluthe, Sally
Subject: Re:

May have some otyher CBC calls too. If he has time.

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Jett, Carole; Berge, John; Cluthe, Sally
Sent: Tue Jul 20 09:12:13 2010
Subject: Re:

Ok good

----- Original Message -----

From: Jett, Carole
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Cluthe, Sally
Sent: Tue Jul 20 09:05:27 2010
Subject: Re:

Remind Secretary that the recent Adm Law Judge award to Charles McDonald is in Clyburne's district. It may come up.

The Adm Law Judge is going to meet with Secretary soon to discuss award, but they all feel it is appropriate.

We are pulling all into huddle in Reeds office inc Joe, karis and Fred.

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John

To: Harden, Krysta; Cluthe, Sally

Cc: Jett, Carole

Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:49:03 2010

Can S call Clyburn today?

It'll be a while, but we may need him to.

We need his help with CBC outreach.

Jett, Carole

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:31 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen - ChiefOfStaff
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: Washington Post: USDA worker quits over racism charge

http://voices.washingtonpost.com/federal-eye/2010/07/usda_worker_quits_over_racism.html

USDA worker quits over racism charge

[VIDEO EMBEDDED]

By Ed O'Keefe and Krissah Thompson:

A U.S. Agriculture Department official from Georgia resigned late Monday after she was caught on tape admitting that she had not helped a farmer as much as she could have because he was white.

Shirley Sherrod, USDA state director of rural development, made the remarks on March 27 at an NAACP Freedom Fund banquet. Her videotaped remarks surfaced on YouTube on Monday.

Agriculture Secretary **Tom Vilsack** accepted Sherrod's resignation, saying, "There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously."

NAACP President and **Benjamin Jealous** called Sherrod's actions shameful and agreed with the decision to fire her.

"Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race," Jealous said in a statement Monday night.

"We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers," he added.

As Sherrod tells the story of denying aid to the white farmer, she explains that she ultimately realized her mistake, but did not give any indication that she had rectified the situation.

Jealous said Sherrod's behavior "is even more intolerable in light of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's well documented history of denying opportunities to African American, Latino, Asian American, and Native American farmers, as well as female farmers of all races."

The NAACP's comments come days after it denounced what it called "racist elements" of the Tea Party movement.

Black, Hispanic, Native American and female farmers have large discrimination lawsuits pending against the Agriculture department. Black farmers have previously been awarded a settlement worth \$1 billion for similar claims of discrimination.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Exemption (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:25 AM
To: Harden, Krysta; Jett, Carole; Cluthe, Sally
Subject: Re:

May have some oither CBC calls too. If he has time.

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Jett, Carole; Berge, John; Cluthe, Sally
Sent: Tue Jul 20 09:12:13 2010
Subject: Re:

Ok good

----- Original Message -----

From: Jett, Carole
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Cluthe, Sally
Sent: Tue Jul 20 09:05:27 2010
Subject: Re:

Remind Secretary that the recent Adm Law Judge award to Exs (b)(6) is in Clyburne's district. It may come up.

The Adm Law Judge is going to meet with Secretary soon to discuss award, but they all feel it is appropriate.

We are pulling all into huddle in Reeds office inc Joe, karis and Fred.

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Cluthe, Sally
Cc: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:49:03 2010

Can S call Clyburn today?

It'll be a while, but we may need him to.

We need his help with CBC outreach.

Jett, Carole

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:14 AM
To: Berge, John; Gutter, Karis -FSA; [Redacted]; Pfaeffle, Frederick
Cc: Williams, Janice; Jett, Carole
Subject: RE: Need you all in my office

En route

-----Original Message-----

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:06 AM
To: Gutter, Karis -FSA; [Redacted]; Pfaeffle, Frederick; Mather, Chris
Cc: Williams, Janice; Jett, Carole
Subject: Re: Need you all in my office

Looping Mather. Chris - please come too.

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Gutter, Karis -FSA; [Redacted]; [Redacted]; Pfaeffle, Frederick
Cc: Williams, Janice; Jett, Carole
Sent: Tue Jul 20 09:05:10 2010
Subject: Need you all in my office

ASAP this morning. Please respond, even with negative responses.

Jett, Carole

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:07 AM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: Fw: NAACP Statement on Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

Whole statement.

From: Mather, Chris
To: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:58:33 2010
Subject: Fw: NAACP Statement on Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

Chris Mather

From: Stephanie Chan
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:50:30 2010
Subject: NAACP Statement on Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

fyi-

NAACP Statement on Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

by **Publius**

July 19, 2010

(BALTIMORE, MD) NAACP President and CEO Benjamin Todd Jealous issued the following statement today after learning of the resignation of Shirley Sherrod of the United States Department of Agriculture:

“Since our founding in 1909, the NAACP has been a multi-racial, multi-faith organization that— while generally rooted in African American communities— fights to end racial discrimination against all Americans.

We concur with US Agriculture Secretary Vilsack in accepting the resignation of Shirley Sherrod for her remarks at a local NAACP Freedom Fund banquet.

Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race.

We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers.

Her actions were shameful. While she went on to explain in the story that she ultimately realized her mistake, as well as the common predicament of working people of all races, she gave no indication she had attempted to right the wrong she had done to this man.

The reaction from many in the audience is disturbing. We will be looking into the behavior of NAACP representatives at this local event and take any appropriate action.

We thank those who brought this to our national office's attention, as there are hundreds of local fundraising dinners each year.

Sherrod's behavior is even more intolerable in light of the US Department of Agriculture's well documented history of denying opportunities to African American, Latino, Asian American, and Native American farmers, as well as female farmers of all races. Currently, justice for many of these farmers is being held up by Congress. We would hope all who share our outrage at Sherrod's statements would join us in pushing for these cases to be remedied.

The NAACP will continue to advance the ideals of America and fight for freedom, justice and fairness for all Americans."

Founded in 1909, the NAACP is the nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization. Its members throughout the United States and the world are the premier advocates for civil rights in their communities, conducting voter mobilization and monitoring equal opportunity in the public and private sectors.

--

Stephanie Chan

Exemption (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:06 AM
To: Gutter, Karis -FSA; [Redacted] Pfaeffle, Frederick; Mather, Chris
Cc: Williams, Janice; Jett, Carole
Subject: Re: Need you all in my office

Looping Mather. Chris - please come too.

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Gutter, Karis -FSA; [Redacted] [Redacted]; Pfaeffle, Frederick
Cc: Williams, Janice; Jett, Carole
Sent: Tue Jul 20 09:05:10 2010
Subject: Need you all in my office

ASAP this morning. Please respond, even with negative responses.

Jett, Carole

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:05 AM
To: Gutter, Karis -FSA; [Redacted] faeffle, Frederick
Cc: Williams, Janice; Jett, Carole
Subject: Need you all in my office

ASAP this morning. Please respond, even with negative responses.

Jett, Carole

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:01 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Misailidis, Sarah
Cc: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

Steph and Sarah please send all clips to this list so everyone gets at same time.
Chris Mather

Jett, Carole

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:59 AM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole
Subject: Fw: NAACP Statement on Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

Chris Mather

From: Stephanie Chan
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:50:30 2010
Subject: NAACP Statement on Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

fyi-

NAACP Statement on Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

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We concur with US Agriculture Secretary Vilsack in accepting the resignation of Shirley Sherrod for her remarks at a local NAACP Freedom Fund banquet.

Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race.

We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers.

Her actions were shameful. While she went on to explain in the story that she ultimately realized her mistake, as well as the common predicament of working people of all races, she gave no indication she had attempted to right the wrong she had done to this man.

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as well as female farmers of all races. Currently, justice for many of these farmers is being held up by Congress. We would hope all who share our outrage at Sherrod's statements would join us in pushing for these cases to be remedied.

The NAACP will continue to advance the ideals of America and fight for freedom, justice and fairness for all Americans."

Founded in 1909, the NAACP is the nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization. Its members throughout the United States and the world are the premier advocates for civil rights in their communities, conducting voter mobilization and monitoring equal opportunity in the public and private sectors.

--

Stephanie Chan

Exemption (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: Lu, Christopher P. [Exemption (b)(6)]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:55 AM
To: Jett, Carole; Greenawalt, Andrei M.; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: RE: final

Karen/Carole – Just wanted you to know that this dismissal came up at our morning senior staff meeting today. Everyone complimented USDA on how quickly you took this action. It's an unpleasant story, but getting on top of this fast blunts any traction it will get. Thanks for the great efforts.

--Chris

From: Lu, Christopher P.
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:32 AM
To: [Exemption (b)(6)] Greenawalt, Andrei M.
Subject: RE: final

We got looped in from WH press. We're all good. Thanks for dealing with this so quickly.

From: Jett, Carole [Exemption (b)(6)]
To: Lu, Christopher P.; Greenawalt, Andrei M.
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:30:27 2010
Subject: FW: final

Sorry if we missed loop with you. Three messages coming on this resignation of Shirley Sherrod.

From: Gavin, Tom
To: Mather, Chris; [Exemption (b)(6)]
Cc: Cherlin, Reid H.
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:32:13 2010
Subject: final
Chris –

We are good with this version on this end. Counsel has cleared the language. Only change is in the first sentence.

Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.

Jett, Carole

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:55 AM
To: Berge, John; Cluthe, Sally
Cc: Jett, Carole
Subject: Re:

Yes he will have time later

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Cluthe, Sally
Cc: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:49:03 2010

Can S call Clyburn today?

It'll be a while, but we may need him to.

We need his help with CBC outreach.

Jett, Carole

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:54 AM
To: Berge, John
Cc: Jett, Carole
Subject: Re: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

No problem just thinking of timing

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:42:56 2010
Subject: Re: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

CJ wants SS.

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John
Cc: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:40:06 2010
Subject: Re: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

All good can Fred and Inga help since Steve is out of pocket?

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:35:12 2010
Subject: RE: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

I'm meeting with Joe this morning. I couldn't track him down yesterday. He and I will meet about 930 to get him fully briefed up. Carole briefed up Pearlle yesterday afternoon. I also have a call into Steve Silverman in re: the Fitz questions that he raised via email last night. Sadly Steve is in CA and may not get back to me right away.

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:32 AM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Re: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

What about Joe and Pearlle?

From: Berge, John
To: Jett, Carole; Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:23:11 2010
Subject: Re: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

Dallas is good on this. Very succinct - facts only. Erin/Chris - he'll need to stay that way.

From: Berge, John
To: Jett, Carole; Mather, Chris
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:18:59 2010
Subject: Re: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

I'm here.

From: Jett, Carole
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:16:42 2010
Subject: Re: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

Dallas is in 205 doing mock hearing. Should you go and ask Sherrod questions?
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Mather, Chris
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:08:20 2010
Subject: Fw: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

CNN American Morning talked to Sherrod. Transcript below.
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:46:21 2010
Subject: Fw: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

Rest of the transcript.

I'm trying to see if I can find the clip online. Esp interested in hearing the full response from this response-

Shirley Sherrod: IF I TRIED TO FIGHT IT AND DIDN'T HAVE ANY SUPPORT FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, WHAT -- WHAT.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Kaplan, Karrah
To: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:37:13 2010
Subject: FW: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

updated

From: McCandless, Brittany
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:37 AM
To: Kraft, James; Dalberto, Emily; Manning, Regina; Kaplan, Karrah
Subject: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

MISSING PART BELOW IN RED:

American Morning transcript

Kiran Chetry and **John Roberts** interview **Shirley Sherrod**, a black Agriculture Department employee, who resigned Monday after conservative media outlets aired a video of her telling an audience she had not given a white farmer "the full force of what I could do" to help him save the family farm. She says the charges of racism are wrong

MISSING PART BELOW IN RED:

Kiran Chetry: THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ACCEPTS THE RESIGNATION OF AN EMPLOYEE AFTER A VIDEO SURFACED SHOWING HER TELLING AN AUDIENCE THAT SHE WITHHELD ASSISTANCE TO A WHITE FARMER BECAUSE OF HIS RACE. LET'S LISTEN TO WHAT SHE TOLD THE NAACP. DOES THAT VIDEO TELL THE WHOLE STORY? JOINING US NOW ON THE PHONE FROM ALBANY, GEORGIA, SHERRI SHERROD HERSELF. THANKS FOR BEING WITH US THIS MORNING, SHIRLEY.

Shirley Sherrod: THANK YOU.

Kiran Chetry: YOU SAY THIS WAS PART OF THE STORY AND THAT IT WAS PART THAT WAS SPLICED ENOUGH TO SHOW YOU IN A BAD LIGHT, THAT THIS ISN'T THE WHOLE STORY. WILL YOU FINISH FOR US HOW THIS ENED?

Shirley Sherrod: OKAY. I WAS SPEAKING TO THAT GROUP LIKE I'VE DONE MANY GROUPS AND I TELL THEM ABOUT A TIME WHEN I THOUGHT THE ISSUE WAS RACE AND RACE ONLY. AND I TELL THEM THE STORY OF HOW I WORKED WITH A WHITE FARMER BACK IN 1986. I WAS NOT WORKING FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE. I WAS WORKING WITH AND NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION ASSISTING FARMERS THROUGHOUT SOUTH GEORGIA AND THE SOUTHEAST. AND THIS FARMER CAME TO ME FOR HELP. I WAS TELLING THE STORY ABOUT HOW WORKING WITH HIM HELPED ME TO SEE THAT THE ISSUE IS NOT ABOUT RACE, IT'S ABOUT THOSE WHO HAVE VERSUS THOSE WHO DO NOT HAVE. AND I TELL HOW I TOOK HIM TO A LAWYER WHO I THOUGHT WOULD HELP HIM. IN THE END, THAT LAWYER DIDN'T. IN THE END, I HAD TO FRANTICLY LOOK FOR A LAWYER BECAUSE WHEN USDA LIFTED -- I'M SORRY. WHEN THE COURTS LIFTED THE INJUNCTION AGAINST USDA IN MAY OF 1987, THIS WHITE FARMER WAS 1 OF 13 THAT WAS FORECLOSED ON BY THE STATE OF GEORGIA. I HAD TO FRANTICLY FIND A LAWYER WHO WOULD FILE A CHAPTER 11 TO STOP THE FORECLOSURE. HE COULDN'T -- AT THAT TIME WE HAD UP TO 12 --

Kiran Chetry: BUT LET ME SAID -- YOU SAID YOU DIDN'T KNOW ENOUGH, DIDN'T GIVE HIM THE FULL FORCE OF WHAT YOU COULD DO. YOU SAID YOU REFERRED HIM TO THE LAWYER WHO WAS WHITE AND PERHAPS HE COULD HELP HIM. WHAT DID YOU MEAN BY THAT?

Shirley Sherrod: WHAT I MEANT WAS, I DIDN'T KNOW ANYONE ELSE, I DIDN'T KNOW ANOTHER LAWYER AT THAT TIME WHO WAS LOCAL, WHO KNEW SOMETHING ABOUT CHAPTER 12. BUT I THOUGHT IF I TOOK HIM TO A WHITE LAWYER, HE WOULD DEFINITELY DO ALL THAT HE COULD TO HELP SAVE HIS FARM.

John Roberts: MS. SHERROD LET'S MAKE IT CLEAR THOUGH. THIS HAPPENED 24 YEARS AGO. YOU EVENTUALLY WORKED WITH THIS WHITE FARMER, YOU EVENTUALL BECAME FRIENDS, YOU SAY, WITH THE FARMER AND HIS WIFE. SO THE QUESTION I HAVE IS, WHEN THE US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE CAME TO YOU AND SAID YOU HAVE TO STEP DOWN, WHY DIDN'T YOU JUST SAY WAIT A MINUTE, YOU DON'T KNOW THE FULL STORY, HERE'S THE FULL STORY, WHY SHOULD I STEP DOWN?

Shirley Sherrod: I DID SAY THAT. BUT THEY FOR SOME REASON, THE STUFF THAT FOX AND THE TEA PARTY DOES IS SCARING THE ADMINISTRATION. I TOLD... I TOLD THEM GET THE WHOLE TAPE AND LOOK AT HOW I TELL PEOPLE WE HAVE TO GET BEYOND RACE AND START WORKING TOGETHER.

John Roberts: I THINK THAT MANY PEOPLE AT HOME MIGHT BE THINKING, IF YOU'RE RECOUNTING AN OLD STORY, WHY DID YOU SUCCUMB TO PRESSURE TO STEP DOWN, WHY DIDN'T YOU TRY TO FIGHT THIS?

Shirley Sherrod: IF I TRIED TO FIGHT IT AND DIDN'T HAVE ANY SUPPORT FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, WHAT -- WHAT.

Kiran Chetry: BEN JEALOUS REFERRED TO YOU AND THIS SURFACING OF THE TAPE, "HER ACTIONS WERE SHAMEFUL. WHILE SHE WENT ON TO EXPLAIN IN THE STORY, SHE ULTIMATELY REALIZED HER MISTAKE AS WELL AS THE COMMON PREDICAMENT OF WORKING PEOPLE OF ALL RACES. SHE GAVE NO INDICATION SHE HAD ATTEMPTED TO RIGHT THE WRONG SHE HAD DONE TO THIS MAN." AND THE REACTION FROM MANY IN THE AUDIENCE IS DISTURBING. THIS IS FROM BEN JEALOUS. DID YOU TRY TO CLARIFY WITH THE NAACP YOUR STORY?

Shirley Sherrod: NO, I HAVEN'T HAD A CHANCE TO TALK TO ANYONE. ALL OF THIS WAS HAPPENING SO FAST. AND IT'S UNFORTUNATE THAT THE NAACP WOULD MAKE A STATEMENT WITHOUT EVEN CHECKING TO SEE WHAT HAPPENED. THIS WAS 24 YEARS AGO AND I'M TELLING A STORY TO TRY TO UNITE PEOPLE WITH THAT NOW.

John Roberts: CERTAINLY YOU'RE COMING OUT AND TELLING YOUR STORY NOW TAKES IT TO A DIFFERENT LEVEL AND OBVIOUSLY WE'RE GOING TO KEEP FOLLOWING THIS. IT IS GOOD TO GET YOUR SIDE OF IT. SHERRI SH SHERLY SHERROD, FORMER DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE OFFICIAL. PERHAPS WE CAN GET YOU BACK ON AGAIN, GET YOUR FACE ON TV AS WELL AND TALK TO YOU MORE ABOUT THIS AS THIS STORY CONTINUES TO DEVELOP.

Shirley Sherrod: I DON'T MIND.

Jett, Carole

From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:52 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: FW: Shirley Sherrod on CNN

Another one.

-----Original Message-----

From: Green, Valerie E. [mailto:Valerie_E_Green@who.eop.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:49 AM
To: Washo, Kevin
Subject: Fw: Shirley Sherrod on CNN

Sent using BlackBerry

----- Original Message -----

From: Bates, Andrew J.
To: Bates, Andrew J.; Pfeiffer, Dan; Hogan, Nancy D.; Gavin, Tom
Cc: Messina, Jim; Green, Valerie E.
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:54:14 2010
Subject: RE: Shirley Sherrod on CNN

And FOX News:

<http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2010/07/19/clip-shows-usda-official-admitting-withheld-help-white-farmer/?test=latestnews>

Video Shows USDA Official Saying She Didn't Give 'Full Force' of Help to White Farmer

Published July 20, 2010
| FoxNews.com

Days after the NAACP clashed with Tea Party members over allegations of racism, a video has surfaced showing an Agriculture Department official regaling an NAACP audience with a story about how she withheld help to a white farmer facing bankruptcy -- video that now has forced the official to resign.

Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, is shown in the clip describing "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." Sherrod, who is black, claimed the farmer took a long time trying to show he was "superior" to her. The audience laughed as she described how she determined his fate.

"He had to come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," she said. "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land -- so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough."

The Agriculture Department announced Monday, shortly after FoxNews.com published its initial report on the video, that Sherrod had resigned.

"There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person," Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a written statement. "We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously."

The NAACP released a statement late Monday condemning Sherrod's admission.

"We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers," the statement said.

"Her actions were shameful," it continued. "While she went on to explain in the story that she ultimately realized her mistake, as well as the common predicament of working people of all races, she gave no indication she had attempted to right the wrong she had done to this man."

Sherrod explained in the video that, at the time, she assumed the state or national Department of Agriculture had referred the white farmer to her. In order to ensure that the farmer could report back that she was indeed helpful, she said she took him to see "one of his own" -- a white lawyer.

"I figured that if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him," she said.

The point of the story wasn't entirely clear; only an excerpt of the speech is included in the video clip.

"It was revealed to me that it's about poor versus those who have," she said, suggesting she had learned that race is less important.

The video clip was first posted by BigGovernment.com. The clip is dated March 27 from an NAACP Freedom Fund banquet.

The clip adds to the firestorm of debate over the NAACP's decision to approve a resolution at its convention last week accusing some Tea Party activists of racism -- a charge Tea Party leaders deny.

In a second clip from the same event posted online, Sherrod appeared to urge black job seekers to find work at the Department of Agriculture because the federal government won't lay people off.

"There are jobs at USDA and many times there are no people of color to fill those jobs because we shy away from agriculture. We hear the word agriculture and think, why are we working in the fields?" she said. "You've heard of a lot of layoffs. Have you heard of anybody in the federal government losing their job? That's all I need to say."

-----Original Message-----

From: Bates, Andrew J.

Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:53 AM

To: Bates, Andrew J.; Pfeiffer, Dan; Hogan, Nancy D.; Gavin, Tom

Cc: Messina, Jim; Green, Valerie E.

Subject: RE: Shirley Sherrod on CNN

Here's an Atlanta Journal Constitution blog post with full tape of her comments:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WnNw7TGkjo&feature=player_embedded

http://blogs.ajc.com/jay-bookman-blog/2010/07/20/in-the-curious-case-of-shirley-sherrod-lets-see-the-whole-tape/?cxntfid=blogs_jay_bookman_blog

Jay Bookman In the curious case of Shirley Sherrod, let's see the whole tape
7:31 am July 20, 2010, by Jay

A couple of folks in comments yesterday brought up the case of USDA official Shirley Sherrod, a black woman caught on tape at an NAACP meeting here in Georgia apparently bragging about being less than diligent in helping a white farmer. The folks at Big Government posted a portion of her speech as part of the running feud between the NAACP and the Tea Party over which organization is more racist.

By the end of the day Monday, Sherrod had been forced to resign her post, and NAACP President Ben Jealous had released a statement agreeing with the forced resignation:

“Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race.

We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers.

Her actions were shameful. While she went on to explain in the story that she ultimately realized her mistake, as well as the common predicament of working people of all races, she gave no indication she had attempted to right the wrong she had done to this man.”

After watching the video Monday evening, I wrote in comments that “what Sherrod says in that video – and what she apparently did – are deeply troubling... She might very well have earned a firing. But I'd like to see that rest of that video as well, because at the point it abruptly ends, she appears to be saying that it's wrong to think in terms of black and white, that she came to see things as more accurately divided between poor and rich than by race.”

As I also noted, the folks at Big Government seem to have the whole video, since they also posted another segment, and it would be useful to see the rest of it.

Sherrod gets a chance to tell her side of the story in an AJC story by Marcus Garner:

“But Tuesday morning, Sherrod said what online viewers weren't told in reports posted throughout the day Monday was that the tale she told at the banquet happened 24 years ago – before she got the USDA job – when she worked with the Georgia field office for the Federation of Southern Cooperative/Land Assistance Fund.

Sherrod said the short video clip excluded the breadth of the story about how she eventually worked with the man over a two-year period to help ward off foreclosure of his farm, and how she eventually became friends with the farmer and his wife.

“And I went on to work with many more white farmers,” she said. “The story helped me realize that race is not the issue, it's about the people who have and the people who don't. When I speak to groups, I try to speak about getting beyond the issue of race.”

So let's see the rest of the tape, Big Government. Was Sherrod giggling among black folk about the time she put it to the white man, as the leaked excerpt suggests, or was the tape a

deceptively edited excerpt of a longer story about getting beyond the issue of race, as she claims?

Let's see the tape. The evidence apparently exists to settle the question. Cough it up.

-----Original Message-----

From: Bates, Andrew J.

Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:50 AM

To: Bates, Andrew J.; Pfeiffer, Dan; Hogan, Nancy D.; Gavin, Tom

Cc: Messina, Jim; Green, Valerie E.

Subject: RE: Shirley Sherrod on CNN

Here's trans. It's near verbatim, but went with rough for speed:

<http://www.shadowtv.com/redirect/notification.jsp?vid=86e15cb25493301e7aee306262074d24>

JOHN ROBERTS: The U.S. Department of Agriculture accepts the resignation of an employee after a video surfaced showing her telling an audience that she withheld assistance to a white farmer because of his race. Let's listen to what she told the NAACP.

[BEGIN VIDEO]

SHIRLEY SHERROD: I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land. And here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So, I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough

[END VIDEO]

KIRAN CHETRY: Does that video tell the whole story? Joining us now on the phone from Albany, Georgia is Shirley Sherrod herself. Thanks for being with us this morning, Shirley.

SHERROD: Thank you.

CHETRY: You say this was part of the story and that it was part that was spliced enough to show you in a bad light, that this isn't the whole story. Will you finish for us how this ended?

SHERROD: Okay. I was speaking to that group like I've done many groups and I tell them about a time when I thought the issue was race and race only. And I tell them the story of how I worked with a white farmer back in 1986. I was not working for the Department of Agriculture. I was working with and non-profit organization assisting farmers throughout south Georgia and the southeast. And this farmer came to me for help. I was telling the story about how working with him helped me to see that the issue is not about race, it's about those who have versus those who do not have. And I tell how I took him to a lawyer who I thought would help him. In the end, that lawyer didn't. In the end, I had to frantically look for a lawyer because when USDA lifted - I'm sorry, when the court lifted the injunction against USDA in may of 1987, this white farmer was 1 of 13 that was foreclosed on by the state of Georgia. I had to frantically find a lawyer who would file a chapter 11 to stop the foreclosure. He couldn't - at that time we had chapter 12 -

CHETRY: Yes, but let me said - you said you didn't know enough, didn't give him the full force of what you could do. You said you did enough, and then you referred to the race of the lawyer as well, saying that perhaps because the lawyer was white that perhaps he could help him. What did you mean by that?

SHERROD: What I meant was, I didn't know anyone else. I didn't know another lawyer at that time who was local, who knew something about chapter 12. But I thought if I took him to a white lawyer, he would definitely do all that he could to help save his farm.

ROBERTS: Miss Sherrod, let's make it clear though, this happened 24 years ago. You eventually worked with this white farmer. You eventually became friends, you say, with the farmer and his wife.

SHERROD: Yes.

ROBERTS: So the question I have is, when the U.S. Department of Agriculture came to you and said you have to step down, why didn't you just say, "Wait a minute, you don't know the full story. Here's the full story, why should I step down?"

SHERROD: I did say that. But they, for, some reason, the stuff that FOX and the Tea Party does is scaring the administration. I told them, get the whole tape and look at the whole tape and look at how I tell people we have to get beyond race and start working together.

ROBERTS: Many people at home might be thinking, well, if you're recounting an old story, why did you succumb to pressure to step down? Why didn't you try to fight this?

SHERROD: If I tried to fight it and didn't have any support from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, what would I do?

CHETRY: Let me ask you this. Did you talk to the NAACP about it? Because I just want to read for our audience what Ben Jealous, the president, said. He said, referring to you and this surfacing of the tape, "Her actions were shameful. While she went on to explain in the story, she ultimately realized her mistake, as well as the common predicament of working people of all races. She gave no indication she had attempted to right the wrong she had done to this man, and the reaction from many in the audience is disturbing." This is from Ben Jealous. Did you try to clarify with the NAACP your story?

SHERROD: No, I haven't had a chance to talk to anyone. All of this was happening so fast. And it's unfortunate that the NAACP would make a statement without even checking to see what happened. This was 24 years ago, and I'm telling a story to try to unite people with that now.

ROBERTS: Certainly you're coming out and telling your story now takes it to a different level, and obviously we're going to keep following this. It is good to get your side of it. Sherri Sherrod, former Agriculture Department official. Perhaps we can get you back on again, get your face on TV as well and talk to you more about this as this story continues to develop.

SHERROD: I don't mind.

ROBERTS: Thanks a lot.

-----Original Message-----

From: Bates, Andrew J.

Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:39 AM

To: Bates, Andrew J.; Pfeiffer, Dan; Hogan, Nancy D.; Gavin, Tom

Cc: Messina, Jim; Green, Valerie E.

Subject: RE: Shirley Sherrod on CNN

Here's video. I'm doing the transcript now.

<http://www.shadowtv.com/redirect/notification.jsp?vid=86e15cb25493301e7aee306262074d24>

-----Original Message-----

From: Bates, Andrew J.
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:33 AM
To: Pfeiffer, Dan; Hogan, Nancy D.; Gavin, Tom
Cc: Messina, Jim; Green, Valerie E.
Subject: RE: Shirley Sherrod on CNN

Sure thing, I'll get it

-----Original Message-----

From: Pfeiffer, Dan
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:27 AM
To: Hogan, Nancy D.; Gavin, Tom
Cc: Messina, Jim; Green, Valerie E.; Bates, Andrew J.
Subject: RE: Shirley Sherrod on CNN

Looping bates

-----Original Message-----

From: Hogan, Nancy D.
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:27 AM
To: Gavin, Tom
Cc: Messina, Jim; Pfeiffer, Dan; Green, Valerie E.
Subject: FW: Shirley Sherrod on CNN

Shirley Sherrod is the USDA regional from last evening. I have not seen yet. Gavin, can someone from your team get transcript?

Jett, Carole

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:49 AM
To: Harden, Krysta; Cluthe, Sally
Cc: Jett, Carole

Can S call Clyburn today?

It'll be a while, but we may need him to.

We need his help with CBC outreach.

Jett, Carole

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:43 AM
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Jett, Carole
Subject: Re: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

CJ wants SS.

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John
Cc: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:40:06 2010
Subject: Re: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

All good can Fred and Inga help since Steve is out of pocket?

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:35:12 2010
Subject: RE: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

I'm meeting with Joe this morning. I couldn't track him down yesterday. He and I will meet about 930 to get him fully briefed up. Carole briefed up Pearlle yesterday afternoon. I also have a call into Steve Silverman in re: the Fitz questions that he raised via email last night. Sadly Steve is in CA and may not get back to me right away.

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:32 AM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Re: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

What about Joe and Pearlle?

From: Berge, John
To: Jett, Carole; Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:23:11 2010
Subject: Re: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

Dallas is good on this. Very succinct - facts only. Erin/Chris - he'll need to stay that way.

From: Berge, John
To: Jett, Carole; Mather, Chris
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:18:59 2010
Subject: Re: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

I'm here.

From: Jett, Carole
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:16:42 2010
Subject: Re: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

Dallas is in 205 doing mock hearing. Should you go and ask Sherrod questions?

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Mather, Chris
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:08:20 2010
Subject: Fw: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

CNN American Morning talked to Sherrod. Transcript below.
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:46:21 2010
Subject: Fw: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

Rest of the transcript.

I'm trying to see if I can find the clip online. Esp interested in hearing the full response from this response-

Shirley Sherrod: IF I TRIED TO FIGHT IT AND DIDN'T HAVE ANY SUPPORT FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, WHAT -- WHAT.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Kaplan, Karrah
To: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:37:13 2010
Subject: FW: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

updated

From: McCandless, Brittany
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:37 AM
To: Kraft, James; Dalberto, Emily; Manning, Regina; Kaplan, Karrah
Subject: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

MISSING PART BELOW IN RED:

American Morning transcript

Kiran Chetry and John Roberts interview **Shirley Sherrod**, a black Agriculture Department employee, who resigned Monday after conservative media outlets aired a video of her telling an audience she had not given a white farmer "the full force of what I could do" to help him save the family farm. She says the charges of racism are wrong

MISSING PART BELOW IN RED:

Kiran Chetry: THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ACCEPTS THE RESIGNATION OF AN EMPLOYEE AFTER A VIDEO SURFACED SHOWING HER TELLING AN AUDIENCE THAT SHE WITHHELD ASSISTANCE TO A WHITE FARMER BECAUSE OF HIS RACE. LET'S LISTEN TO WHAT SHE TOLD THE NAACP. DOES THAT VIDEO TELL THE WHOLE STORY? JOINING US NOW ON THE PHONE FROM ALBANY, GEORGIA, SHERRI SHERROD HERSELF. THANKS FOR BEING WITH US THIS MORNING, SHIRLEY.

Shirley Sherrod: THANK YOU.

Kiran Chetry: YOU SAY THIS WAS PART OF THE STORY AND THAT IT WAS PART THAT WAS SPLICED ENOUGH TO SHOW YOU IN A BAD LIGHT, THAT THIS ISN'T THE WHOLE STORY. WILL YOU FINISH FOR US HOW THIS ENDED?

Shirley Sherrod: OKAY. I WAS SPEAKING TO THAT GROUP LIKE I'VE DONE MANY GROUPS AND I TELL THEM ABOUT A TIME WHEN I THOUGHT THE ISSUE WAS RACE AND RACE ONLY. AND I TELL THEM THE STORY OF HOW I WORKED WITH A WHITE FARMER BACK IN 1986. I WAS NOT WORKING FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE. I WAS WORKING WITH AND NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION ASSISTING FARMERS THROUGHOUT SOUTH GEORGIA AND THE SOUTHEAST. AND THIS FARMER CAME TO ME FOR HELP. I WAS TELLING THE STORY ABOUT HOW WORKING WITH HIM HELPED ME TO SEE THAT THE ISSUE IS NOT ABOUT RACE, IT'S ABOUT THOSE WHO HAVE VERSUS THOSE WHO DO NOT HAVE. AND I TELL HOW I TOOK HIM TO A LAWYER WHO I THOUGHT WOULD HELP HIM. IN THE END, THAT LAWYER DIDN'T. IN THE END, I HAD TO FRANTICLY LOOK FOR A LAWYER BECAUSE WHEN USDA LIFTED -- I'M SORRY. WHEN THE COURTS LIFTED THE INJUNCTION AGAINST USDA IN MAY OF 1987, THIS WHITE FARMER WAS 1 OF 13 THAT WAS FORECLOSED ON BY THE STATE OF GEORGIA. I HAD TO FRANTICLY FIND A LAWYER WHO WOULD FILE A CHAPTER 11 TO STOP THE FORECLOSURE. HE COULDN'T -- AT THAT TIME WE HAD UP TO 12 --

Kiran Chetry: BUT LET ME SAID -- YOU SAID YOU DIDN'T KNOW ENOUGH, DIDN'T GIVE HIM THE FULL FORCE OF WHAT YOU COULD DO. YOU SAID YOU REFERRED HIM TO THE LAWYER WHO WAS WHITE AND PERHAPS HE COULD HELP HIM. WHAT DID YOU MEAN BY THAT?

Shirley Sherrod: WHAT I MEANT WAS, I DIDN'T KNOW ANYONE ELSE, I DIDN'T KNOW ANOTHER LAWYER AT THAT TIME WHO WAS LOCAL, WHO KNEW SOMETHING ABOUT CHAPTER 12. BUT I THOUGHT IF I TOOK HIM TO A WHITE LAWYER, HE WOULD DEFINITELY DO ALL THAT HE COULD TO HELP SAVE HIS FARM.

John Roberts: MS. SHERROD LET'S MAKE IT CLEAR THOUGH. THIS HAPPENED 24 YEARS AGO. YOU EVENTUALLY WORKED WITH THIS WHITE FARMER, YOU EVENTUALLY BECAME FRIENDS, YOU SAY, WITH THE FARMER AND HIS WIFE. SO THE QUESTION I HAVE IS, WHEN THE US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE CAME TO YOU AND SAID YOU HAVE TO STEP DOWN, WHY DIDN'T YOU JUST SAY WAIT A MINUTE, YOU DON'T KNOW THE FULL STORY, HERE'S THE FULL STORY, WHY SHOULD I STEP DOWN?

Shirley Sherrod: I DID SAY THAT. BUT THEY FOR SOME REASON, THE STUFF THAT FOX AND THE TEA PARTY DOES IS SCARING THE ADMINISTRATION. I TOLD... I TOLD THEM GET THE WHOLE TAPE AND LOOK AT HOW I TELL PEOPLE WE HAVE TO GET BEYOND RACE AND START WORKING TOGETHER.

John Roberts: I THINK THAT MANY PEOPLE AT HOME MIGHT BE THINKING, IF YOU'RE RECOUNTING AN OLD STORY, WHY DID YOU SUCCUMB TO PRESSURE TO STEP DOWN, WHY DIDN'T YOU TRY TO FIGHT THIS?

Shirley Sherrod: IF I TRIED TO FIGHT IT AND DIDN'T HAVE ANY SUPPORT FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, WHAT -- WHAT.

Kiran Chetry: BEN JEALOUS REFERRED TO YOU AND THIS SURFACING OF THE TAPE, "HER ACTIONS WERE SHAMEFUL. WHILE SHE WENT ON TO EXPLAIN IN THE STORY, SHE ULTIMATELY REALIZED HER MISTAKE AS WELL AS THE COMMON PREDICAMENT OF WORKING PEOPLE OF ALL RACES. SHE GAVE NO INDICATION SHE HAD ATTEMPTED TO RIGHT THE WRONG SHE HAD DONE TO THIS MAN." AND THE REACTION FROM MANY IN THE AUDIENCE IS DISTURBING. THIS IS FROM BEN JEALOUS. DID YOU TRY TO CLARIFY WITH THE NAACP YOUR STORY?

Shirley Sherrod: NO, I HAVEN'T HAD A CHANCE TO TALK TO ANYONE. ALL OF THIS WAS HAPPENING SO FAST. AND IT'S UNFORTUNATE THAT THE NAACP WOULD MAKE A STATEMENT WITHOUT EVEN CHECKING TO SEE WHAT HAPPENED. THIS WAS 24 YEARS AGO AND I'M TELLING A STORY TO TRY TO UNITE PEOPLE WITH THAT NOW.

John Roberts: CERTAINLY YOU'RE COMING OUT AND TELLING YOUR STORY NOW TAKES IT TO A DIFFERENT LEVEL AND OBVIOUSLY WE'RE GOING TO KEEP FOLLOWING THIS. IT IS GOOD TO GET YOUR SIDE OF IT. SHERRI SH SHERLY SHERROD, FORMER DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE OFFICIAL. PERHAPS WE CAN GET YOU BACK ON AGAIN, GET YOUR FACE ON TV AS WELL AND TALK TO YOU MORE ABOUT THIS AS THIS STORY CONTINUES TO DEVELOP.

Shirley Sherrod: I DON'T MIND.

Jett, Carole

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:40 AM
To: Berge, John
Cc: Jett, Carole
Subject: Re: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

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Shirley Sherrod: I DON'T MIND.

Jett, Carole

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:36 AM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: RE: Can you call me when you receive this this morning?

3 mins.

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Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:36 AM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Re: Can you call me when you receive this this morning?

Can you meet me in pearlie office. Re paige.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA
202-409-7911

From: Berge, John
To: Silverman, Steve
Cc: Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:33:07 2010
Subject: Can you call me when you receive this this morning?

I'm sorry to interrupt your time with your mom, but have a pressing series of questions related to the GA situation. My numbers follow:

Cell – *Exemption (b)(6)*
Direct – 202-720-5759
Office (Janice can find me) – 202-720-7095

John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Jett, Carole

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:35 AM
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Jett, Carole
Subject: RE: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

I'm meeting with Joe this morning. I couldn't track him down yesterday. He and I will meet about 930 to get him fully briefed up. Carole briefed up Pearlie yesterday afternoon. I also have a call into Steve Silverman in re: the Fitz questions that he raised via email last night. Sadly Steve is in CA and may not get back to me right away.

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:32 AM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Re: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

What about Joe and Pearlie?

From: Berge, John
To: Jett, Carole; Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:23:11 2010
Subject: Re: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

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Exemption (b)(6)

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To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
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Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Kaplan, Karrah
To: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:37:13 2010
Subject: FW: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

updated

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Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:37 AM
To: Kraft, James; Dalberto, Emily; Manning, Regina; Kaplan, Karrah
Subject: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

MISSING PART BELOW IN RED:

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Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:33 AM
To: Silverman, Steve
Cc: Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta
Subject: Can you call me when you receive this this morning?

I'm sorry to interrupt your time with your mom, but have a pressing series of questions related to the GA situation. My numbers follow:

Exemption (b)(6)

John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Jett, Carole

From: Lu, Christopher P. [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:32 AM
To: Jett, Carole; Greenawalt, Andrei M.
Subject: Re: final

We got looped in from WH press. We're all good. Thanks for dealing with this so quickly.

From: Jett, Carole <[Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*>
To: Lu, Christopher P.; Greenawalt, Andrei M.
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:30:27 2010
Subject: FW: final

Sorry if we missed loop with you. Three messages coming on this resignation of Shirley Sherrod.

From: Gavin, Tom
To: Mather, Chris; [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Cc: Cherlin, Reid H.
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:32:13 2010
Subject: final
Chris –

We are good with this version on this end. Counsel has cleared the language. Only change is in the first sentence.

Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.

Jett, Carole

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:32 AM
To: Berge, John; Jett, Carole; Mather, Chris
Subject: Re: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

Good

From: Berge, John
To: Jett, Carole; Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:23:11 2010
Subject: Re: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

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Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
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To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:08:20 2010
Subject: Fw: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

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Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:46:21 2010
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Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture

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From: Kaplan, Karrah
To: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:37:13 2010
Subject: FW: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

updated

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Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:37 AM
To: Kraft, James; Dalberto, Emily; Manning, Regina; Kaplan, Karrah
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Jett, Carole

From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:27 AM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: RE: Missed train

Yes,

Talking with Dave White with regards to Nona today.

Porto is ready to go so we'll get that transition moving.

Victor I don't know what you want to do with regards to that

We should walk through the Lona piece one more time.

I already have made contact with PPO on Jerry, hopefully I will have Laz's info before my weekly meeting.

-----Original Message-----

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:14 AM
To: Washo, Kevin
Subject: Re: Missed train

Follow-up
Edwardo
Lona
Nona
Porto
Victor
Sherrrod next steps filling it.
Mande
DUS interviews FSIS

Any can do from train?

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA
202-409-7911

----- Original Message -----

From: Washo, Kevin
To: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:45:37 2010
Subject: Missed train

Getting on 730. My streak is broken. I am on email

Jett, Carole

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:27 AM
To: Jett, Carole; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Washo, Kevin; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: Re: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

Justin printed out for him.
Chris Mather

From: Jett, Carole
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Washo, Kevin; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:18:24 2010
Subject: Re: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

I sent to S.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

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Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:26 AM
To: Berge, John; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta
Subject: Re: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

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Kiran Chetry and **John Roberts** interview **Shirley Sherrod**, a black Agriculture Department employee, who resigned Monday after conservative media outlets aired a video of her telling an audience she had not given a white farmer "the full force of what I could do" to help him save the family farm. She says the charges of racism are wrong

MISSING PART BELOW IN RED:

Kiran Chetry: THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ACCEPTS THE RESIGNATION OF AN EMPLOYEE AFTER A VIDEO SURFACED SHOWING HER TELLING AN AUDIENCE THAT SHE WITHHELD ASSISTANCE TO A WHITE FARMER BECAUSE OF HIS RACE. LET'S LISTEN TO WHAT SHE TOLD THE NAACP. DOES THAT VIDEO TELL THE WHOLE STORY? JOINING US NOW ON THE PHONE FROM ALBANY, GEORGIA, SHERRI SHERROD HERSELF. THANKS FOR BEING WITH US THIS MORNING, SHIRLEY.

Shirley Sherrod: THANK YOU.

Kiran Chetry: YOU SAY THIS WAS PART OF THE STORY AND THAT IT WAS PART THAT WAS SPLICED ENOUGH TO SHOW YOU IN A BAD LIGHT, THAT THIS ISN'T THE WHOLE STORY. WILL YOU FINISH FOR US HOW THIS ENDED?

Shirley Sherrod: OKAY. I WAS SPEAKING TO THAT GROUP LIKE I'VE DONE MANY GROUPS AND I TELL THEM ABOUT A TIME WHEN I THOUGHT THE ISSUE WAS RACE AND RACE ONLY. AND I TELL THEM THE STORY OF HOW I WORKED WITH A WHITE FARMER BACK IN 1986. I WAS NOT WORKING FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE. I WAS WORKING WITH AND NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION ASSISTING FARMERS THROUGHOUT SOUTH GEORGIA AND THE SOUTHEAST. AND THIS FARMER CAME TO ME FOR HELP. I WAS TELLING THE STORY ABOUT HOW WORKING WITH HIM HELPED ME TO SEE THAT THE ISSUE IS NOT ABOUT RACE, IT'S ABOUT THOSE WHO HAVE VERSUS THOSE WHO DO NOT HAVE. AND I TELL HOW I TOOK HIM TO A LAWYER WHO I THOUGHT WOULD HELP HIM. IN THE END, THAT LAWYER DIDN'T. IN THE END, I HAD TO FRANTICLY LOOK FOR A LAWYER BECAUSE WHEN USDA LIFTED -- I'M SORRY. WHEN THE COURTS LIFTED THE INJUNCTION AGAINST USDA IN MAY OF 1987, THIS WHITE FARMER WAS 1 OF 13 THAT WAS FORECLOSED ON BY THE STATE OF GEORGIA. I HAD TO FRANTICLY FIND A LAWYER WHO WOULD FILE A CHAPTER 11 TO STOP THE FORECLOSURE. HE COULDN'T -- AT THAT TIME WE HAD UP TO 12 --

Kiran Chetry: BUT LET ME SAID -- YOU SAID YOU DIDN'T KNOW ENOUGH, DIDN'T GIVE HIM THE FULL FORCE OF WHAT YOU COULD DO. YOU SAID YOU REFERRED HIM TO THE LAWYER WHO WAS WHITE AND PERHAPS HE COULD HELP HIM. WHAT DID YOU MEAN BY THAT?

Shirley Sherrod: WHAT I MEANT WAS, I DIDN'T KNOW ANYONE ELSE, I DIDN'T KNOW ANOTHER LAWYER AT THAT TIME WHO WAS LOCAL, WHO KNEW SOMETHING ABOUT CHAPTER 12. BUT I THOUGHT IF I TOOK HIM TO A WHITE LAWYER, HE WOULD DEFINITELY DO ALL THAT HE COULD TO HELP SAVE HIS FARM.

John Roberts: MS. SHERROD LET'S MAKE IT CLEAR THOUGH. THIS HAPPENED 24 YEARS AGO. YOU EVENTUALLY WORKED WITH THIS WHITE FARMER, YOU EVENTUALLY BECAME FRIENDS, YOU SAY, WITH THE FARMER AND HIS WIFE. SO THE QUESTION I HAVE IS, WHEN THE US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE CAME TO YOU AND SAID YOU HAVE TO STEP DOWN, WHY DIDN'T YOU JUST SAY WAIT A MINUTE, YOU DON'T KNOW THE FULL STORY, HERE'S THE FULL STORY, WHY SHOULD I STEP DOWN?

Shirley Sherrod: I DID SAY THAT. BUT THEY FOR SOME REASON, THE STUFF THAT FOX AND THE TEA PARTY DOES IS SCARING THE ADMINISTRATION. I TOLD... I TOLD THEM GET THE WHOLE TAPE AND LOOK AT HOW I TELL PEOPLE WE HAVE TO GET BEYOND RACE AND START WORKING TOGETHER.

John Roberts: I THINK THAT MANY PEOPLE AT HOME MIGHT BE THINKING, IF YOU'RE RECOUNTING AN OLD STORY, WHY DID YOU SUCCUMB TO PRESSURE TO STEP DOWN, WHY DIDN'T YOU TRY TO FIGHT THIS?

Shirley Sherrod: IF I TRIED TO FIGHT IT AND DIDN'T HAVE ANY SUPPORT FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, WHAT -- WHAT.

Kiran Chetry: BEN JEALOUS REFERRED TO YOU AND THIS SURFACING OF THE TAPE, "HER ACTIONS WERE SHAMEFUL. WHILE SHE WENT ON TO EXPLAIN IN THE STORY, SHE ULTIMATELY REALIZED HER MISTAKE AS WELL AS THE COMMON PREDICAMENT OF WORKING PEOPLE OF ALL RACES. SHE GAVE NO INDICATION SHE HAD ATTEMPTED TO RIGHT THE WRONG SHE HAD DONE TO THIS MAN." AND THE REACTION FROM MANY IN THE AUDIENCE IS DISTURBING. THIS IS FROM BEN JEALOUS. DID YOU TRY TO CLARIFY WITH THE NAACP YOUR STORY?

Shirley Sherrod: NO, I HAVEN'T HAD A CHANCE TO TALK TO ANYONE. ALL OF THIS WAS HAPPENING SO FAST. AND IT'S UNFORTUNATE THAT THE NAACP WOULD MAKE A STATEMENT WITHOUT EVEN CHECKING TO SEE WHAT HAPPENED. THIS WAS 24 YEARS AGO AND I'M TELLING A STORY TO TRY TO UNITE PEOPLE WITH THAT NOW.

John Roberts: CERTAINLY YOU'RE COMING OUT AND TELLING YOUR STORY NOW TAKES IT TO A DIFFERENT LEVEL AND OBVIOUSLY WE'RE GOING TO KEEP FOLLOWING THIS. IT IS GOOD TO GET YOUR SIDE OF IT. SHERRI SH SHERLY SHERROD, FORMER DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE OFFICIAL. PERHAPS WE CAN GET YOU BACK ON AGAIN, GET YOUR FACE ON TV AS WELL AND TALK TO YOU MORE ABOUT THIS AS THIS STORY CONTINUES TO DEVELOP.

Shirley Sherrod: I DON'T MIND.

Jett, Carole

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:05 AM
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: Fw: Today

Let me know if you need me to draft. I am skipping dietary guidelines meeting at WH to deal with Sherrod issue.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: TJV
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Mather, Chris
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:21:30 2010
Subject: Today

I would like an email to every employee at USDA that reaffirms our commitment to a USDA that has no tolerance for discrimination in any form by anyone. I also want to remind every employee that as a USDA employee they have a unique and important individual responsibility to represent USDA well in all their official actions, statements, and public presentations and that all of us are held to a high standard. You may have to explain in the email what happened yesterday in general terms to provide a context for this email. If doing an email is cumbersome I suggest at a minimum a prominent web posting.

TV

Jett, Carole

From: Leonard, Joe
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:52 AM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: Re: Georgia rd

Ok....Carole, are we still a go for a civil rights refresher at tomorrow's senior policy meeting 8-9:30?

----- Original Message -----

From: Jett, Carole
To: Leonard, Joe
Cc: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:16:19 2010
Subject: Georgia rd

Joe,
Berge was tried to catch you yesterday afternoon on the Sherrod issue. Will fully brief you this am. Pls see him at your earliest convenience. Not for email.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: TJV
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:22 AM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Mather, Chris
Subject: Today

I would like an email to every employee at USDA that reaffirms our commitment to a USDA that has no tolerance for discrimination in any form by anyone. I also want to remind every employee that as a USDA employee they have a unique and important individual responsibility to represent USDA well in all their official actions, statements, and public presentations and that all of us are held to a high standard. You may have to explain in the email what happened yesterday in general terms to provide a context for this email. If doing an email is cumbersome I suggest at a minimum a prominent web posting.

TV

Jett, Carole

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:10 AM
To: Jett, Carole; Mather, Chris; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Harden, Krysta
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: Sherrod story

I'll be in at 8 or a little before.

----- Original Message -----

From: Jett, Carole
To: Mather, Chris; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:08:52 2010
Subject: Re: Sherrod story

Call me anytime

Exemption (b)(6)

I will be in around 8:15

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 00:00:47 2010
Subject: Sherrod story

CNN just called me, after reaching out to WH. To squash day two stories, I think we need to consider what happens if this has legs tomorrow, early am if possible. We should not say any more that could create another story BUT, press will look elsewhere, and I fear there are people the could albiet wrongly keep story going. How early can we talk.
Chris Mather

Jett, Carole

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:04 AM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Mather, Chris
Subject: Fw: Google Alert - usda

Flagging ajc article re sherrod.

From: googlealerts-noreply@google.com
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 06:58:11 2010
Subject: Google Alert - usda

News 3 new results for usda

Resigned USDA official says racial story misconstrued

Atlanta Journal Constitution

By Marcus K. Garner The USDA's rural development director for Georgia says she was forced out of her federally appointed job after a "snippet" of a speech ...

[See all stories on this topic »](#)

Nationwide Recall Issued On Frozen Chicken Nuggets

WFMY News 2

National-- Monday, the USDA announced that Perdue Farms, Inc. out of Perry, GA announced it is recalling about 91872 pounds of frozen chicken nugget ...

[See all stories on this topic »](#)

Look! Black People Are Totally Racist Too!

Feministe (blog)

Apparently someone was able to dig up a video of a black USDA worker telling an audience of other black people about having to help a white farmer keep his ...

[See all stories on this topic »](#)

Tip: Use a plus sign (+) to match a term in your query exactly as is.. [Learn more.](#)

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[Manage your alerts.](#)

Jett, Carole

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:01 AM
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Sherrod story

CNN just called me, after reaching out to WH. To squash day two stories, I think we need to consider what happens if this has legs tomorrow, early am if possible. We should not say any more that could create another story BUT, press will look elsewhere, and I fear there are people the could albiet wrongly keep story going. How early can we talk.

Chris Mather

Jett, Carole

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 10:50 PM
To: [REDACTED] Exemption (b)(6)
Cc: Ross, Karen-Chief of Staff; Jett, Carole
Subject: Pending Press Stories

We sent our statement re Sherrod to FOX and CNN tonight per their request. FOX included it in story. Wonkette has posted something and AP TV put together piece but so far, pick up minimal after FOX.

We sent state by state releases on migratory effort this afternoon. So far, no questions.
Chris Mather

Jett, Carole

From: Berge, John
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 9:25 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: Re: Hey

Dr. Leonard still does not know about this. Will brief him in am.

----- Original Message -----

From: Jett, Carole
To: Berge, John
Sent: Mon Jul 19 19:35:39 2010
Subject: Re: Hey

Should have.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; Jett, Carole
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:43:16 2010
Subject: Re: Hey

Ex (b)(5)

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Jett, Carole
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:40:02 2010
Subject: Re: Hey

Ex (b)(5)

Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Jett, Carole
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:32:25 2010
Subject: Hey

Ex (b)(5)

Jett, Carole

From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 8:51 PM
To: TJV
Cc: Harden, Krysta; Jett, Carole
Subject: Resign. Letter

Importance: High

Sir,

Below is a copy of Shirley's letter.

Kevin

Cheryl

I feel so disappointed that the Secretary and President let a misrepresentation of my words on the part of th Tea Party be the reason to ask me to resign

Please look at the tape and see that I use the story from 1986 to show people that the issue is not about race but about those who have v ersus those who do not

I used everything and everyone I could to help me to save that white farmers land. That family has the land because of what I did. He became a very good friend. I went on to help save many other white land owners thru the years

I submit my resignation but in doing so want to put the administration on notice that I will get the whole story out.

My whole life speaks for my commitment to fairness whether white or black.

Shirley Sherrod

Jett, Carole

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 7:28 PM
To: Berge, John
Cc: Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole
Subject: Re: Notifications

Good

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:57:42 2010
Subject: Notifications

Going out now - we are calling and emailing the Secretary's issued statement to CoS/LD.

Jett, Carole

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 7:15 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Tonsager, Dallas; Washo, Kevin; Wyant, Monica; Cook, Cheryl; Harden, Krysta
Subject: RE: Hey

I will go. Justin and Aaron out. Caleb has PAD meeting and Avalos hearing in afternoon. What room number is it in? 10 oclock right?

-----Original Message-----

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:26 PM
To: Tonsager, Dallas; Washo, Kevin; Wyant, Monica; Cook, Cheryl; Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Subject: Re: Hey

We will get you covered and OC will go with you tomorrow.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA
202-409-7911

----- Original Message -----

From: Tonsager, Dallas
To: Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin; Wyant, Monica; Cook, Cheryl; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 17:12:57 2010
Subject: RE: Hey

I wouldn't be surprised to get a question over this matter during my hearings this week. Would appreciate some help on a response.

-----Original Message-----

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:33 PM
To: Washo, Kevin; Wyant, Monica; Tonsager, Dallas; Cook, Cheryl
Subject: FW: Hey

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:32 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Jett, Carole
Subject: Hey

Ex (b)(5)

Jett, Carole

From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:58 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Mather, Chris; Berge, John
Subject: Fw:

----- Original Message -----

From: Cook, Cheryl
To: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:56:14 2010
Subject: FW:

-----Original Message-----

From: Sherrod, Shirley - Athens, GA [mailto:shirley.sherrod@ga.usda.gov]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:55 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject:

Cheryl

I feel so disappointed that the Secretary and President let a misrepresentation of my words on the part of th Tea Party be the reason to ask me to resign

Please look at the tape and see that I use the story from 1986 to show people that the issue is not about race but about those who have v ersus those who do not

I used everything and everyone I could to help me to save that white farmers land. That family has the land because of what I did. He became a very good friend. I went on to help save many other white land owners thru the years

I submit my resignation but in doing so want to put the administration on notice that I will get the whole story out.

My whole life speaks for my commitment to fairness whether white or black.

Shirley sherrod

Sent using BlackBerry

Jett, Carole

From: Berge, John
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:58 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole
Subject: Notifications

Going out now - we are calling and emailing the Secretary's issued statement to CoS/LD.

Jett, Carole

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:39 PM
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Jett, Carole
Subject: Re: Heads up to

Will do.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Jett, Carole; Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:36:49 2010
Subject: Re: Heads up to

Chris will follow up with Comms.

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John; Jett, Carole
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:33:16 2010
Subject: Re: Heads up to

Just wants to make sure someone gives a heads up to NAACP. WH should be fine.

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Jett, Carole
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:30:14 2010
Subject: RE: Heads up to

Does he want to call? We were told by WH Comm that WH may reach out.

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:29 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Berge, John
Subject: Heads up to

The NAACP, the Secy

Jett, Carole

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:38 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; Weaver, Caleb
Subject: Re: final

We're good on our end.

From: Mather, Chris
To: Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:35:49 2010
Subject: Fw: final

Will push send shortly.
Chris Mather

From: Gavin, Tom
To: Mather, Chris; chrismather@gmail.com
Cc: Cherlin, Reid H.
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:32:13 2010
Subject: final
Chris -

We are good with this version on this end. Counsel has cleared the language. Only change is in the first sentence.

Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.

Jett, Carole

From: Berge, John
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:37 PM
To: Harden, Krysta; Jett, Carole; Mather, Chris
Subject: Re: Heads up to

Chris will follow up with Comms.

----- Original Message -----
From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John; Jett, Carole
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:33:16 2010
Subject: Re: Heads up to

Just wants to make sure someone gives a heads up to NAACP. WH should be fine.

----- Original Message -----
From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Jett, Carole
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:30:14 2010
Subject: RE: Heads up to

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Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:29 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Berge, John
Subject: Heads up to

The NAACP, the Secy

Jett, Carole

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:36 PM
To: Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb
Subject: Fw: final

Will push send shortly:
Chris Mather

From: Gavin, Tom
To: Mather, Chris; *Exemption (b)(6)*
Cc: Cherlin, Reid H.
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:32:13 2010
Subject: final
Chris –

We are good with this version on this end. Counsel has cleared the language. Only change is in the first sentence.

Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.

Jett, Carole

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:33 PM
To: Berge, John; Jett, Carole
Subject: Re: Heads up to

Just wants to make sure someone gives a heads up to NAACP. WH should be fine.

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Jett, Carole
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:30:14 2010
Subject: RE: Heads up to

Does he want to call? We were told by WH Comm that WH may reach out.

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:29 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Berge, John
Subject: Heads up to

The NAACP, the Secy

Jett, Carole

From: Berge, John
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:31 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: RE: Heads up to

We can, but it is important to note that WH Comm said that the WH might be calling them.

-----Original Message-----

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:31 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Re: Heads up to

Can you call them?
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Jett, Carole; Berge, John
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:28:40 2010
Subject: Heads up to

The NAACP, the Secy

Jett, Carole

From: Berge, John
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:30 PM
To: Harden, Krysta; Jett, Carole
Subject: RE: Heads up to

Does he want to call? We were told by WH Comm that WH may reach out.

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:29 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Berge, John
Subject: Heads up to

The NAACP, the Secy

Jett, Carole

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:29 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Berge, John
Subject: Heads up to

The NAACP, the Secy

Jett, Carole

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:09 PM
To: Washo, Kevin
Cc: Jett, Carole
Subject: Re: Did they get back to you?

Let's discuss. Not sure why comms would not have gotten this from ppo

Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Washo, Kevin
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: Jett, Carole
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:07:41 2010
Subject: Re: Did they get back to you?

Coming up.

Ex (b)(5)

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Washo, Kevin
Cc: Jett, Carole
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:04:33 2010
Subject: Re: Did they get back to you?

Yes. Ex (b)(5) S called us too. Looping in Carole.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Washo, Kevin
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 17:52:39 2010
Subject: Did they get back to you?

Jett, Carole

From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:08 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: Jett, Carole
Subject: Re: Did they get back to you?

Coming up.

Ex (b)(5)

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Washo, Kevin
Cc: Jett, Carole
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:04:33 2010
Subject: Re: Did they get back to you?

Yes [REDACTED] Ex (b)(5) S called us too. Looping in Carole.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Washo, Kevin
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 17:52:39 2010
Subject: Did they get back to you?

Jett, Carole

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:05 PM
To: Washo, Kevin
Cc: Jett, Carole
Subject: Re: Did they get back to you?

Yes. [REDACTED] *Ex (b)(5)* S called us too. Looping in Carole.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----
From: Washo, Kevin
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 17:52:39 2010
Subject: Did they get back to you?

Jett, Carole

From: Tonsager, Dallas
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:26 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin; Wyant, Monica; Cook, Cheryl; Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Subject: RE: Hey

Thanks.

-----Original Message-----

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:26 PM
To: Tonsager, Dallas; Washo, Kevin; Wyant, Monica; Cook, Cheryl; Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Subject: Re: Hey

We will get you covered and OC will go with you tomorrow.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

----- Original Message -----

From: Tonsager, Dallas
To: Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin; Wyant, Monica; Cook, Cheryl; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 17:12:57 2010
Subject: RE: Hey

I wouldn't be surprised to get a question over this matter during my hearings this week. Would appreciate some help on a response.

-----Original Message-----

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:33 PM
To: Washo, Kevin; Wyant, Monica; Tonsager, Dallas; Cook, Cheryl
Subject: FW: Hey

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:32 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Jett, Carole
Subject: Hey

Ex (b)(5)

Jett, Carole

From: Tonsager, Dallas
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:13 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin; Wyant, Monica; Cook, Cheryl; Harden, Krysta
Subject: RE: Hey

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From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:33 PM
To: Washo, Kevin; Wyant, Monica; Tonsager, Dallas; Cook, Cheryl
Subject: FW: Hey

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:32 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Jett, Carole
Subject: Hey

Ex (b)(5)

Jett, Carole

From: Tonsager, Dallas
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:01 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: RE: Georgia Issue

It is done.

-----Original Message-----

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:38 PM
To: Tonsager, Dallas
Subject: Georgia Issue

Ex (b)(5)

We need to ask.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: Berge, John
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:57 PM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; Jett, Carole; DeJong, Justin; Jett, Carole
Subject: RE: Georgia

Yes. RD. Mission area has been in the loop. Looping Carole to let her explain whole story to you.

-----Original Message-----

From: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:49 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Jett, Carole; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: Georgia

Has anyone had direct conversation with the USDA staff to hear her explanation? Is this FSA or RD? Has mission area talked to her?

Karen Ross
Chief of Staff
Office of the Secretary

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:33:07 2010
Subject: Fw: Georgia

Sarah just checked nexus. It aired yesterday on FOX - Geraldo. TV Eyes did not pick it up. CBS News in NY just ran a story.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Maloney, Wayne
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Zaina, Lisa
Sent: Mon Jul 19 13:55:40 2010
Subject: FW: Georgia

Chris,

I was just informed of a video of the Georgia State Director that was posted on the Internet earlier this afternoon. It speaks for itself and you need to watch it right away.

I have discussed this with Tim McNeilly. He has instructed the PIC and the State Director not to respond to media without checking with us first. We have not been contacted by any media outlet but expect that we will.

Tim has been asked by me to draft a statement for our review to be issued if necessary.

Wayne
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Georgia PIC just called to alert us to a campaign underway involving Shirley Sherrod vs. the Tea Party people. I understand that this may have been brought to your attention already, but

in case it hasn't..... The PIC is looking for guidance if (and I think there will be) media contact regarding the below video.

<http://hotair.com/archives/2010/07/19/breitbart-hits-naacp-with-promised-video-of-racism/>

Looking for guidance on how you would like to prepare and handle any inquiries that result.

Thanks.

Timothy J. McNeilly | Director, Legislative and Public Affairs Rural Development U.S.
Department of Agriculture 1400 Independence Ave., S.W. | Washington, D.C. 20250
Phone: 202.720.1019 | Fax: 202.690.4083

www.rurdev.usda.gov

"Committed to the future of rural communities"

"Estamos dedicados al futuro de las comunidades rurales"

Jett, Carole

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:54 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Washo, Kevin; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Fw: Transcript

Thanks Sarah.
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:42:36 2010
Subject: Transcript
Chris, please see below for transcript

Video: [Link](#)

On July 25, 2009 Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack appointed Shirley Sherrod as Georgia Director of Rural Development. USDA Rural Development spends over \$1.2 Billion in the state of Georgia each year. On March 27, 2010, while speaking at the NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet, Ms. Sherrod admits that in her federally appointed position, overseeing over a billion dollars, she discriminates against people due to their race.

Shirley Sherrod: The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking but he was trying to show me he was superior to me, I know what he was doing. But he had to come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me, was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him. I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land. And here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So, I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough. So that when he, I assumed the Department of Agriculture had sent him to me, either that or the Georgia Department of Agriculture. And he needed to go back and report that I did try and help him. So I took him to a white lawyer that had attended some of the training that we had provided because of Chapter 12 bankruptcy had just been enacted for the family farm. So I figured if I take him to one of them that his own kind would take care of him. That's when it was revealed to me that its about poor versus those who have. It's not so much about white...it is about white and black. It is about white and black but its not you know...it opened my eyes because I took him to one of his own.

Fox News Clip:

Geraldo Rivera: Do you denounce in the way that you ask the Tea Parties denounce racists within your ranks?
Hilary Shelton: Yes we do, we repudiate racists within our ranks.

Back to Shirley Sherrod Clip:

I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farm land and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications

Exemption (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:53 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Jett, Carole; Berge, John
Cc: Harden, Krysta; O'Brien, Doug
Subject: Re: Statement on civil rights

In the event we do this, okay?

The individual has resigned. There is absolutely no tolerance for discrimination at usda and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: Harden, Krysta; O'Brien, Doug
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:40:00 2010
Subject: Statement on civil rights

There is absolutely no tolerance for discrimination at usda and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and we will be carefully reviewing this situation. This individual will be placed on administrative leave immediately.

A couple other notes:

Need to make sure that "administrative leave" is correct terminology.

S said he would be available for any interviews on this topic.

S asked that we find name of person who did/didnt get loan so he could personally apologize.

Jett, Carole

From: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:51 PM
To: [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Cc: Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Subject: Fw: Shirley Sherrod

Mr Secretary
Not sure you received the original from Dallas regarding the story being carried today.
Karen Ross
Chief of Staff
Office of the Secretary

From: Tonsager, Dallas
To: [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6)
Cc: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:04:06 2010
Subject: Shirley Sherrod

Dear Mr. Secretary

We have just seen the video of Georgia State Director Shirley Sherrod and are deeply disturbed. Cheryl has put her on administrative leave pending a full investigation. Of course, the video suggests that this is about a farm loan, and those programs were transferred to the Farm Service Agency in 1995.

Shirley explained to Cheryl that this piece of tape shows only one small part of a longer story she told of her personal transformation beyond race, and is about a farmer who came to see her in 1986 when she was working as a farm advocate. The rest of the story apparently explains how she came to assist this farmer and many other white farmers during this time period. She said there is a copy of the entire speech, and Cheryl asked her to provide it as quickly as possible.

Dallas and Cheryl

Dallas Tonsager | Under Secretary

Rural Development

U.S. Department of Agriculture

1400 Independence Ave., S.W. | Washington, D.C. 20250

Phone: 202.720.4581 | Fax: 202.720.2080

www.rurdev.usda.gov

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Chief of Staff
Office of the Secretary

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To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Zaina, Lisa
Sent: Mon Jul 19 13:55:40 2010
Subject: FW: Georgia

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Jett, Carole

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:29 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Berge, John; Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: URGENT

That is why we have been general and explained the matter was under review. We are on hold.

----- Original Message -----

From: Jett, Carole
To: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:13:56 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT

Stop calling until you see the rest of the story.

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:13 PM
To: Berge, John; Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: URGENT

Please go ahead if you will

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:41:29 2010
Subject: Re: URGENT

Krysta - do you want to call KINGSTON too?

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John; Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:38:39 2010
Subject: Re: URGENT

Justin is drafting per Secy and sending now

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; Jett, Carole
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:37:24 2010
Subject: Re: URGENT

J Berge or J Dejong? I'm not drafting.

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Jett, Carole
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:36:40 2010
Subject: Re: URGENT

J, are you drafting because S gave you guidance and if not, we should do here to save time.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:34:58 2010
Subject: Re: URGENT

We need talkers as soon as the statement is ready so that we can reach out to the rest of the delegation.

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John; Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:33:51 2010
Subject: Re: URGENT

Just sent email....I have never seen him so angry. He said it is the worse thing that has happened while he has been S

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:28:52 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT

Please keep us posted on his reaction. We need to know when to reach out to the GA delegation.

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:16 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John
Subject: Re: URGENT

Doug and I will talk to the Secy right after this stop. Should I share with Justin.

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:11:55 2010
Subject: Re: URGENT

I have.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta

To: Berge, John; Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:06:33 2010
Subject: Re: URGENT

We need to make sure someone has seen the video. I am quick to jump to conclusions but want to be certain it is what is said to be before I tell the Secy.

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:03:05 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT

Just showed it to Carole - she is meeting with Kevin.

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:02 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John
Subject: Re: URGENT

Good

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:00:42 2010
Subject: Re: URGENT

I sent to Ross and Jett
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 14:51:24 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT

Is WH or Kevin aware of this?

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 2:44 PM
To: Berge, John; Mather, Chris
Subject: Re: URGENT

I agree

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 14:42:27 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT

She needs to resign immediately.

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 2:39 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John
Subject: Re: URGENT

Terrible. What can I do to help?

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 14:34:25 2010
Subject: URGENT

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Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 1:56 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Zaina, Lisa
Subject: FW: Georgia
Importance: High

Chris,

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Jett, Carole

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:16 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Berge, John; O'Brien, Doug
Subject: Re: WCBS story on Sherod
Attachments: image001.jpg

Ex (b)(5)

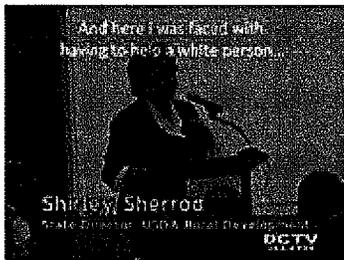
From: Mather, Chris
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:52:19 2010
Subject: Fw: WCBS story on Sherod

FYI
Chris Mather

From: Maloney, Wayne
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: Zaina, Lisa; Cook, Cheryl; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:31:29 2010
Subject: WCBS story on Sherod

SHOCK: Video Suggests Racism At NAACP Event

NEW YORK (CBS) 0



[Click to enlarge](#)

1 of 1

Shirley Sherrod, USDA Rural Development Georgia State Director

Last Tuesday, the NAACP passed a resolution condemning racism in the Tea Party movement. The organization's delegates called on Tea Party leaders to "repudiate those in their ranks who use racist language in their signs and speeches."

Tea Party members and supporters saw the resolution as a condemnation of the group itself, which calls for fiscal responsibility, restrictions on governmental power, and backs political candidates who claim the same.

The NAACP's action caught the attention of Andrew Breitbart of BigGovernment.com, who said the controversy was "absolutely manufactured for political gain," in a summer "in which the economy is the number one issue affecting blacks and whites in this country. This country can ill afford the schism of race to be exploited the way [he is] based upon the false premise of the Tea Party being racist."

He also claimed to possess recorded evidence of racism from the NAACP.

On Monday, Breitbart posted a video of a speech by Shirley Sherrod, USDA Rural Development Georgia State Director, delivered at the NAACP's 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet.

The video shows Sherrod speaking of racial considerations being a factor for how much help she would give.

"The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking but he was trying to show me he was superior to me. I know what he was doing, but he had come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was, I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," Sherrod said.

"I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough," Sherrod said. "So that when he, I assumed the Department of Agriculture had sent him to me, either that or the Georgia Department of Agriculture, and he needed to go back and report that I did try to help him."

In the video, Sherrod also spoke of referring the white farmer to a white lawyer, thinking the latter would be more sympathetic because of race. "So I took him to a white lawyer that had attended some of training that we had provided because Chapter 12 bankruptcy had just been enacted for the family farm. So I figured if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him."

Jett, Carole

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:13 PM
To: Berge, John; Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: URGENT

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Cc: Ross, Karen - Chief of Staff; Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin
Subject: Shirley Sherrod

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Dallas and Cheryl

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From: Tonsager, Dallas
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:54 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: Is this okay to send?

Dear Mr. Secretary

We have just seen the video of Georgia State Director Shirley Sherrod and are deeply disturbed. Cheryl has put her on administrative leave pending a full investigation. Of course, the video suggests that this is about a farm loan, and those programs were transferred to the Farm Service Agency in 1995.

Shirley explained to Cheryl that this piece of tape shows only one small part of a longer story she told of her personal transformation beyond race, and is about a farmer who came to see her in 1986 when she was working as a farm advocate. The rest of the story apparently explains how she came to assist this farmer and many other white farmers during this time period. She said there is a copy of the entire speech, and Cheryl asked her to provide it as quickly as possible.

Dallas and Cheryl

Dallas Tonsager | Under Secretary
Rural Development
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W. | Washington, D.C. 20250
Phone: 202.720.4581 | Fax: 202.720.2080
www.rurdev.usda.gov

Jett, Carole

From: Berge, John
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:00 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta
Subject: RE: WCBS story on Sherod
Attachments: image001.jpg

Any talkers yet?

We are teed up to call the GA delegation, Governor of GA and the State Director of Agriculture of GA.

Should we talk to authorizers and appropriators?

Waiting for talkers and green light.

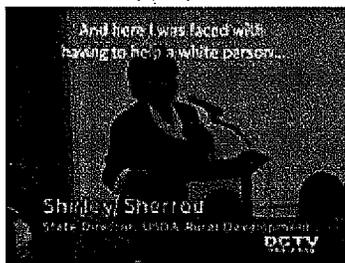
From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:52 PM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Subject: Fw: WCBS story on Sherod

FYI
Chris Mather

From: Maloney, Wayne
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: Zaina, Lisa; Cook, Cheryl; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:31:29 2010
Subject: WCBS story on Sherod

SHOCK: Video Suggests Racism At NAACP Event

NEW YORK (CBS) —



[Click to enlarge](#)

1 of 1

Shirley Sherrod, USDA Rural Development Georgia State Director

Last Tuesday, the NAACP passed a resolution condemning racism in the Tea Party movement. The organization's delegates called on Tea Party leaders to "repudiate those in their ranks who use racist language in their signs and speeches."

Tea Party members and supporters saw the resolution as a condemnation of the group itself, which calls for fiscal responsibility, restrictions on governmental power, and backs political candidates who claim the same.

The NAACP's action caught the attention of Andrew Breitbart of BigGovernment.com, who said the controversy was "absolutely manufactured for political gain," in a summer "in which the economy is the number one issue affecting blacks and whites in this country. This country can ill afford the schism of race to be exploited the way [he is] based upon the false premise of the Tea Party being racist."

He also claimed to possess recorded evidence of racism from the NAACP.

On Monday, Breitbart posted a video of a speech by Shirley Sherrod, USDA Rural Development Georgia State Director, delivered at the NAACP's 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet.

The video shows Sherrod speaking of racial considerations being a factor for how much help she would give.

"The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking but he was trying to show me he was superior to me. I know what he was doing, but he had come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was, I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," Sherrod said.

"I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough," Sherrod said. "So that when he, I assumed the Department of Agriculture had sent him to me, either that or the Georgia Department of Agriculture, and he needed to go back and report that I did try to help him."

In the video, Sherrod also spoke of referring the white farmer to a white lawyer, thinking the latter would be more sympathetic because of race. "So I took him to a white lawyer that had attended some of training that we had provided because Chapter 12 bankruptcy had just been enacted for the family farm. So I figured if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him."

Jett, Carole

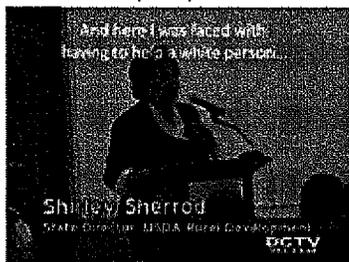
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Jett, Carole

From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:50 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Cc: Wyant, Monica
Subject: FW: Urgent

I let the WH know.

-----Original Message-----

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:06 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl; Tonsager, Dallas; Washo, Kevin
Cc: Wyant, Monica
Subject: Urgent

Sherliy Sherrod is on tape and you need to see/hear immediately

<http://hotair.com>

In upper right search Sherrod

We need to take immediate action.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption b6

Jett, Carole

From: Berge, John
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:43 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; Jett, Carole
Subject: Re: Hey

Concur. She should be fired. As an appointee, she has no recourse.

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Jett, Carole
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:40:02 2010
Subject: Re: Hey

Our hands may be tied but given tea party press coverage and FOX and CBS pick up, and potential for this to get super blown up, admin leave might not be strong enough.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Jett, Carole
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:32:25 2010
Subject: Hey

Exemption b5

Jett, Carole

From: Berge, John
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:41 PM
To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: URGENT

Krysta - do you want to call KINGston too?

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John; Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:38:39 2010
Subject: Re: URGENT

Justin is drafting per Secy and sending now

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; Jett, Carole
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:37:24 2010
Subject: Re: URGENT

J Berge or J Dejong? I'm not drafting.

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Jett, Carole
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:36:40 2010
Subject: Re: URGENT

J, are you drafting because S gave you guidance and if not, we should do here to save time.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:34:58 2010
Subject: Re: URGENT

We need talkers as soon as the statement is ready so that we can reach out to the rest of the delegation.

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John; Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:33:51 2010
Subject: Re: URGENT

Just sent email....I have never seen him so angry. He said it is the worse thing that has happened while he has been S

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From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:28:52 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT

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From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:16 PM
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Doug and I will talk to the Secy right after this stop. Should I share with Justin.

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
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Subject: Re: URGENT

I have.
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Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:06:33 2010
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From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:03:05 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT

Just showed it to Carole - she is meeting with Kevin.

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:02 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John
Subject: Re: URGENT

Good

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta

Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:00:42 2010
Subject: Re: URGENT

I sent to Ross and Jett
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----
From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 14:51:24 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT

Is WH or Kevin aware of this?

-----Original Message-----
From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 2:44 PM
To: Berge, John; Mather, Chris
Subject: Re: URGENT

I agree

----- Original Message -----
From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 14:42:27 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT

She needs to resign immediately.

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To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John
Subject: Re: URGENT

Terrible. What can I do to help?

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-----Original Message-----

From: Maloney, Wayne
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 1:56 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Zaina, Lisa
Subject: FW: Georgia
Importance: High

Chris,

I was just informed of a video of the Georgia State Director that was posted on the Internet earlier this afternoon. It speaks for itself and you need to watch it right away.

I have discussed this with Tim McNeilly. He has instructed the PIC and the State Director not to respond to media without checking with us first. We have not been contacted by any media outlet but expect that we will.

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Wayne
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Looking for guidance on how you would like to prepare and handle any inquiries that result.

Thanks.

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I need to tell WH comms.
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Ex (b)(5)

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Georgia PIC just called to alert us to a campaign underway involving Shirley Sherrod vs. the Tea Party people. I understand that this may have been brought to your attention already, but in case it hasn't..... The PIC is looking for guidance if (and I think there will be) media contact regarding the below video.

<http://hotair.com/archives/2010/07/19/breitbart-hits-naacp-with-promised-video-of-racism/>

Looking for guidance on how you would like to prepare and handle any inquiries that result.

Thanks.

Timothy J. McNeilly | Director, Legislative and Public Affairs Rural Development U.S.
Department of Agriculture 1400 Independence Ave., S.W. | Washington, D.C. 20250
Phone: 202.720.1019 | Fax: 202.690.4083

www.rurdev.usda.gov

"Committed to the future of rural communities"

"Estamos dedicados al futuro de las comunidades rurales"

Jett, Carole

From: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:35 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin; Wyant, Monica; Tonsager, Dallas
Subject: Re: Hey

Done

----- Original Message -----

From: Jett, Carole
To: Washo, Kevin; Wyant, Monica; Tonsager, Dallas; Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:33:04 2010
Subject: FW: Hey

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:32 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Jett, Carole
Subject: Hey

The S is absolutely sick and mad over the S Sherrod issue. He wants her immediately on Adm leave, Justin is working on a strong statement and I need to call Rep Bishop as soon as ya'll give me the go ahead.

Jett, Carole

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:34 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Mather, Chris; Berge, John
Subject: Re: Hey

Will do

----- Original Message -----

From: Jett, Carole
To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris; Berge, John
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:33:39 2010
Subject: RE: Hey

I would make the call. The mechanics are going to take a while.

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:32 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Jett, Carole
Subject: Hey

The S is absolutely sick and mad over the S Sherrod issue. He wants her immediately on Adm leave, Justin is working on a strong statement and I need to call Rep Bishop as soon as ya'll give me the go ahead.

Jett, Carole

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:34 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: Georgia

Can I call Rep Bishop and Chambliss?

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:33:07 2010
Subject: Fw: Georgia

Sarah just checked nexus. It aired yesterday on FOX - Geraldo. TV Eyes did not pick it up. CBS News in NY just ran a story.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Maloney, Wayne
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Zaina, Lisa
Sent: Mon Jul 19 13:55:40 2010
Subject: FW: Georgia

Chris,

I was just informed of a video of the Georgia State Director that was posted on the Internet earlier this afternoon. It speaks for itself and you need to watch it right away.

I have discussed this with Tim McNeilly. He has instructed the PIC and the State Director not to respond to media without checking with us first. We have not been contacted by any media outlet but expect that we will.

Tim has been asked by me to draft a statement for our review to be issued if necessary.

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Thanks.

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Jett, Carole

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:34 PM
To: Berge, John; Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: URGENT

Just sent email....I have never seen him so angry. He said it is the worse thing that has happened while he has been S

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:28:52 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT

Please keep us posted on his reaction. We need to know when to reach out to the GA delegation.

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:16 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John
Subject: Re: URGENT

Doug and I will talk to the Secy right after this stop. Should I share with Justin.

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:11:55 2010
Subject: Re: URGENT

I have.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John; Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:06:33 2010
Subject: Re: URGENT

We need to make sure someone has seen the video. I am quick to jump to conclusions but want to be certain it is what is said to be before I tell the Secy.

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:03:05 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT

Just showed it to Carole - she is meeting with Kevin.

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta

Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:02 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John
Subject: Re: URGENT

Good

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:00:42 2010
Subject: Re: URGENT

I sent to Ross and Jett
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 14:51:24 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT

Is WH or Kevin aware of this?

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 2:44 PM
To: Berge, John; Mather, Chris
Subject: Re: URGENT

Ex (b)(5)

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 14:42:27 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT

Ex (b)(5)

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 2:39 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John
Subject: Re: URGENT

Terrible. What can I do to help?

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 14:34:25 2010
Subject: URGENT

This is horrible. Video just posted on Hotair.com.

The NAACP is about to learn one of the most basic of all lessons in life – those who live in glass houses should avoid provoking a stone-throwing war. After the civil-rights organization threatened to issue a condemnation of Tea Party activism by equating it with racism (a position from which they ultimately retreated), Andrew Breitbart announced that he would publish at least one video of the NAACP itself cheering racism. Breitbart delivers on that promise today at Big Government, showing USDA official Shirley Sherrod explain to an appreciative NAACP audience in July 2009 how she deliberately withheld information from a white farmer in Georgia trying to save his land and his business:

-----Original Message-----

From: Maloney, Wayne
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 1:56 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Zaina, Lisa
Subject: FW: Georgia
Importance: High

Chris,

I was just informed of a video of the Georgia State Director that was posted on the Internet earlier this afternoon. It speaks for itself and you need to watch it right away.

I have discussed this with Tim McNeilly. He has instructed the PIC and the State Director not to respond to media without checking with us first. We have not been contacted by any media outlet but expect that we will.

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Jett, Carole

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:34 PM
To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris; Berge, John
Subject: RE: Hey

I would make the call. The mechanics are going to take a while. ??

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:32 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Jett, Carole
Subject: Hey

Ex (b)(5)

Jett, Carole

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:33 PM
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Subject: Fw: Georgia

Importance: High

Sarah just checked nexus. It aired yesterday on FOX - Geraldo. TV Eyes did not pick it up. CBS News in NY just ran a story.
Chris Mather

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From: Maloney, Wayne
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Jett, Carole

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:32 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Jett, Carole
Subject: Hey

Ex (b)(5)

Jett, Carole

From: Berge, John
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:29 PM
To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole
Subject: RE: URGENT

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From: Harden, Krysta
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Doug and I will talk to the Secy right after this stop. Should I share with Justin.

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Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:00:42 2010

Subject: Re: URGENT

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Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

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To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 14:51:24 2010
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Subject: FW: Georgia
Importance: High

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Jett, Carole

From: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:27 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Tonsager, Dallas; Washo, Kevin
Cc: Wyant, Monica
Subject: RE: Urgent

My computer won't load it. Heading for Dallas' office to try there.

-----Original Message-----

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:06 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl; Tonsager, Dallas; Washo, Kevin
Cc: Wyant, Monica
Subject: Urgent
Importance: High

Ex (b)(5)

Ex (b)(5)

Ex (b)(5)

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Ex (b)(5)

Exemption b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 2:31 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: SUPER URGENT

Importance: High

THIS IS HORRIBLE. From hotair.com

The NAACP is about to learn one of the most basic of all lessons in life – those who live in glass houses should avoid provoking a stone-throwing war. After the civil-rights organization threatened to issue a condemnation of Tea Party activism by equating it with racism (a position from which they ultimately retreated), Andrew Breitbart announced that he would publish at least one video of the NAACP itself cheering racism. Breitbart delivers on that promise today at Big Government, showing USDA official Shirley Sherrod explain to an appreciative NAACP audience in July 2009 how she deliberately withheld information from a white farmer in Georgia trying to save his land and his business...

And there is video

-----Original Message-----

From: Maloney, Wayne
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 1:56 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Zaina, Lisa
Subject: FW: Georgia
Importance: High

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Jett, Carole

From: Diephouse, Greg
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 4:15 PM
To: Harden, Krysta; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; May, Tina
Cc: Berge, John
Subject: FW: Chairman Towns on Sherrod
Attachments: 6412273 sherrod.pdf

Making sure you all see this one. We will not assign it to any agency – please advise on how or if we need to respond to this. The letter doesn't ask for a written response as much as a meeting.

Greg

Greg Diephouse
Director
Office of the Executive Secretariat
USDA - 202-720-7100

From: Young, Marquithia -USDA
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 4:10 PM
To: Diephouse, Greg
Subject: Chairman Towns on Sherrod

Letter attached.

Marquithia Young
Office Automation Clerk
Office of the Executive Secretariat
United States Department of Agriculture
202-720-7100

Jett, Carole

From: Leonard, Joe
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 6:37 AM
To: Jett, Carole; 'ARLEAN.LELAND@OGC.USDA.GOV'; 'Frederick.Pfaeffle@OGC.USDA.GOV'; McNeil, Mary
Cc: Silverman, Steve; 'INGA.BUMBARY-LANGSTON@OGC.USDA.GOV'
Subject: Re: Help [Sherrod Track B Decision]

Ex (b)(5)

----- Original Message -----

From: Jett, Carole
To: 'ARLEAN.LELAND@OGC.USDA.GOV' <ARLEAN.LELAND@OGC.USDA.GOV>; Leonard, Joe; 'Frederick.Pfaeffle@OGC.USDA.GOV' <Frederick.Pfaeffle@OGC.USDA.GOV>; McNeil, Mary
Cc: Silverman, Steve; 'INGA.BUMBARY-LANGSTON@OGC.USDA.GOV' <INGA.BUMBARY-LANGSTON@OGC.USDA.GOV>
Sent: Wed Jul 21 09:54:05 2010
Subject: Re: Help [Sherrod Track B Decision]

Ex (b)(5)

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

----- Original Message -----

From: Leland, Arlean <ARLEAN.LELAND@OGC.USDA.GOV>
To: Leonard, Joe; Jett, Carole; Pfaeffle, Frederick <Frederick.Pfaeffle@OGC.USDA.GOV>; McNeil, Mary
Cc: Silverman, Steve; BUMBARY-LANGSTON, INGA <INGA.BUMBARY-LANGSTON@OGC.USDA.GOV>
Sent: Wed Jul 21 09:45:55 2010
Subject: RE: Help [Sherrod Track B Decision]

Dr. Leonard,

Ex (b)(5)

Arlean Leland
AGC-CRD

-----Original Message-----

From: Leonard, Joe [mailto:Joe.Leonard@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:51 AM
To: Jett, Carole; Pfaeffle, Frederick; McNeil, Mary
Cc: Silverman, Steve; BUMBARY-LANGSTON, INGA; Leland, Arlean
Subject: RE: Help [Sherrod Track B Decision]

Ex (b)(5)

Joe Leonard Jr., Ph.D
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Suite 212-A Washington, DC 20250 Joe.Leonard@osec.usda.gov

O: (202) 720-3808

F: (202) 690-1782

-----Original Message-----

From: Jett, Carole

Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:34 PM

To: 'Frederick.Pfaeffle@OGC.USDA.GOV'; McNeil, Mary; Leonard, Joe

Cc: Silverman, Steve; 'INGA.BUMBARY-LANGSTON@OGC.USDA.GOV'; 'ARLEAN.LELAND@OGC.USDA.GOV'

Subject: Re: Help [Sherrod Track B Decision]

Thx!

Carole Jett

Deputy Chief of Staff

USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

----- Original Message -----

From: Frederick.Pfaeffle@OGC.USDA.GOV <Frederick.Pfaeffle@OGC.USDA.GOV>

To: Jett, Carole; McNeil, Mary; Leonard, Joe

Cc: Silverman, Steve; INGA.BUMBARY-LANGSTON@OGC.USDA.GOV <INGA.BUMBARY-LANGSTON@OGC.USDA.GOV>; ARLEAN.LELAND@OGC.USDA.GOV <ARLEAN.LELAND@OGC.USDA.GOV>

Sent: Tue Jul 20 19:50:01 2010

Subject: RE: Help [Sherrod Track B Decision]

Confidential Attorney-Client Communication

Exemption (b)(6)

Exemption (b)(6)

I will provide further info when we hear back from the Department of Justice

COMPTON.

Jett, Carole

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 7:17 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta
Subject: Re: Sherrod and Cong. Steve King (IA)

King was trashing us earlier today.
Chris Mather

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Sent: Thu Jul 22 19:14:49 2010
Subject: Sherrod and Cong. Steve King (IA)
FYI - Made comments on radio today that Shirley Sherrod should be investigated because he believes most of the Pigford claims are fraudulent.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548

Exemption (b)(6) (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

Jett, Carole

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 7:15 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Subject: Sherrod and Cong. Steve King (IA)

FYI - Made comments on radio today that Shirley Sherrod should be investigated because he believes most of the Pigford claims are fraudulent.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548

Exemption (b)(6) (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

Jett, Carole

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 7:02 PM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole
Subject: Fw: CNN Transcript- POTUS on Shirley

Potus did interview
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Misailidis, Sarah; Purchia, Liz; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thu Jul 22 18:56:03 2010
Subject: CNN Transcript- POTUS on Shirley

CNN 07/22/2010 18:38:51

President obama has granted a interview to abc news and he spoke about the agriculture secretary tom vilsack's decision to go ahead to fire **shirley** sherrod, and listen to this.

he jumped the gun partly because we now live in this media culture where something goes up on youtube or a blog, and everybody scrambles, and i have told my team and i told my agencies that we have to make sure that we are focusing on doing the right thing instead of what looks to be politically necessary at that very moment. we have the take our time and think these issues through.

the president of the united states. all right. let's bring in candy crowley our chief political correspondent and host of ""state of the union"" which airs sunday mornings at 9:00, and john king who hosts ""john king usa"" which comes up at the top of the hour. you spoke with **shirley** sherrod, john, and how did that conversation with you go with her after she spoke with the president?

well, good. she said she had a brief conversation with the president, and she is grateful that he did not use the words i'm sorry, but right in the vain that he regretted what had happened. interestingly, she has questions and still believes that someone, and not the president, and she believes him, but someone in the white house was involved in her firing. other things, wolf, she is not sure if she will take the job and she is exhausted and tough words for the naacp and how they treated her in this, and i asked her about andrew breitbart, the conservative who put the edited words on the air, and what she thought about him.

reporter: if you had a few seconds for andrew breitbart, what would you stay?

i would say he is a liar. he knew exactly what effect that would have on the conservative racist people he is dealing with. that is why i started to get the hate mail. and that is why i started to get the hate calls. he got the effect he was looking for.

she said it would take a very long time, and she would have to have deep personal conversation with andrew breitbart, and she will forgive the white house, and secretary vilsack, but not andrew breitbart.

well, what is your take, candy. i have been anxious to speak to you over the last couple of days.

i think that the post presidency race isn't. i was having a conversation saying that is the white house tried to take president obama out of this, and sort of keep him above it, and yet he makes this phone call, and i said, that there is no way to keep this president away from racial issues. he is the first african-american president, and naturally, i mean, i was trying to think that if this, if the gates, the harvard thing that happened with the policeman, and the professor, if that had happened under george w. bush, nobody would have looked at him to say something, but they do look to barack obama to say something, because he is president and made history and something they know they have to live with.

so, it is not just that the buck stops here as harry truman said, but also because he is african-american?

sure, sure. ask any other -- and look at any other president trying to put him in position of the particular harvard incident and no one would have expected that they would have to put something out there, but they do expect it of president obama,

and they do also expect, and they did politically 101, get rid of the problem. that is what everybody's first reaction is when a political problem comes up, everybody has learned to get rid of the problem, and that is a problem for them, except he is exactly right in this day and age --

it turned out to be a big problem.

except that she was not a problem and gave a remarkable and redemptive speech. remember when the gates thing happened the president regretted that the cambridge police acted stupidly and now his administration has acted stupidly, and they didn't check out to the right, and the speech did not get investigated, and they accepted that she was a racist and problem and it looked especially bad when it is the administration of the first african-american president, and the naacp act on the premise to treat everybody fairly and jumped the gun, and didn't treat this woman fairly, and they have egg on their face and they know it.

we look forward to your show at the top of the hour, ""john king usa,"" and candy crowley sunday.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Exemption (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 7:00 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Misailidis, Sarah; Purchia, Liz
Cc: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole
Subject: RE: CNN Transcript- POTUS on Shirley

Looping Karen and Carole. POTUS did interview re: Shirley Sherrod. His comment highlighted below.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548

Exemption (b)(6) cell
Justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 6:56 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Misailidis, Sarah; Purchia, Liz; DeJong, Justin
Subject: CNN Transcript- POTUS on Shirley

CNN 07/22/2010 18:38:51

President Obama has granted an interview to ABC News and he spoke about the Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack's decision to go ahead to fire **Shirley** Sherrod, and listen to this.

Obama: he jumped the gun partly because we now live in this media culture where something goes up on YouTube or a blog, and everybody scrambles, and I have told my team and I told my agencies that we have to make sure that we are focusing on doing the right thing instead of what looks to be politically necessary at that very moment. We have to take our time and think these issues through.

the president of the United States. All right. Let's bring in Candy Crowley, our chief political correspondent and host of "State of the Union" which airs Sunday mornings at 9:00, and John King who hosts "John King USA" which comes up at the top of the hour. You spoke with **Shirley** Sherrod, John, and how did that conversation with you go with her after she spoke with the president?

Well, good. She said she had a brief conversation with the president, and she is grateful that he did not use the words I'm sorry, but right in the vein that he regretted what had happened. Interestingly, she has questions and still believes that someone, and not the president, and she believes him, but someone in the White House was involved in her firing. Other things, Wolf, she is not sure if she will take the job and she is exhausted and tough words for the NAACP and how they treated her in this, and I asked her about Andrew Breitbart, the conservative who put the edited words on the air, and what she thought about him.

Reporter: If you had a few seconds for Andrew Breitbart, what would you say?

I would say he is a liar. He knew exactly what effect that would have on the conservative racist people he is dealing with. That is why I started to get the hate mail. And that is why I started to get the hate calls. He got the effect he was looking for.

She said it would take a very long time, and she would have to have deep personal conversation with Andrew Breitbart, and she will forgive the White House, and Secretary Vilsack, but not Andrew Breitbart.

Well, what is your take, Candy. I have been anxious to speak to you over the last couple of days.

i think that the post presidency race isn't. i was having a conversation saying that is the white house tried to take president obama out of this, and sort of keep him above it, and yet he makes this phone call, and i said, that there is no way to keep this president away from racial issues. he is the first african-american president, and naturally, i mean, i was trying to think that if this, if the gates, the harvard thing that happened with the policeman, and the professor, if that had happened under george w. bush, nobody would have looked at him to say something, but they do look to barack obama to say something, because he is president and made history and something they know they have to live with.

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except that she was not a problem and gave a remarkable and redemptive speech. remember when the gates thing happened the president regretted that the cambridge police acted stupidly and now his administration has acted stupidly, and they didn't check out to the right, and the speech did not get investigated, and they accepted that she was a racist and problem and it looked especially bad when it is the administration of the first african-american president, and the naacp act on the premise to treat everybody fairly and jumped the gun, and didn't treat this woman fairly, and they have egg on their face and they know it.

we look forward to your show at the top of the hour, "john king usa," and candy crowley sunday.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Exemption (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 1:45 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: Fw: Shirley Sherrod

I will follow up with Chris.
Karen Ross
Chief of Staff
Office of the Secretary

From: Elder, Fitzhugh (Appropriations)
To: Harden, Krysta; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Cc: Fountain, Galen (Appropriations)
Sent: Thu Jul 22 13:40:43 2010
Subject: Shirley Sherrod
Krysta and Karen,

I know that the last couple of days have been difficult. I certainly wish the circumstances were different. As I am certain you will understand, what transpired with regard to Ms. Sherrod has raised many questions. At this point, I am particularly interested in knowing what happened, when it happened, and who was involved. Please compile this information for me. A timeline of events would also be useful and should be included with the information you send me. I would like the information sent to me as soon as possible and I would like the information to be as specific as possible.

Also, I sent an email message to Chris Mather yesterday and never received a response. I would like the courtesy of an answer to my question.

Thank you.

Fitzhugh Elder IV
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate

Ex (b)(6)

(telephone)

Ex (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 1:11 PM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; O'Brien, Doug
Cc: Mather, Chris; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: FW: READOUT OF PRESIDENT OBAMA'S CALL WITH SHIRLEY SHERROD

Fyi.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
Exemption (b)(6) (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: noreply@messages.whitehouse.gov [mailto:noreply@messages.whitehouse.gov]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 1:09 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: READOUT OF PRESIDENT OBAMA'S CALL WITH SHIRLEY SHERROD

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

July 22, 2010

READOUT OF PRESIDENT OBAMA'S CALL WITH SHIRLEY SHERROD

The President reached Ms. Sherrod by telephone at about 12:35. They spoke for seven minutes.

The President expressed to Ms. Sherrod his regret about the events of the last several days. He emphasized that Secretary Vilsack was sincere in his apology yesterday, and in his work to rid USDA of discrimination.

The President told Ms. Sherrod that this misfortune can present an opportunity for her to continue her hard work on behalf of those in need, and he hopes that she will do so.

###

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Jett, Carole

From: White House Press Office [noreply@messages.whitehouse.gov]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 1:08 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: READOUT OF PRESIDENT OBAMA'S CALL WITH SHIRLEY SHERROD

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

July 22, 2010

READOUT OF PRESIDENT OBAMA'S CALL WITH SHIRLEY SHERROD

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###

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The White House · 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW · Washington DC 20500 · 202-456-1111

Jett, Carole

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 8:59 AM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Mather, Chris
Subject: Fw: Federal Eye: Shirley Sherrod wants to talk to President Obama

From: ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com
Sent: Thu Jul 22 07:28:02 2010
Subject: Federal Eye: Shirley Sherrod wants to talk to President Obama

http://voices.washingtonpost.com/federal-eye/2010/07/shirley_sherrod_wants_to_talk.html

Shirley Sherrod wants to talk to President Obama

Updated 7:24 a.m. ET

Ousted but now recruited U.S. Agriculture Department official Shirley Sherrod says she wants to hear directly from President Obama that he and his administration are fully committed to fighting discrimination against black farmers.

"I can't say that the president is fully behind me," Sherrod told ABC's "Good Morning America" Thursday morning. "I would hope that he is...I would love to talk to him."

Sherrod -- whose forced resignation Monday night based on a misleading video snippet led to a White House apology and a new job offer from Agriculture -- is in New York Thursday for a series of television interviews on the network and cable morning shows.

On NBC's Today Show, Sherrod said she hoped to speak to Obama about the experiences of rural farmers.

"I'd like to talk to him about the experiences of people like me, people at the grassroots level, people who live out here in rural America people, who live in the South. I know he does not have that kind of experience," Sherrod said.

"We love him, we want him to be successful, because we feel he think in some ways like we do, and we think that's good for the country," she said later. "Yes, there are issues out there that we are faced with, issues of poverty. The other thing, I want everything to reflect, I want a good reflection for him as the first black president."

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack offered Sherrod a position with USDA's Office of Civil Rights and Community Outreach, Sherrod said. But she's inclined to decline the offer.

"I would not be that individual that the department, everyone is looking to to solve the issue of racism in USDA. It takes a lot more to get that job done," she said, noting that other USDA officials have not lost their jobs for discriminating against minority or women farmers.

Sherrod also told CNN's "American Morning" that said she would like to "get back at" Andrew Breitbart, the right-wing blogger whose posting of the video snippet triggered the political storm that led to her ouster. Asked whether she would like to see Breitbart's Web site shut down, Sherrod replied: "That would be a great thing...he's doing more to divide us."

Ed O'Keefe
The Federal Eye
The Washington Post
ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com

Ex (b)(6) (c)

Jett, Carole

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 8:08 AM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin
Subject: Fw: NBC Today Show 7 AM

Was he supposed to email something? If so, we need to send soon so this story goes away.
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Purchia, Liz; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Thu Jul 22 07:48:34 2010
Subject: NBC Today Show 7 AM

FYI- She says that she still has yet to see the job offer emailed from the secretary

"yeah, i haven't seen the offer, you know. the secretary said he would e-mail it to me. i have not seen it yet. so before i say no totally, i would like to look at that to weigh in."

Station: **(NBC)**
Date: 07/22/2010 07:02:20 - 7:12:20 AM

Video:
<http://mms.tveyes.com/Transcript.asp?stationid=1665&DateTime=07/22/2010+07:02:20&mediapreload=14&playclip=true>

it's been an interesting 48 hours for shirley sherrod. she's accepted apologies from the white house, and the secretary of agriculture. but, is she ready to take a new job within the same administration that demanded her resignation just three days ago?

it is a decision that she is mulling over this morning after agriculture secretary tom vilsack admitted he should have done a better job of investigating the video that started the controversy. so is she ready to put it all behind her? does the president himself owe her a personal apology? well, she's sitting right over there. i'm going to talk with shirley sherrod right ahead.

also a storm brewing in the caribbean has brought efforts to permanently plug the busted oil well in the gulf to a near standstill. we're going to get the latest on that story and a rare view of the disaster as crews use a submarine to search for oil beneath the surface. we're going to take you live to the gulf in just a couple of minutes.

and plus-sized and proud. the model who is furious that recent pictures of her were altered to make her appear thinner than she actually is.

but we begin on this thursday morning with the fallout over the premature firing of an agriculture department official named shirley sherrod. we'll talk to her in a moment. but first, nbc's savannah guthrie is at the white house with the latest on the story. savannah, good morning to you.

reporter: good morning, matt. well the white house is hoping to move past this chapter, now that the agriculture secretary has come forward to offer miss sherrod a new job with the agency, and to apologize. under fire for the firing of a usda worker, agriculture secretary tom vilsack faced the cameras.

this is a good woman. she's been put through hell. and i could have done and should have done a better job.

reporter: vilsack said he personally called sherrod to apologize.

i asked for shirley's forgiveness and she was gracious enough to extend it to me. and for that i am thankful.

reporter: at the white house wednesday, it was also all apologies.

i think without a doubt miss sherröd is owed an apology. a disservice was done for which we apologize. and on behalf of the administration, i offer our apologies.

reporter: after initially standing by the agriculture secretary's decision to fire sherröd, the white house now acknowledges it was a rush to judgment. a usda official called sherröd monday afternoon, in her car, asked her to pull over and resign by blackberry. this, after video surfaced online of sherröd making racially charged comments that turned out to be selectively edited.

how did we not ask the right questions? how did you all not ask the right questions? how did other people not ask the right questions?

reporter: watching the apologies as they were issued, live on cable tv, shirley sherröd herself later reacted.

i'm just wondering how will my grandchildren look at this when they read about this in later years, and their grandmother being the first black person to be state director of rural development in georgia, was asked to resign by the first black president.

reporter: as for andrew breitbart, the conservative blogger who posted the video, he acknowledged he put it online without seeing the full content of the remarks. but he didn't apologize for posting it. though he did say he has sympathy for sherröd.

i feel bad that they made this about her and i feel sorry that they made this about her. i'm not sure if that was done because they rushed to judgment, or whether they wanted to make it about shirley versus me. because that's what it's become.

well, there's one issue outstanding. senior aides here at the white house insist they did not push the agriculture secretary to fire ms. sherröd, that it was a decision made at agriculture and they were, frankly, looped in essentially after it had been done. on the other hand, miss sherröd has said repeatedly it was her impression, based on her conversation with an agriculture department official, that it was the white house who wanted her to resign. so that's one of those issues of fact that a lot of people will be talking about today, meredith.

all right, savannah guthrie, thank you very much. shirley sherröd is with us again this morning. ms. sherröd, thank you so much for joining us.

thank you.

you have now received apologies from the usda, the white house and the naacp for their rush to judgment. you've accepted those apologies. you really are a woman, as the secretary put it, who has been through hell. how are you feeling right now?

you know, i've gone from being at such a low on monday, as this was unfolding, and thinking, this is so unreal, to feeling so great about the support i've received from around the country. it's encouraging. it makes me feel that there are many others out there who think like i do, and so many who do not think like the individual who started this in the first place.

let's talk about that. i want to talk about it in a minute. but first of all, do you think that you deserve a phone call from president obama?

i think i do.

you do?

mm-hmm.

an apology?

well, you know, he is the president of the united states of america. i received the apologies that are important. i really would not want the president to apologize to me. i'd love to have a conversation with him, though.

and what would you say to him?

you know, i'd like to talk to him a little bit about the experience of people like me. people at the grassroots level. people who live out there in rural america, people who live in the south. i know he does not have that kind of experience. let me help him a little bit with how we think, how we live, and the things that are happening.

what do you think he doesn't understand and a lot of the rest of the country doesn't understand about people like you and the way you live and what you're faced with?

you know, we are people who struggle every day, who do the best we can in our community. who love this country. we love him. we want him to be successful, because we feel thinks, in some ways, like we do. and we think that's good for the country. yes, there are issues out there that we are faced with. issues of poverty. issues that i worked so hard on these last 11 months at rural development to try to really have an impact on, mainly because that's me. but the other thing, i want everything to reflect, i want a good reflection for him as the first black president.

but why do you think when it comes to this topic of race, it just presses people's buttons? people are so quick to react without thinking. you're in the center of a storm here. why do you think that is?

you know, this has gone on for years and years, and i thought we were getting to a place where we really could talk about it. but we can't deal with it until we can face each other. that's the whole point i make when i talk. the things that are being done by the gentleman who started this, and i can't even think of his name --

andrew Breitbart.

yes. i didn't know of him before this happened. but the things he's doing, being done more to divide us so we can't move on.

but i guess his point was that this is not him versus you. he was trying to point out racism within the membership of the naacp. that when you told that story about being reluctant to help a white farmer, before he realized this was about poverty, that there was acceptance within the crowd, people who are yeah, you're right, what he was trying to say was there's racism in the naacp, the same way they claim there might be racism within the tea party. is there room for debate, for discussion about that?

you know, there's always room for debate and discussion. because that's what will get us to a point where we can tolerate each other. people were not laughing in that audience. and he knew that his actions would take shirley sherrod down. he didn't mind doing that. he thought, i think, he probably hoped, it would also deal with the naacp. but what he did was getting me. and that, i cannot -- well, he's never offered to apologize for what he's done. but that, you know, it would be hard for me to forgive him at this point.

but at some point the white house could have checked and seen the whole video, the usda could have seen the whole video, the naacp could have seen the whole video before going on the attack with you. the white house has said they had nothing to do with your ouster. you have said that you had three phone calls on monday from your superiors saying that the white house was behind it, they wanted you to resign. do you stand by that?

i stand by that. because i asked what has happened? you know, i just couldn't -- it was so -- you know, the first call i received said we're putting you on administrative leave. i had to explain to my leadership staff that we were quite a ways from the office, in a meeting, that i explained what happened, and i told them, i have to leave and go turn this government car in and get my car and go home. you know, i asked -- so first they were putting me on administrative leave. the next call was shirley, we're going to have to ask you to resign. and then the white house wants you to resign. because i'm asking them, what happened? this is just so unbelievable. it was one thing for them to put me on administrative leave and then look into it. but they went from administrative leave directly into asking me to resign.

so obviously you still feel the white house has some explaining to do. meanwhile the usda, the secretary of agriculture has offered you a new job that you're thinking about. what can you tell us about this job?

you know, it's -- it's discrimination happens in the usda. that's why there are lawsuits by black farmers, hispanic farmers, native american farmers, women farmers. and they're because the agency that never deals with the people who call it. no one lost their job because they're discriminated against a black farmer or a native american farmer or a hispanic farmer or a female farmer. those individuals, many of them, some have retired, but many of them are still there. i would not want to be that individual that the department and everyone is looking to to solve the issue of racism in usda. it takes a lot more to get that job done.

so i'm just asking very quickly, what is the job exactly that they'd like you to do?

they talked about the office about me dealing with discrimination within the agency.

and you're inclined to say no to that?

at this moment, I would think I would be.

so as far as you're concerned at this point you're out of the USDA for good?

yeah. I haven't seen the offer, you know. the secretary said he would e-mail it to me. I have not seen it yet. so before I say no totally, I would like to look at that to weigh in.

ms. Sherrill we appreciate very much you coming in.

thank you.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Exemption (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: Lu, Christopher P. <Exemption (b)(6)>
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:38 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole
Subject: Re: Can someone call me?

Perfect. Thanks much.

From: Mather, Chris <Exemption (b)(6)>
To: Lu, Christopher P.; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff <Karen.Ross@osec.usda.gov>; Jett, Carole <Jett@osec.usda.gov>
Sent: Wed Jul 21 21:02:53 2010
Subject: Re: Can someone call me?

Personal Cell:

Ex (b)(6)

Work cell:

Exemption (b)(6)

Home:

Ex (b)(6)

Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----
From: Lu, Christopher P. <Exemption (b)(6)>
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole
Sent: Wed Jul 21 20:43:34 2010
Subject: Can someone call me?

Potus is trying to reach Sherrod and we're having the same problems you had getting her. I'm at 503-5716. Thanks.

Jett, Carole

From: Lu, Christopher P. [Exemption (b)(6)]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:03 PM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole
Subject: Re: Can someone call me?

Just talked to Chris Mather. All good.

----- Original Message -----

From: Lu, Christopher P.
To: 'karen.ross [Exemption (b)(6)]' <karen.ross [Exemption (b)(6)]>; 'Chris.Mather [Exemption (b)(6)]' <Chris.Mather [Exemption (b)(6)]>; 'Jett [Exemption (b)(6)]' <Jett [Exemption (b)(6)]>
Sent: Wed Jul 21 20:43:54 2010
Subject: Can someone call me?

Potus is trying to reach Sherrod and we're having the same problems you had getting her. I'm at [Exemption (b)(6)] Thanks.

Jett, Carole

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:03 PM
To: 'Christopher_P._L [Exemption (b)(6)]'; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole
Subject: Re: Can someone call me?

Personal Cell:

[Ex (b)(6)]

Work cell:

[Exemption (b)(6)]

Home:

[Ex (b)(6)]

Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Lu, Christopher P. <Christopher_P._Lu@who.eop.gov>
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole
Sent: Wed Jul 21 20:43:34 2010
Subject: Can someone call me?

Potus is trying to reach Sherrod and we're having the same problems you had getting her. I'm at [Exemption (b)(6)] Thanks.

Jett, Carole

From: Lu, Christopher P. [Redacted] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 8:44 PM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole
Subject: Can someone call me?

Potus is trying to reach Sherrod and we're having the same problems you had getting her. I'm at [Redacted] *Exempti... (b)(6)*. Thanks.

Jett, Carole

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 8:34 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: Re: ASAP

Charlie sent. Thanks.
Chris Mather

From: Jett, Carole
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wed Jul 21 20:31:26 2010
Subject: Re: ASAP

At office.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Mather, Chris
To: Jett, Carole; Fromstein, Charles
Sent: Wed Jul 21 20:29:36 2010
Subject: Re: ASAP

I know but she could be. They need numbers in case POTUS has to call at some point.
Chris Mather

From: Jett, Carole
To: Mather, Chris; Fromstein, Charles
Sent: Wed Jul 21 20:19:32 2010
Subject: Re: ASAP

Nope. She is not at home.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Mather, Chris
To: Jett, Carole; Fromstein, Charles
Sent: Wed Jul 21 19:49:52 2010
Subject: Fw: ASAP

Any other numbers for Shirley?
Chris Mather

From: Lesser, Eric P.
To: Mather, Chris

Sent: Wed Jul 21 19:12:01 2010

Subject: RE: ASAP

Thanks, are there any backup/second numbers?

From: Mather, Chris [mailto:Exemption (b)(6)]

Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:04 PM

To: Lesser, Eric P.

Subject: FW: ASAP

From: Fromstein, Charles

Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:02 PM

To: Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole; Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

Subject: RE: ASAP

The cell phone number we reached her at is Ex (b)(6)

From: Mather, Chris

Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:59 PM

To: Jett, Carole; Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Fromstein, Charles

Subject: ASAP

Who has Shirley number?

From: Lesser, Eric P. [mailto:Eric_P._Lesser@who.eop.gov]

Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:58 PM

To: chrisemather@gmail.com; Mather, Chris

Subject: phone number for Shirley Sherrod

Hi Chris,

Do you have the phone numbers for Shirley Sherrod? (We need them if the President decides to call her).

Thanks,

Eric Lesser

Special Assistant to Senior Advisor David Axelrod

The White House

Exemption (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 8:30 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Fromstein, Charles
Subject: Re: ASAP

I know but she could be. They need numbers in case POTUS has to call at some point.
Chris Mather

From: Jett, Carole
To: Mather, Chris; Fromstein, Charles
Sent: Wed Jul 21 20:19:32 2010
Subject: Re: ASAP

Nope. She is not at home.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Mather, Chris
To: Jett, Carole; Fromstein, Charles
Sent: Wed Jul 21 19:49:52 2010
Subject: Fw: ASAP

Any other numbers for Shirley?
Chris Mather

From: Lesser, Eric P.
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wed Jul 21 19:12:01 2010
Subject: RE: ASAP
Thanks, are there are any backup/second numbers?

From: Mather, Chris [mailto:Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:04 PM
To: Lesser, Eric P.
Subject: FW: ASAP

From: Fromstein, Charles
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:02 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole; Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: RE: ASAP

The cell phone number we reached her at is Ex (b)(6)

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:59 PM

To: Jett, Carole; Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Fromstein, Charles
Subject: ASAP

Who has Shirley number?

From: Lesser, Eric P. [mailto:Eric_P_Lesser@who.eop.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:58 PM
To: chrisemather@gmail.com; Mather, Chris
Subject: phone number for Shirley Sherrod

Hi Chris,

Do you have the phone numbers for Shirley Sherrod? (We need them if the President decides to call her).

Thanks,

Eric Lesser
Special Assistant to Senior Advisor David Axelrod
The White House

Exemption (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:50 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Fromstein, Charles
Subject: Fw: ASAP

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Chris Mather

From: Lesser, Eric P.
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wed Jul 21 19:12:01 2010
Subject: RE: ASAP
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Subject: phone number for Shirley Sherrod

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Eric Lesser
Special Assistant to Senior Advisor David Axelrod
The White House

Exemption (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: Silverman, Steve
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:15 PM
To: Leonard, Joe; Jett, Carole; 'Frederick.Pfaeffle@OGC.USDA.GOV'; McNeil, Mary; 'doug.O'brien@usda.gov'
Subject: Thought

Ex (b)(5)

----- Original Message -----

From: Leonard, Joe
To: Jett, Carole; 'Frederick.Pfaeffle@OGC.USDA.GOV' <Frederick.Pfaeffle@OGC.USDA.GOV>; McNeil, Mary
Cc: Silverman, Steve; 'INGA.BUMBARY-LANGSTON@OGC.USDA.GOV' <INGA.BUMBARY-LANGSTON@OGC.USDA.GOV>; 'ARLEAN.LELAND@OGC.USDA.GOV' <ARLEAN.LELAND@OGC.USDA.GOV>
Sent: Wed Jul 21 07:51:01 2010
Subject: RE: Help [Sherrod Track B Decision]

I hope this information is for internal understanding only.

Joe Leonard Jr., Ph.D
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Suite 212-A Washington, DC 20250 Joe.Leonard@osec.usda.gov
O: (202) 720-3808
F: (202) 690-1782

-----Original Message-----

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:34 PM
To: 'Frederick.Pfaeffle@OGC.USDA.GOV'; McNeil, Mary; Leonard, Joe
Cc: Silverman, Steve; 'INGA.BUMBARY-LANGSTON@OGC.USDA.GOV'; 'ARLEAN.LELAND@OGC.USDA.GOV'
Subject: Re: Help [Sherrod Track B Decision]

Thx!
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

----- Original Message -----

From: Frederick.Pfaeffle@OGC.USDA.GOV <Frederick.Pfaeffle@OGC.USDA.GOV>
To: Jett, Carole; McNeil, Mary; Leonard, Joe
Cc: Silverman, Steve; INGA.BUMBARY-LANGSTON@OGC.USDA.GOV <INGA.BUMBARY-LANGSTON@OGC.USDA.GOV>; ARLEAN.LELAND@OGC.USDA.GOV <ARLEAN.LELAND@OGC.USDA.GOV>
Sent: Tue Jul 20 19:50:01 2010
Subject: RE: Help [Sherrod Track B Decision]

Confidential Attorney-Client Communication

Exemption (b)(5), (b)(6)

Exemption (b)(5), (b)(6) I will provide further info when we hear back from the Department of Justice tomorrow.

Jett, Carole

From: Fromstein, Charles
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:02 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole; Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: RE: ASAP

The cell phone number we reached her at is Ex (b)(6)

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:59 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Fromstein, Charles
Subject: ASAP

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Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:58 PM
To: chrisemather@gmail.com; Mather, Chris
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Special Assistant to Senior Advisor David Axelrod
The White House

Exemption (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:59 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Fromstein, Charles
Subject: ASAP

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Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:58 PM
To: chrisemather@gmail.com; Mather, Chris
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Thanks,

Eric Lesser
Special Assistant to Senior Advisor David Axelrod
The White House

Exemption (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:52 PM
To: JIC4, OC -USDA; Chan, Stephanie; Misailidis, Sarah; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb
Cc: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Subject: RE: congressional black caucus

Here is transcript of the CBC press conference remarks.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
Exemption (b)(6) (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: OC.JIC4@oc.usda.gov [mailto:OC.JIC4@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:48 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Misailidis, Sarah; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Subject: congressional black caucus

Barbara Lee's statement in full:

this is an apology for the secretary, and we asked him to come visit was, and talk about what transpired and you have the statement that we prepared earlier, and we asked him that we want him to ask ms. sherrod to come back to the department of agriculture in a position of empowerment be made, and that we believe he acted too quickly and he did not have all of the facts. the secretary very quickly responded. he has talked to many members of the congressional black caucus and he came to our meeting. he has issued an apology in a really real way, and we accept his apology, and he has talked to mrs. sherrod, and i am sure he will talk to you later about that conversation and we talked about the fact that this is really should be a moment that we look at the department of agriculture and all of the issues that historical issues not addressed, and in which he is trying to address in terms of discrimination, and in terms of land grant colleges, funding for historically black colleges and universities and the pickford lawsuit, and the black farmer's issues and all of the issues that mrs. sherrod understands and has a keen sensitivity to, because of her life and what she has experienced through her life. the secretary understands that very clearly, and he apologized and he -- and when one makes a mistake, we expect an apology, and he did that. and we told him that we look forward to working with him as we begin to move forward. this is a moment that our nation needs to really understand that we have to begin to discuss race. we cannot believe that this is a post-racial era, and in many ways race has been swept under the rug, and we are trying as a congressional black caucus to have this coconversation, and w believe that the secretary is a good partner for us in this conversation moving forward. i thank you very much for being here and members of the black caucus for coming and the secretary for being with us and for being so candid. it was a very good meeting and we really believed that mrs. sherrod deserves our respect. she deserves our applause, and her life now has become very public and her history is one that i hope that the entire country will look at in terms of transformation and redemption which we can all learn from. thank you very much.

Jett, Carole

From: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:32 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: RE: KUDOS to Secretary Vilsack

?

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:17 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: RE: KUDOS to Secretary Vilsack
Importance: High

I regret that I couldn't have done as well.

From: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:48 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: Fw: KUDOS to Secretary Vilsack

Score one for the home team.

From: Exemption (b)(6)
To: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Wed Jul 21 17:23:36 2010
Subject: KUDOS to Secretary Vilsack

Facebook -

Save Shirley Sherrod

Tell Sec. Vilsack while it may have come a little late - he manned up - for that I support him - facing it head on - I think he can fix the long standing problems there for civil rights - but he has to be willing to be patient, listen and stand! But above all, STAND

Thank you, Vilsack!

Jett, Carole

From: White House Press Office [noreply@messages.whitehouse.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:19 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: Press Briefing by Press Secretary Robert Gibbs, 7/21/2010

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

July 21, 2010

PRESS BRIEFING
BY PRESS SECRETARY ROBERT GIBBS

James S. Brady Press Briefing Room

2:36 P.M. EDT

MR. GIBBS: Mr. Feller.

Q Thanks, Robert. Can you tell us what the White House's position is right now on Shirley Sherrod? Should she get her job back?

MR. GIBBS: Well, let me -- Secretary Vilsack is -- has tried and is trying to reach Ms. Sherrod. When the Secretary reaches her, he will apologize for the events of the last few days and they will talk about their next steps. I think it is -- I think, clearly, that a lot of people involved in this situation, from the government's perspective on through, acted without all the facts. Now, as you saw Secretary Vilsack's statements from last evening, now that we have greater knowledge and a broader fact set, he is going to review all of those facts, and that's what he'll talk to Ms. Sherrod about today.

Q So does the Secretary plan to offer her her job back?

MR. GIBBS: Well, again, I think that's something that -- the Secretary and Ms. Sherrod are going to talk through those next steps.

Q What was the President's involvement in this? Can you walk us through that, from when he first found out to the present?

MR. GIBBS: I believe the President was briefed on this sometime yesterday, most likely in the morning. This was, as you heard Secretary Vilsack say yesterday, a decision that was made by the U.S. Department of

Agriculture. The President was briefed yesterday and has been briefed obviously today as well.

Q So did he or anyone at the White House direct that she be fired?

MR. GIBBS: Not to my knowledge, no.

Q And to a lot of people trying to follow this story, they see a government employee who ends up losing her job because of comments posted and a videotape that appears to be taken out of context -- it just looks bungled. Is that a fair way to put it?

MR. GIBBS: Well, Ben, I think this is one -- I think this is a fair way to put it: Members of this administration, members of the media, members of different political factions on both sides of this have all made determinations and judgments without a full set of facts. I think that is wholly and completely accurate. I think without a doubt Ms. Sherrod is owed an apology. I would do so certainly on behalf of this administration.

I think if we learn -- if we look back and decide what we want to learn out of this, I think it is, as I said, everybody involved made determinations without knowing all the facts and all the events.

Q Why do you think that happened?

MR. GIBBS: I can't speak for everybody involved, but I think we live in a culture that things whip around, people want fast responses, we want to give fast responses, and I don't think there's any doubt that if we all look at this, I think the lesson -- one of the great lessons you take away from this is to ask all the questions first and to come to that fuller understanding. I say that, again, from the perspective of this administration; I say that from the perspective of those that cover this administration, and those that are involved in the back and forth in the political theater of this country.

Q One last one on this. That apology from the Secretary, does that reflect the President's view as well?

MR. GIBBS: Again, I did so just a few moments ago on behalf of this entire administration.

Yes, sir.

Q It does sound like you've spoken to the President about this.

MR. GIBBS: I have.

Q So what does he think of it? Does he agree that she was a victim of a rush to judgment?

MR. GIBBS: Again, I don't think I'd be out here, Matt, giving you the answers that I just gave to Ben without having those reflect the feelings of the President and the feelings of members of this administration.

Q Was he angry about the way this has transpired?

MR. GIBBS: Well, again, look, we -- decisions were made based on an incomplete set of facts. We now have a more complete set of facts and a review is being done as it should be.

Q And what, if any, concern is there within the administration that the mishandling of this Sherrod affair could hurt the President and the Democrats as well in an election year?

MR. GIBBS: I think this is -- your question encapsulates a little bit of what I was talking about a minute ago. I know there is a -- we have this society and this culture now that's pervasive in this town where everything is viewed through the lens of who wins, who loses, how fast, by what margin. Look, a disservice was done; an apology is owed. That's what we've done. This administration has never looked at -- I think if you go well back into the campaign -- never looked at a scoreboard at the end of each day to figure out where we stood.

Q Just one other subject. Financial regulations -- the President signed the bill today. He said that reform would, in fact, bring certainty to the business community. But we have major business groups -- the Business Roundtable, the Chamber of Commerce, the ABA -- saying that it actually brings greater uncertainty, could have unintended consequences --

MR. GIBBS: How so? How so?

Q Where business -- that the uncertainty about how the new regulations will be implemented, the welter of regulations that are being introduced --

MR. GIBBS: Well, I think there are people that believe that the regulations that governed our economy and our financial industry up until the moment the President signed that piece of paper into law, that that was just fine; that if some people take some risks, make some gambles, and we all owe money because of it, or if 8 million people lose their job because of it, that's just fine.

The President has a different take on that. The President is glad that we are not approaching the second anniversary of the financial collapse with the same rules in place that led to a tremendous retraction in economic growth, more than 8 million jobs lost.

I think in many ways government is about choice and about choices. I will let those that oppose this bill defend the choice that the rules that we had in place are the ones that should continue to govern the financial

sector. The President certainly does not believe that and, thank goodness, three Republicans in the Senate put aside those partisan differences to ensure that a very strong piece of legislation that will protect consumers and Main Street is now the law of the land.

Ed.

Q Robert, I wanted to go back to Shirley Sherrod because when you started out by staying that Secretary Vilsack is going to call her and apologize, and then, as you put it, talk about the next steps -- here we are two days later; presumably people in the White House have seen the full tape, realize that it seems an injustice was done here. Why is there still vagueness? Why hasn't the President, the Chief of Staff, or someone here picked up the phone and said, here's what we're doing, make a decision -- instead of saying we're trying to figure out the next steps? Why the vagueness?

MR. GIBBS: Well, I don't think I'm being vague, Ed. The Secretary of Agriculture employs a number of people to carry out the duties and the functions of the Department of Agriculture. I think there are clearly some things that Ms. Sherrod will likely want to talk to Mr. Vilsack about, and we're going to let that conversation happen.

Q Right, but this is the President's administration. It's bigger than Tom Vilsack or any department. This appears to be an injustice. Why wouldn't the President intervene instead of letting this all fall on the Agriculture Department?

MR. GIBBS: We have a fuller set of facts. A review is taking place and the Secretary is trying to reach Ms. Sherrod to apologize for the exact injustice that you talk about.

Q Shirley Sherrod --

MR. GIBBS: Hold on, let me -- can I -- if you don't mind, let me finish a few of my answers. As I said, a disservice was done, for which we apologize. I think the next step that has to happen is the Secretary needs to speak with her. And he's tried to reach her and we hope that that --

Q Is he going to tell her something specific or --

MR. GIBBS: Again, Ed, I'm --

Q -- like offer her her job back or something?

MR. GIBBS: I know we've all got deadlines. We're going to let these conversations happen.

Q Okay. Now, Shirley Sherrod has told CNN several times that Cheryl Cook, the Deputy Under Secretary at Agriculture, called her three times on Monday when all this was starting to unfold, was pressuring her

to resign, and specifically said that the "White House wants you to step down."

MR. GIBBS: Again, I think I'd point you to the interview that the Secretary did with --

Q The Secretary said that -- and told CNN yesterday he did not, himself, speak to anybody inside the White House, but there are thousands of people who work at the Agriculture Department.

MR. GIBBS: Right, and as I said to Ben earlier, I know of no conversations that have happened like that, as the Secretary said.

Q So no one at the White House urged her --

MR. GIBBS: Ed, I answered your question.

Jake.

Q Apparently she's watching this briefing, Shirley Sherrod, on CNN right now. Is there anything you want to say to her? (Laughter.)

Q We know where she is. (Laughter.)

Q I'm being quite serious. She's watching --

MR. GIBBS: No, no, I understand --

Q She's watching you.

MR. GIBBS: And let me -- the Secretary is trying to reach her. I hope that the Secretary reaches her soon and they have an opportunity to talk. The Secretary will apologize for the actions that have taken place over the past 24 to 36 hours, and on behalf of the administration, I offer our apologies.

Again, this is more directed at everybody writ large here. I think everybody has to go back -- we have, we will continue to -- and look at what has happened over the past 24 to 36 hours, and ask ourselves how we got into this. How did we get into -- how did we not ask the right questions? How did you all not ask the right questions? How did other people not ask the right questions -- and go from there.

Q Well, I asked the right questions. I actually called her before we reported on this to find out what her end of the story is, so you can fault the media if you want but --

MR. GIBBS: No, no, I'm not faulting the media, Jake, but I -- no, no, hold on. I'm not here to fault the media. I apologize on behalf of the administration. I will say a number of people called quite quickly after these comments aired and wanted to know what our response was. I don't know who else called. I don't know who made calls trying to seek a

greater understanding. We made a mistake on that and I think many involved in this made mistakes on it.

Q I've heard conservatives and liberals say this administration overreacted because you're afraid of conservative commentators. Do you think there's any truth to that?

MR. GIBBS: No.

Q All right. Can I ask a follow-up on financial regulation?

MR. GIBBS: Yes.

Q One of the things about -- one of the uncertainties a lot of people in the business community are worried about has to do with the fact that there's so much rulemaking that has yet to occur. Hundreds of rules, dozens of studies. Is that not a possible reason because there's so many things that were left vague in this legislation -- is that not a possible reason --

MR. GIBBS: Well, no, no, let's not -- let's be clear. Rulemaking doesn't take place based on legislative vagueness. Rulemaking is -- happens in virtually every piece of legislation that is passed in order to implement legislative directives.

Q Okay, but the Vice President said that the business community right now should not have uncertainty because this legislation has passed. But the truth is they don't know --

MR. GIBBS: Again, I --

Q -- who's going to count as somebody whose derivatives need to be monitored. They don't know what the fees are going to be.

MR. GIBBS: I think the legislative intent is clear. I do not believe that -- I think this provides certainty for people on Wall Street; it provides certainty for people that work in the financial industry; and I think it provides certainty for those on Main Street that they're going to be protected.

Again, there were those -- I think many of the people that you discussed -- let's be clear -- spent tens of millions of dollars, hiring hundreds if not thousands of lobbyists to water down the legislation and stop it. That's the role that many of those people played that you just mentioned. I don't think that -- I think the motives of those I think are important to understand. And I do think this provides certainty for all.

Q Last question about Shirley Sherrod. Why do you think there was such an overreaction?

MR. GIBBS: I don't know. I think, again, I think in a frenzied culture where everything happens so quickly, where -- when everybody --

when one person has a story everybody has to have a story, and responses are given, mistakes in this case clearly were made.

Yes, sir.

Q Robert, during the campaign, particularly during the speech on race in Philadelphia, the President said he would use every opportunity to advance dialogue on race. Since taking office the President has had numerous opportunities or these teachable moments to advance the dialogue on race. Why hasn't he done more to advance the national discussion on race and race relations?

MR. GIBBS: Well, look, I think this is one of those teachable moments, and I think -- we contacted the Department of Agriculture last night in order to ensure that fairness was done in this and that a review that the Department of Agriculture is doing is undertaken. I think that is -- I think a teachable moment is a moment in which the facts change and you react to those different facts. I think this is one of those moments, and I think that's what's happened.

Q Will he call a national -- because the Congressional Black Caucus has asked for a national summit on race. Would the President --

MR. GIBBS: I have not heard a discussion about that.

Chip.

Q If it's a teachable moment, who's the teacher? Are we going to hear from the President on this, do you think?

MR. GIBBS: Let me just be clear. I don't think the teacher is -- I don't think -- I don't know who the teacher is in this, Chip. I don't think the teacher is, in and of himself, necessarily the President. I think -- again, I think everybody asks themselves questions about the events of the last 24 to 36 hours. I think based on those common-sense questions that you're asking -- that everybody asks themselves -- you find a moment that you can learn from.

Q Would you rule out the President speaking about this, using it as a teachable moment?

MR. GIBBS: No, I wouldn't rule it out, no.

Q Have you heard -- you mentioned that you did -- you were with the President when he talked about this, I think. Could you give us some specific words?

MR. GIBBS: Well, I talked to the President today about this. I was in the -- I talked to him about this yesterday --

Q Can you tell us specifically some things that he said about this?

MR. GIBBS: Again, I think he talked about the fact that a disservice had been done here and that an injustice had happened that -- and because the facts had changed, a review of the decision based on those facts should be undertaken.

Q On the question of why there was this overreaction, some have suggested that it was because this administration is particularly sensitive, some say hypersensitive, on issues of race. What do you think about that?

MR. GIBBS: I don't agree with that any more than I did the characterization about conservative columnists or whatever.

Q And forgive me if I missed this, but has the President talked to Vilsack about that?

MR. GIBBS: Not that I know of.

Q Is he planning to?

MR. GIBBS: I don't know. I can check.

Q And what happens to Vilsack? Is his job safe? Is it up in the air?

MR. GIBBS: Yes, I think -- again, I think Secretary Vilsack will acknowledge the mistakes that he made based on the information that he had when he made that decision. But I think he's doing terrific work at the Department of Agriculture.

Q Robert, follow up on Chip's question real fast?

Q Just very --

MR. GIBBS: Let me come back.

Q Did you -- since she is watching, did you want to directly address her? Since she's watching?

MR. GIBBS: Well, again, I would apologize on behalf on those involved here for what has happened.

Q Why -- have you gotten an explanation of why she wasn't simply put on administrative leave -- why she went from administrative leave to fired in less than 24 hours? Did you get a proper explanation for that?

MR. GIBBS: I have not asked that question, but I might direct you to USDA.

Q And does the President think this is a story about race or about the media?

MR. GIBBS: I think it is a -- I have not talked -- did not ask the President that question directly. Again, I think there -- I think all of that is involved in a larger story that combines rapid advances in technology, a whole host of things that are involved in culture and race and media and politics, that create an environment that we're living in today.

I'm reminded of when the President spoke at the memorial service for Walter Cronkite and mentioned -- and told the story that Cronkite would tell about not just getting something first but getting something right. I think that is true for all of us involved here.

Q Do you think the issue with this government settlement with Black Farmers had anything to do with Secretary Vilsack's overreaction here?

MR. GIBBS: Well, I will say this. As many of you know, the department is in the midst of paying out a settlement for decades-long discrimination. I think as you saw in the statements from Secretary Vilsack that, rightly, the department has a zero-tolerance policy for discrimination. And the reason it does so is because of -- if you look back at the history of some aspects of the way USDA benefits have been dispensed, they were done so in a way that people have acknowledged were discriminatory. So I don't know whether that played a direct role in this. I know that is something that Secretary Vilsack is mindful of in having a zero-tolerance policy.

Q Did you just misspeak? Because the money has not -- Congress has not approved --

MR. GIBBS: No, no, but there were -- there have been a series of different settlements. I'm not suggesting that -- obviously there's several billion dollars on this. Again, the settlement has been entered into based on a judgment of discrimination.

Q Quickly on financial reform, can you square this circle: If this ends "too big to fail," why is there resolution authority to deal with "too big to fail"?

MR. GIBBS: Because resolution authority -- no, no, resolution authority --

Q How do the two --

MR. GIBBS: Well, let's go back to our AIG example, right? You have what by all accounts was a well-performing insurance company that somebody had the bright idea of attaching a hedge fund to the top of, right? And when all that become so intertwined that when mortgage-backed securities fail miserably, you can't -- you don't have the authority -- hold on -- you don't have the authority to break those two apart. You either have to figure out how, if there's systemic risk involved, as what happened with

AIG, the decisions that were made at that point to ensure that that failure didn't happen to a larger -- but now what we have is the ability to break apart. In other words, if you can't fix it, then you're liquidated. And that is a vast --

Q But then you haven't ended "too big to fail" -- you've just figured out a way how to --

MR. GIBBS: No, no, no, no -- "too big to fail" --

Q -- because you're allowing these firms to get --

MR. GIBBS: No, no, "too big to fail" presumes that once you become so big that -- well, first of all, I would say there obviously are limits on the size and scope of certain aspects of financial instruments, derivatives being brought into the sunlight.

But understand this, Chuck, that what happened with AIG was the only steps that could be taken were to ensure that this meltdown didn't affect the broader economy, because -- because there's not the authority legally to break apart these instruments and say, let's sell this, let's keep this because it's a successful business over here, let's not have -- I mean, again, somebody had the bright idea of putting a horribly risky hedge fund on top of --

Q I understand that. But is this legislation designed to prevent AIG from doing that, or to unwind AIG if they do it?

MR. GIBBS: Both. Both -- it prevents certain activities from happening. It takes certain activities into the light of day. But it also allows that if something like that gets into trouble, if a series of risky investments are made and ultimately they can't cover the damage that they're about to do, you break it apart and you get rid of it.

Q I don't mean -- so to follow your logic, so you're admitting that maybe everything you're trying to do to prevent these firms from getting bigger won't work and they could end up getting risky --

MR. GIBBS: No, no, no, no, I'm not saying that that's -- I'm saying that there now is the -- understand this, Chuck. Before this signature, there's no legal authority to resolve by breaking apart. There's no legal authority that takes part of this business and sells its assets to cover the losses of something else. Legally, it's not -- the mechanism doesn't exist. Now, legally the mechanism does exist.

Jonathan.

Q At yesterday's -- yesterday morning's staff communications meeting, what did Deputy Chief of Staff Jim Messina say about the handling thus far of the Shirley Sherrod incident?

MR. GIBBS: I don't know which meeting you're talking about. I've seen the reports of what somebody believed Jim said. I did not hear Jim say that and I think other people in that article say that Jim didn't say that either.

Q So what do you say happened at that meeting? Was there -- did this come up at the staff meeting yesterday?

MR. GIBBS: You mean talking about the events at USDA? Yes.

Q Okay. Now, you said that there is no truth to the idea that right-wing media spooks this administration. Yosi Sergant, Van Jones, now Shirley Sherrod have all come under attack from Glenn Beck, Bill O'Reilly, Andrew Breitbart -- none of them are at this moment members of this administration. How do you explain those three departures? Do they really have nothing to do with the campaign that had been waged against them?

MR. GIBBS: I was asked a larger question about this, and I -- my answer doesn't change. Why do you do stories on all three of them?

Q Well, they will be included in the stories tomorrow, I'm sure.

MR. GIBBS: Why?

Q You do not -- you do not see any connection between --

MR. GIBBS: You answer my question --

Q -- and between Shirley Sherrod's assertion -- she was told that Glenn Beck was going to have her on the TV that night.

MR. GIBBS: Again, you want to answer my question about why you'd do those stories, too?

Q I'm not sure what that question is. Why would I do that --

MR. GIBBS: We'll check on that and get back to you.

Q Robert, has the press office or anyone here at the White House put the freeze on the Agriculture Department in terms of taking questions from reporters? It's been our experience in the past 24 hours or so that they are not being responsive.

MR. GIBBS: None that I'm aware of, no. That certainly wouldn't be a directive that came from here, no.

Q Ms. Sherrod obviously did not enjoy, if you will, due process, to say the least, through this whole thing. How do you think this whole episode is going to affect the way future sensitive personnel decisions are going to be handled by this administration --

MR. GIBBS: I hope in just the way I discussed earlier. I hope that everybody involved takes the time to learn what happened; that we make decisions based on a full set of facts, not on a partial set of facts.

Q On financial re-reg, what's the White House going to do to fend off lobbying, to soften or change the impact of the regulations?

MR. GIBBS: Look, obviously there will be an extensive rulemaking procedure in order to fulfill the legislative intent, and I think that -- again, I think we're clear at what provisions mean and what they're trying to prevent and how and what activities should and should not be allowed. Obviously the implementation of this, the additional offices and bureaus that the legislation calls for would be important appointments for the President to consider.

Major.

Q Following up on Ed's question, Ms. Sherrod seems very convinced that the White House did play some role in this and is willing to say so publicly. That is her conviction, that she is under the impression based on repeated conversations --

MR. GIBBS: Again, I would direct you to the --

Q Wait. Are you saying that she has a misimpression, that she's somehow got information incorrectly --

MR. GIBBS: Major, I would direct you to what the Secretary said yesterday and the answer that I gave Ben.

Q Right, but the Secretary talked about what he did. And she's asserting that others indicated to her --

MR. GIBBS: I think you're parsing the way that --

Q No, I'm just trying to separate what is publicly available. The Secretary said he didn't, which I'm not challenging. But others at the Agriculture Department might have. And she's under the impression and is saying publicly she believes the White House did play a role in this.

MR. GIBBS: And as I said to Ben, and as I said to Ed, that's not anything based on my knowledge.

Q So you're absolutely convinced that that did not happen?

MR. GIBBS: Major, I can only answer your question three times.

Q You're actually only answering it once.

MR. GIBBS: Well, I gave you the same answer three times.

Q Fine. Is there going to be any effort put forward by the administration to let us talk to Cheryl Cook about what she did or did not say to Ms. Sherrod?

MR. GIBBS: I don't -- I'd direct you to USDA about speaking to her.

Q It's okay for her to talk to us about this?

MR. GIBBS: Again, I'd direct you to -- you ask the same question, I give you the same answer.

Q Okay. On -- no, I've got a couple others. Ben Bernanke today said that he believes the economy -- the economic outlook remains unusually uncertain. Would you agree, generally speaking, with --

MR. GIBBS: I'm not going to get into parsing or interpreting what the Fed chairman says. I think it is safe to say that we have -- if you look, Major, at where we were and where we are, we are -- we have improved our circumstances, improved our conditions, but I don't think there's any doubt that it's not improved for enough people. And that's what the President and the team will continue to work on.

Q Is there a component of uncertainty that this administration also sees out there that the Fed chairman sees?

MR. GIBBS: Again, I think, Major, that we are in, as we have been, quite frankly, since well before December of 2007, we have a fragile economy.

Q Just one more economic question. Rahm told The Washington Post and it was published on Sunday that the administration was looking forward to and had every reason to anticipate a strong -- a somewhat strong second quarter, but G forces that he described as the Greek debt situation, Germany's call for budget cuts throughout Europe, the Gulf oil spill, and the Gaza flotilla situation created an atmosphere of uncertainty that led consumers to not spend as much, led investors not to invest as much, CEOs not to act as economically -- as aggressively as they might. Does the President believe that? Is that a theory that the economic team --

MR. GIBBS: Look, I've said before I think -- I won't get into every one of your Gs, but --

Q They're not mine. I'm just quoting what he said.

MR. GIBBS: Look, to understand where we were economically in April, what happened in Europe with Greece, and not to assume that that has had an impact on our economy -- I've said that on a number of occasions, of course.

Q And all the others?

MR. GIBBS: Look, obviously there is -- I'd lead the Greek G.

Q If we can get back to Secretary Vilsack's role in all of this. My understanding from the timeline that you just suggested here and that other White House officials have said was that the White House was informed but not consulted about his decision to fire her.

MR. GIBBS: I think the Secretary has said that, too.

Q But that it took pressure from the White House last night for him to agree to reconsider that decision.

MR. GIBBS: I will say, as I think we have said to a number of you today, we, the White House contacted the Department of Agriculture and a review was agreed upon.

Q Who made that call?

MR. GIBBS: I'm not going to get into who talked directly to them.

Q But what does this -- does this not do anything to alter the President's judgment of Secretary Vilsack's ability to run this department and his judgment and his -- especially given this department's history on these kinds of issues?

MR. GIBBS: Look, I think the Secretary rightly has a zero-tolerance policy for discrimination. I think that the Secretary made a decision based on the information that he had, and is in the process of trying to reach Ms. Sherrod to apologize for having made that decision on that incomplete information.

Q And nobody asked for the tape of the full speech or anything like that?

MR. GIBBS: Again, we are -- based on the fuller information that we have, these decisions are being reconsidered.

Q Lots of us have reached her. Why can't he reach her? It's got to be that she's not taking his call.

MR. GIBBS: Maybe he's talking to you. I don't know.

Q Robert, can you just walk us through a little bit President Obama's role in this? When was he told?

MR. GIBBS: Well, as I said earlier, he was told about this I believe sometime like -- I forget the time -- probably likely late morning yesterday.

Q And what was his initial reaction to what he had heard and how was --

MR. GIBBS: Well, again, based on what -- again, I don't have the exact time with me. But, again, I think as we had said yesterday, that based on incomplete information and based on the decision that was made on incomplete information, the White House was supportive of that decision. Obviously, new information came to light, and that's why the review is being undertaken.

Q I understand that. But who was it that first told Mr. Obama about this? How did he first learn of it?

MR. GIBBS: A group of staff -- again, I don't remember what time.

Q Do you remember when he found out about the additional information that she actually -- that her quotes were taken out of --

MR. GIBBS: At some point yesterday, but I don't know the exact time.

Q And you weren't involved in -- you don't know --

MR. GIBBS: I was involved in the first discussion with him. I don't know who -- I don't know how he was briefed last -- yesterday afternoon and early evening.

Q And I understand, in response to some of the questions about why you think this has gone so viral so quickly, you say a lot of this is because of the frenzy, people react really quickly without getting the facts. But why do you -- I mean, a lot of this -- part of the reason why people reacted so quickly I think at the end of the day is because this is about race. Why do you think this issue of race remains so inflammatory? And what does the President say about how to handle it? I mean, does he express frustration when this sort of thing happens? How has he been --

MR. GIBBS: You know this, I know this, I think everybody knows this. This was -- race has been a topic of discussion for a long, long time in this country. We -- a war was fought about it. A movement to gain equal and civil rights was had to rectify injustice. And it continues to be something that we will discuss for quite sometime. Again, I think this is -- this just continues many of those discussions.

Mark.

Q Three real quick ones on three other subjects. Jobless benefits. Are you ready -- what are you hearing about the timing of it? And are you ready to sign --

MR. GIBBS: Well, I'll say this. I think many of you saw the statement that we released. Despite the fact that the procedural hurdles that we shouldn't have had to go through, we went through and were passed, Republicans have insisted on the full 30 hours of that debate. The partisan minority continues its stalling effort for the unemployment insurance that 2.5 million Americans so desperately need -- that have -- those are the people that have been cut off from.

As soon as the Senate takes this up, the House will have to take this up. And as soon as that happens, that bill will come here and the President will sign it as quickly as he can.

Q Public ceremony?

MR. GIBBS: I think part of that depends on the -- Mark, our desire is to get this signed into law.

Q Okay. Consumer protection agency, are you able to move on that quickly?

MR. GIBBS: Well, obviously, the President, as I said earlier, will make some appointments based on the law that was signed. I do not expect an imminent announcement on that. I would say --

Q Next week?

MR. GIBBS: Not that I'm aware of, no. I think we've got highly qualified candidates. Again, there's a number of positions that the President will be looking at. And obviously the consumer office is -- the consumer bureau is one of tremendous importance.

Q And does Elizabeth Warren's shall we say close questioning of Secretary Geithner move her out for that?

MR. GIBBS: Absolutely not. She is -- look, I think in many ways, Elizabeth Warren is -- this is what Elizabeth Warren thought should be put in place to ensure that consumers were on equal footing with big banks. I think she would be a terrific nominee. I have seen comments by those that questioned whether she could be confirmed, and I don't agree with those at all.

Q Sorry, Robert, this all sounds a little absurd. Ms. Sherrod has not exactly been hiding. And Vilsack's office was able to reach her three times yesterday on her cell phone. She says she has the same cell phone with her. When did he start trying to reach her?

MR. GIBBS: Sometime today.

Q But it must have been fairly recently because apparently her phone still has not rung, same phone she --

MR. GIBBS: Again, Ann, if you've got a number, I'd be happy to deliver it to the Secretary to make sure that he's calling the right one.

Q She says since you --

MR. GIBBS: Well, don't do that out here --

Q Since you've made your statement here and she heard you, she says that she was most struck by how this would play for her grandkids that the first black rural director in Georgia was fired by the first black President. Does that have some resonance?

MR. GIBBS: Well, I would -- decisions on personnel at USDA were made by USDA. Those decisions were made based on an incomplete set of facts and they're being reviewed based on a more complete set of facts.

I will say this. This situation is -- regardless of who is involved and regardless of their race, the decisions were wrong.

Q Robert, today the President signed yet another big, consequential piece of legislation and this one is very popular with the public. I'm wondering -- all of these accomplishments, legislative successes don't seem to be changing the public's opinion on the President's job performance. And even though I know he says he doesn't do them because --

MR. GIBBS: Mara, he signed it about three hours ago.

Q I know, I know, but this has been around for a while.

MR. GIBBS: I don't know what instant polling has been done in the interim, but --

Q Well, okay, but it's not -- the fact that we're getting financial reform isn't brand new. And he says he doesn't do these things because they're popular, but because they're right. But I'm wondering what you think it's going to take before all of these accomplishments begin to have --

MR. GIBBS: We still need 8.5 million jobs to come back.

Q And that's it, pure and simple?

MR. GIBBS: I think people have, rightly so, a continued frustration about the economic situation in this country. I think the rules that we had in place that led to the financial collapse two years ago contributed mightily to the 8.5 million jobs that were lost. That is not something that was going to be easy to replace. If you look at the last six months of 2008 and the last six months that we've had in 2010, you find a difference of losing 3 million jobs and gaining more than half a million jobs, so we're moving in the right direction, but we've got a big hole to fill.

And I think -- look, the President is frustrated. I think -- what was the story that he said -- if your neighbor had lost their house, if your other neighbor had lost their live savings to send their kid to college, and if you'd lost your job, and a pollster called you and said, how do you feel about the country, I don't -- or how do you feel about the President, I don't think that it's a wild-eyed stretch to believe that you would think things still need to get better in this country.

Q What's happening tomorrow?

MR. GIBBS: We are signing I believe the bill on improper payments that was passed recently -- and we'll have more information on that.

Q Improper --

MR. GIBBS: Improper payments by government.

Q China has expressed concern that the U.S.-South Korean naval exercises announced yesterday will further destabilize the region. Do you accept -- does the White House accept those concerns? And what is the political message that you're trying to send to China?

MR. GIBBS: Wait a second -- are you guys changing the oil down there? (Laughter.) We need a smaller filter for the four cylinder --

Q Part of Chuck's contract. (Laughter.)

MR. GIBBS: I was going to say -- the makeup person is next, I presume.

Q Here we go.

MR. GIBBS: Sorry, Stephen.

Q One TV guy cannot go after another TV guy. (Laughter.)

MR. GIBBS: All right. Go ahead. I don't know what's going on down here, Stephen, but -- a whole different set of naval exercises. (Laughter.)

Q China has said that it's concerned that the U.S.-South Korean naval exercises will destabilize the region even further. Does the White House accept those concerns? And what political message are you trying to send to North Korea?

MR. GIBBS: Well, look, I think it's important to understand that these are exercises that are defensive in nature, and defense sends a clear signal of deterrence to the aggression of North Korea and in support of the defense of South Korea. I think you've heard the condemnation of those in the administration and in the international community for the events undertaken by North Korea, and certainly we are strongly supportive of exercises that demonstrate South Korea defending itself.

Q Robert, can I follow on that?

Q Let me ask quickly -- I'm sorry. I don't think this has been asked. Is the President trying or does the President want to reach Shirley Sherrod himself?

MR. GIBBS: I do not believe the President has tried, but I will check.

Q Do you expect him to?

MR. GIBBS: I will check.

Q Robert, a few questions on Shirley Sherrod and on the Black Farmers. One, who here at the White House viewed the entire videotape?

MR. GIBBS: I think a number of us have now.

Q Okay. Was the President one of those?

MR. GIBBS: I don't know if the President has seen the entire tape.

Q Okay. But he's seen portions of it, is that what you're saying?

MR. GIBBS: Yes.

Q Okay. Now, early on, you said -- you talked about the frenzy and the immediacy of the news cycle. This is not the first time this administration has gotten caught up in the immediacy of the news cycle when it comes to issues of race. The first time we saw the press conference when President Obama talked about his friend Henry Louis Gates and the police sergeant in Massachusetts. What say you on matters of race? I mean, some have accused this administration of not being able to embrace race with the historic nature of this presidency. But yet again you say you're embracing it but you're very -- you react without getting all the facts on these two incidents of race.

MR. GIBBS: Well, again, look, April, I'm not up here to make excuses for -- actually, quite the contrary -- on what has happened in this case. I think many involved at all levels believe, rightly, that not all information was gotten. I think rectifying that is tremendously important for everyone.

Q Do you feel serious domestic items are being hijacked because of issues of race and the racial drama that's been playing out?

MR. GIBBS: I don't, no.

Q All right. And going back to something that Kevin had asked earlier about the CBC, they're asking for a national dialogue. This is from the CBC and a quote from them: "We also believe that a national dialogue on race must be held. The basis for Ms. Sherrod's resignation is another example of why we must not sweep race under the rug. Rather, we must come together as a nation and recognize that we do not live in a post-racial era, and that, while difficult, we must confront these issues head on with clarity and without fear." Bill Clinton held a conversation on race. Does this administration feel they need to hold one?

MR. GIBBS: Again, I will go back and check. As I said to Kevin, I have not heard discussions about that in here today.

Q And Black Farmers -- you brought it up with Chuck.

MR. GIBBS: I don't know where the legislation -- I will check on, and you should check with members on Capitol Hill that might have, quite honestly, better intelligence about the level at which -- what's in different drafts of supplemental appropriations that need to go through.

Q John Boyd says the President doesn't want it in the war bill. He says that the administration is saying no way, and the President in particular doesn't want it there.

MR. GIBBS: That's not the impression that's been left with me, but I don't know -- I do not know the latest on what's in what bill.

Glenn.

Q Robert, on the Shirley Sherrod matter, administration officials have repeatedly said that they were informed but not consulted on her forced --

MR. GIBBS: I think I agreed with that statement earlier.

Q But what does that mean? What's the difference between those two things?

MR. GIBBS: Well, I mean, I think --

Q I don't understand.

MR. GIBBS: You don't understand that?

Q The difference between being informed and consulted.

MR. GIBBS: Again, I think the decisions that were made on hiring are made, as I said earlier, at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and it's a department run by the Secretary of Agriculture, and they informed the White House of the decisions that had been made.

Q At the White House, which official was informed initially that that decision --

MR. GIBBS: I think there was interaction between a number of people.

Q Could someone have -- from the White House have said, presumably after being informed, that this is not acceptable?

MR. GIBBS: That --

Q This was not an acceptable decision? I mean, was there someone in the White House who could have red-lighted this at that moment in time?

MR. GIBBS: Well, again, this was a decision that the Secretary made based off of incomplete information.

Q We know about the Secretary. He's spoken publicly on this.

MR. GIBBS: Again, I guess it's hard to go back in terms of that hypothetical.

Q But it's not a hypothetical. Someone in the White House was informed about this and decided not to say it was unacceptable. Who was that individual?

MR. GIBBS: Again, this was based on -- look, I'm not here to make excuses for the decisions that were made. They were wrong.

Q The notion of responsibility implies that an individual was --

MR. GIBBS: Look, I've certainly -- for the actions of our administration, I've --

Q How about accountability?

Q But who was it?

Q Is someone going to be held accountable?

MR. GIBBS: But let me finish.

Q I understand.

Q But it goes to his question.

MR. GIBBS: Weirdly, he didn't ask it.

Q Well, it's a better one.

MR. GIBBS: Yes, there you go. You guys get together in a group and we'll play Jeopardy.

Look, I have, throughout this -- throughout today, right here, taken responsibility for our actions.

Q So was it you? (Laughter.)

MR. GIBBS: No, I'm the lucky guy that gets to go talk to you.

Q But can't -- I'm sorry -- can't we just put a final point on it? I mean, we're -- you talked quite significantly about sort of this frenzy of overreaction and the way that folks are responding --

MR. GIBBS: Well, I understand --

Q -- but who individually is responsible for this in the White House, as opposed to --

MR. GIBBS: Look, I think there are a number of people that are responsible. I think there are a number of people responsible at the USDA. I think there are a number of people that have been involved in this situation at many different levels and in many different venues, that will, as a result of this, take a look at the actions and decisions that were made.

Q Can you at least tell us who in the White House reversed course and called the Agriculture Department and said, we need to review this? Can you at least tell us that information?

MR. GIBBS: The White House. The White House.

Q Different subject. The President was scheduled to meet -- or have lunch with House members today.

MR. GIBBS: Yes.

Q Who were they and what was the topic?

MR. GIBBS: I do not have the list of members here, but I will get that. I don't think there was a set topic. I think much like the senators that came over here recently, there were I assume a number of topics. I will try to get a clear readout and the folks who came.

Bill.

Q Robert, in terms -- back to Shirley Sherrod -- in terms of a teachable moment, Van Jones and Shirley Sherrod aren't exact parallels, but is one of the lessons to be learned here that the administration should not be so quick to throw its own people under the bus?

MR. GIBBS: Well, Bill, I don't know that I would -- I'm going to separate out and not get into something that happened last year. I think that, again, decisions were made based on what we knew at that time.

Q But both the cases --

MR. GIBBS: Hold on, let me finish.

Q Yes, sorry.

MR. GIBBS: The Secretary of Agriculture made that decision. I think everyone goes back and thinks, what could you have done differently, what would you have done differently? And we'll all have an opportunity to do

that. I think that is an important role. I think that's what makes it teachable. I think that's what you learn from.

Q So, Robert, is the lesson don't trust the Internet, or what?

MR. GIBBS: Well, I think you have to -- I think when somebody puts two-and-a-half minutes of video up and people play two-and-a-half minutes of video off of a 43-minute speech, it's probably important for both the news organization transmitting the two-and-a-half minutes and what they purport that it means, and for those involved making decisions about somebody's career and their life, to do the same thing. I think that's true as I started out this briefing by saying, those on the political playing field that are going to commentate -- and I don't mean necessarily pundits, interest groups on this side or that -- to do the same thing. I think that's clearly what the NAACP has done over the course of the past 24 hours.

I think this is something where -- again, I think what makes this teachable, what makes this something you learn from, is us taking a step back and looking at the decisions that were made based on that incomplete information, what questions you should have asked, when you should have asked them, both -- as Glenn asked -- both here and at the Department of Agriculture.

Again, I had a lot of people asking for a response to the two-and-a-half minutes. Nobody birthed on Monday that the two-and-a-half minutes was really 43. My guess is you heard from a lot of your editors saying, go get reaction to this story. And I think that groups get involved in this.

Yes.

Q This whole issue of, like, advances in technology, 24-hour news cycle, the question right now -- are you saying, in effect, that advances in technology allow for things to be taken out of context, as opposed to real journalistic standards where you're supposed to put things in context without advancing any particular agenda, whether it's liberal --

MR. GIBBS: Well, I don't doubt that even in some context some people might decide -- look, we've always had opinion writers in this country. But I think that sort of in some ways oversimplifies this. The context here wasn't somehow that the two-and-a-half minutes was not contextualized properly. It wasn't a complete recitation of what she had said.

Now, again, that is put up on the Internet. That is transmitted. You all see it. You all want reaction. We get reaction. You transmit both the two-and-a-half minutes -- not the 43 -- the reaction that's based off the two-and-a-half minutes, not the 43, and decisions are made on personnel based on that. I don't think there's anybody involved in that chain that wouldn't think that from start to finish this couldn't have been handled and shouldn't have been handled differently.

Q To follow up on an unrelated subject -- on jobs. Last week, at the jobs summit, Chamber of Commerce CEO said, if you really want to create jobs, increase economic growth, you temporarily extend the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts -- temporarily -- versus the President is only calling for an extension of your middle-class tax cuts. Is there some possible medium, just a temporary extension?

MR. GIBBS: Well, look, obviously this is an issue that is going to come to the fore based on, as you said, the expiration of the 10-year 2001 tax cuts. The President's priority is on, as you heard in the campaign, those that affect the middle class. We had -- we instituted those tax cuts at a time -- I was asked -- I think I was asked yesterday -- I think it was yesterday or Monday -- about unemployment benefits. Well, the economic situations have changed. You can't -- how can you continue to -- how can you pass an extension of unemployment insurance based on the fact that the budgetary situation has changed?

I think we're going to have to ask ourselves whether, given our budgetary situation, tax cuts for those, as the President has said on numerous occasions, that people didn't need and people weren't asking for are something that, given where we are, can be afforded budgetarily.

Thanks, guys.

Q When will you let us know when the President calls her?

MR. GIBBS: I will update you as soon as it happens.

END

3:33

P.M. EDT

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Jett, Carole

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:02 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole
Subject: Re: Shirley Sherrod
Attachments: Blank Bkgrd.gif

Mr Reed can verify but I think Pigford I

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wed Jul 21 18:00:45 2010
Subject: FW: Shirley Sherrod

Is this a question we can answer tonight? Would it be better/easier to provide this on background tonight instead of provide later and generate a subsequent story? This is 2nd inquiry of this nature that I've received.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW; Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548

Exemption (b)(6) (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Ellyn Ferguson [mailto:Ex (b)(6)]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:58 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: Shirley Sherrod

Justin,

Secretary Vilsack said Ms. Sherrod was a plaintiff in a discrimination case against USDA. Do you know which case?

Ellyn Ferguson
Agriculture Reporter
CQ-Roll Call Group
Email: Ex (b)(6)
Ph: Ex (b)(6)

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Jett, Carole

From: USDA Office of Communications [oc.news@usda.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:58 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: Statement by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Shirley Sherrod



Release No. PENDING

Contact:
USDA Office of Communications
(202) 720-4623

Statement by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Shirley Sherrod

WASHINGTON, July 21, 2010 - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today released the following statement in response to his conversation with Shirley Sherrod:

“Today, I reached out to Shirley Sherrod to apologize. I also told her I was sorry for the pain this caused her and her family and friends.

“I reacted too quickly. I should have taken the time to listen and learn.

“While I cannot change what happened, I can try to make something out of this difficult incident.

“As we know, Shirley has a unique and compelling story to tell. She and her family endured discrimination and overcame adversity. Fighting to advance justice and equality, she has helped farmers who were struggling to keep their land, fought for women in need of social and economic justice, and African-American men and women who faced discrimination. As USDA’s Georgia State Rural Development Director, she worked to promote economic opportunity for all people by enabling job creation and business growth. And Shirley has shown tremendous character through the events of the last few days.

“Shirley and I talked about a unique opportunity at USDA. With all that she has seen, endured and accomplished, it would be invaluable to have her experience, commitment and record of service at USDA. I hope she considers staying with the department.

“I did not handle this situation well. I will continue to review the circumstances that brought us to this day and I am committed to making sure it does not happen again.

“As part of this effort, I also want to renew my firm commitment to put behind all of us the USDA’s past record on civil rights. While we have made some progress over the last 18 months, more work is needed.”

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This message was sent from USDA Office of Communications to Jett@osec.usda.gov. It was sent from: OC News, USDA Office of Communications 1400 Independence Ave, SW, Washington, DC 20250-1300. You can modify/update your subscription via the link below.

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Jett, Carole

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:57 PM
To: Eamich, Amanda; Mather, Chris; Chan, Stephanie; Lavallee, Aaron
Cc: Rhee, Peter; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta
Subject: RE: Press Conference: Twitter Recap

Thanks. And looping in OSEC/OCR team to see our New Media team's good work.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548

Exemption (b)(6) (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Eamich, Amanda
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:51 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Chan, Stephanie; Lavallee, Aaron
Cc: Rhee, Peter
Subject: Press Conference: Twitter Recap

Very positive response on Twitter following the presser. Attached and pasted below. Sam is working on posting the video to the homepage.

@USDAgov Tweets During the Press Conference

Thank you, we will provide links to video and audio on our website later today. 26 minutes ago
<<http://twitter.com/USDAgov/status/19105725551>>

Vilsack: I am grateful that she extended forgiveness and accepted my apology. 27 minutes ago
<<http://twitter.com/USDAgov/status/19105686705>>

Vilsack: I could have & should have done a better job. I want us to be stronger for it and close chapter on difficult pd in civil rights. 30 minutes ago <<http://twitter.com/USDAgov/status/19105515079>>

Vilsack: We had the chance to discuss unique opportunity to help us at USDA. I again expressed my deep regret to her & to her family. 41 minutes ago <<http://twitter.com/USDAgov/status/19104884339>>

Vilsack: She was extraordinarily gracious. She has extraordinary experience in helping people in trouble. 43 minutes ago <<http://twitter.com/USDAgov/status/19104746699>>

Vilsack: A few moments ago I had the opportunity and privilege to speak with Shirley Sherrod. about 1 hour ago <<http://twitter.com/USDAgov/status/19104658717>>

Sec Vilsack will speak to members of the media & provide stmt regarding Shirley Sherrod at 4:45 pm EDT, at USDA 1400 Independence Ave SW, DC about 2 hours ago <<http://twitter.com/USDAgov/status/19102171892>>

#

Sample Feedback from Twitter Community:

@ProudLib <<http://twitter.com/Proudlib/status/19105943226>> : Re: *Vilsack's* press conference: Way to man up and take responsibility. Damn but it's good to have grownups in charge again.

AndrewleBoyce <<http://twitter.com/AndrewleBoyce/status/19106190689>> : I think Tom *Vilsack* is a decent man. I don't know if Obama will call to personally apologize to Sherrod but I don't think he needs to.

HumanityCritic <<http://twitter.com/HumanityCritic/status/19105675971>> : I have to give Tom *Vilsack* some credit, the man falls on a sword rather gracefully.

DCPlod <<http://twitter.com/DCPlod/status/19105845930>> : *Vilsack* doing something almost unheard of for pols - extending an unqualified, sincere apology. Less sniping, more forgiveness in order #p2
<<http://twitter.com/search?q=%23p2>>

Jaymitchell <<http://twitter.com/jaymitchell/status/19105951731>> : Tom *Vilsack's* apology to Shirley Sherrod showed him to be a truly good person, to which anyone from his SE IA home town can attest.

NubianBlogger <<http://twitter.com/NubianBlogger/status/19105917194>> : *Vilsack's* presser was impressive. He's a rare politician to admit wrongdoing, PERIOD. Too bad his BOSS doesn't have that quality.

Amanda Eamich
Director of New Media
Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
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<http://www.usda.gov/open>
<http://www.usda.gov/newmedia>

 Consider the environment. Please don't print this e-mail unless you need it.

Jett, Carole

From: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:48 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: Fw: KUDOS to Secretary Vilsack

Score one for the home team.

From: Ex (b)(6)
To: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Wed Jul 21 17:23:36 2010
Subject: KUDOS to Secretary Vilsack

Facebook -

Save Shirley Sherrod

Tell Sec. Vilsack while it may have come a little late - he manned up - for that I support him - facing it head on - I think he can fix the long standing problems there for civil rights - but he has to be willing to be patient, listen and stand! But above all, STAND

Thank you, Vilsack!

Jett, Carole

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:22 PM
To: JIC4, OC -USDA; Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Cc: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole
Subject: RE: Vilsack Statement Transcript

Looping Karen and Carole.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548

Exemption (b)(6) (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: OC.JIC4@oc.usda.gov [mailto:OC.JIC4@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:18 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Vilsack Statement Transcript

Station: CNN
Date: 07/21/2010 16:51:39 - 5:10:39 PM

can't forget but she can forgive the hatred shown to her parents, to her father. the murder of her father, the cross on the lawn, those kind of things for a woman to grow out of that and reach the point she has i think is a remarkable story and it does reflect again the best strands of america at a time we're looking at the dark side of politics here she comes along and shows us what's still good about america and what we can still look up to.

david gergen, the man who's a bit of a sage around here and has a wonderful way of expressing things sometimes, i simply didn't want to get in your way. the break will though because we've got to get a commercial in real quick. stay with us. when we come back, you see the picture there. in fact, if you could, let's take that full so you can see. i think we finally got it now. there it is. that's the podium. that's where secretary vilsack is going to come back in just a moment and give the comment that so many americans have been waiting to hear and certainly shirley sherrod has been waiting to hear although we understand he just called her a little while ago. brooke baldwin is going to stick around and be with me when we come back. hopefully we'll go right to that news conference. you're watching a special edition of ""rick's list."" this is ""race in america, shirley's story."" does this look risky to you? tdd# 1-800-345-2550 nancy? fred? no. well it is. in a high-risk area, there's a 1-in-4 chance homes like us will flood. i'm glad i got flood insurance. fred, you should look into it. i'm a risk-taker. [female announcer] only flood insurance covers floods. visit floodsmart.gov/risk to learn your risk.

here now secretary of agriculture tom vilsack. let's go live.

in the conversation i started off by extending to her my personal and profound apologies for the pain and discomfort that has been caused to her and to her family over the course of the last several days. i wanted to give her the opportunity to express what i'm sure has been an extraordinary range of emotions she must have had and still probably does have but she was extraordinarily gracious. i wanted to make sure that she understood that i regretted the circumstances and that i accepted full responsibility for them. we talked briefly about the process and then i asked if she would be interested in figuring out a way forward that would take advantage of the extraordinary life experiences that she's had. she has been a claimant in a case against the united states department of agriculture and has experienced some of the prejudice and bias that we still today are dealing with in terms of claims against the department. she's had a broad range of experiences at usda and understands many of the programs in usda. she has an extraordinary history of helping individuals in trouble and of course she has gone through a very difficult period in the last couple of days. as a result of that experience, she has a unique set of skills which i think would lend themselves to assisting and helping usda as we deal with trying to turn the page on our civil rights chapter which has been

difficult. for the last 18 months we've spent a good deal of time and effort in an effort to try to resolve thousands of claims that have been filed against the usda. continuing that work. and we had an opportunity to discuss a unique opportunity here at usda that might be of interest to her. she asked for the opportunity to think about it, which i certainly respected. again, i expressed my deep regret and apology to her and to her family and advised her that i would be meeting with the press to publicly apologize to her and to express publicly my regret. so with that --

secretary vilsack, you say that you accept full responsibility. you clearly seemed to have jumped to conclusions, this agency did, early on. why did you jump to conclusions? was there pressure from the white house to make a quick conclusion here?

no. there was no pressure from the white house.

was there any communication between this agency, anyone in this agency and the white house consulting on this?

no. i want to make sure everyone understands. this was my decision and it was a decision that i regret having made in haste. you ask why. for the last 18 months we have really focused on trying to address the long standing history of civil rights claims against the department. they're outstanding claims brought by black farmers, hispanic farmers, women farmers, native american farmers. these are not just a few incidents or a few isolated claims. these are tens of thousands of claims that have been brought against the department. i made it as a goal when i took this office that we would try to reverse that history. we would try to close that chapter. that we would be a department that would not tolerate in any way, shape, or form discrimination. i still hold that belief very firmly. and i know shirley does as well. i've learned a lot of lessons from this experience in the last couple of days and one of the lessons i learned is that these types of decisions require time. i didn't take the time. i should have. and as a result, a good woman has gone through a very difficult period. and i'll have to live with that for a long, long time.

mr. secretary, from the cbs evening news. when you made the decision to dismiss ms. sherrod, had you seen her full remarks in their full context or had you only seen the clip that was posted on the web?

i saw a transcript because i was out of the office. i was in ohio. i saw a transcript.

was that of the whole speech?

no, it was just of a portion of it.

ms. sherrod has told -- from cnn -- ms. sherrod has told cnn that cheryl cook called her and asked her to resign and she said the white house had made this decision to put the pressure on her. are we going to be able to hear from mrs. cook? is that true?

you know, i think that first of all i indicated to shirley my personal regret and my responsibility for the fact that she received multiple phone calls. that's again a problem that i could have corrected if i had done this job properly. having said that, there was no pressure from the white house here. this was my decision. i obviously was not party to those conversations. it may very well be that during the course of the conversation ms. cook indicated that a white house liaison had been contacted but i don't know that she necessarily indicated that there was any pressure because that was not the case. this was something i decided and i have to accept full responsibility for this.

what does that mean, a white house liaison?

we have a number of people in the white house that we communicate with from time to time when there are issues just to keep them informed. and i -- this was my decision. i mean, you know, i appreciate the concerns that folks are expressing, but this was my decision. and i made it in haste.

secretary, evan mcmarsh, talking points memo. what do you say to other employees of the agriculture department, worried that something might come up about them on the internet and they may be facing the same kind of problems ms. sherrod faced?

this is a teachable moment for me and i hope a teachable moment for all of us. i think it is important to understand that each of us represents this department. each of us represents the administration and the president. and we've got to be very careful about our actions and our words and we have to make sure that we think before we act. i did not think before i acted. and for that reason this poor woman has gone through a very difficult time.

will there be a vetting process put in place before you make a decision like this or how you might examine information?

sure. we went through a process today of reviewing precisely as best we could what took place and there will be changes. one

thing is there needs to be a more deliberative process obviously and i need to do a better job of reaching out for input before a decision of this magnitude is made. that is a very serious lesson i learned. i was very sensitive and remain sensitive to the civil rights issues involving this department. again, when you're dealing with tens of thousands of claims, tens of thousands of claims, it is something that needs to be resolved that hasn't been resolved and must be resolved and so we have done two things. we've made a concerted effort to try to resolve these cases and we've also begun a process of looking at our entire operation from an outside consultant to take a look and see whether or not there are any other things that we're doing or shouldn't be doing that would potentially lead to claims in the future because we want to put a stop to this. this is a great agency. a lot of hard working people who care deeply. shirley is one of them. and they're proud of this agency. and this is part of our history. we need to close the chapter on. and that was foremost in my mind when i made a very hasty decision which i deeply regret.

mr. secretary, from ""the washington post"" --

ed, go ahead.

that was my question. can you elaborate a little more? had you met ms. sherrod previous to today's conversation? if she is so qualified, so uniquely qualified, why was she not given a more senior position previously when you were hiring new officials with the new administration?

ed, first of all, i may very well have visited with her or met her in the context of the larger group meeting of rural development directors.

you don't recall specifically meeting her previously?

no. and i don't know for certain whether or not the rural development job was one she specifically sought. i know she was recommended for that job. but given her life experiences, as we begin the process of more aggressively doing advocacy and outreach, this is a person who because of these experiences, having been discriminated against and being a claimant, having gone through that process, having gone through the process that she described in great detail in her speech, having gone through the last couple of days, she is uniquely positioned to be able to identify with a number of different people who might intersect with this agency in an effort to try to make sure that we don't continue to make the same mistakes we've made in the past.

would she be a senior adviser or under secretary?

i don't really want to go into detail. i'm happy to do this after she has had an opportunity to think about this. i want to honor my commitment to her in our conversation today to give her a chance to think about this. i just simply want everyone to know that i value that experience and i think there is a way in which, despite the difficulties that i have put her through, there is an opportunity here for us, for me personally to learn, obviously, but for the department to be strengthened and at the end of the day i think that's what the people of this country would want. they want to do right by this woman but they also want to make sure this doesn't happen again, which is the learning process, and if there is a way of strengthening the department, then that's my responsibility to explore. and i'm hopeful that she sees it that way.

secretary vilsack, kate bolduan with cnn. have you spoken to **president** obama about this?

no.

secretary vilsack, from bloomberg news, is this a position that had been looked at previous to this incident or would this be a new position created in part as a result of the incident?

it's a position that needs to be filled.

secretary --

wait a minute. phil did you want to ask a question?

just to be clear when you saw the transcript i assume the staff provided you a transcript of the initial video clip. were you aware it was a partial transcript? did they make you aware of it? did you ask to see more of it?

i had not been aware of it and i talked with shirley about the fact that she had e-mailed the office the thursday prior to this video becoming an issue. i did not receive the e-mail because it was not addressed properly to me. in other words the e-mail address

was -- there was a problem with the e-mail address so it never came to my attention. she had received some indication of this clip being available and she in an effort to try to respond sent an e-mail to me which i did not get. it was not addressed properly. it was also sent to the deputy secretary's attention. we did not discover it until after the fact. and that's one of the issues that we're going to address in terms of this review.

mr. secretary you're taking very deeply personal responsibility.

yes.

for this today.

yes.

does that absolve -- i mean barack obama, **president** obama is your boss. are you absolving the white house of any responsibility here in this situation?

you know, it's not my place to absolve anybody from anything other than to accept responsibility for what i did. and i am accepting that responsibility with deep regret. this is a good woman. she has been put through hell. and i could have done and should have done a better job. i want to learn from that experience. i want the agency and department to learn from that experience. and i want us to be stronger for it. i want to renew the commitment of this department to a new era in civil rights. i want to close the chapter on a very difficult period in civil rights. so i accept responsibility. and i don't think -- the buck stops with me, as it should.

you decided to fire ms. sherrod and then you notified the liaison at the white house or someone did? and can you describe their reaction to that?

i requested her resignation about the same time sort of things crossed in time. i'm not certain in what period of time the white house was contacted but as these calls were being made, the white house through the liaison's office was aware. but the decision to do what was done was done by me. it was my decision and was communicated and one of the lessons learned here is that this type of decision first and foremost should have been communicated by me. it should have been done in a much more personal way. it should have been done with far more thought and it should have been done in far less haste. and all of those are my responsibility. and i accept that responsibility. and i ask for shirley's forgiveness and she was gracious enough to extend it to me and for that i am thankful.

all right. so there he is the secretary of agriculture tom vilsack, apologizing publicly and very enthusiastically to shirley sherrod for what has been done to this woman, this former official who was forced to resign from the department of agriculture but now she's been offered a brand new job at the department of agriculture and you heard tom vilsack say she is thinking about whether to accept this new position. we want to welcome our viewers here in the united states and around the world. i'm wolf blitzer. we're in ""the situation room"" and we're going to digest what we've now heard from the secretary of agriculture because it's been a dramatic several hours. first the white house went ahead and apologized to this former agriculture official and now the secretary of agriculture upon talking to her on the phone a little while ago formally apologized as well. let's bring in our senior white house correspondent ed henry. this is dramatic stuff. you don't see it every day. but he's basically saying and he regretted the circumstances, i accept responsibility for the pain and discomfort done to this woman and he is exonerating in effect the white house where you are.

reporter: he is trying to, wolf. you're right. he was very blunt in saying this woman, shirley sherrod, has been put through hell. the agriculture secretary also is saying that the buck stops with him. but it doesn't completely absolve the white house. very interesting that this comes, this statement a short time after robert gibbs was at the podium in the white house briefing room really being very vague about the details about exactly what the white house knew and when they knew it. when we pressed him on a whole series of issues in terms of when all of this started playing out on monday afternoon and evening, which white house officials spoke to the agriculture department, he wouldn't name any names.

Media Advisory No. PENDING

Contact:
USDA Office of Communications
(202) 720-4623

TODAY: Agriculture Secretary Vilsack to Deliver Statement to Media Regarding Shirley Sherrod

WASHINGTON, July 21, 2010 – TODAY, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack will speak to members of the media and provide a statement regarding Shirley Sherrod.

WHERE: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Whitten Office Building, 1400 Independence Ave. SW
Press Briefing Room, Room 107
Washington, D.C.

WHEN: Wednesday, July 21, 2010
4:45 p.m. EDT

***Please Note: Limited media parking will be made available on both Independence Ave. and Jefferson Drive between 12th and 14th Streets SW.

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Jett, Carole

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 3:01 PM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; O'Brien, Doug; Mather, Chris
Subject: FW: Gibbs Transcript - CNN

Transcript of Gibb's briefing below.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548

Exemption (b)(6) (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: OC.JIC4@oc.usda.gov [mailto:OC.JIC4@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:59 PM
To: Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie; Misailidis, Sarah; Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Gibbs Transcript - CNN

Gibbs speaking starts in yellow...

Station: CNN
Date: 07/21/2010
14:34:27 -
2:44:27
PM

Gibbs: are we missing anybody back there that's going to -- do you know if anybody else is back there waiting?

can you tell us what the white house he's position is right now on shirley sherrod? should she get her job back?

well, let me -- secretary vilsack has tried and is trying to reach ms. sherrod. when the secretary reaches her, he will apologize for the events of the last few days and they will talk about their next steps. i think it is -- i think clearly that a lot of people involved in this situation from the government's perspective on through acted without all the facts. now, as you saw secretary vilsack's statement from last evening, now that we have greater knowledge and broader facts sent, he is going to review all of those facts and that's what he'll talk to ms. sherrod about today.

does the secretary plan to offer her her job back?

again, i think that's something that the secretary and ms. sherrod are going to talk through those next steps.

what was the president's involvement in this? can you walk us through that?

i believe the president was briefed on this sometime yesterday, most likely in the morning. this was, as you heard secretary vilsack say yesterday, a decision that was made by the u.s. department of agriculture. the president was briefed yesterday and has been briefed obviously today as well.

so did he or anyone at the white house direct that she be fired?

not to my knowledge, no.

and to a lot of people trying to follow this story, they see a government employee who ends up losing her job because of comments

posted on a videotape that appears to be taken out of context. it just looks bungled. is that a fair way to put it?

ben, i think this is one -- i think this is a fair way to put it. members of this administration, members of the media, members of different political factions on both sides of this have all made determinations and judgments without a full set of facts. i think that is wholly and completely accurate. i think without a doubt, ms. sherrod is owed an apology. i would do so certainly on behalf of this administration. i think if we look back and decide what we want to learn out of this, i think it is, as i said, everybody involved made determinations without knowing all the facts and all of the events.

why do you think that happened?

i can't speak for everybody involved. but i think we live in a culture that things whip around, people want fast responses, we want to give fast responses and i don't think there's any doubt that if we all look at this, i think the lesson -- one of the great lessons you take away from this is to ask all of the questions first and to come to that fuller understanding. i say that, again, from the perspective of this administration, i say that from the perspective of those that cover this administration and those that are involved in the back and forth in the political theater of this country.

one last one on this -- that apology from the secretary, is that -- does that reflect the president's view as well?

again, i did so just a few moments ago on behalf of this entire administration.

it does sound like you've spoken to the president about this. if so, does he think she was a victim of a rush to judgment?

i don't think i'd be out here giving you the answers i just gave to ben without having those reflect the feelings of the president and the feelings of the members of this administration.

was he angry about the way this transpired?

again, look, decisions were made based on an incomplete set of facts. we now have a more complete set of facts and a review is being done as it should be.

what if any concern is there within the administration that this handling of ms. sherrod could hurt the president and the democrats as well --

your question encapsulates a little bit of what i was talking about a minute ago. i know there is a -- we have this society and this culture now that's pervasive in this town where everything is viewed through the lens of who wins, who loses? how fast, by what margin? look, a disservice was done, an apology is owed. that's what we've done. this administration has never looked at -- i think if you go well back into the campaign, never looked at a scoreboard at the end of each day to figure out where we stood.

Briefly discussed something else...

i wanted to go back to shirley sherrod. when you started out by saying that secretary vilsack is going to call her and apologize. and then as you put it, talk about the next steps, here we are two days later, presumably people inside the white house have seen the full tape, realize it seems an injustice was done here. why is there still vagueness? why hasn't the president, the chief of staff or somewhere here picked up the phone and said, here's what we're doing instead of saying, we're trying to figure out the next steps?

i don't think i'm being vague. the secretary of agriculture employs a number of people to carry out the duties and the functions of the department of agriculture. i think there are clearly some things that ms. sherrod will likely want to talk to mr. vilsack about and we're going to let that conversation --

this is the president's administration. it's bigger than vilsack or any department. this appears to be an injustice. why wouldn't the president intervene instead of letting it all fall out?

we have a fuller set of facts. a review is taking place and the secretary is trying to reach ms. sherrod to apologize for the exact injustice that you talk about. hold on. let me just finish a few of my answers. as i said, a disservice was done for which we apologize. i think the next step that has to happen is the secretary needs to speak with her. he's tried to reach her and we hope --

is he going to tell her something specific or offer her her job back?

i know we have deadlines.

shirley sherrod's told cnn several times that cheryl cook, the deputy undersecretary was pressuring her to resign and specifically said that the white house wants you to step down.

again, i think i would point you to the interview the secretary did with --

the secretary told cnn yesterday he did not himself speak to anybody inside the white house. but there are thousands of people who work at the agriculture department.

right. as i said to ben earlier, i know of no conversations that have happened like that as the secretary said.

so no one at the white house --

i answered your question.

apparently she's watching this briefing, shirley sherrod, on cnn right now. is there anything you want to say to her? she's watching you --

and let me -- the secretary is trying to reach her. i hope that the secretary reaches her soon and they have an opportunity to talk. the secretary will apologize for the actions that have taken place over the past 24 to 36 hours and on behalf of the administration, i offer our apologies. again, this is more directed at everybody at large here. i think everybody has to go back. we have -- we will continue to look at what has happened over the past 24 to 36 hours and ask ourselves how we got into this. how did we get into -- how did we not ask the right questions? how did you all not ask the right questions? how did other people not ask the right questions?

i asked the right questions. i called her to find out the story. you can fault the media if you want --

i'm not faulting the media. hold on. i'm not here to fault the media. i've apologized on behalf of the administration. i will say, a number of people called quite quickly after these comments aired and wanted to know what our response was. i don't know who else called. i don't know who made calls trying to seek a greater understanding. we made a mistake on that. and i think many involved in this made mistakes --

i've heard conservatives and liberals say this administration overreacted because you're afraid of conservative commentators. do you think there's any truth to that?

no.

Jett, Carole

From: Lu, Christopher P. [Christopher_P_Lu@who.eop.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:59 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole
Subject: Fw: Sherrod on CNN following breifing

From: Bates, Andrew J.
To: Abrams, Adam W.; Burton, William A.; Cherlin, Reid H.; Ealons, Corey A.; Gavin, Tom; Gibbs, Robert L.; Hogan, Nancy D.; Inouye, Shin; Jarvis-Shean, Elizabeth; Lu, Christopher P.; Messina, Jim; Pfeiffer, Dan; Sheehy, Kristin J.; Vega, Dag; Vietor, Tommy; Wilson, Samuel A.
Sent: Wed Jul 21 14:55:52 2010
Subject: Sherrod on CNN following breifing

Working on transcript. Velshi leads in by saying that Vilsack "certainly" knows how to reach Sherrod at CNN and that he's welcome to call and apologize while she's there

<http://www.shadowtv.com/redirect/notification.jsp?vid=4675d3ed3d8969a7cc64f4084e4b04c3>

Jett, Carole

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:53 PM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Mather, Chris; O'Brien, Doug
Cc: Weaver, Caleb
Subject: Summary of Gibbs

Secretary Vilsack has tried to reach Ms. Sherrod but has been unable to reach. Secretary will apologize and discuss next steps.

It is an event with a lot of people involved. Government people acted without all facts.

Sec's statement from last evening, he's seeking broader knowledge. He's going to review the facts.

Offer job back? Secretary will work through next steps.

President was briefed, most likely in the morning yesterday. Was briefed today as well.

This was decision to ask for resignation was made by Secretary Vilsack.

Was the bungled? Members of administration, members of the media, members of different political factions, have all made determinations and judgments without full set of facts. That is wholly and completely accurate.

Apologies on behalf of administration.

Everybody involved made determinations without knowing all facts and all events.

I think we live in a culture that things whip around, people want fast responses. Don't think there is any doubt, one of great lessons is that to ask all the questions first, get full understanding.

I say that to those who cover administration.

Was she victim of rush to judgment? Was she angry about how this transpired? We now have more complete set of facts.

I know there is a society that is pervasive in this town, who wins who loses, how fast what margin. Disservice was done, apologies should come from all around.

Why is there still vagueness in terms of next steps? Secretary of Agriculture has number of people who carry out duties and functions.

Pressure from WH? Point you to interview of Secretary. Gibbs knows of no conversations between WH and USDA.

How did WH not ask right questions? How did media to ask right questions?

Afraid of conservative commentators? No.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548

Exemption (b)(6) (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

Jett, Carole

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:04 PM
To: Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Draft statement

Today I reached out to Shirley Sherrod to apologize. I also told her I was sorry for the pain this caused her and her family and friends.

I reacted too quickly. I should have taken the time to listen and learn.

While I cannot change what happened, I can try to make something out of this difficult incident.

As we know, Shirley has a unique and compelling story to tell. She and her family endured discrimination by the USDA many decades ago. She worked as a ... helping... As Georgia's State Director... And she too has had to endure the events of the last few days.

We talked about a unique opportunity at USDA. With all that she has seen, endured and accomplished, having her experiences, her commitment and her record of service in the Office of Advocacy and Outreach would be invaluable to USDA and beneficial to the American people. The Office of Advocacy and Outreach is charged with

I did not handle this situation properly. I take seriously my duty as a public official and am grateful for the privilege I have to serve. I will continue to review the circumstances that brought us to this day and I am committed to making sure it does not happen again.

As part of this effort, I also want to renew my firm commitment to put behind all of us the USDA's record on civil rights. While we have made some progress over the last 18 months, more work is needed

Chris Mather
Director of Communications
USDA
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 402A
Washington, DC 20250

Exemption (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: Shaffer, Debra on behalf of OpsCenter
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:03 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Repass, Todd; Harless, Angela -USDA; Maddux, Sheryl -USDA; Lescallett, Kenneth; Crew, John
Cc: 'Pavek, John - Washington, DC'; Zaina, Lisa; Redington, JamesH
Subject: Protesters

All cameras and protesters have departed the scene. No incidents. Will continue to monitor but all is quiet.

v/r-

Deb:

Debra Shaffer
USDA OpsCenter
202-720-5711

Jett, Carole

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:03 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: FW: Letter to Secretary Vilsack Re: Shirley Sherrod
Attachments: Microsoft Word - Revised Letter _2_ to Secretary Vilsack RE Shirley Sherrod_doc.pdf

Note others in "to" column.

From: Jackie Ward [mailto: [REDACTED] Ex (b)(6)]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:55 PM
To: Kalinga, Tatyana; Johnson-Blake, Deborah; John Zippert; Norris, John -OSEC; John Dasher; Berge, John; Joelette Crawl; Jerry Pennick; James Scott; James Hill, FVSU; Jackie Ward; Alice Love; Alice Paris; Allen, Renee -USDA; Amadou Diop; Arthur Phalo; Barker, Dorothy E., Executive Director, Operation Spring Plant, ; Beatrice Owens/Dr. McAfee; Beatrice Sams; Belvie Rooks; [REDACTED] Ex (b)(6); Beverly George, Artur Davis; Billy Senter; Bobby Wilson; Brooks, Tiffany; Brown, Rhonda - Washington, DC; [REDACTED] Ex (b)(6); Carol Mugar; Carol Zippert; Jett, Carole; Cheryl Bailey; Chief Dave White; Clayton Sherrod; Thompson, Clyde -RD; Corey Ealons; Cornelius Blanding; Cornelius Key; Dan Glickman; darby- gmail; Daryl Perkins, Cong. Davis; David Senter; David Wiggins, RMA; Debra Eatman; Donna Brazile; Doris Gates; Dorothy Barker; Douglas, Walt - Washington, DC; Dr. Carla Roncoli; Leonard, Joe; Dr. Walter Hill; Dr. N'Tam Baharanyi; Ealons, Corey A.; Erin Crowel; Faya Rose; Frank Taylor; Fred Seamon; Gary Grant; George Paris; Georgia Good; Herring, Geraldine; Gillison, Jacob"; Vaughn, Gladys; Gloria Pompey; gpompey@csspca.com; Heather Gray; Henry, Sherie - Washington, DC; Holmes, Larry - Washington, DC; Hubert Hammer; Hunter, Karen; hurricaneleon@aol.com
Subject: Letter to Secretary Vilsack Re: Shirley Sherrod

Please see the attached letter.

Jacqueline B. Ward
Executive Assistant
Federation of Southern Cooperatives/
Land Assistance Fund
2769 Church Street
East Point, GA 30344
Phone: 404.765.0991
Fax: 404.765.9178
Web: www.federation.coop

Jett, Carole

From: Jackie Ward [*Ex (b)(6)*]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:55 PM
To: Kalinga, Tatyana; Johnson-Blake, Deborah; John Zippert; Norris, John -OSEC; John Dasher; Berge, John; Joelette Crawl; Jerry Pennick; James Scott; James Hill, FVSU; Jackie Ward; Alice Love; Alice Paris; Allen, Renee -USDA; Amadou Diop; Arthur Phalo; Barker, Dorothy E., Executive Director, Operation Spring Plant, ; Beatrice Owens/Dr. McAfee; Be-Atrice Sams; Belvie Rooks; *Ex (b)(6)*; Beverly George, Artur Davis; Billy Senter; Bobby Wilson; Brooks, Tiffany; Brown, Rhonda - Washington, DC; *Ex (b)(6)*; Carol Mugar; Carol Zippert; Jett, Carole; Cheryl Bailey; Chief Dave White; Clayton Sherrod; Thompson, Clyde -RD; Corey Ealons; Cornelius Blanding; Cornelius Key; Dan Glickman; darby- gmail; Daryl Perkins, Cong. Davis; David Senter; David Wiggins, RMA; Debra Eatman; Donna Brazile; Doris Gates; Dorothy Barker; Douglas, Walt - Washington, DC; Dr. Carla Roncoli; Leonard, Joe; Dr. Walter Hill; Dr. N'Tam Baharanyi; Ealons, Corey A.; Erin Crowel; Faya Rose; Frank Taylor; Fred Seamon; Gary Grant; George Paris; Georgia Good; Herring, Geraldine; Gillison, Jacob"; Vaughn, Gladys; Gloria Pompey *Ex (b)(6)*; Heather Gray; Henry, Sherie - Washington, DC; Holmes, Larry - Washington, DC; Hubert Hammer; Hunter, Karen; *Ex (b)(6)*
Subject: Letter to Secretary Vilsack Re: Shirley Sherrod
Attachments: Microsoft Word - Revised Letter _2_ to Secretary Vilsack RE Shirley Sherrod_doc.pdf

Please see the attached letter.

Jacqueline B. Ward
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Web: www.federation.coop

Jett, Carole

From: [REDACTED] Ex (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:51 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: Please Reinstate Mrs. Shirley Sherrod

Importance: High

Mr. Vilsack,

Please accept this email as a request for you to reconsider and reinstate Mrs. Shirley Sherrod to her post as Georgia's State Director. It was obviously a mistake to require her to resign. I assume you made the decision in an effort to protect the reputation of the Ag Department. Now that the truth has been revealed, please reconsider.

For more than ten years that I've known Mrs. Sherrod, she has meaningfully helped the disenfranchised of all races; she is fair in her dealings with others regardless of their race, religion, or national origin.

Mr. Vilsack, in order for the American people to have faith and trust in Washington government officials, we need to know that you all are able to admit when you are wrong. Please reconsider, offer her an apology, and allow this lady to continue to serve the people of Georgia in the capacity of USDA State Director.

Thank you.

Lillie Webb
Sparta, GA 31087

[REDACTED] Ex (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:51 PM
To: Harden, Krysta; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Mather, Chris; Washo, Kevin
Subject: Fw: Shirley Sherrod

----- Original Message -----

From: Wilson, Denise R. <Denise_R._Wilson@who.eop.gov>
To: Berge, John; Stoneman, Shelly O. <Shelly_O._Stoneman@who.eop.gov>
Sent: Wed Jul 21 10:51:38 2010
Subject: Shirley Sherrod

Just had a conversation with Ron Stroman of the Oversight committee. Towns is very worried that USDA took action against Ms Sherrod w/o learning the facts which resulted in her being directed to resign. He has directed his staff to prepare a letter to Vilsak along this line. Ron said that Ranking Member Issa is expected to play into the media accounts that the WH was behind the move to take action against a black woman-and that Issa will play the race card against USDA and the WH -highlighting the fact that we took action before the facts were in. According to Ron, (who is in touch with her) Ms Sherrod does not appear to plan on coming back to USDA because she feels so unfairly treated.

Denise Wilson

Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

Jett, Carole

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:51 PM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Mather, Chris; O'Brien, Doug
Subject: FW: Letter to USDA Secretary Vilsack on forced resignation of Shirley Sherrod

Fyi from Ralph Paige.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548

Exemption (b)(6) (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Hagstrom, Jerry [mailto:Exemption (b)(6)]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:47 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: FW: Letter to USDA Secretary Vilsack on forced resignation of Shirley Sherrod

This is the group to which Vilsack made his first out of town speech after becoming secretary. I was there.

I realize i do not have the CBC statement. One of my colleagues has written a little about it and you will have to go to Rep. Barbara Lee to get it.

I will send the Rural Coalition statement.

From: Heather Gray [mailto:Exemption (b)(6)]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:18 AM
To: Heather Gray
Subject: Letter to USDA Secretary Vilsack on forced resignation of Shirley Sherrod

For Immediate Release:
July 21, 2010
Contact: Ralph Paige
404 765 0991
Federation of Southern Cooperatives/
Land Assistance Fund
www.federation.coop

The Federation Sends Letter to USDA Secretary Vilsack Regarding Sherrod Resignation

ATLANTA....On July 19, former Federation staff member and head of the USDA's Rural Development Office in Georgia was asked by the USDA to resign her post. The reason was because of the ramifications of a distorted video from a March 2010 speech she gave at the NAACP in south Georgia that was publicized by Fox News. In response to this the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund has sent the letter below to Thomas Vilsack, Secretary of Agriculture.

July 21, 2010

The Honorable Thomas Vilsack
Secretary of Agriculture
Washington DC

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

We at the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund are writing regarding your decision to ask Shirley Sherrod to resign. We think you must reconsider and immediately reinstate her as Georgia USDA State Director of Rural Development.

Your decision to force Ms. Sherrod to resign was taken in haste without a thorough and complete review of the facts, context and circumstances of her actions. We feel you were unduly influenced by distorted and edited videotape that completely misrepresented a speech Ms. Sherrod made to the NAACP in Georgia.

It is a sign of leadership to admit to mistakes and quickly corrected them. We feel you as Secretary of Agriculture must quickly correct this injustice committed against Ms. Shirley Sherrod and the people she has struggled for years to serve. This is the transformative awareness and enlightened judgment we are expecting from you.

We note with interest that your concern is to move forward to solve the problems that USDA has had in the past in terms of its sad record on civil rights. Yet your decision to fire one of the few persons in the country who could likely do the most to help achieve that goal stubbornly negates your stated interest of moving forward toward equal access and equality of opportunity at USDA with integrity.

At the NAACP gathering in March this year, Shirley was sharing with the group her experience in the 1980's of assisting the white farmer Roger Spooner. She, in fact, was instrumental in helping to save his farm. She describes the process of getting beyond her assumption that whites didn't need services and assistance. She realized that being white did not make anyone immune to the problems of and to the lack of access to services. She realized rather that it was a matter of who has and how does not. This was a life changing experience for her. Her message was that all of us need to get beyond race and assist each other whether black or white.

Another of your interests we know is to finally resolve the lawsuits against USDA. Lack of access to services at USDA is the basis for the Pigford lawsuit. In addition to securing the necessary funding for settling Pigford from Congress to finally resolve this injustice to individual farmers, we know that another essential step in moving forward is to assist and assure farmers have access to the USDA programs. Programs, in fact, that are supposed to be available on an equitable basis to all farmers.

Shirley Sherrod in her remarkable career has been one of the most active practitioners in assisting untold numbers of black and white farmers to access the credit, conservation and other programs at USDA. Shirley has essentially been an ambassador for the USDA in her work at the Federation of Southern Cooperatives and as Georgia State Director of Rural Development. If anything, she deserves to be honored for this work and not falsely condemned and forced to retire in disgrace.

We find it ironic that in the one hundred years of USDA's history of discrimination, not a single white person has been dismissed for discrimination, however, a Black women who is doing her job well is falsely accused of discrimination in an altered video and you decide that she can no longer do a credible and nondiscriminatory job of dispensing USDA rural development programs and must resign.

Once Shirley is restored to her position, we feel it would enhance USDA's goals by utilizing her as an ambassador for USDA. She could offer USDA staff throughout the country training and teaching about transformation on the issue of race and what it means to offer service to all farmers with justice and integrity regardless of race.

In summary, the inference that Shirley Sherrod is a racist is beyond comprehension. For you to make a decision without consideration of Shirley's long and impressive work in civil rights is uncalled for. It is not only an insult to her, but also to the communities she has worked for and with all these many years as well as our organization that has for decades fought against racism and injustice in the rural South

We ask that you immediately reconsider your decision to fire Shirley Sherrod, apologize to her and consider instead the tremendous asset she has been and could continue to be for the USDA and rural America. We urge you to learn from this disagreeable incident and make it a shining example of a true change of heart and direction at USDA toward a brighter day of racial reconciliation and justice for all.

Cooperatively yours,

Ralph Paige
Executive Director

Jett, Carole

From: Lorette Picciano [lpicciano@ruralco.org]
Sent: Wednesday, July 28, 2010 3:14 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: IMPT

Hey Carole,

If you want 2 more of my cents....

What I keep on hearing from our communities (and I agree strongly) is that Secretary can offer Shirley Sherrod any position she wants or as many options as he wants. But unless one of those options is her old RD job, it will be appropriately viewed as unjust and a failure to support her. And it will also be seen as the Obama administration caving to the tea party and Fox news.

Shirley can choose whatever she wants if more than one job is on the table, but people have a lot more confidence that she can fairly treat all who come to RD in Georgia than they do in the Secretary to treat her fairly. She already stood up to these folks for a week on national TV. They do not scare her and having her in Georgia should be a good thing for the Secretary and the President. Let them sue if they don't like her service. To say because of all of this that USDA cannot put her back there because people will not believe she serves them fairly is basically saying this administration supports those people who believe that. In a civil rights sense, it smacks of retaliation against her.

If you talk to any African American career staffers and probably most people of color staffers at USDA, they would say within 5 seconds that Sec. Vilsack needs to offer her her job back. Several came up to me today as I was walking the halls because they have seen our statements and said as much. They are watching. Re OAO the response I am hearing is "Why not as Director." If she goes there, more questions.

It would say a lot of the very wrong thing if this administration is saying that Shirley can't do her job when she already has with the support of people like the Spooners. And who will replace her? That will be another controversy.

This one is on the Secretary, and he really should think carefully about it.

If I were him, I would send Cheryl there to talk to Shirley (providing that Shirley is willing to see her) with a few RD options (her old job, RD regional, and whatever else she might want to talk about) and with an invitation to come and see him next week.

Leaving this out there is not a good thing (tho I have not watched any cable news today).

Lorette

Lorette Picciano
Executive Director
Rural Coalition/Coalición Rural
1012 14th Street NW suite 1100
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: 202-628-7160
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About us at www.ruralco.org
SHOP AT: <http://www.supermarketcoop.com>
direct email: lpicciano@ruralco.org

Jett, Carole

From: Silverman, Steve
Sent: Wednesday, July 28, 2010 12:37 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Jett, Carole; Reed, Pearlie; Leonard, Joe; Harden, Krysta; O'Brien, Doug; McNeil, Mary
Cc: Mather, Chris; 'INGA.BUMBARY-LANGSTON@OGC.USDA.GOV'; ARLEAN.LELAND@OGC.USDA.GOV
Subject: RE: CNN request

Yes, there is detailed information available for the Office of the Pigford Monitor. Here is the website link:
<http://www.pigfordmonitor.org/>

Here are detailed statistics from the claims process: <http://www.pigfordmonitor.org/stats/>

In short, 22,721 claims were filed. 99% of those were Track A (1 % were Track B). 15,640 of the Track A claims were approved (69%) for a total of \$1,008,195,028 (i.e., slightly over \$1 billion) including debt relief. I don't have a final number for Track B awards, but I believe it was approximately \$20 million for those awards, including the one that Sherrod won.

Keep in mind that all of these numbers are for Pigford I. The Pigford II claims process has not been set up yet and is awaiting funding from Congress.

As far as the Sherrod matter, I don't believe there was any settlement with Sherrod (and certainly no deal to give her a job); rather, my understanding is that she was a Track B Pigford I claimant and that she prevailed and received an award as part of the Pigford I claims process. In other words, she opted into the Pigford Consent Decree claims process. That's different than entering into a specific, individual settlement with USDA. I'm looping Inga and Arlean Leland to verify my statements. Thanks. --Steve

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 28, 2010 9:54 AM
To: Jett, Carole; Reed, Pearlie; Leonard, Joe; Harden, Krysta; Silverman, Steve; O'Brien, Doug; McNeil, Mary
Cc: Mather, Chris
Subject: FW: CNN request

Hi all,

CNN is working on a story primarily on Pigford. Please see questions below. I haven't seen any numbers/statistics of this nature, wondering if they exist?

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548

Exemption (b)(6)

justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: [Redacted] Ex (b)(6) [mailto:\[Redacted\]](mailto:[Redacted]) Ex (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, July 28, 2010 9:39 AM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: CNN request

Thanks Justin

Looking for the total number of claims filed under Pigford to date.

-How many of those claims have been paid (and price tag)?

-How many of those claims have been denied?

-How many cases of fraud have been discovered? How many have been prosecuted?

-Also would like a statement addressing allegations that Mrs. Sherrod was given her job as part of her settlement with USDA?

Sorry to hit you with all this but need a response by 4pm today please. Best way to reach me is email or cell. Thank you,
Todd

Todd.schwarzschild *Ex (b)(6)*

Office-404-827-4117

Cell- *Ex (b)(6)*

Jett, Carole

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 28, 2010 11:03 AM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; O'Brien, Doug
Cc: Mather, Chris
Subject: FW: Sherrod - need new transcripts

Flagging that CNN called about a video clip with Charles Sherrod, husband of Shirley. They aren't entirely sure how much they are going to show this on air, but he does discuss Pigford settlement. Highlighted below. Also, know that there is again an excerpted/edited video that is again circulating based on this video that is not entirely flattering.

Short clip:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QrcJ3cBDS7Y>

Long clip:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m22eXuYNbkY>

Justin DeJong
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Exemption (b)(6) cell
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 28, 2010 10:55 AM
To: DeJong, Justin; Misailidis, Sarah
Cc: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb
Subject: RE: Sherrod - need new transcripts

Full transcript. Please note that this is not a new video, it was first uploaded to Youtube Feb 2, 2010 by UVA Law School.

Rev. Charles Sherrod Delivers Keynote Address at Race and Law Conference Uploaded to Youtube: February 2, 2010

We've come a long way but we've got a long way to go. We've come from Africa where life in this world began; we blacks were the first human beings on this earth. But we've also come from slavery, that ungodly system that denied human rights to black people. Slavery goes back thousands of years to Hebrews, Greeks, Romans, Babylonians, Vikings, Africans and others. But these slaves were not always black, and this early slavery had rules. You couldn't just do anything you wanted to, to a slave. A slave had rights. But when slavery came to America, it became a peculiar institution. It was sanctioned by the constitution, approved by the church and the whole American society. If money became short, masters sold slaves at auctions, separating husbands from wives, children from mothers. Women endured the sexual advances of white men. Infants suffered malnutrition and the elderly were neglected. A white man could beat or rape a woman, any slave woman, at any time, anybody's mother, anybody's sister, anybody's grandmother. When slavery was abolished, blacks were still prevented from owning land, from serving on juries, from voting, from traveling as they desired or just making decisions for themselves. As leadership came on the scene, Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. DuBois, Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman and others, blacks were determined to live a better life. It took years of a bloody civil war to end slavery,

but another war stood in our way. Segregation. And with segregation, thousands of lynching and blacks being railroaded into southern jails, and northern prisons. We've come a long way. The 1930's economic depression, when jobs became available, they went to whites first, and what was left went to blacks. During World War 1, many Afro-Americans in the south migrated north for defense jobs and many saw the armed forces as a refuge, as it was desegregated in the 1940's. Education of black children was clearly inferior to that of white children. In 1954 we had the Brown v. Board of Education decision by the Supreme Court of the United States, and yet segregation in public schools lived on. Blacks in the south still could not vote, could not eat, swim, drink, nor go to the bathroom in the same facilities as whites. Leaders were threatened and leaders were murdered by the Ku Klux Klan, and our government did nothing. And then it happened. In my young life. A boy about my age, Emit (indecipherable) in Mississippi was killed. He was 15-years-old. He went to Mississippi to visit his uncle for the summer. He either whistled or said "hey baby" to a white woman in a store and left, and for this a group of white men, including the ladies husband - two nights later came to get him at his uncle's house. They beat him, shot him in the head, and tied a 75 pound carton (indecipherable) around his body with barbed wire and threw him in the Tallahatchie River. I could still see his swollen face and gauged out eye on the front of the Jet magazine. It caught my attention as a 15-year-old myself. Could this happen to me? It was already happening to me. It was tearing my heart out. I was losing faith in my country. Where was justice and mercy? Where was the land of the free and the home of the brave? Why are so many blacks being killed all over the country? Was the constitution written for me? I took these questions with me to college and seminary from 1954 to 1961. The festering rot of 200 years of oppression and discrimination came to a head in 1960s. A man had a dream. He said, I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at a table of brotherhood; I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character. I have a dream today. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream speech inspired the nation. For three years before the speech, student sit-ins had spread across the nation; thousands were involved in sit-ins, marches, boycotts, stand-ins, picketing, or direct non-violent action. Thousands of black and white people of all ages, elementary, high school, and colleges as well, street people, participated as freedom fighters. My experience in the civil rights movement went all over the country; having been arrested in five states, but most of those fifty years, was a struggle of a period in southwest Georgia, some 190 miles due south of Atlanta. We worked in some twenty counties doing voter registration, and education, and direct action. Some three thousand people went to jail while participating in peaceful demonstrations. Many houses and churches of movement supporters were burned to the ground and there were no fruitful negotiations. We learned what white power really meant. And we continued to struggle, though we have many successes to show, socially and politically, where decisions are made economically, boss is still boss. And my way of passing the torch to you. I want to make a few brief points. First of all, we must stay faithful. We who have fought for freedom believe that god is on our side. God has held our hand through the many encounters with death. I have heard and felt the wind from a death bullet coming by my ear. I have seen 16 officers of the so called law with pistols and shotguns and long flashlights break into our voting meeting place in the church. But they left only two sliced tires and broken windshield on the night I thought it was my time to die. I've heard many times "Nigger don't you know I'll blow your brains out," with a gun aimed at my head many, many times. God has protected me from death for 73 years because I'm thankful and I'm still thankful. Secondly, we must reclaim our schools in our neighborhoods. The racketeers and drug culture are using our boys and seducing our girls at early age. Listen to our death now. Eighty percent of our boys drop out of high school. One out of eight black men between 25 and 29 have been jailed already. A thousand black children are arrested every day. The number one cause of death for our children is homicide. We are losing a whole generation of children right before our eyes from un-outlawed drug culture. Don't say we are puzzled. We knew where they live, we know where they party, we know what schools they work in, we know which policeman support them and we know which judges and lawyers are their backbones. Somebody here has got to lay down their life for our children. We must not give them our children. We must not give up our future. Then, we must find a way to leverage the 900 billion dollars we spend on consumables each and every year. We spend more than the gross national product of many countries and what do we own together. Where is the company, where is the university, where is the hospital or network or land that we own together? Ten years ago we held in group ownership of a non-profit organization called New Communities Incorporated. We farmed it for 17 years. We held on to it for that number of years. Then we had five straight years of drought. Then we had a three year fight with USDA, just to get the right to get loans for drought. But all around us plantations all kind of plantations we proved were getting loans, and they were saying but since we were a corporation we are

not an individual, we are not a farm, but it took us three years to win that battle. Then four more years of late payments from USDA caused us to lose this land. We appealed to hundreds of black and white groups to save the land. 250 dollars an acre would save 6,000 acres. Looking for 6,000 people to give 250 dollars to save 6,000 acres of land, the largest piece of land owned by blacks in the country anywhere in a single track. (Indecipherable) owned more land than we did but not in a single track. We lost that 6,000 acres in 1985 and sued the federal government, because we were faithful and had good lawyers. We won a large sum of money so that new communities could live again and will live again. Large sum of money, large sum of money. So that new communities could project to stabilize southern farmers, to create a food delivering system from the south to our people in the north and to participate creatively in the international trade, were our three objectives. So that possibility is yet alive. Young people, you will be making more money than we ever dreamed of. Please find a way, find a way that we can trust each other so that our monies can work for our total liberation. We have ideas, inventions, athletic talent, but our labor and our monies and our contacts usually end up in white folk's hands and pockets. When will we trust our own? When will we feel responsible to save ourselves? Finally, we must stop the white man and his Uncle Tom from stealing our elections. We must not be afraid to vote black. We must not be afraid to turn a black out who votes against our interests. We've got to stay tough and take the time to communicate from day to day and door to door. We must reason and meet and meet and meet some more. Our people will listen, if we come close enough, long enough for them to hear. In a few days or weeks the FCC will announce that we won a full power community-owned radio station in Albany, Georgia, a result of years of work. Tears that we shed so many times when the TV and the newspaper comes out the day of an election or day before an election and tell white folk all over wherever we're running somebody for an office that blacks are gonna take the office over and thousands are coming to the polls. But we had no means of communicating with our people. It's a blessing that finally we will have a radio station to cover thousands of people. Last thing I want to say before I sit, the greatest challenge that I've had in the movement is dealing with fear. Dealing with fear with our people, people who had to back down and talk to the white person. He was sitting right here and said, "Miss would you want me to go to the left or want me to go to the right or should I take the wood and place it on their back?" never looking at the lady but head straight down at the floor. This is the kind of attitude, the kind of people, the kind of fear that our people had when I first went to Albany, Georgia. But the young people had not known Marshall, they hadn't see any beatings, they hadn't known nobody who had got pistol whipped. And they weren't afraid of nobody, including their mama and daddy. And so the thing I learned was that when they got in jail, when the children got in jail, whoa now buddy, we go downtown, "Mister Johnston sir, you got my little man in there and I need him to be home." In other words don't mess with my children, you can mess with me but don't mess with my children. And that's what stood them up. It took us a little while to understand that and learn that. And there is another point that all of us in organizers, this will include you one day, it may have already included you. The fear that comes with making a decision that will affect the pocket book or making a decision that will affect your family or making a decision that is going effect you in some way. That fear. And I had to deal with the fear of death, the fear of dying. In all those years I didn't think about dying, never thought it. Raised in Petersburg, Virginia and sang all over Virginia with the police boy club. So I had good relations with police, I thought police were here to help ya. Well after getting smacked a few times and getting knocked upside the head with a pistol and getting jabbed in my side and other things done to me, I started to fear police power and fear because every time, they wouldn't let me down. All the time they watched me every day. Close in behind me when I'm driving. Every time I pick up the telephone, nigga nigga don't you know you gonna die. Then when I get married, nigga I'm gonna kill your family. That racks ya, you got to have something to deal with that. I said lord I can't make no decision with me shaking like this, I can't deal with it lord. And I can't tell you the day and I can't tell you the hour, but one day and one early hour I was able to look one sheriff in his face without the fear that here before I had, and boy then I was bad. Because no more did I have fear of death. It coming from me it came from my religion from a scripture I want you to read when you go home, I'm not gonna preach. I'm gonna take this passage, it's the 8th chapter of Romans, about the 38th verses where it says "For I am persuaded that neither light nor death nor principalities nor powers no things above the earth no things on the earth will be able to separate me from the love of Christ." I read that scripture, I was in prison in South Carolina in the chain gang, going through a lot of difficulty. They were trying to get us out of jail and we were trying to say in jail. They did some bad things to us then but I read this scripture in jail a whole new world opened to me and I was no longer afraid of dying or death. For me to live as Christ and to die is gain. But you don't have to die, but you have to make a decision and I wish you'd make that decision today. That you gonna take the torch that I'm passing to you right now, I'm not saying I'm gonna stop working, I'm not saying I'm gonna stop working, I'm not gonna stop working till

they kill me, they going to have to kill me to get me out of here. What my wife and what my children that was the greatest challenge. What they were saying, was the Ku Klux Klan went to my house one day, my wife was in the house and in a slip and praying. They were looking for me, when they left they approached her and then she screamed and the lefty her. When they left the house, the house was burning, we had 15 people staying at the house. That taught us one thing, you should not ever try and stay together like that but we stayed like that for economics we had no money. I was supposed to get \$10 a week from SNIC but mine never came, they owe me. So in conclusion, I want to say stay faithful. I'm asking you take this as your own commitment: to stay faithful, to reclaim our neighborhoods, leverage our money to finally use our political strength. We who believe in freedom cannot rest until it comes.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 28, 2010 9:54 AM
To: DeJong, Justin; Misailidis, Sarah
Cc: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb
Subject: RE: Sherrod - need new transcripts

We are still waiting on transcript from the longer clip but please see below for transcript of the shorter clip:

We must stop the white man and his Uncle Tom from stealing our elections. We must not be afraid to vote black. We must not be afraid to turn a black out who votes against our interests. In a few days or weeks the FCC will announce that we won a full power community-owned radio station in Albany, Georgia, a result of years of work. Tears that we shed so many times when the TV and the newspaper comes out the day of an election or day before an election and tell white folk all over wherever we're running somebody for an office that blacks are gonna take the office over and thousands are coming to the polls. But we had no means of communicating with our people. It's a blessing that finally we will have a radio station to cover thousands of people.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 28, 2010 9:43 AM
To: DeJong, Justin; Misailidis, Sarah
Cc: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb
Subject: RE: Sherrod - need new transcripts

Yes. Will have this over shortly

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Exemption (b)(6)

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 28, 2010 9:41 AM
To: Misailidis, Sarah; Chan, Stephanie
Cc: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb
Subject: Sherrod - need new transcripts

There is new video, of Charles Sherrod. Can we get interns moving on a transcript ASAP?

Short clip:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QrcI3cBDS7Y>

Long clip:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m22eXuYNbkY>

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
Exemption (b)(6) cell
justin.dejong@usda.gov

Jett, Carole

From: Wilkerson, Courtney
Sent: Wednesday, July 28, 2010 10:58 AM
To: Jett, Carole
Cc: Smith, Christopher L. -OCIO; Jackson, Yvonne
Subject: FW: FOIA request 7/28/10

This FOIA just came in . . . Courtney

-----Original Message-----

From: Jalonick, Mary Clare [mailto:mjalonick@ap.org]
Sent: Wednesday, July 28, 2010 10:36 AM
To: Wilkerson, Courtney
Subject: FOIA request 7/28/10

Please confirm receipt -- thank you!

Mary Clare

To USDA FOIA, Washington, DC 20250

Under provisions of the Freedom of Information Act and under the Electronic Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C 552, I am seeking copies of the following records:

* Any and all emails, phone logs, or communications of any sort between March 1, 2010 and July 28, 2010 regarding former USDA employee Shirley Sherrod and her March 27, 2010 speech to a local NAACP meeting in Georgia. This includes but is not limited to any communications within USDA or between USDA and parties inside and outside government regarding preparation of the speech, delivery of the speech, her efforts to inform superiors of potential fallout from the speech and communications about the request to ask her to resign. Also any communications regarding the decision to reconsider the decision to ask her to resign, efforts to contact her, the decision to offer her a new job and discussions about the new job.

* Any and all emails, phone logs, or communications of any sort within USDA or with outside parties that mention the words "Shirley Sherrod" or "Sherrod" between July 18-28.

* Any and all emails, phone logs, or communications of any sort regarding Shirley Sherrod involving Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, Deputy Undersecretary Cheryl Cook, Chief of Staff Karen Ross and the office of White House liaison.

Please release any information pursuant to my requests as it is received and/or reviewed by your office, rather than waiting to send me all the material I have requested.

Please provide any information responsive to my request in electronic form, if possible, and I prefer that you communicate with me about my request via e-mail for expediency, in addition to U.S. Postal mail. My e-mail address is mjalonick@ap.org.

If there are any fees for searching for, or copying, the records I have requested, please supply the records without informing me if the fees do not exceed \$250.

As you know, the Act permits you to reduce or waive the fees when the release of the information is considered as "primarily benefiting the public." I believe that this request fits that category and I therefore ask that you waive any fees.

If all or any part of this request is denied, please cite the specific exemption(s) that you think justifies your refusal to release the information and inform me of your agency's administrative appeal procedures available to me under the law.

I would appreciate your handling this request as quickly as possible, and I look forward to hearing from you.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed on July 28, 2010.

Sincerely,

Mary Clare Jalonick
The Associated Press
7th Floor
1100 13th Street NW
Washington DC 20005
202-641-9461 (office)
[REDACTED] (cell)

The information contained in this communication is intended for the use of the designated recipients named above. If the reader of this communication is not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that you have received this communication in error, and that any review, dissemination, distribution or copying of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please notify The Associated Press immediately by telephone at +1-212-621-1898 and delete this e-mail. Thank you.

[IP_US_DISC]

msk dccc60c6d2c3a6438f0cf467d9a4938

Warm Regards

~Denise

Denise N. Scott
Confidential Assistant/ Scheduler
USDA, Rural Development
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Suite 205-W
Washington, DC 20250
Office: 202-720-4581
Fax: 202-690-0273
Email: dnsconfig@osec.usda.gov

"Committed to the future of rural communities"

"Estamos dedicados al futuro de las comunidades rurales"

Jett, Carole

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:21 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Mather, Chris
Subject: RE: Rev. jackson on MSNBC

my big question today, who is to blame for the rush to judgment? reverend jesse jackson is the head of the rainbow push coalition. who do you blame for this rush to judgment, reverend?

well, those who made the determination to force her to resign or to fire her clearly this is a distorted story where with the low cable standards this thing became viral. she was hurt by it and in some sense maybe damaged by it. she deserves an apology and restoration and the department of agriculture should be investigated for the decision made relative to her.

i had a guy write to me today who said, i personally think everyone involved in that lady's firing should be ashamed. the white house, the usda, the naacp, and the media. what does this say to you about how motivated the administration is by whatever is the controversy of the day on conservative cable?

i think last week the tea party was so much a focus of the naacp convention last week. some of this was kind of a retaliation to prove that blacks are racist and so now we've sunk to a new level of who is a racist. that's not a good thing. i hope that president barack obama, when he had the beer summit and it would be beautiful to see shirley sherrod whom i've known for so many years and the spooner family come to the white house and be accommodated in some way. this really is a good news ending. here is a basic rural white family salvaged by a rural black woman who now found common ground. it is a tough story but really a good news ending.

there is the theory out there that this may have been payback for the naacp accusing the tea party of harboring racists. how much is race now becoming the motivating factor in political anger do you think, reverend?

it has been there for a long time and this does not address the need for a meaningful, racial justice session because while we have these exceptions in athletics, exceptions in president barack obama, blacks are still three times the national average in unemployment for example, number one in poverty, number one in short life expectancy, number one in prenatal deaths, number one in school expulsions, 2.3 million americans in prison over half are african-americans so the issue of racial disparity is very real and deserves halfway meaningful discussion but also some remedy.

okay. reverend jackson, good of you to join us today. thank you.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548

Exemption (b)(6) (cell)
Justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:09 PM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Mather, Chris
Subject: Rev. jackson on MSNBC

Said something about "USDA should be investigated for how they are handling." We'll have transcript shortly.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications

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Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548

Exemption (b)(6) cell

justin.dejong@usda.gov

Jett, Carole

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:55 AM
To: Berge, John; Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: RE: CBC NEWS: CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod
Attachments: image001.png; image002.png; image003.png

Yes, I share with the S.

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:41 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: FW: CBC NEWS: CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

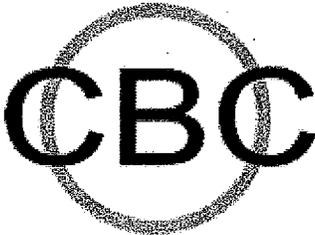
I'm sure you've seen this.

From: Wilson, Denise R. [mailto:Denise_R._Wilson@who.eop.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:39 AM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Fw: CBC NEWS: CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

FYI
Denise Wilson
Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

From: Schwoeffermann, Irene (CBC) [redacted] *Ex (b)(6)*
Sent: Wed Jul 21 10:46:38 2010
Subject: CBC NEWS: CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

Trouble viewing this press release? [Click here.](#)



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Contact Us

Congressional Black Caucus

2444 Rayburn Building
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(202) 225-9817 (F)

[click here to email us](#)

**CBC Statement on the
Resignation of Shirley Sherrod**

Wednesday, July 21, 2010

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact : J. Jioni Palmer

(Washington, D.C.)- Congressional Black Caucus Chairwoman Barbara Lee and members of the CBC released the following statement today on the firing of USDA employee Shirley Sherrod:

“It is troubling that Shirley Sherrod was asked for her resignation as Georgia State Director for Rural Development at the U.S. Department of Agriculture because of an edited video clip. A full review of the clip demonstrates Ms. Sherrod’s personal transformation. She was clearly educating the public about the power of redemption. It is now apparent that Secretary Vilsack did not have all of the facts available to him and overreacted.

“The Congressional Black Caucus continues to believe that Ms. Sherrod was unfairly asked to resign, without due process and should be reinstated immediately. There are many individuals still serving in the Department of Agriculture who were responsible for years of discrimination against African American farmers.

“We also believe that a national dialogue on race must be held. Last November, we held a forum on race in Washington DC to begin the discussion. The basis for Ms. Sherrod’s resignation is another example of why we must not sweep race under the rug. Rather, we must come together as a nation and recognize that we do not live in a post-racial era and that, while difficult, we must confront these issues head on with clarity and without fear.

“Ms. Sherrod has been an effective public servant and it would be tragic to lose a person of such caliber, competence and commitment to fairness and equality and one who has dedicated her life to working for a more perfect union.”

- 30 -

www.thecongressionalblackcaucus.com

To unsubscribe, [click here](#).

J. Jioni Palmer
Communications Director
Congressional Black Caucus
(202) 226-1912 - office

Ex (b)(6) cell

Jett, Carole

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:41 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: FW: CBC NEWS: CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod
Attachments: image001.png; image002.png; image003.png

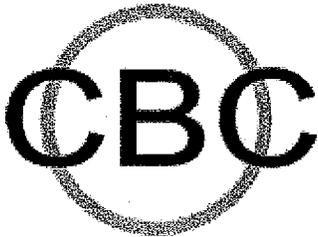
I'm sure you've seen this.

From: Wilson, Denise R. [mailto:Denise_R._Wilson@who.eop.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:39 AM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Fw: CBC NEWS: CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

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Denise Wilson
Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

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Sent: Wed Jul 21 10:46:38 2010
Subject: CBC NEWS: CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

Trouble viewing this press release? [Click here.](#)



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- 30 -

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Communications Director
Congressional Black Caucus
(202) 226-1912 - office

Ex (b)(6) - cell

Jett, Carole

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:56 AM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Mather, Chris; O'Brien, Doug
Cc: Weaver, Caleb
Subject: FW: Top Outlets "vilsack" : Official Ousted From Ag Department Had Taken USDA to Court, Won

Flagging new story line.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548

Exemption (b)(6) (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:51 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; USDA Clips; JIC1, OC -USDA; JIC2, OC -USDA; JIC3, OC -USDA; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: FW: Top Outlets "vilsack" : Official Ousted From Ag Department Had Taken USDA to Court, Won

From: Factiva[SMTP:EMAILEDNEWS@EMAIL.GLOBAL.FACTIVA.COM]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:50:42 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Top Outlets "vilsack" : Official Ousted From Ag Department Had Taken USDA to Court, Won
Auto forwarded by a Rule

Your topic is Top Outlets "vilsack"

Official Ousted From Ag Department Had Taken USDA to Court, Won
20 July 2010, 22:54 GMT, FOXNews.com [707 Words]

The Agriculture Department has a lengthy history with the official forced to resign Monday over a controversial YouTube clip -- it turns out she and a group she helped found with her husband won millions last year in a discrimination suit settlement with the federal government.

The information about the suit only thickens the plot that has evolved seemingly by the hour since Shirley Sherrod resigned late Monday as the department's Georgia director of rural development.

She claims the video clip, which showed her telling a story about how she withheld her full assistance to a white farmer, omitted key details, and she argues she was pushed out by the

Obama administration without getting a chance to tell her side. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack is standing by his decision.

But it's not the first time Sherrod faced off against the federal government. Days before she was appointed to the USDA post last year, her group reportedly won a \$13 million settlement in a longstanding discrimination suit against the USDA known commonly as the Pigford case.

The Rural Development Leadership Network announced last summer that New Communities Inc. -- a group Sherrod formed with husband Charles, who is a civil rights activist, and with other black farmers -- had reached the agreement. The RDLN said the USDA had "refused" to offer new loans or restructure old loans to members of New Communities, leading to the discrimination claim.

The announcement said that in addition to the \$13 million to New Communities, Shirley and Charles Sherrod would each get \$150,000 for "pain and suffering."

A USDA official told FoxNews.com on Tuesday that the settlement had "nothing to do with" Sherrod's hiring last year -- likewise, the official said her resignation was only the result of her comments in the video.

"This is all about her comments," the official said.

Sherrod's settlement was a drop in the bucket in terms of the money the federal government has paid out in Pigford claims to other black farmers over the years. The suit claimed the USDA racially discriminated against black farmers by not giving them fair treatment when they applied for loans or assistance. The case was first settled in 1999, resulting to date in more than \$1 billion in compensation payments from the federal government.

In addition, the Obama administration has called for another \$1.15 billion to settle claims for other black farmers -- Congress has not yet granted the money.

However, the case has attracted some scrutiny.

Former Agriculture Secretary Ed Schafer told Fox News that while those who were discriminated against "should be reimbursed," there are other hangers-on trying to game the system.

"The problem you have with the class-action lawsuits is a lot of people jump in that may be on the fringe, that maybe don't deserve it, that sounded good because their neighbor got a check ... (It) is very expensive, very time consuming," Schafer said. "It probably in the long run is going to be cheaper just to settle the whole thing -- so some people will get paid that probably don't deserve it. And to me, I don't like that kind of thing. I like to settle it on merit."

Vilsack appeared to reference the Pigford case, or the backstory behind it, in his statement Tuesday defending his decision to effectively dismiss Sherrod.

"Yesterday, I asked for and accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation for two reasons. First, for the past 18 months, we have been working to turn the page on the sordid civil rights record at USDA and this controversy could make it more difficult to move forward on correcting injustices. Second, state rural development directors make many decisions and are often called to use their discretion," he said.

Sherrod claims the administration never bothered to find out "the truth" about the video clip. She says she was telling a story about something that happened more than two decades ago when she was working for a local nonprofit group. She ended up helping that farmer and says she was, in recalling the story, trying to impart a lesson about the importance of looking beyond race.

<http://global.factiva.com/redirect/default.aspx?p=sta&ep=AE&an=WC42085020100721e67k0000q&fid=300612057&cat=w&aid=9USD000900&ns=18&fn=Top%20Outlets%20%22vilsack%22&ft=g&OD=V2AUBjNaqd6b5Ap%2b90PrU4iu6h%2fp8T%2byJNGtxGUDhq6zQxl8ytkPQ7A%3d%3d%7c2>

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Jett, Carole

From: Bittleman, Sarah
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:08 AM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole
Subject: So far so good

If no second round of questions we should be done in about 20. No questions or statements on Sherrod yet.

Lincoln, Chambliss, Roberts, Thune, Stabenow, Ben Nelson, Gillibrand, Johanns (thune and roberts already left).

Jett, Carole

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:04 AM
To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole
Subject: Fw: Jackson

From: Hannigan, Erin
To: Berge, John
Sent: Wed Jul 21 10:02:24 2010
Subject: RE: Jackson

Jesse Jackson wants apology for Sherrod's ouster

By *MARY CLARE JALONICK*
The Associated Press
Wednesday, July 21, 2010; 9:49 AM

WASHINGTON -- The Rev. Jesse Jackson is calling for an apology from the Obama administration for ousting an Agriculture Department employee now at the center of a racially tinged firestorm.

Jackson said he talked to Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack late Tuesday night before Vilsack said that he would reconsider his department's decision to ask Shirley Sherrod to leave her job.

Vilsack issued a short statement early Wednesday morning after Sherrod said she was pressured to resign because of her comments that she didn't give a white farmer as much help as she could have 24 years ago. Until Tuesday, Sherrod was the department's director of rural development in Georgia.

Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:02 AM
To: Hannigan, Erin
Subject: Re: Jackson

Can you paste words in email?

From: Berge, John
To: Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Wed Jul 21 09:55:41 2010
Subject: Re: Jackson

Not til now.

From: Hannigan, Erin
To: Berge, John
Sent: Wed Jul 21 09:54:36 2010
Subject: Jackson
Have you seen this?

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/07/21/AR2010072102398.html>

Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

Jett, Carole

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:46 AM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Mather, Chris; O'Brien, Doug
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: FW: Top Outlets "vilsack" : Ag chief: Former USDA worker's case to be reviewed

Flagging a couple key points/quotes from this story.

(CNN) -- A black former Agriculture Department official who resigned under pressure after a video clip surfaced of her discussing a white farmer said Wednesday the agency's decision to review her case is "bittersweet," but said she isn't sure she would accept her job back if it is offered.

"If they had just taken the time to -- even without looking at the tape -- to look at me, to look at what I've stood for, to look at what I've done since I've actually been at the department, I don't think they would have been so quick to do what they did and so insistent," she said. "... To now come back and say, 'Well, we're willing to look at this,' it definitely is a little bittersweet."

At the department, Sherrod said, "I didn't make a lot of noise. ... I worked for fairness for everyone."

Asked whether she would accept her job back if the USDA offered it, she said, "You know, I'm just not so sure at this point. I really wonder, in light of how I was treated over the last two days, just what that relationship would be like for the future. Can they move beyond this?"

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548

Exemption (b)(6) (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:37 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; USDA Clips; JIC1, OC -USDA; JIC2, OC -USDA; JIC3, OC -USDA; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: FW: Top Outlets "vilsack" : Ag chief: Former USDA worker's case to be reviewed

From: Factiva[SMTP:EMAILEDNEWS@EMAIL.GLOBAL.FACTIVA.COM]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:36:21 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Top Outlets "vilsack" : Ag chief: Former USDA worker's case to be reviewed
Auto forwarded by a Rule

Your topic is Top Outlets "vilsack"

Ag chief: Former USDA worker's case to be reviewed
21 July 2010, 12:52 GMT, CNN [2111 Words]

(CNN) -- A black former Agriculture Department official who resigned under pressure after a video clip surfaced of her discussing a white farmer said Wednesday the agency's decision to review her case is "bittersweet," but said she isn't sure she would accept her job back if it is offered.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said early Wednesday that he will review the case of Shirley Sherrod, who resigned Monday after the video clip first appeared on a conservative website and later on Fox News.

In the video, Sherrod, the former USDA director of rural development for Georgia, seems to tell an audience at an NAACP function in March that she did not do her utmost to help a white farmer avoid foreclosure.

However, Sherrod later said the clip only shows part of her comments, and that she tells the story of her experience -- from nearly a quarter century ago when she was not a federal employee -- to illustrate the importance of moving beyond race.

"I am, of course, willing and will conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts to ensure to the American people we are providing services in a fair and equitable manner," Vilsack said in a statement.

The USDA's decision is "bittersweet," Sherrod told CNN's "American Morning" on Wednesday.

"If they had just taken the time to -- even without looking at the tape -- to look at me, to look at what I've stood for, to look at what I've done since I've actually been at the department, I don't think they would have been so quick to do what they did and so insistent," she said. "... To now come back and say, 'Well, we're willing to look at this,' it definitely is a little bittersweet."

At the department, Sherrod said, "I didn't make a lot of noise. ... I worked for fairness for everyone."

Asked whether she would accept her job back if the USDA offered it, she said, "You know, I'm just not so sure at this point. I really wonder, in light of how I was treated over the last two days, just what that relationship would be like for the future. Can they move beyond this?"

In the video, Sherrod can be heard telling an audience at a March 27, 2010, appearance before a local chapter of the NAACP that she had not given a white farmer "the full force of what I could do" to help him save the family farm.

But later in the tape, in the portion not originally posted, Sherrod says, "working with (the farmer) made me see that it's really about those who have versus those who have not. They could be black. They could be white. They could be Hispanic."

The video initially brought condemnation from the NAACP, which later retracted its statement and apologized to Sherrod after the context of the clip became clear. Also, the farmer and his wife Sherrod was discussing, Roger and Eloise Spooner, came forward Tuesday, saying they credited Sherrod with helping them save their farm and that she did not discriminate against them.

The NAACP, which initially called Sherrod's statements "shameful," said in a statement Tuesday that it was "snookered by Fox News" and conservative website publisher Andrew Breitbart. Breitbart originally posted the video, which was quickly picked up by Fox News.

"Having reviewed the full tape by Shirley Sherrod, who is the woman who was fired by the Department of Agriculture, and most importantly heard the testimony of the white farmers mentioned in this story, we now believe that the organization that edited the documents did so with the intention of deceiving millions of Americans," the statement from NAACP President Benjamin Jealous said.

The organization had also urged Vilsack to reconsider Sherrod's resignation from her post.

Sherrod said Wednesday she accepted the NAACP apology and is "ready to move on."

Conservative media outlets tied the video to the NAACP's recent resolution calling on the Tea Party movement to repudiate racist elements within it that have displayed such items as images of President Barack Obama with a bone through his nose and the White House with a lawn full of watermelons. The controversy has led one Tea Party umbrella group to oust another because of a blog posting by the second group's leader.

Tea Party Express leader Mark Williams posted on his blog a faux letter from Jealous to President Abraham Lincoln in which Williams ridicules the organization's use of "colored" in its historic name and uses multiple stereotypes to bolster his point. The National Tea Party Foundation expelled Williams' organization from its coalition as a result.

Breitbart told CNN's "John King USA" on Tuesday that releasing the video was "not about Shirley Sherrod."

"This was about the NAACP attacking the Tea Party, and this is showing racism at an NAACP event," he said. "I did not ask for Shirley Sherrod to be fired."

Sherrod said Tuesday that she "went all out" to help the Spooners keep their farm in the 1986 incident, which occurred before she started working for USDA and was at the nonprofit Federation of Southern Cooperatives Land Assistance Fund. She said she resigned after receiving four phone calls Monday telling her the White House wanted her to step down.

"They asked me to resign, and in fact they harassed me as I was driving back to the state office from West Point, Georgia, yesterday," she said. The last call "asked me to pull to the side of the road and do it [resign]," she said.

However, Vilsack told CNN on Tuesday that he "didn't speak to anyone at the White House. ... I made this decision, it's my decision. Nobody from the White House contacted me about this at all."

A White House official also told CNN that "the White House did not pressure her or the USDA over the resignation. It was the secretary's decision, as he has said."

Obama was briefed on the situation after Vilsack decided to seek Sherrod's resignation, according to a White House official, who said the president fully supports the decision.

"I don't know what brought up the racist mess," Roger Spooner told CNN's "Rick's List" on Tuesday. "They just want to stir up some trouble, it sounds to me in my opinion."

Spooner says Sherrod accompanied him and his wife to a lawyer in Americus, Georgia, who was able to help them file for Chapter 11 bankruptcy, which ultimately saved their farm.

"If it hadn't been for her, we would've never known who to see or what to do," he said. "She led us right to our success."

Eloise Spooner remembered Sherrod as "nice-mannered, thoughtful, friendly; a good person."

She said that when she saw the story of the tape and Sherrod's resignation on television, "I said, 'That ain't right. They have not treated her right.' "

The poor-quality video shows Sherrod telling her audience that the farmer she was working with "took a long time ... trying to show me he was superior to me." As a result, she said, she "didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough."

To prove she had done her job, she said, she took him to a white lawyer. "I figured that if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him," she said.

But that lawyer failed to help, she said Tuesday. "I did not discriminate against [the farmer]. And, in fact, I went all out to frantically look for a lawyer at the last minute because the first lawyer we went to was not doing anything to really help him. In fact, that (first) lawyer suggested they should just let the farm go."

Sherrod, who was appointed to the USDA position in 2009, said she first heard of the possible controversy when someone e-mailed her Thursday to taunt her about her comments. She immediately forwarded the e-mail to the USDA so the agency would be aware. She was told that someone would look into it.

She said it wasn't until Monday that she heard back, and by then, she was being asked for her resignation.

Asked if she felt she had an opportunity to explain, Sherrod said, "No, I didn't. The administration, they were not interested in hearing the truth. No one wanted to hear the truth."

Vilsack said Tuesday that the controversy, regardless of the context of her comments, "compromises the director's ability to do her job."

"This isn't a situation where we are necessarily judgmental about the content of the statement, that's not the issue here. I don't believe this woman is a racist at all," he said. "She's a political appointee, and her job is basically to focus on job growth in Georgia, and I have deep concern about her ability to do her job without her judgments being second-guessed."

Ralph Paige, executive director of the Federation of Southern Cooperatives Land Assistance Fund, told CNN on Tuesday that Sherrod had garnered only praise during her time there and there were never any claims of discrimination against her.

"I can't praise Shirley enough," he said. "She holds no malice in her heart."

Vilsack said in a statement Monday he had accepted Sherrod's resignation, noting a "zero tolerance" policy for discrimination at the USDA. "I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person," he said.

The first statement that the NAACP issued late Monday backed Vilsack's decision.

"Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race," Jealous said. "We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers."

But Tuesday evening, the NAACP said in another statement, "(Sherrod) was sharing this account as part of a story of transformation and redemption. In the full video, Ms. Sherrod says she realized that the dislocation of farmers is about 'haves and have nots.' 'It's not just about black people, it's about poor people,' says Sherrod in the speech. 'We have to get to the point where race exists but it doesn't matter.' "

Earlier Tuesday, Sherrod called the NAACP "the reason why this happened. They got into a fight with the Tea Party, and all of this came out as a result of that."

"When you spend your life helping others and see people try to turn that around to try to make it look like you're a racist when that's not been what your life has been about -- that doesn't feel good," she said.

Sherrod and her family were part of a lawsuit filed in 1997 against the Agriculture Department that charged it discriminated against black farmers by denying them timely loans or debt restructuring. Complaints of discrimination began piling up after the Reagan administration shut down the department's civil rights division in 1983, and the lawsuit covered the years between 1983 and 1997.

A district court judge eventually combined two such lawsuits into a class action, and the two sides reached a settlement in 1999. The agreement gave each plaintiff \$50,000 plus loan forgiveness and tax offsets, provided the plaintiff met certain criteria (Track A), or the possibility of a larger amount by showing evidence of greater damages (Track B).

More than 22,000 farmers applied -- far more than the 2,000 expected -- and more than 13,000 were approved for the \$50,000 award. Fewer than 200 farmers opted for the Track B process.

Sherrod and her husband were part of the lawsuit because of the land trust they started in the 1960s along with several other black families. Ultimately, their land trust -- New Communities -- was awarded \$13 million, mostly for loss of land and loss of income and including \$300,000 for the Sherrods, according to the Rural Development Leadership Network.

Vilsack, who is now the defendant in the lawsuit -- Pigford vs. Vilsack -- as final details are worked out, referred to the discrimination lawsuit and other similar suits in a statement announcing that he had accepted Sherrod's resignation.

"We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously," Vilsack said.

<http://global.factiva.com/redirect/default.aspx?p=sta&ep=AE&an=WCCNN00020100721e67100011&fid=300612057&cat=w&aid=9USD000900&ns=18&fn=Top%20Outlets%20%22vilsack%22&ft=g&OD=V2AubjNaqd6b5Ap%2b90PrU4iu6h%2fp8T%2byJNGtxGUDhq6zQxl8yztzkPQ7A%3d%3d%7c2>

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(<http://global.factiva.com/redirect/default.aspx?p=mce>) from your desktop. Please check with your account admin for your corporate mobile policies.
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Jett, Carole

From: Leland, Arlean [ARLEAN.LELAND@OGC.USDA.GOV]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:46 AM
To: Leonard, Joe; Jett, Carole; Pfaeffle, Frederick; McNeil, Mary
Cc: Silverman, Steve; BUMBARY-LANGSTON, INGA
Subject: RE: Help [Sherrod Track B Decision]

Dr. Leonard,

Ex (b)(5)

Arlean Leland
AGC-CRD

-----Original Message-----

From: Leonard, Joe [mailto:Joe.Leonard@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:51 AM
To: Jett, Carole; Pfaeffle, Frederick; McNeil, Mary
Cc: Silverman, Steve; BUMBARY-LANGSTON, INGA; Leland, Arlean
Subject: RE: Help [Sherrod Track B Decision]

Ex (b)(5)

Joe Leonard Jr., Ph.D
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Suite 212-A Washington, DC 20250 Joe.Leonard@osec.usda.gov
O: (202) 720-3808
F: (202) 690-1782

-----Original Message-----

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:34 PM
To: 'Frederick.Pfaeffle@OGC.USDA.GOV'; McNeil, Mary; Leonard, Joe
Cc: Silverman, Steve; 'INGA.BUMBARY-LANGSTON@OGC.USDA.GOV'; 'ARLEAN.LELAND@OGC.USDA.GOV'
Subject: Re: Help [Sherrod Track B Decision]

Thx!
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA
202-409-7911

----- Original Message -----

From: Frederick.Pfaeffle@OGC.USDA.GOV <Frederick.Pfaeffle@OGC.USDA.GOV>
To: Jett, Carole; McNeil, Mary; Leonard, Joe
Cc: Silverman, Steve; INGA.BUMBARY-LANGSTON@OGC.USDA.GOV <INGA.BUMBARY-LANGSTON@OGC.USDA.GOV>; ARLEAN.LELAND@OGC.USDA.GOV <ARLEAN.LELAND@OGC.USDA.GOV>
Sent: Tue Jul 20 19:50:01 2010
Subject: RE: Help [Sherrod Track B Decision]

Confidential Attorney-Client Communication

Exemption (b)(5), (b)(6)

Exempt... (b)(5), (b)(6)...

I will provide further info when we hear back from the Department of Justice

TOMORROW.

Jett, Carole

From: [REDACTED] *Ex (b)(6)*
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 8:32 AM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: Reinstatement of Georgia State Director Shirley Sherrod

Secretary Vilsack:

I am writing in support of Georgia State Director of Rural Development Shirley Sherrod. I have known and worked with Shirley for almost 25 years and can think of no better to represent the USDA and the Administration than Shirley. She has worked tirelessly for those who have had little or no access to those services provided by USDA and she has worked tirelessly for all people. It has been reported that you are concerned that "the controversy surrounding Sherrod's comments could, rightly or wrongly, cause people to question her decisions as a federal employee and lead to lingering doubts about civil rights at the agency, which has a troubled history of discrimination." Please let me tell you about another perception. Last week I was at a meeting of service providers to socially disadvantaged clients. In attendance were four State Directors of Rural Development and three were African American women. You cannot imagine how that fact encourages those work work on behalf of those in need at the grassroots level, those who are trying to improve the trouble history at USDA that you are concerned about. So, on half of those who support USDA and it's valuable work, and those who support those who are working to make those needed positive changes at USDA like Shirley Sherrod, please reconsider the decision to ask for her resignation and reinstate her to continue the work she has started.

Sincerely,

Robert Zabawa

Jett, Carole

From: Maisel, Chad
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 8:27 AM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: RE: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Re the tick tock:

As I think more about the timeline, I think I told DS about the existence of an email around 4p. I actually printed it out and showed it to her around 6:15p.

Jett, Carole

From: Jeanquart, Bobbi
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 8:03 AM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole
Subject: Re: FYI

Support of sherrod, apology from S and POTUS requested

From: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
To: Jett, Carole; Jeanquart, Bobbi
Sent: Wed Jul 21 07:46:39 2010
Subject: RE: FYI
What is the statement?

Karen Ross
Chief of Staff
Office of the Secretary

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:37 AM
To: Jeanquart, Bobbi; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: Re: FYI

I did not get this.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Jeanquart, Bobbi
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Wed Jul 21 07:35:30 2010
Subject: Fw: FYI

From: Lorette Picciano
To: Reed, Pearlie
Cc: Jeanquart, Bobbi
Sent: Wed Jul 21 06:58:08 2010
Subject: FYI
Pearlie, (and Bobbi)

Good to talk to you the other week.

I am sharing with you this statement sent last night to Carole. We will officially fax in in a few hours.

We are very deeply concerned about this matter, and certainly it will impact anything OAO does regarding continuation of a partners process.

Let us know if you have an questions,

Lorette

Lorette Picciano

Executive Director

Rural Coalition/Coalición Rural

1012 14th Street NW suite 1100

Washington, DC 20005

Phone: 202-628-7160

Fax: 202-393-1816

About us at www.ruralco.org

SHOP AT: <http://www.supermarketcoop.com>

direct email: Lpicciano@ruralco.org

Jett, Carole

From: Leonard, Joe
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:51 AM
To: Jett, Carole; 'Frederick.Pfaeffle@OGC.USDA.GOV'; McNeil, Mary
Cc: Silverman, Steve; 'INGA.BUMBARY-LANGSTON@OGC.USDA.GOV';
'ARLEAN.LELAND@OGC.USDA.GOV'
Subject: RE: Help [Sherrod Track B Decision]

I hope this information is for internal understanding only.

Joe Leonard Jr., Ph.D
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Suite 212-A Washington, DC 20250 Joe.Leonard@osec.usda.gov
O: (202) 720-3808
F: (202) 690-1782
-----Original Message-----

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:34 PM
To: 'Frederick.Pfaeffle@OGC.USDA.GOV'; McNeil, Mary; Leonard, Joe
Cc: Silverman, Steve; 'INGA.BUMBARY-LANGSTON@OGC.USDA.GOV'; 'ARLEAN.LELAND@OGC.USDA.GOV'
Subject: Re: Help [Sherrod Track B Decision]

Thx!
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA
202-409-7911

----- Original Message -----
From: Frederick.Pfaeffle@OGC.USDA.GOV <Frederick.Pfaeffle@OGC.USDA.GOV>
To: Jett, Carole; McNeil, Mary; Leonard, Joe
Cc: Silverman, Steve; INGA.BUMBARY-LANGSTON@OGC.USDA.GOV <INGA.BUMBARY-LANGSTON@OGC.USDA.GOV>; ARLEAN.LELAND@OGC.USDA.GOV <ARLEAN.LELAND@OGC.USDA.GOV>
Sent: Tue Jul 20 19:50:01 2010
Subject: RE: Help [Sherrod Track B Decision]

Confidential Attorney-Client Communication

Exemption (b)(5), (b)(6)

Exempt... (b)(5), (b)(6)...

I will provide further info when we hear back from the Department of Justice tomorrow.

Jett, Carole

From: Maisel, Chad
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:33 AM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Yes, I did early last week.

From: Jett, Carole
To: Maisel, Chad
Sent: Wed Jul 21 07:29:02 2010
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Have you interviewed with Astri yet?
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Maisel, Chad
To: Jett, Carole
Sent: Wed Jul 21 07:26:11 2010
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

I would say 3:00pm

From: Jett, Carole
To: Maisel, Chad
Sent: Wed Jul 21 07:13:18 2010
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Chad
I am putting a tick tock together. Do you know time?
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Maisel, Chad
To: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:08:21 2010
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

This afternoon

From: Jett, Carole
To: Maisel, Chad
Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:07:24 2010
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

No worries. When did you let the Deputy Secretary know about it?

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Maisel, Chad
To: Jett, Carole; Eve, Malcolm; Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:06:14 2010
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

On Thursday. With this email account I sometimes wait to see how the email exchanges develop so that I can best decide who to send it along to. I wish I had forwarded it right away.

From: Jett, Carole
To: Maisel, Chad; Eve, Malcolm; Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 21:58:40 2010
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Chad. When did you discover this message?

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Maisel, Chad
To: Eve, Malcolm; Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 21:40:38 2010
Subject: FW: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet
Email train from 7/15 with DS' public account (kathleen.merrigan@usda.gov) cced

From: Exemption (b)(6) [mailto:Exemption (b)(6)]
Sent: Thursday, July 15, 2010 7:07 PM
To: georgeko@gmail.com
Cc: Exemption (b)(6) webmail@chambliss-iq.senate.gov; Donnie.Thomas@one.usda.gov; Tom.Vilsack@usda.gov; Exemption (b)(6) Merrigan, Kathleen
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

My words were taken out of context. I told about something that happened in 1986 when I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm. When so many black farmers were losing their. My point was that I initially did not do all that I could but in the process realized it was not about black versus white but about poor people or those who have versus those who do not.

If they will use all that I said you see that I talked about what I did to save that white farmers farm and from there went to help hundreds of other white farmers

I use the story to try to get people to move beyond race and work together

I feel deeply hurt that someone would take my words out of context and try to make them mean something else

My record of work for others for 45 years will show my love for people and for fairness

Shirley Sherrod

Sent using BlackBerry

From: George Ko [Exemption (b)(6)]
To: Sherrod, Shirley - Athens, GA
Cc: Tom.Vilsack [Exemption (b)(6)] <Tom.Vilsack [Exemption (b)(6)]>; Merrigan, Kathleen (OSEC [Exemption (b)(6)])
[Exemption (b)(6)] <webmail@chambers-iq.senate.gov> <webmail@chambers-iq.senate.gov>; Thomas,
Donnie - Athens, GA
Sent: Thu Jul 15 15:33:41 2010
Subject: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Dear Ms. Sherrod:

I recently came across a video of your speech at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet in Douglas Coffee County, GA: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=62hPa37v2J4>

In the video, you stated that you did not help a white farmer with the "full force of what [you] could do" when he sought your help. From the context of your speech, you seem to imply that the "amount" of help you provided was due to the color of his skin (white) and because of your sympathy and preference for black farmers.

Are your comments and the context of the comments in your speech correct? As Georgia's USDA Rural Development State Director, do you believe your comments were appropriate?

Thank you,

George Ko

--

George Ko

[Ex (b)(6)]

Jett, Carole

From: Mitchell, Ernest on behalf of OpsCenter
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:31 AM
To: Afshartoos, Nic; Anelli, Joseph F; Ashworth, Russ - OSEC; Bale, Mary; Barrett, ToddJ; Bowen, Frank; Brewer, John; Brickler, Gary L; Carter, Pamela; Casaus, Carlos; Chang, Jason; Cooksie, Carolyn -FSA; Corso, Barbara A; Crew, John; Crichton, Chanae F.; Dallos, Linda; Dorn, Ralph -FS; Evans, Lakisha; Fantinato, Jessica -USDA; Febles, Celso; Goodman, Jeffrey; Grode, Jeffrey J; Gulbranson, Susan; Hager, Randall; Harvey, Reola; Hobbs, Alma; Holdridge, Kip; Holladay, Jon; Hollingsworth, Deidra; Hovey, Richard; Hrubovcak, Jim -OCE; Huff, Justin -USDA; Jacykewycz, Oleh; Jahn, Molly; Jeanquart, Bobbi; Jett, Carole; Jones, Reggie; Katz, Lora -APHIS; Knott, Deborah M; Lassister, Eleanora V; Lautner, Elizabeth A; Lazarus, David; Levings, Randall L; Li, Yun; Linneman, Jerad; Lisi, Brenda; Lodder, Ruth; Lodge, Deborah J -FS; Lott, James -NRCS; Lowe, Stephen; Maddux, Troy -FS; Maguire, Karen; Mande, Jerold; Martin, John K -FS; Mather, Chris; Mayer, Alvina; McElfresh, Keith; Mezoughem, Claire; Michener, Michael; Mills, Ann; Munno, Joanne L; Murtagh, Ed; O'Connor, Michael; Ohanesson, Michael R; Olson, Peter; OpsCenter; Paik, Moon (CTR); Palmieri, Suzanne; Panganiban, Kelly; Passino, John P.; Pfaender, Carl; Pollard, Nicole -OBPA; Pozanek, Leslie; Redington, JamesH; Reed, Pearlie; Repass, Todd; Romero, Marian; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Russell, Cora; Salloum, Holly; Salsburg, Risa; Sanders, Steve -FSA; Shaffer, Debra; Shields, Kara; Smith, Christopher L. -OCIO; Smith, Cindy; Smith, Cindy J; Smith, Mark -OBPA; Stull, Josh; Styles, Darrel K; Tate, Morris; Taulman, Lesley; Thompson, Cornell; Thornton, Janey; Timmons, David; Toomer, Letitia -NRCS; Velde, Blake; Vetter, Darci; Walton, Ronald A; Wilburn, Curtis; Wilner, Mark
Cc: OpsCenter
Subject: Overnight News Highlights: 07/21/10
Attachments: image001.jpg; image002.gif; image003.gif; image004.gif



**OPERATIONS CENTER
OVERNIGHT NEWS HIGHLIGHTS
July 21, 2010**

Oil Spill – Gulf of Mexico

Gulf cattle ranchers fear toxins after oil spill

Louisiana (Reuters) - The cattle in these parts don't seem to mind the helicopters hauling oil booms overhead, nor the response boats hurrying past their banks. But the oil that British energy giant BP is scrambling to clean up from its massive Gulf of Mexico spill threatens the animals' grazing land and the income of the ranchers who own them. Over 1,000 head of cattle graze on marshy islands off Louisiana's southeast tip and thousands more are found in the coastal low-lying pastures highly susceptible to flooding. The petroleum and cattle industries have managed to co-exist over the years. But now, ranchers fear a hurricane in this watery southeastern area of the state could wash the oil onto grazing land, poisoning their livestock and ruining their value. "We don't have a clue what this oil will do," said Robert Joyner, who heads the Louisiana Cattlemen's Association. "It's a whole 'nother ball game." Louisiana is home to about 450,000 head of cattle valued last year at \$365 million. But the best pasture land is in the coastal south, where cattle can graze year-round.

Even before the oil spill it was a challenge being a cattleman here, where many animals can only be moved by barge. Calves succumb to alligators and snake bites, corrals need constant maintenance amid the quick-growing vegetation, and erosion and rising water levels steal valuable pasture every year. And then there are the hurricanes. Hurricane Katrina in 2005 killed 1,800 of Earl Armstrong's cattle. The next hurricane could pack a double wallop, with the additional danger of toxins brought ashore. "I'm not being happy with the oil right now," said Armstrong, whose cattle graze at the mouth of the Mississippi River, not far from the oil spill clean-up's command center. "I don't know when it's going to come in on that cattle where they have to eat that grass. It's a wait-and-see deal." Ranchers see themselves ending up last on BP's compensation list after the oystermen, shrimpers and others who have lost their livelihoods due to the spill are taken care of under BP's \$20 billion fund.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE66J4QM20100720?type=domesticNews>

BP denies CEO leaving as it readies asset sales

(Reuters) - BP Plc on Wednesday denied a report its heavily criticized chief executive would soon leave, after the company lined up \$7 billion in asset sales to help pay for the worst oil spill in U.S. history. CEO Tony Hayward had the full support of the board and would stay in office, a BP spokesman told Reuters, dismissing a report in the Times newspaper that he would step down within the next 10 weeks. Hayward has been roundly criticized for a series of PR gaffes and a failure to quickly stem the three-month leak in the Gulf of Mexico, prompting speculation he would be removed. Hayward would have to step down so that BP could build its defenses against a potential buyout threat by ExxonMobil or Royal Dutch Shell, the Times cited a person close to the matter as saying. There was a growing expectation that he would announce his departure in late August or September, with Robert Dudley, chief of BP's Gulf Coast restoration efforts, viewed as the front-runner to replace him, The Times said.

BP is also selling assets around the world to help shore up its finances after pledging to set aside \$20 billion to meet the costs of the spill. The company said on Tuesday it reached a \$7 billion deal with U.S. firm Apache Corp, a large part of its planned sale of \$10 billion in assets. BP said Apache would pay a \$5 billion cash deposit on July 30 as part of the deal for exploration and production facilities in North America and Egypt. The company said the deal would include assets in New Mexico, natural gas in western Canada and concessions in Egypt. Earlier, it announced it would sell \$1.7 billion worth of assets in Vietnam and Pakistan.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE65O5TA20100721>

BP may try "static kill": Allen

(Reuters) - BP Plc and U.S. government scientists are in talks about trying to plug its Gulf of Mexico well from the top with a so-called "static kill," the top U.S. spill official said on Tuesday. Retired Coast Guard Admiral Thad Allen also told reporters at a briefing in Washington that he approved extending BP's key pressure test on the blown-out Macondo well another day. He said that the new procedure could augment a relief well, which remains on target to kill the leak by mid-August. "We'll probably have a good idea over the next 24 hours exactly what the detailed plan by BP would be to do that," he said. Like BP's failed "top kill" in May, a static kill would involve pumping heavy drilling mud and cement into the well through a hose into a failed blowout preventer at the seabed.

Kent Wells, BP's senior vice president of exploration and production, explained at a separate briefing that the difference would be the cap atop that blowout preventer, which now shuts in all flows. During the top kill, drilling mud pumped into the blowout preventer shot out of an uncovered pipe at the top along with leaking

crude. The cap closes that escape route and keeps pressure manageable, Wells said. The relief well is expected to intercept the blown-out well near its bottom, about 13,000 feet beneath the seabed, by the end of July, Wells said. Mud and cement would be pumped in to seal the well, and the static kill operation could do the same from the top.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE66J5R320100720?type=domesticNews>

2009 H1N1

Swine Flu Fizzles Out; WHO May Declare End to Pandemic Alert

Public health experts are likely to tell the world this month it can breathe easier: The swine flu pandemic is ending. The World Health Organization's emergency committee may convene next week to review infection data from Argentina to New Zealand and recommend that the agency declare the century's first flu pandemic to be over, said two people familiar with the matter. They declined to be identified because the deliberations are confidential. WHO Director-General Margaret Chan has to decide whether the virus warrants extra vigilance as it circles the globe a second time with no sign it's becoming deadlier or developing resistance to Roche Holding AG's Tamiflu drug. More than \$14 billion was spent on vaccines and medicines to fight the germ, which shared features of the Spanish flu of 1918 while causing little more than a fever and a cough in a majority of patients. "We have to count our lucky stars," said Malik Peiris, professor of microbiology at Hong Kong University, in a telephone interview. "We were really fortunate that on this occasion it was a very mild infection." A decision by Chan to scale down the pandemic response will be guided by how the virus evolves and a date for an announcement hasn't been set, said Gregory Hartl, a WHO spokesman.

'Very Watchful'

The emergency panel was to convene as early as today, the two people said. The WHO late yesterday decided it may take a little longer to review the latest flu data and allow Argentina to wrap up its vaccination campaign, one of the people said. The WHO moved to the top level of its six-step pandemic alert in June 2009 after the discovery of the new H1N1 virus in Mexico and the U.S. two months earlier, sparking what the agency described as a health emergency of international concern. The virus is now circulating at low levels worldwide after killing at least 18,337 people, WHO said on July 16. "We are still not at the end of the Southern Hemisphere flu season, so we have to be very watchful," Hartl said yesterday by telephone from WHO's headquarters in Geneva. U.S. health authorities determined last month that special medical measures to fight the first flu pandemic in 41 years are no longer required and said other countries are likely to make similar assessments in coming weeks. Americans probably increased spending on cold, cough and throat remedies to \$3.6 billion last year as the pandemic spurred demand for influenza relief, Mintel International Group Ltd. said in October. The London-based research company estimated U.K. consumers spent 428 million pounds (\$653 million) in 2009 alleviating flu symptoms with products that don't require a doctor's prescription.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2010-07-19/swine-flu-fizzles-out-who-may-declare-end-to-pandemic-alert.html>

Foot Mouth Disease/FMD

FMD Outbreak Reported in Russia

The World Organisation for Animal Health has reported an outbreak of foot and mouth disease in Russia. To date, the disease has affected cattle, swine, sheep and goats. Russian veterinary authorities sent an immediate notification to the OIE on Monday. A total of 112 cattle were found affected, while 2256 showed signs of susceptibility. In the case of swine, four animals were found affected while 50 were found susceptible to the disease. No animals were destroyed. According to the report, the outbreak occurred about 7 miles from the Chinese border. The source of the outbreak is remains inconclusive and is under investigation.

http://www.porkmag.com/directories.asp?pgID=675&ed_id=9645

Agriculture

USDA to reconsider ousting of worker over race charges

Video of speech was 'deliberately edited to create a false impression of racial bias,' NAACP says
Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said Wednesday he will reconsider the USDA's decision to oust a black employee over racially tinged remarks after learning more about what she said. Vilsack issued a short statement early Wednesday morning after Shirley Sherrod, who until Tuesday was the Agriculture Department's director of rural development in Georgia, said she was pressured to resign because of her comments that she didn't give a white farmer as much help as she could have 24 years ago.

Sherrod said her remarks, delivered in March at a local NAACP banquet in Georgia, were part of a larger story about learning from her mistakes and racial reconciliation, not racism, and they were taken out of context by bloggers who posted a video showing only parts of her speech. Vilsack's statement came after the NAACP posted the full video of Sherrod's comments Tuesday night and retracted its earlier condemnation of her. "I am of course willing and will conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts to ensure to the American people we are providing services in a fair and equitable manner," Vilsack said.

On Tuesday, NAACP President Benjamin Todd Jealous said that the group was "snookered" into believing that Sherrod expressed racist sentiments at a local NAACP meeting in Georgia earlier this year. After initially supporting her ouster, Jealous changed his mind and said she should keep her job. The Obama administration's move to reconsider her employment was a reversal on the position just hours earlier, when a White House official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said President Barack Obama had been briefed on Sherrod's resignation after the fact and stood by the Agriculture Department's handling of it...

http://today.msnbc.msn.com/id/38321920/ns/us_news-life/

FDA Says Raw Milk Is Not Worth Risk of Contamination

July 20 (THAINDIAN NEWS) Raw milk contains too much harmful bacteria, according to the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA), such as E coli and salmonella which makes the possible benefits of drinking it not worth the risks of harm to those who ingest it. Although these types of bacteria can cause people to become very sick, and has even been reported to have caused death in some cases, many Americans feel that the risks are worth it. Many raw milk advocates visit dairy farms in order to get their own raw milk, and have been known to pay up to 10 dollars a gallon. Still others have purchased goats or their own cattle in order to have their own raw milk, since it has been banned by the FDA. The advocates scoff at the ban, and say that if people can buy alcohol, fast food, and cigarettes, then a ban on raw milk is silly. Clean, raw milk which came from cows which had only been fed grass was once considered to be a medicine during the early part of the last century. It was considered a kind of "stem cell food" when it came straight from the cow. According to history,

people have used it since the time of Hippocrates until after World War II and it was often called "white blood", which nourished many people.

http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/world/fda-says-raw-milk-is-not-worth-risk-of-contamination_100399130.html

Study finds no clear safety advantage for grass-fed beef

Jul 20, 2010 (CIDRAP News) – A recent study of a modest sample of US retail beef products found little difference between the levels of bacteria in grass-fed and conventionally raised beef, despite marketing claims that grass-fed beef is safer. Reporting in *Foodborne Pathogens and Disease*, researchers said they found no significant differences in total coliform bacteria, *Escherichia coli*, or *Enterococcus* species. They also looked at antimicrobial resistance and found mixed evidence, with some signs of increased resistance in bacteria isolated from conventional beef as compared with grass-fed beef. "Taken together, these data indicate that there are no clear food safety advantages to grass-fed beef products over conventional beef products," says the report by investigators from Purdue University in Indiana and Zhejiang University in Hangzhou, China.

They write that grass-fed beef products are often marketed as safer than conventional grain-finished beef because of the potential effects of the grass diet on gut microbes. But they suggest that other factors, including where and how beef is processed and whether cattle are fed preventive antimicrobials, may have larger effects on contamination in finished products. Grass-fed cattle are more likely to be processed in small facilities and are less likely to be given preventive antibiotics, the authors say. In view of these factors, they hypothesized that grass-fed beef would have higher overall contamination rates but that conventional products would carry bacteria with higher levels of antimicrobial resistance.

To test this, they collected and analyzed samples of conventional beef and beef labeled as grass-fed from retail stores in Illinois and Indiana between July 2008 and March 2009. Fifty conventional samples were collected from four outlets, and 50 grass-fed samples were gathered from 10 sources, including retail stores, farm stores, and farmers' markets. About two thirds of the samples in each set were solid cuts of beef such as steaks, and the rest were ground beef. The samples were washed according to a standard protocol, and the wash solution was then tested for bacteria. The bacteria also were tested for resistance to various antimicrobials. Testing showed no difference in overall coliform contamination of the sample sets (conventional beef, 2.6 log-10 colony-forming units [CFU] per milliliter of rinsate; grass-fed beef, 2.7 CFU/mL of rinsate). Likewise, solid cuts and ground beef did not differ in coliform levels.

<http://www.cidrap.umn.edu/cidrap/content/fs/food-disease/news/jul2010grass-jw.html>

U.S. company recalls chicken nuggets

LOS ANGELES, July 20 (Xinhua) -- A U.S. company has recalled more than 91,000 pounds of frozen fully cooked chicken nuggets sold at Walmart stores because the products may contain plastic pieces, CBS reported on Tuesday. In response to consumer complaints, the company, Perdue Farms Inc., made a checkup and found foreign objects -- pieces of blue plastic -- inside the nuggets, according to the report. The products, produced on June 9, were all shipped to Walmart, under its store brand, Great Value, a Perdue spokesman said. Each bag bears a best if used by date of June 9, 2011 as well as an establishment number of P-33944, and a case code of 8900A0160. It was not immediately known whether there was any incident in relation with the problematic products. The Georgia-based company said anyone concerned about an injury from consumption of this product should contact a physician.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/world/2010-07/21/c_13407156.htm

GIPSA Rule Takes Hot Seat at House Subcommittee Hearing

The House Ag Subcommittee on Livestock met Tuesday to review livestock and related USDA programs ahead of the 2012 Farm Bill. Subcommittee Chair David Scott says the hearing was a productive one - allowing members to explore in depth a wide array of issues with the department. He says it also brought several issues to light that require more thorough investigation in the future. According to Ranking Member Randy Neugebauer fair and transparent markets are necessary for orderly commerce between producers, packers, processors, retailers and consumers. But he says the policy process must be fair and transparent as well - so the path of good intentions does not lead to the land of unintended consequences. Neugebauer is disappointed that the comment period on the GIPSA rule announced last month is only 60 days and will close before the USDA/DOJ workshops on the subject are completed. He joined 21 of his colleagues to request a 120 day extension. USDA Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs Edward Avalos was the primary witness Tuesday. He says joined by administrators from USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Agricultural Marketing Service and Grain Inspection, Packers, and Stockyards Administration.

http://www.hoosieragtoday.com/wire/news/01097_gipsarule_224416.php

Key US senators seek progress on S.Korea trade pact

WASHINGTON — A group of senior US senators offered President Barack Obama their "strong support" Tuesday as he forges ahead with a free trade deal with South Korea opposed by some of his Democratic allies. "We write to applaud your call for a prompt resolution of outstanding issues to the US-Korea Free Trade Agreement (KORUS FTA) this year and to reiterate our strong support for such action," the lawmakers wrote in a letter to Obama. The group included Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman John Kerry, Senate Agriculture Committee Blanche Lincoln, and Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Daniel Inouye -- all Democrats. It also included Independent Senator Joe Lieberman, who chairs the Senate Homeland Security Committee; Democratic Senator Dianne Feinstein, who chairs the Senate Intelligence Committee; and East Asia and Pacific Affairs Subcommittee Chairman Jim Webb, a Democrat.

Democratic Senators Mark Warner, Daniel Akaka, Maria Cantwell, and Mark Begich were also part of the group, which threw its weight behind Obama's vow to resolve difficult disputes holding up congressional approval for the deal. "We share your commitment to addressing the outstanding issues with the Agreement, including trade in beef and autos, and securing congressional approval in an expeditious manner," the lawmakers wrote. The group said approving the agreement would bolster ties with South Korea, and send a message to North Korea, while failure to approve the pact "could have wide-ranging repercussions for US engagement and influence" in the region. "We look forward to your prompt submission of the Agreement to the Congress, and we stand by to assist you in resolving any outstanding issues in order to ensure that this Agreement garners widespread support and is approved by the Congress in an expeditious fashion," they wrote.

But organized labor, a critical support base for Obama's Democratic Party with critical November mid-term elections looming, and several Democratic lawmakers have vowed to fight the deal which they say would hurt workers...

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5hwwLlw8nT8TwdFd0NzND9rvNw5Vw>

Accused terror suspect pleads not guilty Man is accused of conspiring to help al-Qaida

BOSTON — A man accused in a terror plot to kill Americans pleaded not guilty Tuesday to federal charges that he conspired to help al-Qaida. Tarek Mehanna smiled and nodded to dozens of supporters in a federal courtroom in Boston before he was arraigned on a charge of conspiring to provide material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization. The charge was added last month in a superseding indictment against Mehanna and Ahmad Abousamra, a former Massachusetts man who U.S. authorities say is now in Syria. The men already faced charges that they conspired to kill American troops in Iraq, assassinate two unnamed U.S. politicians and shoot shoppers in U.S. malls. A trial date of Oct. 3, 2011, was set to give the defense time to examine thousands of pages of government evidence.

Mehanna's lawyer, J.W. Carney Jr., said he expects to file a motion to dismiss some or all of the charges against Mehanna in February. Carney has said prosecutors built their case based on anti-American statements Mehanna made from 2002 to 2006, when he was in college. Carney has said Mehanna's statements, though unpopular, are protected by the First Amendment. Authorities have said Mehanna and two other men charged never came close to pulling off an attack but did seek training at terrorist camps in the Middle East. The men allegedly told friends they were rejected for terrorist training because of their nationality, ethnicity or inexperience, or that they were unable to make contact with people they hoped would get them into camps. Prosecutors allege that the men dropped plans to attack shopping malls because their weapons contact said he could only find handguns, not automatic weapons.

http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/38333130/ns/us_news-security/

Report: Warmer climate puts water supplies at risk

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) - A new report says more than 1,000 counties across the United States are at risk for potential water shortages by midcentury as warmer temperatures deplete supplies and demand for water rises. The report, released Tuesday by the Natural Resources Defense Council, says some regions including the Northeast could see a boost to water supplies as climate change shifts weather patterns. But for much of the rest of the country, the group paints a sobering picture of warm temperatures further taxing aquifers already stressed by heavy agricultural and consumer use. The report did not factor in future improvements to water supply systems. Fourteen states were highlighted as being most at risk: Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Idaho, Kansas, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas.

<http://www.wtop.com/?nid=104&sid=2007481>

Rubberized dam breaks at man-made Arizona lake

TEMPE, Ariz. (AP) - A rubberized dam on a man-made lake near Phoenix has collapsed, sending hundreds of gallons of water gushing into the dry Salt River bed. Tempe police and fire department crews were evacuating the area around Tempe Town Lake and anyone who may be along the river bottom, but there were no immediate reports of any injuries. The lake near the campus of Arizona State University has four dams on its west end. Authorities say there was a break in the middle section. Tempe bought the dams in 1998 and filled the lake the following year.

<http://www.wtop.com/?nid=104&sid=2007692>

International News

U.S. announces new sanctions against N.Korea

Measures are designed to stop nuclear proliferation, Clinton says in Seoul

SEOUL — The United States announced new sanctions against North Korea on Wednesday including on the purchase and sale of arms and an asset freeze on individuals. U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said at a joint press conference in Seoul that the sanctions are part of a series of measures designed to stop nuclear proliferation. She said the moves are meant to halt illicit activities that help fund the Pyongyang regime's atomic weapons program. The sanctions were a response to the policies in Pyongyang and were not directed at the people of North Korea, Clinton said.

http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/38338549/ns/world_news-asiapacific/

China flooding kills 701 in worst toll in a decade

BEIJING (AP) - Flooding this year has killed 701 people, left 347 missing and caused tens of billions of dollars in damage, the worst toll across the board that China has seen in a decade, a senior Chinese official said Wednesday. Three-quarters of China's provinces have been hit by flooding and 25 rivers have seen record-high water levels, Liu Ning, general secretary of the government's flood prevention agency, told a news conference. Aside from the 701 dead and 347 missing, 645,000 houses were toppled and overall damage totaled 142.2 billion yuan. All the figures, Liu said, were the highest China had seen since 2000. With the flood season far from over, this year is shaping up to be one of the most devastating since 1998, which was the worst in 50 years. Flooding, particularly along the Yangtze River Basin, has overwhelmed reservoirs, swamped towns and cities, and broken off hillsides causing landslides that have smothered communities.

<http://www.wtop.com/?nid=105&sid=2005845>

Police: 2 killed in Russian power station attack

ROSTOV-ON-DON, Russia (AP) - Two carloads of assailants attacked a hydroelectric station in southern Russia on Wednesday, killing two workers and setting off bombs. The attack took place in Kabardino-Balkariya, one of the republics in Russia's restive Caucasus region where clashes with insurgents are frequent. A spokesman for the republic's police, Adlan Kakakuyev, said two cars carrying a half-dozen assailants attacked the Baksan plant, killing two guards and wounding three others in gunfire. The attackers then set off explosives in several parts of the 25-megawatt plant and detonated them. The assailants fled. There were no immediate claims of responsibility for the attack. The explosions and subsequent fire destroyed two of the plant's three power units, but there was no danger of flooding downriver, the state news agency ITAR-Tass cited power company RusGidro as saying. The dam and plant are on the Baksan River, a waterway that flows into the Terek, a major regional river.

The assault was launched around 4:30 a.m. Kakakuyev said the same assailants are believed to have earlier opened fire on a police station in the town of Baksan. No one was hurt in that attack. The attack on the hydroelectric station was the most dramatic outburst of violence in the Russian Caucasus in recent months. Although Kabardino-Balkariya sees less violence than nearby Chechnya, Dagestan and Ingushetia, the republic suffers from persistent tensions stemming from poverty and harsh police actions toward worship by unsanctioned Muslim sects. In October 2005, dozens of men stormed the capital city, Nalchik, attacking police and government offices. Some 139 people died, including 94 militants.

National Fire News

July 20, 2010

Nationally, wildland fire activity remains light. Four new large fires were reported, three in Arizona and one in Wyoming. Firefighters contained three large fires yesterday. Fifty-four large fires are being managed to achieve multiple objectives throughout the states. Uncontained large fires include only fires being managed under a full suppression strategy.

The Department of the Interior personnel is assigned to several locations in the Gulf of Mexico to assess and mitigate impacts resulting from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. For more information regarding the response effort visit the following website, <http://www.deepwaterhorizonresponse.com/go/site/2931/>.

Weather: A low pressure trough along the Pacific Northwest coast will bring dry and breezy conditions to portions of the Great Basin and Wyoming. Thunderstorms are expected over the Four Corner States, Wyoming and Montana.

Tropical Storm Information

Atlantic - Carib - Gulf of Mexico:

Of five tropical waves spanning the Atlantic, the one moving across the northern islands of the Caribbean and the southwestern North Atlantic has the best chance to develop.

As the upper-level low to its northwest weakens, the shearing winds are lessening and the showers and thunderstorms are looking more organized in the vicinity of Hispaniola and Puerto Rico. Low pressure may be trying to develop just north of the eastern tip of the Dominican Republic. Heavy rain will spread westward from the northern Leeward Islands, Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico into the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Turks and Caicos Islands, eastern Cuba and the southeast Bahamas. This tropical wave could become a tropical depression in the next day or two. The system is moving of toward the west-northwest at a slow rate of only 10 mph. At that rate of speed and direction, south Florida could be targeted by Friday.

Meanwhile, a tropical wave and upper level low are combining to increase shower and thunderstorm activity somewhat in the Gulf of Mexico. This system is not expected to develop as it moves off to the west between 10 and 15 mph. Shower and thunderstorm activity should increase over the southern half of Texas and northeast Mexico through Thursday as the system moves onshore.

Another tropical wave in the western Caribbean Sea is moving into Central America and the Yucatan Peninsula with scattered heavy showers and thunderstorms. This system should not develop due to its proximity to land.

A fourth wave is heading toward the central tropical Atlantic Ocean. Environmental conditions are not favorable for this wave to develop over the next two days. At its current rate of speed the wave could be in the Lesser Antilles late week.

A fifth tropical wave is just coming off of the coast of western Africa.

Eastern Pacific Basin:

There are no tropical cyclones at this time.

Local Weather

Detailed weather forecast			°F °C
Day	Forecast	Description	Precip chance
Today Jul 21	 T-storms Hi: 94° Lo: 78°	Day: T-storms. High 94F. Winds SW at 10 mph. Air Quality: Moderate, UV Index: 8 Night: Partly Cloudy. Low 78F. Winds W at 5 mph.	30% 0%
Details			
Tomorrow Jul 22	 Partly Cloudy Hi: 94° Lo: 77°	Day: Partly Cloudy. High 94F. Winds NW at 8 mph. Air Quality: Moderate, UV Index: 9 Night: Partly Cloudy. Low 77F. Light winds.	0% 0%
Details			
Friday Jul 23	 Scattered Thunderstorms Hi: 95° Lo: 82°	Scattered Thunderstorms. High 95F. Winds SW at 9 mph. Air Quality: Moderate, UV Index: 10	20%
Saturday Jul 24	 Scattered Thunderstorms Hi: 97° Lo: 82°	Scattered Thunderstorms. High 97F and low 82F. Winds W at 8 mph. Air Quality: NA, UV Index: 10	20%
Sunday Jul 25	 T-storms Hi: 90° Lo: 76°	T-storms. High 90F and low 76F. Winds W at 7 mph. Air Quality: NA, UV Index: NA	40%

[Detailed ten-day forecast](#)

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Ernest (Mitch) Mitchell

Watch Officer
USDA Operation Center
202-720-5711 (main)
202-205-2915 (fax)

Jett, Carole

From: Maisel, Chad
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:26 AM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

I would say 3:00pm

From: Jett, Carole
To: Maisel, Chad
Sent: Wed Jul 21 07:13:18 2010
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Chad
I am putting a tick tock together. Do you know time?
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Maisel, Chad
To: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:08:21 2010
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

This afternoon

From: Jett, Carole
To: Maisel, Chad
Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:07:24 2010
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

No worries. When did you let the Deputy Secretary know about it?
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Maisel, Chad
To: Jett, Carole; Eve, Malcolm; Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:06:14 2010
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

On Thursday. With this email account I sometimes wait to see how the email exchanges develop so that I can best decide who to send it along to. I wish I had forwarded it right away.

From: Jett, Carole
To: Maisel, Chad; Eve, Malcolm; Washo, Kevin

Sent: Tue Jul 20 21:58:40 2010

Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Chad. When did you discover this message?

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Maisel, Chad
To: Eve, Malcolm; Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 21:40:38 2010
Subject: FW: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet
Email train from 7/15 with DS' public account Exemption (b)(6) cced

From: Exemption (b)(6) [mailto:Exemption (b)(6)]
Sent: Thursday, July 15, 2010 7:07 PM
To: Ex (b)(6)
Cc: Exemption (b)(6) webmail@chambliss-iq.senate.gov; Donnie.Thomas@one.usda.gov; Tom.Vilsack(a)usda.gov; Merrigan, Kathleen
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

My words were taken out of context. I told about something that happened in 1986 when I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm. When so many black farmers were losing their. My point was that I initially did not do all that I could but in the process realized it was not about black versus white but about poor people or those who have versus those who do not.

If they will use all that I said you see that I talked about what I did to save that white farmers farm and from there went to help hundreds of other white farmers

I use the story to try to get people to move beyond race and work together

I feel deeply hurt that someone would take my words out of context and try to make them mean something else

My record of work for others for 45 years will show my love for people and for fairness

Shirley Sherrod

Sent using BlackBerry

From: George Ko <Exemption (b)(6)>
To: Sherrod, Shirley - Athens, GA
Cc: Tom.Vilsack Exemption (b)(6) <Tom.Vilsack@Exempti... (b)(6)>; Merrigan, Kathleen (OSEC) Ex (b)(6)
Ex (b)(6) webmail@chambliss-iq.senate.gov <webmail@chambliss-iq.senate.gov>; Thomas, Donnie - Athens, GA
Sent: Thu Jul 15 15:33:41 2010
Subject: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Dear Ms. Sherrod:

I recently came across a video of your speech at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet in Douglas Coffee County, GA: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=62hPa37v2J4>

In the video, you stated that you did not help a white farmer with the "full force of what [you] could do" when he sought your help. From the context of your speech, you seem to imply that the "amount" of help you

provided was due to the color of his skin (white) and because of your sympathy and preference for black farmers.Â

Are your comments and the context of the comments in your speech correct? As Georgia's USDA Rural DevelopmentÂ State Director, do you believe your comments were appropriate?Â

Thank you,

George Ko

George Ko

Ex (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:24 AM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: Fw: Federal Eye: Tom Vilsack, USDA and civil rights

Sarah, for top clips. Tx.

From: ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com
Sent: Wed Jul 21 07:12:16 2010
Subject: Federal Eye: Tom Vilsack, USDA and civil rights

http://voices.washingtonpost.com/federal-eye/2010/07/tom_vilsack_usda_and_civil_rig.html

Tom Vilsack, USDA and civil rights

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said early Wednesday morning that he's willing to reconsider his decision to force Shirley Sherrod's resignation.

"I am of course willing and will conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts to ensure to the American people we are providing services in a fair and equitable manner," Vilsack said in a statement that arrived in inboxes after 2 a.m.

But to understand why he sought Sherrod's resignation so quickly, let's go back to February 2009. That's when Vilsack publicly vowed to tackle USDA's troubled civil rights history by ensuring that employees fairly treated minority and women farmers.

"Some folks refer to USDA as the last plantation, and it has a pretty poor history of taking care of people of color," Vilsack said at the time. "You've got outright bias and discrimination."

"Also you've got good people who don't even know that they're discriminating," said Vilsack. "It's necessary to begin the process of reeducating people."

Vilsack made those comments in Albany, Ga., Sherrod's home town. And he said them at a conference hosted by the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund, the same group Sherrod worked for in 1986 when she first met white farmer Roger Spooner.

Reeducating employees required an \$8 million consulting contract with Jackson Lewis Corporate Diversity Counseling Group. And it required reviewing tens of thousands of complaints leveled against USDA during George W. Bush's presidency. The review has been led by a 34-year USDA veteran whom Vilsack coaxed out of retirement.

"When this department was established in 1862 by Abraham Lincoln, he referred to it as the people's department," Vilsack told colleague Krissah Thompson in February. "In order to be consistent with that legacy, it's necessary that our programs and our approach reflect an appreciation for everyone's rights. We took a look at [these] prior issues and are in the process of trying to address each of them."

The efforts received little national news coverage until this week when a three-minute clip of Sherrod's now-infamous speech surfaced. Her message -- that Americans need to see beyond a person's skin color -- was tainted by an impolitic delivery White House officials consider too damaging.

"This controversy could make it more difficult to move forward on correcting injustices," Vilsack said Tuesday, adding later that, "The controversy surrounding [Sherrod's] comments would create situations where her decisions, rightly or wrongly, would be called into question making it difficult for her to bring jobs to Georgia."

"Our policy is clear," he continued. "There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA and we strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have a duty to ensure that when we provide services to the American people we do so in an

equitable manner. But equally important is our duty to instill confidence in the American people that we are fair service providers."

Did Vilsack make the right decision, or did he overreact at the mercy of the web and cable news cycle? Or did he have to accept Sherrod's resignation in order to reinforce his work on civil rights? It's a question many in Washington will continue asking today.

Continue reading the Wednesday Eye Opener: http://voices.washingtonpost.com/federal-eye/2010/07/tom_vilsack_usda_and_civil_rig.html

Ed O'Keefe
The Federal Eye
The Washington Post
ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com

Ex (b)(6) (c)

Release No. PENDING

Contact:
USDA Office of Communications
(202) 720-4623

**Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video
From Shirley Sherrod**

WASHINGTON, July 21, 2010 - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack tonight released the following statement in response to the release of remarks in video from Shirley Sherrod:

"I am of course willing and will conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts to ensure to the American people we are providing services in a fair and equitable

manner."

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice), or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Exemption (b)(6)

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Exemption (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: Tonsager, Dallas
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:38 AM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: RE: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod
Attachments: image001.jpg

Great I am in my office.

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:38 AM
To: Tonsager, Dallas
Subject: Re: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

On my way in.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Tonsager, Dallas
To: Jett, Carole; Cook, Cheryl; Vasquez, Victor
Cc: Zaina, Lisa
Sent: Wed Jul 21 06:31:25 2010
Subject: RE: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod
Thank you Carole, I think it would be helpful if I could speak with you for a moment before my hearing. I leave at 8:15.

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:04 AM
To: Tonsager, Dallas; Cook, Cheryl; Vasquez, Victor
Cc: Zaina, Lisa
Subject: Fw: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Mather, Chris
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wed Jul 21 05:17:54 2010
Subject: Fw: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

This went at 2
Chris Mather

Release No. PENDING

Contact:
USDA Office of Communications
(202) 720-4623

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Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Exemption (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:50 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Got it. Kevin did call me but I could not talk

From: Jett, Carole
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:36:48 2010
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

What Kevin is getting at is that the Deputy Secretary had it while we were at work and called Kevin tonight at 8 to discuss it.

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:17:05 2010
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Thanks Chad provided a copy. The S's address has a typo so that is why he did not get it.

From: Washo, Kevin
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:14:36 2010
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Carole/John per our discussion this was the email she referenced to me tonight at 8

From: Jett, Carole
To: Washo, Kevin; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:09:45 2010
Subject: Fw: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Maisel, Chad
To: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:08:21 2010
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

This afternoon

From: Jett, Carole
To: Maisel, Chad
Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:07:24 2010
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

No worries. When did you let the Deputy Secretary know about it?
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Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

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From: Maisel, Chad
To: Jett, Carole; Eve, Malcolm; Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:06:14 2010
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

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Email train from 7/15 with DS' public account (Exemption (b)(6)) cced

From: Exemption (b)(6) [mailto:Exemption (b)(6)]
Sent: Thursday, July 15, 2010 7:07 PM
To: Ex (b)(6)
Cc: Exemption (b)(6); webmail@chambliss-iq.senate.gov; Donnie.Thomas@one.usda.gov; Tom.Visack(a)usda.gov; Merrigan, Kathleen
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

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If they will use all that I said you see that I talked about what I did to save that white farmers farm and from there went to help hundreds of other white farmers

I use the story to try to get people to move beyond race and work together

I feel deeply hurt that someone would take my words out of context and try to make them mean something else

My record of work for others for 45 years will show my love for people and for fairness

Shirley Sherrod

Sent using BlackBerry

From: George Ko <[REDACTED] Ex (b)(6)>
To: Sherrod, Shirley - Athens, GA
Cc: Tom Vilsack (Exempt... (b)(6)) <Tom.Vilsack Exs (b)(2), (b)(6)>; Merrigan, Kathleen (OSEC) [REDACTED] Ex (b)(6)
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Are your comments and the context of the comments in your speech correct? As Georgia's USDA Rural Development State Director, do you believe your comments were appropriate?

Thank you,

George Ko

--

George Ko

[REDACTED] Ex (b)(6)

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From: Eve, Malcolm
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:37 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

The original you tube video was sent to the right address from mr ko
Malcolm Eve
Lead Advance for Secretary Vilsack

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Jett, Carole
To: Eve, Malcolm
Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:08:42 2010
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Note that the tom vilsack address was not valid. This is why we didn't see it!
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Eve, Malcolm
To: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:03:37 2010
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

I just spoke with chad. It appears this hit the deputy's public email on thursday and the deputy saw it today. I informed the secretary and he has read the message.

Malcolm Eve
Lead Advance for Secretary Vilsack

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I recently came across a video of your speech at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet in Douglas Coffee County, GA: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=62hPa37v2J4>

In the video, you stated that you did not help a white farmer with the "full force of what [you] could do" when he sought your help. From the context of your speech, you seem to imply that the "amount" of help you provided was due to the color of his skin (white) and because of your sympathy and preference for black farmers.

Are your comments and the context of the comments in your speech correct? As Georgia's USDA Rural Development State Director, do you believe your comments were appropriate?

Thank you,

George Ko

--

George Ko

Ex (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:15 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Carole/John per our discussion this was the email she referenced to me tonight at 8

From: Jett, Carole
To: Washo, Kevin; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:09:45 2010
Subject: Fw: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Maisel, Chad
To: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:08:21 2010
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

This afternoon

From: Jett, Carole
To: Maisel, Chad
Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:07:24 2010
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

No worries. When did you let the Deputy Secretary know about it?
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Maisel, Chad
To: Jett, Carole; Eve, Malcolm; Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:06:14 2010
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

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From: Jett, Carole
To: Maisel, Chad; Eve, Malcolm; Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 21:58:40 2010
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Chad. When did you discover this message?

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Maisel, Chad
To: Eve, Malcolm; Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 21:40:38 2010
Subject: FW: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet
Email train from 7/15 with DS' public account (Exemption (b)(6)) cced

From: Exemption (b)(6) [mailto:Exemption (b)(6)]
Sent: Thursday, July 15, 2010 7:07 PM
To: Ex (b)(6)
Cc: Ex (b)(6); webmail@chambliss-iq.senate.gov; Donnie.Thomas@one.usda.gov; Tom.Vilsack Exemption (b)(6); Merrigan, Kathleen
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My record of work for others for 45 years will show my love for people and for fairness

Shirley Sherrod

Sent using BlackBerry

From: George Ko Ex (b)(6) >
To: Sherrod, Shirley - Athens, GA
Cc: Tom.Vilsack Exemption (b)(6); Tom.Vilsack Exemption (b)(6); Merrigan, Kathleen (OSEC Ex (b)(6)); Ex (b)(6); webmail@chambliss-iq.senate.gov <webmail@chambliss-iq.senate.gov>; Thomas, Donnie - Athens, GA
Sent: Thu Jul 15 15:33:41 2010
Subject: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

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Ex (b)(6)

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Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:14 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

I shared that with him
Malcolm Eve
Lead Advance for Secretary Vilsack

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Jett, Carole
To: Eve, Malcolm
Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:08:42 2010
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Note that the tom vilsack address was not valid. This is why we didn't see it!

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Eve, Malcolm
To: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:03:37 2010
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

I just spoke with chad. It appears this hit the deputy's public email on thursday and the deputy saw it today. I informed the secretary and he has read the message.

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Lead Advance for Secretary Vilsack

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Email train from 7/15 with DS' public account (kathleen.merrigan@usda.gov) cced

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To: [redacted] Ex (b)(6)
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Thank you,

George Ko

--

George Ko

[Redacted] Ex (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 28, 2010 9:54 AM
To: Jett, Carole; Reed, Pearlie; Leonard, Joe; Harden, Krysta; Silverman, Steve; O'Brien, Doug; McNeil, Mary
Cc: Mather, Chris
Subject: FW: CNN request

Hi all,

CNN is working on a story primarily on Pigford. Please see questions below. I haven't seen any numbers/statistics of this nature, wondering if they exist?

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548

Exemption (b)(6) (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Todd.Schwarzschild@turner.com [mailto:Todd.Schwarzschild@turner.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 28, 2010 9:39 AM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: CNN request

Thanks Justin

Looking for the total number of claims filed under Pigford to date.

-How many of those claims have been paid (and price tag)?

-How many of those claims have been denied?

-How many cases of fraud have been discovered? How many have been prosecuted?

-Also would like a statement addressing allegations that Mrs. Sherrod was given her job as part of her settlement with USDA?

Sorry to hit you with all this but need a response by 4pm today please. Best way to reach me is email or cell. Thank you,
Todd

Todd.schwarzschild@turner.com
Office-404-827-4117
Cell- Ex (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Wednesday, July 28, 2010 6:56 AM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: Chads emails print

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Jett, Carole
To: Jett, Carole
Sent: Wed Jul 28 06:36:57 2010
Subject: Fw: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Print all Chads emails.

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Jett, Carole
To: Maisel, Chad
Sent: Wed Jul 21 09:04:11 2010
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Perfect. Thx.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Maisel, Chad
To: Jett, Carole
Sent: Wed Jul 21 08:27:00 2010
Subject: RE: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet
Re the tick tock:

As I think more about the timeline, I think I told DS about the existence of an email around 4p. I actually printed it out and showed it to her around 6:15p.

Jett, Carole

From: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tuesday, July 27, 2010 11:44 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: Re: Urgent

I sent this to S tonight and that is why he wants to call her tomorrow
Karen Ross
Chief of Staff
Office of the Secretary

From: Jett, Carole
To: Reed, Pearlie; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tue Jul 27 23:08:00 2010
Subject: Urgent

Let's discuss asap in am.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Lorette Picciano
To: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tue Jul 27 18:18:39 2010
Subject: Act
Invite her to DC asap, or to meet with the SEC wherever she can.

Or to meet with you and Karen and your white house guy, and then the SEC when he returns. Have to get above the OAO level.

Would be good to have her where she can also informally bump into Cheryl and others with whom she may like to speak.

She is putting out a peace branch.

Accept it fast and work it out soon, and talk it through with her.

L

Shirley Sherrod considering job offer in USDA outreach office

By The Post's Lisa Rein

The former Department of Agriculture official who was forced to resign last week after an out-of-context video of remarks she made were published on a conservative website tells CBS News http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-503544_162-20011765-503544.html she is still considering a job offer as deputy director of the agency's Office of Advocacy and Outreach.

Sherrrod said she sat down to read through the offer for the first time this morning, but has not read it in its entirety yet. She still has many questions about the offer before coming to any decision, she said, such as who is the director of the department and whether and how much money is appropriated for the work that should be accomplished in the position.

"I need to have a conversation with someone," Sherrrod said, though she was not sure whether she would speak with Vilsack directly.

var entrycat = 'Agencies and Departments'

By Lisa Rein | July 27, 2010; 12:42 PM ET

Categories: Agencies and Departments <http://voices.washingtonpost.com/federal-eye/agencies_and_departments/>

Lorette Picciano
Executive Director
Rural Coalition/Coalición Rural
1012 14th Street NW suite 1100
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: 202-628-7160
Fax: 202-393-1816
About us at www.ruralco.org
SHOP AT: <http://www.supermarketcoop.com>
direct email: Lpicciano@ruralco.org

Jett, Carole

From: Lorette Picciano [lpicciano@ruralco.org]
Sent: Tuesday, July 27, 2010 11:18 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: Re: Act

No. But I know from someone who did speak to her that she is struggling w this and should have someone to talk to besides the press. Give her someone to talk to and see who and where she wants to talk. If she is open to the job she probably wants to sit down and talk it through

Sent from my iPhone

On Jul 27, 2010, at 11:08 PM, "Jett, Carole" <Exemption (b)(6)> wrote:

Just picked this up. Did you speak with her?
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

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SHOP AT: <http://www.supermarketcoop.com>
direct email: lpicciano@ruralco.org

Jett, Carole

From: Reed, Pearlie
Sent: Tuesday, July 27, 2010 8:24 PM
To: Harden, Krysta; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Cc: Jeanquart, Bobbi; Reed, Pearlie; Jett, Carole
Subject: Re: hey

Ms. Sherrod is okay provding her phone numbers to Ms. Lincoln. H Ex (b)(6) cell : Ex (b)(6)

Pearlie

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Reed, Pearlie
Cc: Jeanquart, Bobbi
Sent: Tue Jul 27 17:20:29 2010
Subject: RE: hey

Mr. Reed is reaching out to see if she minds if we share her number with the Senator.

From: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tuesday, July 27, 2010 2:35 PM
To: Harden, Krysta; Reed, Pearlie
Cc: Jeanquart, Bobbi
Subject: Re: hey

I have home and cell number at office.
Karen Ross
Chief of Staff
Office of the Secretary

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Reed, Pearlie
Cc: Jeanquart, Bobbi; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tue Jul 27 13:43:13 2010
Subject: hey

Hey folks, Senator Lincoln has asked me for a phone number for Mrs. Sherrod. She would like to call her.

Is this something we can provide?

KH

Krysta Harden
Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations
USDA
202.720.7095

Jett, Carole

From: Lorette Picciano [lpicciano@ruralco.org]
Sent: Tuesday, July 27, 2010 7:22 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Cook, Cheryl
Subject: FYI -FW: Race: the Discussion We Avoid--Washington Post

I thought this piece, from the Washington Post on Sunday was more reasoned than most.

L

By Charles J. Ogletree Jr. and Johanna Wald

Sunday, July 25, 2010

President Obama has called and chatted with Shirley Sherrod. Tom Vilsack and Ben Jealous have issued heartfelt apologies <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/07/21/AR2010072103871.html>> . There is talk of a "Chardonnay summit" in the Rose Garden. The subtext to all this? Let's wrap up this incident quickly so we can all go on our vacations guilt-free, secure in the knowledge that our "post-racial society" remains intact.

Once again, in the midst of the cacophony <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/07/22/AR2010072201691.html>> , calls abound for a national "dialogue" on race. Yet our nation cannot muster the patience or stamina to sustain such a discussion beyond a single news cycle. In some ways, Sherrod's tale is a metaphor for this country's aborted efforts to address race. In its entirety, her deeply moving story was about transformation and reconciliation between blacks and whites. It contained the seeds of progress and healing. She spoke of blacks and whites working together to save farms and to end poverty and suffering. But Sherrod, and those listening to her story, could get to her hopeful conclusion only by first wading through painful admissions of racial bias and struggle.

Unfortunately, our news and political cycles make it impossible for any of us to stay in a room long enough to reach that transformative moment. At the barest suggestion of race, we line up at opposite corners and start hurling accusations. Attorney General Eric Holder was widely criticized last year for suggesting that we are a "nation of cowards"

<<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/02/20/AR2009022003643.html>> when it comes to such discussions. The reaction to his comments is a reminder that we cannot continue to ignore this challenge. Yet Americans refuse to acknowledge that, in today's society, racial attitudes are often complicated, multi-layered and conflicted.

Racial inequality is perpetuated less by individuals than by structural racism and implicit bias. Evidence of structural inequality is everywhere: in the grossly disproportionate numbers of young black men and women in prison; in the color of students shunted into remedial and

special education tracks; in the stubborn segregation of our neighborhoods and schools; in the lack of recreational and academic opportunities for children of color in poor communities; in the inferior medical treatment that people of color receive; and in the still appallingly small numbers of men and women of color in law firms, corporations and government. It is evident, too, in the history of blatant discrimination against black farmers practiced by the Agricultural Department.

But that does not make doctors, nurses, police officers, judges, teachers, lawyers, city planners, admission officers or others prejudiced. Most are well-intentioned professionals who believe themselves to be free of racial bias. From their perspective, it is not easy to connect individual actions and decisions to broader structural conditions and environments built up over decades and even centuries.

Implicit bias is a reality we must confront far more openly. A growing mass of compelling research reveals the unconscious racial stereotypes many of us harbor that affect our decisions. Such attitudes do not make us prejudiced; they make us human. Those who take the [/implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/](http://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/)

[href="http://https://%3c%3e/%3c%3eimplicit.harvard.edu/%3c%3eimplicit/%3c%3e"](http://https://%3c%3e/%3c%3eimplicit.harvard.edu/%3c%3eimplicit/%3c%3e) Implicit Association Test often express shock when results show that their unconscious biases conflict with their explicit egalitarian values and ideals. Nonetheless, white and black test-takers match black faces more quickly than white ones with words representing violent concepts and are more likely to mistake a harmless object for a gun when it is carried by a black person. One study found that the more stereotypically black the features of a criminal defendant, the harsher the sentence he or she is likely to receive

http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=901453 . Implicit bias has been shown to factor into hiring decisions and into the quality of health care that individuals receive. Mazharin Banaji and Jerry Kang, leading scholars on implicit bias, have noted: "As disturbing as this evidence is, there is too much of it to be ignored."

<http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~7btild%7dmbworks/articles/manuscripts/Kang.pdf>

The good news is that structures can be dismantled and replaced and unconscious biases can be transformed, as happened to Shirley Sherrod and the family she helped, the Spooners <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/07/21/AR2010072106437.html> . First, though, they must be acknowledged. We and others researching race and justice are committed to untangling the web of structures, conditions and policies that lead to unequal opportunities. Our nation has to stop denying the complexity of our racial attitudes, history and progress. Let's tone down the rhetoric on all sides, slow down and commit to listening with less judgment and more compassion. If Americans did so, we might find that we share more common ground than we could have imagined.

Charles J. Ogletree Jr. is executive director of the Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice <http://www.charleshamiltonhouston.org/Home.aspx> *and the author most recently of "The Presumptions of Guilt: The Arrest of Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Race, Class, and Crime in*

America." Johanna Wald is director of strategic planning at the Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice.

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----- End of Forwarded Message

Jett, Carole

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 27, 2010 6:37 PM
To: 'jd@osec.usda.gov'
Cc: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole
Subject: Pending press stories

Bill Tomson is looking to do a more in depth story on the Ivermectin issue with Brazil. We are working with FSIS to determine the best spokesperson to talk with Bill on background and develop on the record comments.

Colbert Report called today about the amount of fecal matter allowed in hamburger. We provided the researcher with the regulation showing that we do not allow any fecal matter in hamburger. We feel fairly sure won't be in story.

Politico writing about the tick tock regarding when media, and which ones, covered Sherrod story.

Agripulse asked for perspective on NACB audit. Provided statement: The Cattlemen's Beef Board (CBB) had an independent review of National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) financial accounting system as part of its contractual review. AMS is in the process of reviewing the final review and seeing what additional steps or oversight may need to be taken. USDA has an obligation to farmers and ranchers to make sure that funds that are used from the check off accounts are not to be used to fund policy activities. The beef check off program plays a critical role in promoting producer products and addressing critical issues impacting the industry. Transparency, accountability and compliance are crucial components of the national research and promotion board program.

Chris Mather

Jett, Carole

From: Lorette Picciano [lpicciano@ruralco.org]
Sent: Tuesday, July 27, 2010 6:19 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: Act

Invite her to DC asap, or to meet with the SEC wherever she can.

Or to meet with you and Karen and your white house guy, and then the SEC when he returns. Have to get above the OAO level.

Would be good to have her where she can also informally bump into Cheryl and others with whom she may like to speak.

She is putting out a peace branch.

Accept it fast and work it out soon, and talk it through with her.

L

Shirley Sherrod considering job offer in USDA outreach office

By The Post's Lisa Rein

The former Department of Agriculture official who was forced to resign last week after an out-of-context video of remarks she made were published on a conservative website tells CBS News <http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-503544_162-20011765-503544.html> she is still considering a job offer as deputy director of the agency's Office of Advocacy and Outreach.

Sherrod said she sat down to read through the offer for the first time this morning, but has not read it in its entirety yet. She still has many questions about the offer before coming to any decision, she said, such as who is the director of the department and whether and how much money is appropriated for the work that should be accomplished in the position.

"I need to have a conversation with someone," Sherrod said, though she was not sure whether she would speak with Vilsack directly.

var entrycat = 'Agencies and Departments'

By Lisa Rein | July 27, 2010; 12:42 PM ET

Categories: Agencies and Departments <http://voices.washingtonpost.com/federal-eye/agencies_and_departments/>

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SHOP AT: <http://www.supermarketcoop.com>
direct email: lpicciano@ruralco.org

Jett, Carole

From: Lorette Picciano [lpicciano@ruralco.org]
Sent: Tuesday, July 27, 2010 6:08 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: FW:

This is from the Tom Burrell faction that needs some way to get into the news.

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: John Zippert <[REDACTED] Ex (b)(6)>
Reply-To: John Zippert <[REDACTED] Ex (b)(6)>
Date: Tue, 27 Jul 2010 22:29:39 +0000
To: Lorette Picciano <lpicciano@ruralco.org>, Starry Krueger <[REDACTED] Ex (b)(6)>
Subject: Fw: SECRETARY VILSACK'S RESIGNATION

FYI - JZ

Sent via BlackBerry by AT&T

From: "Jackie Ward" <[REDACTED] Ex (b)(6)>
Date: Tue, 27 Jul 2010 17:14:05 -0400
To: Jerry Pennick <[REDACTED] Ex (b)(6)>; John Zippert <[REDACTED] Ex (b)(6)>; Shirley Sherrod <[REDACTED] Ex (b)(6)>
Subject: FW: SECRETARY VILSACK'S RESIGNATION

From: BFAA, Inn [mailto:[REDACTED] Ex (b)(6)]
Sent: Monday, July 26, 2010 2:27 PM
To: [REDACTED] Ex (b)(6)
Subject: SECRETARY VILSACK'S RESIGNATION

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
PRESS RELEASE**

July 26, 2010 Thomas Burrell
(901) 522-8880

BFAA, Inc

BLACK FARMERS ASK FOR SECRETARY VILSACK'S RESIGNATION

Zero Tolerance for Discrimination for all USDA Employees

Memphis, TN---July 26, 2010---The Black Farmers and Agriculturalists

Association, Incorporated (BFAA, Inc.) is planning a press conference for Tuesday, August 3, 2010, to ask the Obama Administration for the immediate resignation of Tom Vilsack, Secretary of Agriculture. This press conference will be held outside of, the Office of the Secretary at USDA, 1400 Independence Avenue, main building, north

entrance (next to mall) at 10:00 o'clock in Washington, D.C. On Monday, July 20, 2010, Tom Vilsack ordered the firing and forced resignation, of Shirley Sherrod, via Blackberry, as per the directions of Cheryl Cook of USDA in Washington, D. C. Ms. Cook indicated to Ms. Sherrod that the White House was requesting this resignation because certain conservative talk show hosts were going to air certain parts of a speech for which Ms. Sherrod had made at a NAACP function earlier this year: that a tape of the speech proved that she (Sherrod) harbored and "displayed" racial animus toward a Georgia White farmer who was being foreclosed on by USDA in 1986. Ms. Sherrod was not even given an opportunity to provide a cursory explanation of the statements made at the NAACP meeting before being terminated. In his reasoning for letting Ms. Sherrod go, Secretary Vilsack stated that, "our policy is clear," Vilsack said. "There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA and we strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person." Mr. Vilsack is required, as is every other government official, to be bound by oath or affirmation, to support the constitution of the United States, as codified under Article VI, clause 3 of the constitution. On Monday, July 20th 2010, Mr. Vilsack demonstrated and "displayed" to this nation, by denying Due Process and equal protection under the law to Ms. Sherrod, that he, not Ms. Sherrod, is the USDA employee not capable or equipped to carry out that sacred and solemn oath. USDA and its white employees have been found guilty of discriminating against Black farmers by a Federal District Court Judge over 13, 000 times in the Pigford v. Vilsack class action lawsuit," states Thomas Burrell, President of BFAA, Inc. "Not one of these white employees has ever been fired by Mr. Vilsack for their court ordered unconstitutional and racist behavior against one of those Black farmers," Burrell continues. "Zero tolerance applies only when discrimination is alleged, not proven, to be committed by an African American USDA employee," Burrell concludes. BFAA, Inc will also have its thousands of members to contact their congressional representatives and ask them also to call for Mr. Vilsack's removal from public trust. #####

*BFAA, Incorporated
5 North 3rd Street, Suite 2030
Memphis Tennessee 38103
(901) 522-8880*

You are subscribed to this mailing list as Wgammon@aol.com. Please click here <http://cp20.com/Tracking/t.fo?BY27--1kuL-UR0pp9> to modify your message preferences or to unsubscribe from any future mailings. We will respect all unsubscribe requests.

http://www.campaigner.com/campaignerPro.php?utm_source=campaigner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=deliveryfooter

----- End of Forwarded Message

Jett, Carole

From: Lorette Picciano [lpicciano@ruralco.org]
Sent: Tuesday, July 27, 2010 5:26 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: Sherrod final
Attachments: Shirley Sherrod Statement FINAL 7-25-10.pdf

Dear Carole,

Here is the electronic version of our statements, slightly updated.

I will send you several more messages.

Stand strong!

Lorette

Lorette Picciano
Executive Director

Rural Coalition/Coalición Rural
1012 14th Street NW suite 1100
Washington, DC 20005

Phone: 202-628-7160

Fax: 202-393-1816

About us at www.ruralco.org

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direct email: lpicciano@ruralco.org

Jett, Carole

From: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tuesday, July 27, 2010 4:51 PM
To: Reed, Pearlie
Cc: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole; Cluthe, Sally
Subject: Ralph Paige's annual meeting

Mr. Reed,

I just got off the phone with Ralph Paige. The Federation of Southern Cooperatives annual meeting is Aug. 19-21. Earlier this month he had invited the Secretary to attend if possible – and especially if Pigford funding passed. He has renewed the invitation for the Secretary to attend if he is interested in a platform to discuss his views on diversity and disparity in agriculture. The morning of the 20th they have Jonathan Coppess, Dave White and Tom Tidwell (tentative) there to discuss their agency programs and access for minority farmers. The afternoon of the 20th is a discussion on the 2012 farm bill and how minority farmers can be engaged early in the process of providing input. On the morning of the 21st they have two keynote speakers: Ben Jealous and Shirley Sherrod.

If the Secretary does not attend the annual meeting, Ralph would welcome a letter from the Secretary to include in the annual report that is distributed at his annual meeting. The deadline is very near so we need to put it together quickly. Should we submit a letter if the Secretary does not attend the meeting and if so, who should draft it?

Karen Ross
Chief of Staff
Office of the Secretary

Exemption (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 27, 2010 3:06 PM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Mather, Chris; Reed, Pearlie
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: WaPo: Shirley Sherrod considering job offer in USDA outreach office

<http://voices.washingtonpost.com/federal-eye/2010/07/shirley-sherrod-considering-jo.html>

Shirley Sherrod considering job offer in USDA outreach office

By The Post's Lisa Rein

The former Department of Agriculture official who was forced to resign last week after an out-of-context video of remarks she made were published on a conservative website tells CBS News she is still considering a job offer as deputy director of the agency's Office of Advocacy and Outreach.

Sherrod said she sat down to read through the offer for the first time this morning, but has not read it in its entirety yet. She still has many questions about the offer before coming to any decision, she said, such as who is the director of the department and whether and how much money is appropriated for the work that should be accomplished in the position. "I need to have a conversation with someone," Sherrod said, though she was not sure whether she would speak with Vilsack directly.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548

Exemption (b)(6) (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

Jett, Carole

From: Maloney, Wayne
Sent: Tuesday, July 27, 2010 2:05 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Daily Show takes on Sherrod issue

Daily Show takes on Sherrod issue. View the bottom clip.

http://politicallyillustrated.com/index.php?/news_page/iw/1668/

Jett, Carole

From: Jeanquart, Bobbi
Sent: Tuesday, July 27, 2010 1:40 PM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole
Cc: Reed, Pearlie
Subject: BFAA - FYI

Importance: High

Wanted to make sure you saw this.

The Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association based in Memphis, TN is calling on Tom Vilsack to resign as U.S. Agriculture secretary in the wake of his unwarranted firing of Shirley Sherrod last week. The group has scheduled a press conference for next Tuesday, August 3, outside the USDA building to ask the Obama Administration for Vilsack's resignation.

BFAA President Thomas Burrell said the organization represents 10,000 black farmers or their heirs.

This is from the press release he sent out:

"In his reasoning for letting Ms. Sherrod go, Secretary Vilsack stated that, "our policy is clear." Vilsack said, "There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA and we strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person."

Quoting Burrell, the press release goes on to say:

"USDA and its white employees have been found guilty of discriminating against Black farmers by a Federal District Court Judge over 13, 000 times in the Pigford v. Vilsack class action lawsuit. Not one of these white employees has ever been fired by Mr. Vilsack for their court ordered unconstitutional and racist behavior against one of those Black farmers. Zero tolerance applies only when discrimination is alleged, not proven, to be committed by an African American USDA employee.

The association also plans to have its members contact their congressional representatives to lobby for Vilsack's removal.

Vilsack, Iowa's former governor, subsequently apologized to Sherrod and offered her another job. Although he took responsibility for making the incorrect decision to fire her, based on a selectively edited piece of video of a speech she gave, it's suspected he was ordered to do so by someone in the White House.

Roberta Jeanquart
Office of Assistant Secretary for Administration
bobbi.jeanquart@osec.usda.gov
Phone 202-720-3805
Cell Exemption (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: Steve.Silverman@osec.usda.gov
Sent: Tuesday, July 27, 2010 1:32 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: FW: IMMEDIATE LITIGATION HOLD ON ALL RECORDS RELATED TO SHIRLEY SHERROD

Importance: High

Here is the email that Benny sent out last Thursday. --Steve

-----Original Message-----

From: BENJAMIN.YOUNG@OGC.USDA.GOV [mailto:BENJAMIN.YOUNG@OGC.USDA.GOV]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 11:27 AM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Smith, Christopher L. -OCIO; McGuire, Michael; McClam, Charles; Wren, Christopher; Tonsager, Dallas; Cook, Cheryl; Mather, Chris; Shearer, David
Cc: Frederick.Pfaeffle@OGC.USDA.GOV; J_Michael.Kelly@OGC.USDA.GOV; ANDREA.FOSTER@OGC.USDA.GOV; Silverman, Steve
Subject: [REDACTED] Ex (b)(5)
Importance: High

SUBJECT TO ATTORNEY-CLIENT WORK PRODUCT PRIVILEGES

[REDACTED]

Ex (b)(5)

Ex (b)(5)

L. Benjamin Young, Jr.

Assistant General Counsel

General Law Division

202-720-5565

202-720-5837 (fax)

Jett, Carole

From: Diephouse, Greg
Sent: Monday, July 26, 2010 8:35 AM
To: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Cc: Griffis, Janice
Subject: Fw: Chairman Towns on Sherrod
Attachments: 6412273 sherrod.pdf

I think this is the letter you're looking for.

Greg

From: Diephouse, Greg
To: Harden, Krysta; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; May, Tina
Cc: Berge, John
Sent: Thu Jul 22 16:15:09 2010
Subject: FW: Chairman Towns on Sherrod
Making sure you all see this one. We will not assign it to any agency – please advise on how or if we need to respond to this. The letter doesn't ask for a written response as much as a meeting.

Greg

Greg Diephouse
Director
Office of the Executive Secretariat
USDA - 202-720-7100

From: Young, Marquithia -USDA
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 4:10 PM
To: Diephouse, Greg
Subject: Chairman Towns on Sherrod

Letter attached.

Marquithia Young
Office Automation Clerk
Office of the Executive Secretariat
United States Department of Agriculture
202-720-7100

Jett, Carole

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 28, 2010 7:18 PM
To: 'jd@osec.usda.gov'
Cc: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole
Subject: FW: For S

Wp and New York Times is doing story on Pigford and Sherrod, specifically we anticipate them making the case that Pigford plaintiffs are complaining we fires Sherrod but have not fired people who discriminate. Justin been pushing back most of day. We gave them all of the CR bullet points we had to show the progress we have made here. Deadlines pushed back so we have another day.

New York Times is seeking comment on the ruling today on the fire retardant lawsuit. Forest Service is developing TPs to respond with the legal team.

Oregon and Washington TV and radio have put in inquiries about the permit to move trash from Hawaii to Washington. MRP is coordinating the development of TPs in light of the lawsuit that was filed by the Yakama Tribe today.

Scott Kilman with WSJ is looking to talk to someone about corn shipments to China. FFAS and OCE are working on a recommended way to proceed. Scott has not identified a deadline.

Caleb Weaver
Press Secretary
USDA
O: 202-720-0622
C: *Exemption (b)(6)*
caleb.weaver@oc.usda.gov

Jett, Carole

From: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Wednesday, July 28, 2010 6:53 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: FW: Flagging article

Do we know if there was any action taken on the alleged USDA lobbying referenced in the article below?

Karen Ross
Chief of Staff
Office of the Secretary

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 28, 2010 6:44 PM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Subject: Flagging article

[The Huffington Post July 28, 2010](#)

Donald Carr

Senior Policy and Communications Advisor, Environmental Working Group

Posted: July 28, 2010 03:35 PM
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The Bitter Ironies in USDA's Firing of Shirley Sherrod

The conflagration that embroiled the US Department of Agriculture last week (July 19) over the knee-jerk dismissal of an African American official who was falsely accused of reverse discrimination is only the latest travesty at an agency that has a notorious record on racial issues.

The department abruptly ousted long-time employee Shirley Sherrod in reaction to what turned out to be a heavily edited video, disseminated by a discredited right-wing blogger, that grossly distorted the message of a speech Sherrod gave in March about her past experiences and feelings about race and discrimination in USDA. Too late, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, the USDA and the White House realized their mistake and apologized, as indeed did President Obama. USDA offered Sherrod a new position, but she has yet to say whether she will accept.

There is bitter irony in the mistaken firing of Sherrod in light of USDA's current efforts to reverse its checkered past of racial discrimination toward farmers and employees of color. On Friday (July 23), The Washington Post described the reaction to the Sherrod affair among those who have felt the sting of USDA's discrimination first hand. It quoted, among others, Jerry Pennick, director of the Federation of Southern Cooperatives Land Assistance Fund, where Sherrod worked before joining USDA:

The government's poor treatment of [Sherrod] has resonated loudly and badly among farmers who have faced discrimination.

"The government stands to pay out over \$2 billion for discrimination against African Americans and not one person in the department has been fired because of that, yet the first African American woman to [oversee rural development] in Georgia was fired for alleged racism," Pennick said. "And nobody has been fired for proven discrimination..."

Pennick said Vilsack had built up good will with minority farmers by meeting with them to address their concerns and speaking often about "changing the culture" of the USDA, but the treatment of Sherrod has left a bitter taste. "It stands a chance of erasing all they have done," he said.

The Environmental Working Group is well versed in the history of discrimination at USDA. EWG collaborated with National Black Farmers Association on two landmark reports, 2007's Short Crop and 2004's Obstruction of Justice, that showed a widening gap between the federal farm subsidies paid to black farmers and those paid to other farmers, due in part to discriminatory practices at USDA. Short Crop found that "in every single category of aid, and for every crop, black beneficiaries received a fraction of the aid that other beneficiaries received."

This is the system that lavishes 74 percent of all farm subsidies on the top 10 percent of recipients, the largest and wealthiest. It's the system -- stoutly defended by leaders of the House and Senate agriculture committees -- that has withstood efforts by both President Bush and President Obama to trim payments to wealthy farmers. But for all the the subsidy programs' generosity toward those *least* in need, it has been impossible to bring closure to black farmers victimized by past USDA discrimination. Despite a settlement brokered earlier this year by lawyers for aggrieved black farmers and the Obama administration designed to settle thousands of longstanding legal claims, funding for the settlement remains stalled in the Senate, as reported last Thursday (July 22) by CNN:

In July, the House approved a war supplemental bill that included money to pay for the settlement. It now remains stuck as senators examine the bill.

The 1997 Pigford v. Glickman case against the U.S. Agriculture Department was settled out of court 11 years ago. Under a federal judge's terms dating to 1999, qualified farmers could receive \$50,000 each to settle claims of racial bias.

As a senator, Barack Obama sponsored "Pigford II," a measure in the 2008 Farm Bill that reopened the case. In February of this year, his administration brokered a \$1.25 billion settlement for Pigford II. But Congress missed two deadlines, one in March and the other in May.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi on Thursday blasted Senate Republicans for holding up the process, saying that they have "rejected over and over again any legislation that has had the Pigford settlement in it.

When EWG and NBFA partnered on the 2007 report, it seemed unimaginable that the restitution issue would linger into 2010 while black farmers and their families languished. Sadly, as the Associated Press reports, they'll have to wait longer.

Late Thursday, the Senate stripped \$1.2 billion for the claims from an emergency spending bill, along with \$3.4 billion in long-overdue funding for a settlement with American Indians who say they were swindled out of royalties by the federal government.

Black farmers are once again being denied justice, while other farm interests -- with powerful backers in the Senate -- take priority. From the National Journal (subscription required).

Facing a tough re-election battle, Sen. Blanche Lincoln, D-Ark., is fighting for a vehicle to move a disaster aid package benefiting her state's farmers that she has touted as evidence of her sway as Senate Agriculture chairwoman. Lincoln has won Majority Leader Reid's agreement to add the package to a small-business jobs bill he might offer this week, but the measure still faces several obstacles, according to Senate leadership aides. The roughly \$2 billion disaster package may be an obscure provision nationally, but it is a major matter for Lincoln, who has frequently cited it in her race against Rep. John Boozman, R-Ark.

What the National Journal story does not mention is that the farmers who would receive aid in Lincoln's package need only show a minor 5 percent loss in their crops in order to receive taxpayer assistance -- a threshold so low that even subsidy proponent, House Agriculture Committee Chairman Collin Peterson, initially balked at it.

But navigating a Congress driven by powerful special interests is not the only obstacle to black farmers seeking final restitution. In August, 2007, leaked emails revealed potentially illegal lobbying by USDA employees seeking to have funding for the Pigford settlement stripped from the Farm Bill because of the "boatload" of work it would entail for them. The episode took an even more bizarre turn when the USDA barred from its offices the Government Accountability Office investigators who were probing the suspect lobbying.

Despite pressure from congress -- including from then-Senator and presidential candidate Barack Obama -- there was never any public announcement of whether USDA took disciplinary action against the employees responsible, as reported on Sept. 5, 2007, by Gannett reporter Mike Hasten (link not available):

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has conducted or is conducting an internal review of employees who plotted to illegally lobby the U.S. Senate against a farm bill that helps black farmers but it will not publicize any action taken against the employees.

Keith Williams, press secretary for Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns, said the agency considers any actions taken against employees to be "a personnel issue" that, like any employer's actions, would not be a public matter.

An Aug. 2 e-mail circulated by employees of the Farm Service Agency in Virginia urged opposition to a farm bill provision reopening the settlement of a discrimination lawsuit settlement against the USDA. During a specified period, the agency paid \$50,000 to every black farmer who could show that he was discriminated against in receiving loans or other assistance.

The e-mail urging fellow FSA employees to lobby senators to block the House-passed bill triggered several congressmen, including presidential candidate Sen. Barack Obama, and government interest groups to call for a full investigation into the matter.

The message quoted a top FSA official as saying it would be "awful" to allow more black farmers to qualify for the \$50,000 settlements issued before a deadline in 1999. It also said the official, Carolyn Cooksie, deputy administrator for farm loans, was already lobbying against the provision.

John Boyd, of the National Black Farmers Association, told the Gannett reporter that the USDA also never took action against the employees responsible for the original discrimination:

Boyd said USDA never took action against the employees that were found in the Pigford lawsuit to be discriminating against black farmers.

"The biggest downfall over the years with the department is lack of accountability," he said.

Perhaps something positive can come from the Sherrod controversy in the form of a quick resolution to the Pigford funding issue. President Obama made clear in his historic presidential campaign speech on race that addressing racial divisions was a driving motivation for his decision to seek the highest office:

I chose to run for the presidency at this moment in history because I believe deeply that we cannot solve the challenges of our time unless we solve them together - unless we perfect our union by understanding that we may have different stories, but we hold common hopes; that we may not look the same and we may not have come from the same place, but we all want to move in the same direction - towards a better future for our children and our grandchildren.

The children and grandchildren of black farmers pushed from the land as a result of discrimination are in many cases the only ones left who could cheer a final decision on funding the Pigford settlements.

Consider the ironies. USDA employees discriminated against black farmers for decades. When a legal settlement finally promised justice, USDA employees lobbied against the measures. GAO investigators probing the case were tossed from USDA's offices. Then presidential candidate Obama stepped directly into the fray, demanding accountability from Bush's USDA. And now Bush's former Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns is a Republican member of the Senate, where the funding for the settlements never seems to get voted.

To date it remains unclear if there ever has been any action on USDA's alleged illegal lobbying against the Pigford funding. In the unsettling aftermath of the Shirley Sherrod incident-- and not halfway through the term of America's first black president -- we are left to contemplate old racial wounds at USDA, and the nation as a whole.

Follow Donald Carr on Twitter: www.twitter.com/DonEWG

Chris Mather
Director of Communications
USDA
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 402A
Washington, DC 20250

Exemption (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 28, 2010 6:44 PM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Subject: Flagging article

[The Huffington Post July 28, 2010](#)

Donald Carr

Senior Policy and Communications Advisor, Environmental Working Group

Posted: July 28, 2010 03:35 PM
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The Bitter Ironies in USDA's Firing of Shirley Sherrod

The conflagration that embroiled the US Department of Agriculture last week (July 19) over the knee-jerk dismissal of an African American official who was falsely accused of reverse discrimination is only the latest travesty at an agency that has a notorious record on racial issues.

The department abruptly ousted long-time employee Shirley Sherrod in reaction to what turned out to be a heavily edited video, disseminated by a discredited right-wing blogger, that grossly distorted the message of a speech Sherrod gave in March about her past experiences and feelings about race and discrimination in USDA. Too late, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, the USDA and the White House realized their mistake and apologized, as indeed did President Obama. USDA offered Sherrod a new position, but she has yet to say whether she will accept.

There is bitter irony in the mistaken firing of Sherrod in light of USDA's current efforts to reverse its checkered past of racial discrimination toward farmers and employees of color. On Friday (July 23), [The Washington Post](#) described the reaction to the Sherrod affair among those who have felt the sting of USDA's discrimination first hand. It quoted, among others, Jerry Pennick, director of the Federation of Southern Cooperatives Land Assistance Fund, where Sherrod worked before joining USDA:

The government's poor treatment of [Sherrod] has resonated loudly and badly among farmers who have faced discrimination.

"The government stands to pay out over \$2 billion for discrimination against African Americans and not one person in the department has been fired because of that, yet the first African American woman to [oversee rural development] in Georgia was fired for alleged racism," Pennick said. "And nobody has been fired for proven discrimination..."

Pennick said Vilsack had built up good will with minority farmers by meeting with them to address their concerns and speaking often about "changing the culture" of the USDA, but the treatment of Sherrod has left a bitter taste. "It stands a chance of erasing all they have done," he said.

The Environmental Working Group is well versed in the history of discrimination at USDA. EWG collaborated with National Black Farmers Association on two landmark reports, 2007's Short Crop and 2004's Obstruction of Justice, that showed a widening gap between the federal farm subsidies paid to black farmers and those paid to other farmers, due in part to discriminatory practices at USDA. Short Crop found that "in every single category of aid, and for every crop, black beneficiaries received a fraction of the aid that other beneficiaries received."

This is the system that lavishes 74 percent of all farm subsidies on the top 10 percent of recipients, the largest and wealthiest. It's the system -- stoutly defended by leaders of the House and Senate agriculture committees -- that has withstood efforts by both President Bush and President Obama to trim payments to wealthy farmers. But for all the the subsidy programs' generosity toward those *least* in need, it has been impossible to bring closure to black farmers victimized by past USDA discrimination. Despite a settlement brokered earlier this year by lawyers for aggrieved black farmers and the Obama administration designed to settle thousands of longstanding legal claims, funding for the settlement remains stalled in the Senate, as reported last Thursday (July 22) by CNN:

In July, the House approved a war supplemental bill that included money to pay for the settlement. It now remains stuck as senators examine the bill.

The 1997 Pigford v. Glickman case against the U.S. Agriculture Department was settled out of court 11 years ago. Under a federal judge's terms dating to 1999, qualified farmers could receive \$50,000 each to settle claims of racial bias.

As a senator, Barack Obama sponsored "Pigford II," a measure in the 2008 Farm Bill that reopened the case. In February of this year, his administration brokered a \$1.25 billion settlement for Pigford II. But Congress missed two deadlines, one in March and the other in May.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi on Thursday blasted Senate Republicans for holding up the process, saying that they have "rejected over and over again any legislation that has had the Pigford settlement in it.

When EWG and NBFA partnered on the 2007 report, it seemed unimaginable that the restitution issue would linger into 2010 while black farmers and their families languished. Sadly, as the Associated Press reports, they'll have to wait longer.

Late Thursday, the Senate stripped \$1.2 billion for the claims from an emergency spending bill, along with \$3.4 billion in long-overdue funding for a settlement with American Indians who say they were swindled out of royalties by the federal government.

Black farmers are once again being denied justice, while other farm interests -- with powerful backers in the Senate -- take priority. From the National Journal (subscription required).

Facing a tough re-election battle, Sen. Blanche Lincoln, D-Ark., is fighting for a vehicle to move a disaster aid package benefiting her state's farmers that she has touted as evidence of her sway as Senate Agriculture chairwoman. Lincoln has won Majority Leader Reid's agreement to add the package to a small-business jobs bill he might offer this week, but the measure still faces several obstacles, according to Senate leadership aides. The roughly \$2 billion disaster package may be an obscure provision nationally, but it is a major matter for Lincoln, who has frequently cited it in her race against Rep. John Boozman, R-Ark.

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But navigating a Congress driven by powerful special interests is not the only obstacle to black farmers seeking final restitution. In August, 2007, leaked emails revealed potentially illegal lobbying by USDA employees seeking to have funding for the Pigford settlement stripped from the Farm Bill because of the "boatload" of work it would entail for them. The episode took an even more bizarre turn when the USDA barred from its offices the Government Accountability Office investigators who were probing the suspect lobbying.

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The e-mail urging fellow FSA employees to lobby senators to block the House-passed bill triggered several congressmen, including presidential candidate Sen. Barack Obama, and government interest groups to call for a full investigation into the matter.

The message quoted a top FSA official as saying it would be "awful" to allow more black farmers to qualify for the \$50,000 settlements issued before a deadline in 1999. It also said the official, Carolyn Cooksie, deputy administrator for farm loans, was already lobbying against the provision.

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"The biggest downfall over the years with the department is lack of accountability," he said.

Perhaps something positive can come from the Sherrod controversy in the form of a quick resolution to the Pigford funding issue. President Obama made clear in his historic presidential campaign speech on race that addressing racial divisions was a driving motivation for his decision to seek the highest office:

I chose to run for the presidency at this moment in history because I believe deeply that we cannot solve the challenges of our time unless we solve them together - unless we perfect our union by understanding that we may have different stories, but we hold common hopes; that we may not look the same and we may not have come from the same place, but we all want to move in the same direction - towards a better future for our children and our grandchildren.

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Follow Donald Carr on Twitter: www.twitter.com/DonEWG

Chris Mather
Director of Communications
USDA
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 402A
Washington, DC 20250

Exemption (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 6:03 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin
Subject: RE: Has Vilsack heard back from Sherrod?

Hi there,

Yes. She called Pearlie late this afternoon - sorry for the delay in telling you but there have been back to back meetings here. They discussed the position, its responsibilities and resources for about 45 minutes. She is aware that it is a meaningful position and that it is real (a position that will be filled by someone but one she is uniquely qualified to fill). She wants to take next week to think about it and what she wants to do next. She is exhausted.

Karen Ross
Chief of Staff
Office of the Secretary

Exemption (b)(6)

-----Original Message-----

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 5:39 PM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin
Subject: FW: Has Vilsack heard back from Sherrod?

-----Original Message-----

From: Ed O'Keefe [mailto:Ex (b)(6)]
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 5:34 PM
To: justin.dejong@usda.gov; Mather, Chris
Subject: Has Vilsack heard back from Sherrod?

Thanks in advance.

Ed O'Keefe
The Federal Eye, The Washington Post

Ex (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 5:40 PM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole
Cc: Mather, Chris

For political appointees?

As you know, while the Secretary answered many questions from the press about Shirley Sherrod as well as the White House and USDA's press shop, the media is still interested in talking about this. If you are contacted by the media, please send the request to the Office of Communications using the following contact information:

Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov
202-720-4623

Some of you have asked about what to say if approached by the press in person. If you have to talk to them, let the press know that the Secretary answered these questions at his press briefing and that any further questions should go to the Office of Communications.

Information Regarding USDA's Actions

On Monday afternoon we learned about an online video showing Mrs. Sherrod saying things that we thought would make it hard to turn the page on civil rights abuses at USDA.

We immediately put her on administrative leave then asked if she was willing to resign, to which she said yes. We called her twice to ask for a letter of resignation so that we could respond to press inquiries about her status.

On Tuesday, the entire tape of the speech she gave was released by the NAACP and after watching it, we determined we had acted without all of the information.

The Secretary spoke to Shirley Sherrod on Wednesday and apologized. He also told her I was sorry for the pain this caused her and her family and friends. That same day, the Secretary did a press briefing and spoke to the Congressional Black Caucus.

We have discussed with Mrs. Sherrod a unique opportunity at USDA and asked her to return to the Department. With all that she has seen, endured and accomplished, it would be invaluable to have her experience, commitment and record of service at USDA. And if she wants her old job back, she can have it.

We admit we reacted too quickly and should have taken the time to listen and learn.

The White House did not direct the Secretary to do this, it was USDA's decision.

We continue to review the circumstances that brought us to this day to ensure that nothing like this happens again.

Chris Mather
Director of Communications
USDA

1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 402A
Washington, DC 20250

Exemption (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: Tonsager, Dallas
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 3:48 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: FW: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod
Attachments: image001.jpg

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:04 AM
To: Tonsager, Dallas; Cook, Cheryl; Vasquez, Victor
Cc: Zaina, Lisa
Subject: Fw: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Mather, Chris
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wed Jul 21 05:17:54 2010
Subject: Fw: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

This went at 2
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wed Jul 21 02:07:06 2010
Subject: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod



Release No. PENDING

Contact:
USDA Office of Communications
(202) 720-4623

Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

WASHINGTON, July 21, 2010 - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack tonight released the following statement in response to the release of remarks in video from Shirley

Sherrod:

"I am of course willing and will conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts to ensure to the American people we are providing services in a fair and equitable manner."

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice), or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Exemption (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: Tonsager, Dallas
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 3:47 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: FW: Please read the lower portion of this story

From: Tonsager, Dallas
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:53 AM
To: Cook, Cheryl; Zaina, Lisa
Subject: Please read the lower portion of this story

http://blogs.ajc.com/jay-bookman-blog/2010/07/20/in-the-curious-case-of-shirley-sherrod-lets-see-the-whole-tape/?cxntfid=blogs_jay_bookman_blog

Dallas Tonsager | Under Secretary
Rural Development
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W. | Washington, D.C. 20250
Phone: 202.720.4581 | Fax: 202.720.2080
www.rurdev.usda.gov

Jett, Carole

From: Tonsager, Dallas
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 3:46 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: FW:

-----Original Message-----

From: TJV
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:37 PM
To: Tonsager, Dallas
Subject: Re:

Ex (b)(5)

TV

----- Original Message -----

From: Tonsager, Dallas
To: TJV
Sent: Mon Jul 19 17:30:47 2010
Subject:

Mr. Secretary

I had tried you earlier today on a different email address which failed.

I am shocked by the comments made by State Director Shirley Sherrod and posted on the internet. She was immediately suspended and my understanding is she has resigned.

Dallas

Jett, Carole

From: The Office of the Secretary
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 3:45 PM
To: ALL-USDA-2K
Subject: Message from Secretary Vilsack

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250**

Many of you have contacted me to offer your support, and for those comments, I am appreciative. This has been a very difficult week for many of us at USDA because of a decision I made regarding the employment of Shirley Sherrod. For that, I want to apologize to all of you.

I reacted too quickly. I should have taken the time to listen and learn.

I apologized to Mrs. Sherrod on Wednesday and told her I was sorry for any pain this caused her and her family. Thankfully, she graciously accepted my apology. I also offered her a unique opportunity to continue her service in federal government at USDA and I am hopeful that she accepts.

As we all have learned, Mrs. Sherrod has a compelling story to tell. She and her family endured discrimination and overcame adversity. Fighting to advance justice and equality, she has helped farmers who were struggling to keep their land, fought for women in need of social and economic justice, and also for African-American men and women who faced discrimination. With all that she has seen, endured and accomplished, it would be invaluable to have her experience, commitment and record of service at USDA.

We continue to make important progress correcting USDA's record on civil rights, but obviously, there is still a lot more work to do. You have heard me talk about my commitment to fairness and equality through the last 18 months, and I ask that you continue working with me to correct injustices of the past.

Thank you for your commitment to USDA and your continued service to the American people.

Tom Vilsack

Secretary of Agriculture

Jett, Carole

From: Tonsager, Dallas
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 3:37 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: FW:

-----Original Message-----

From: Tonsager, Dallas
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:31 PM
To: TJV
Subject:

Mr. Secretary

I had tried you earlier today on a different email address which failed.

I am shocked by the comments made by State Director Shirley Sherrod and posted on the internet. She was immediately suspended and my understanding is she has resigned.

Dallas

Jett, Carole

From: Tonsager, Dallas
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 3:36 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: FW: Hey

-----Original Message-----

From: Tonsager, Dallas
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:26 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin; Wyant, Monica; Cook, Cheryl; Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Subject: RE: Hey

Thanks.

-----Original Message-----

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:26 PM
To: Tonsager, Dallas; Washo, Kevin; Wyant, Monica; Cook, Cheryl; Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Subject: Re: Hey

We will get you covered and OC will go with you tomorrow.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

----- Original Message -----

From: Tonsager, Dallas
To: Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin; Wyant, Monica; Cook, Cheryl; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 17:12:57 2010
Subject: RE: Hey

I wouldn't be surprised to get a question over this matter during my hearings this week. Would appreciate some help on a response.

-----Original Message-----

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:33 PM
To: Washo, Kevin; Wyant, Monica; Tonsager, Dallas; Cook, Cheryl
Subject: FW: Hey

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:32 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Jett, Carole
Subject: Hey

The S is absolutely sick and mad over the S Sherrod issue. He wants her immediately on Adm leave, Justin is working on a strong statement and I need to call Rep Bishop as soon as ya'll give me the go ahead.

Jett, Carole

From: Tonsager, Dallas
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 3:36 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: FW: Hey

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Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:33 PM
To: Washo, Kevin; Wyant, Monica; Tonsager, Dallas; Cook, Cheryl
Subject: FW: Hey

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:32 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Jett, Carole
Subject: Hey

Ex (b)(5)

Jett, Carole

From: Tonsager, Dallas
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 3:35 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: FW: Hey

-----Original Message-----

From: Tonsager, Dallas
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:13 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin; Wyant, Monica; Cook, Cheryl; Harden, Krysta
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To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Jett, Carole
Subject: Hey

Ex (b)(5)

Jett, Carole

From: Tonsager, Dallas
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 3:35 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: FW:

From: Tonsager, Dallas
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:51 PM
To: Exemption (b)(6)
Subject:

Shirley Sherrod has resigned.
Dallas

Dallas Tonsager | Under Secretary
Rural Development
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W. | Washington, D.C. 20250
Phone: 202.720.4581 | Fax: 202.720.2080
www.rurdev.usda.gov

Jett, Carole

From: Tonsager, Dallas
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 3:35 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: FW: Shirley Sherrod

From: Tonsager, Dallas
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:04 PM
To: Exemption (b)(6)
Cc: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin
Subject: Shirley Sherrod

Dear Mr. Secretary

We have just seen the video of Georgia State Director Shirley Sherrod and are deeply disturbed. Cheryl has put her on administrative leave pending a full investigation. Of course, the video suggests that this is about a farm loan, and those programs were transferred to the Farm Service Agency in 1995.

Shirley explained to Cheryl that this piece of tape shows only one small part of a longer story she told of her personal transformation beyond race, and is about a farmer who came to see her in 1986 when she was working as a farm advocate. The rest of the story apparently explains how she came to assist this farmer and many other white farmers during this time period. She said there is a copy of the entire speech, and Cheryl asked her to provide it as quickly as possible.

Dallas and Cheryl

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From: Tonsager, Dallas
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 3:34 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: FW: Hey

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To: Washo, Kevin; Wyant, Monica; Tonsager, Dallas; Cook, Cheryl
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To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Jett, Carole
Subject: Hey

Ex (b)(5)

Jett, Carole

From: Tonsager, Dallas
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 3:33 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: FW: Urgent

-----Original Message-----

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:06 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl; Tonsager, Dallas; Washo, Kevin
Cc: Wyant, Monica
Subject: Urgent

Sherliy Sherrod is on tape and you need to see/hear immediately

<http://hotair.com>

In upper right search Sherrod

We need to take immediate action.

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 2:16 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: RE: Hey

Sorry for the delay.

I received your forward of Krysta's message indicating that the Secretary wanted Shirley on Admin Leave at 3:33 p.m. Per my outgoing call log, I called the GA state office at 3:37 (adjusting for my phone's clock being off by 4.5 hours).

There was no answer at the state office, so I call her cell phone at 3:38 and reached her. That was the conversation putting her on leave and hearing her explanation.

I called her back on her cell phone at 4:42 to ask whether she'd be willing to resign.

I called her a third time on her cell phone at 5:56 to ask whether she'd be willing to offer a letter of resignation by the end of the day.

I called her a fourth time at 6:35 to ask whether she'd be willing to pull over to the side of the road, and submit a resignation by email.

I received her email at 6:55 and forwarded to WHLO.

-----Original Message-----

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 1:09 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Hey
Importance: High

Sorry to bug you. Can you give me the exact times that you called shirley sherrod on Monday?

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

Jett, Carole

From: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 8:24 AM
To: Maddux, Sheryl -USDA
Cc: Jett, Carole
Subject: Just a few more Sherrod-related emails this morning
Attachments: RE: Shirley Sherrod quote; I am offended by reports of cheryl cooks conduct; Rehire Shirley Sherrod

Good morning to you both, and happy Friday.

Jett, Carole

From: Reed, Pearlie
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 8:23 AM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole
Cc: Jeanquart, Bobbi; Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta
Subject: FW: Position at USDA

FYI.
Pearlie

From: [Redacted] Ex (b)(6) mailto:[Redacted] Ex (b)(6)
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 11:52 PM
To: Reed, Pearlie
Subject: Re: Position at USDA

I will call you tomorrow.

-----Original Message-----

From: "Reed, Pearlie"
Sent: Jul 22, 2010 7:31 PM
To: [Redacted] Ex (b)(6)
Cc: Reed, Pearlie
Subject: Position at USDA

Ms. Sherrod, Secretary Vilsack asked me to provide you with additional information on the position he discussed with you yesterday. I can be reached at [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6) cell) or [Redacted] Exemption (b)(6) office).

Pearlie S. Reed

From: BENJAMIN.YOUNG@OGC.USDA.GOV
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 11:27 AM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Smith, Christopher L. -OCIO; McGuire, Michael; McClam, Charles; Wren, Christopher; Tonsager, Dallas; Cook, Cheryl; Mather, Chris; Shearer, David
Cc: Frederick.Pfaeffle@OGC.USDA.GOV; J_Michael.Kelly@OGC.USDA.GOV; ANDREA.FOSTER@OGC.USDA.GOV; Silverman, Steve
Subject: IMMEDIATE LITIGATION HOLD ON ALL RECORDS RELATED TO SHIRLEY SHERROD
Importance: High

SUBJECT TO ATTORNEY-CLIENT WORK PRODUCT PRIVILEGES

Ex (b)(5)

Ex (b)(5)

1

Ex (b)(5)

Ex (b)(5)

Ex (b)(5)

Ex (b)(5)

Ex (b)(5)

L. Benjamin Young, Jr.
Assistant General Counsel
General Law Division
202-720-5565
202-720-5837 (fax)

2

[REDACTED]

From: Bittleman, Sarah
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:34 AM
To: Tonsager, Dallas
Subject: Re: Statements

Oops! Tina just said she gave u the latest - you're all set!

From: Tonsager, Dallas
To: Bittleman, Sarah
Sent: Wed Jul 21 06:55:47 2010
Subject: RE: Statements
Got it thanks.

From: Bittleman, Sarah
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:14 PM
To: Tonsager, Dallas
Subject: FW: Statements

Dallas – Wanted to make sure you had these in preparation for tomorrow. Call me if you need me. Exemption (b)(6) sb

1

From: Weaver, Caleb
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:07 PM
To: May, Tina; Bittleman, Sarah
Subject: FW: Statements

Below are the statements and the CNN clip.

Today

Statement by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack

Yesterday, I asked for and accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation for two reasons. First, for the past 18 months, we have been working to turn the page on the sordid civil rights record at USDA and this controversy could make it more difficult to move forward on correcting injustices. Second, state rural development directors make many decisions and are often called to use their discretion. The controversy surrounding her comments would create situations where her decisions, rightly or wrongly, would be called into question making it difficult for her to bring jobs to Georgia.

Our policy is clear. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA and we strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have a duty to ensure that when we provide services to the American people we do so in an equitable manner. But equally important is our duty to instill confidence in the American people that we are fair service providers.

Yesterday

2

Harden, Krysta

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 8:46 AM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Harden, Krysta; Jett, Carole
Cc: May, Tina
Subject: Update on Dallas Hearing

Senator Lincoln is going to speak with Dallas before the hearing and ask for a full briefing on this issue as soon as is possible. Dallas is going to say that we would be willing to brief as soon as all of the information gathering is complete. Senator Lincoln will use that information with the press and potentially in the hearing saying that the Under Secretary has ensured the committee that he or others would provide a thorough briefing of the situation at a later date. Tina and I agree that this is a good course of action, and will allow the committee to focus on the subject of the hearing.

John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.

CNN clip with Secretary's comments today highlighted

let me just look at some notes here. suzanne malveaux, one of our correspondents is recording this from the white house. the white house did not pressure her. it was the secretary's decision as he has said.

that's not what they told me. that's not what cheryl cooke conveyed to me. each time she said it she said the white house.

are you still there?

i'm still here.

sorry about that. shirley, hold on just a moment. i understand we just got some sound with your boss, the secretary of agriculture. that would be tom vilsack. we just now concluded an interview with him. i think we're ready to turn some sound around on this. let's do it. rog, if you've got it, go ahead.

this is obviously a very difficult circumstance for all concerned. but when you're the state rural development director your principal job is to try to develop job growth in the state of georgia. unfortunately the statements and the context of the statements created a circumstance where in the future if people were not satisfied with the decisions that the rural development director made they could attribute the decision to a wide variety of reasons that weren't necessarily related to the job.

3

did you hear what he said there, shirley? that's part of it.

what did he say?

well, he went back to the comment that you made and he referred specifically to the context of the comment in the way it was -- he seemed to be indicating the way it was broadcast. so he says that -- do we have some more? all right. let's go ahead and listen to some more of this. can you hear it, shirley?

yes, i can hear it.

all right. let's play some more of this. it's coming in in parts. as we get it, we'll share it with you.

when i saw the statements and the context of the statements, i determined that it would make it difficult for her to do her job as rural development director and potentially compromise our capacity to close the chapter on civil rights cases. i didn't want to do anything to jeopardize her job in terms of getting people to work in georgia. i certainly didn't want us to have a controversy making it more difficult to turn the page. it was my decision. nobody from the white house contacted me about this at all.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: (202) 256-8626
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

4

From: Bittleman, Sarah
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:33 AM
To: Tonsager, Dallas
Subject: Re: Statements

And the one from overnight: the secy is reviewing ms sherrod's resignation and ensures fair and equitable treatment for the American people. Statement on cnn's home page. See u in a few.

From: Tonsager, Dallas
To: Bittleman, Sarah
Sent: Wed Jul 21 06:55:47 2010
Subject: RE: Statements
Got it thanks.

From: Bittleman, Sarah
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:14 PM
To: Tonsager, Dallas
Subject: FW: Statements

Dallas – Wanted to make sure you had these in preparation for tomorrow. Call me if you need me. 202 590 0760. sb

1

From: Weaver, Caleb
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:07 PM
To: May, Tina; Bittleman, Sarah
Subject: FW: Statements

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Statement by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack

Yesterday, I asked for and accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation for two reasons. First, for the past 18 months, we have been working to turn the page on the sordid civil rights record at USDA and this controversy could make it more difficult to move forward on correcting injustices. Second, state rural development directors make many decisions and are often called to use their discretion. The controversy surrounding her comments would create situations where her decisions, rightly or wrongly, would be called into question making it difficult for her to bring jobs to Georgia.

Our policy is clear. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA and we strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have a duty to ensure that when we provide services to the American people we do so in an equitable manner. But equally important is our duty to instill confidence in the American people that we are fair service providers.

2

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are you still there?

i'm still here.

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3

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Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: (202) 256-8626
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

4

[REDACTED]

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Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:14 PM
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Subject: FW: Statements

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From: Weaver, Caleb
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Subject: FW: Statements

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1

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2

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3

anything to jeopardize her job in terms of getting people to work in georgia. i certainly didn't want us to have a controversy making it more difficult to turn the page. it was my decision. nobody from the white house contacted me about this at all.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: (202) 256-8626
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

4

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] Ex (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 8:58 AM
To: Tonsager, Dallas
Subject: Shirley Sherrod must be reinstated. Despicable you.

Mr. Under Secretary,

I just saw the brief on Rachel Maddow show and my heart dropped when I heard what y'all did to Shirley Sherrod. How can you believe, at first blush, anything FAUXNEWS has to say that has the word racism in it? The same media outlet where Beck claimed Obama is a racist? I mean seriously?

As a white male who never has to deal with the levels of discrimination a black or a woman still faces in this country, I could not believe my eyes and ears when I heard what y'all did to her. A woman who relayed the story about how when a white man was sizing her up because she was a black, woman she decided NOT to use her position of authority for payback, and this you fire her for.

Despicable You.

Re-instate her TODAY and walk your butt over to FOXNEWS studio and conduct a live interview defending your staff member with the facts.

Regards,
Dave Byrd

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] Ex (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:25 PM
To: Tonsager, Dallas
Subject: Termination of Shirley Sherrod

Dear Sir:

I was appalled at the rush to judgment of Ms. Shirley Sherrod. This spineless, politically-motivated, knee-jerk reaction was nothing more than caving in to hate-mongering. Whether or not you were directed by the White House to pursue this course of action, it was your job to conduct a thorough investigation of the allegations directed at Ms. Sherrod. You failed to exercise both leadership and stewardship in this case, and your actions have far greater racial overtones than anything attributed to her.

It is time you conducted a swift investigation into this matter, cleared Ms. Sherrod of any wrong doing, and made both personal and public apologies for this serious lapse in judgment. Frankly, Mr. Donsager, your actions in this case leave me with a grave concern over your leadership, not Ms. Sherrod's. If you want to restore some semblance of confidence in your organization, I strongly suggest that you do what you know is right and

1

promptly rectify this scurrilous situation.

Please pass these comments along to Mr. Vilsack's office.

Sincerely,

David L. Putney

[REDACTED]
Ex (b)(6)

2

[REDACTED]

From: Harvey, Jill - Syracuse, NY [REDACTED] *Ex (b)(6)*
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:11 AM
To: Cook, Cheryl (OSEC/RD); Berge, John (OSEC/OCR); Tonsager, Dallas; Yocum, Katie -
Washington, DC; Hannigan, Erin
Subject: My two cents

I am disappointed with my beloved agency and department's handling of SD Sherrod. Really upset. There but for the grace of god go I.

Message sent from BlackBerry Device

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:04 AM
To: Tonsager, Dallas; Cook, Cheryl; Vasquez, Victor
Cc: Zaina, Lisa
Subject: Fw: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

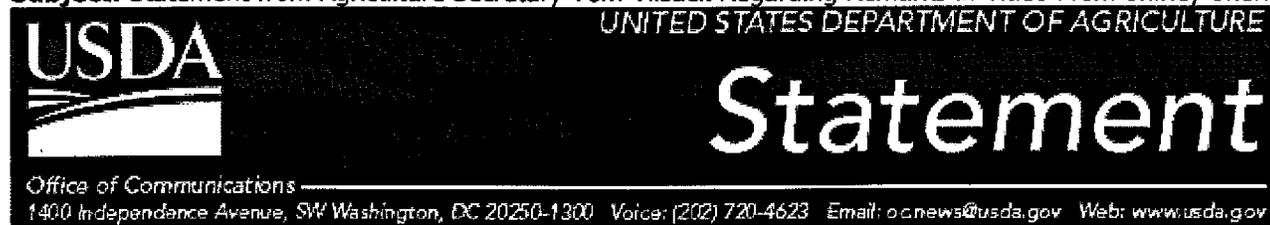
Exemption (b)(6)

From: Mather, Chris
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wed Jul 21 05:17:54 2010
Subject: Fw: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

This went at 2
Chris Mather

1

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wed Jul 21 02:07:06 2010
Subject: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod



Release No. PENDING

Contact:
USDA Office of Communications
(202) 720-4623

Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

WASHINGTON, July 21, 2010 - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack tonight released the following statement in response to the release of remarks in video from Shirley Sherrod:

"I am of course willing and will conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts

2

to ensure to the American people we are providing services in a fair and equitable manner."

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice), or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Exemption (b)(6)

[REDACTED]

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:22 PM
To: Tonsager, Dallas; Cook, Cheryl; Vasquez, Victor
Cc: Zaina, Lisa
Subject: Secretary statement

Yesterday, I asked for and accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation for two reasons. First, for the past 18 months, we have been working to turn the page on the sordid civil rights record at USDA and this controversy could make it more difficult to move forward on correcting injustices.

Second, state rural development directors make many decisions and are often called to use their discretion. The controversy surrounding her comments would create situations where her decisions, rightly or wrongly, would be called into question making it difficult for her to bring jobs to Georgia.

Our policy is clear. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA and we strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have a duty to ensure that when we provide services to the American people we do so in an equitable manner. But equally important is our duty to instill confidence in the American people that we are fair service providers. Carole Jett Deputy Chief of Staff USDA

1

Exemption (b)(6)

2

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:26 PM
To: Tonsager, Dallas; Washo, Kevin; Wyant, Monica; Cook, Cheryl; Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Subject: Re: Hey

We will get you covered and OC will go with you tomorrow.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

----- Original Message -----

From: Tonsager, Dallas
To: Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin; Wyant, Monica; Cook, Cheryl; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 17:12:57 2010
Subject: RE: Hey

I wouldn't be surprised to get a question over this matter during my hearings this week. Would appreciate some help on a response.

-----Original Message-----

1

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:33 PM
To: Washo, Kevin; Wyant, Monica; Tonsager, Dallas; Cook, Cheryl
Subject: FW: Hey

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:32 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Jett, Carole
Subject: Hey

The S is absolutely sick and mad over the S Sherrod issue. He wants her immediately on Adm leave, Justin is working on a strong statement and I need to call Rep Bishop as soon as ya'll give me the go ahead.

2

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:33 PM
To: Washo, Kevin; Wyant, Monica; Tonsager, Dallas; Cook, Cheryl
Subject: FW: Hey

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:32 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Jett, Carole
Subject: Hey

The S is absolutely sick and mad over the S Sherrod issue. He wants her immediately on Adm leave, Justin is working on a strong statement and I need to call Rep Bishop as soon as ya'll give me the go ahead.

[REDACTED]

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:06 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl; Tonsager, Dallas; Washo, Kevin
Cc: Wyant, Monica
Subject: Urgent

Sherliy Sherrod is on tape and you need to see/hear immediately

<http://hotair.com>

In upper right search Sherrod

We need to take immediate action.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Jim Richardson [jr@nrfc.org]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:03 PM
To: Tonsager, Dallas
Cc: Cherry, Shayna; Bolivar, Sylvia
Subject: FW: Please support Shirley Sherrod
Attachments: Shirley Sherrod Support2_7-10.doc

Dear Dallas:

I hope all is well with you. Just a note to let you know that I have known Shirley Sherrod personally for several years through our work at the National Rural Funders Collaborative and I can vouch that in my personal experience Ms. Sherrod is anything but racist in her beliefs or actions. She has actively worked on behalf of low-income farmers and southerners, without any bias because of race, culture, class or any other objectionable position. I hope that you will use your good counsel and influence to encourage Secretary Vilsack to take a closer look into this matter. Surely, the wrong decision has been made based on misinformation.

Best wishes,

Jim Richardson
Executive Director

1

National Rural Funders Collaborative

From: StarryKru@aol.com [mailto:StarryKru@aol.com]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:57 PM
To: undisclosed-recipients:
Subject: Please support Shirley Sherrod

Dear RDLN Network Members and Friends:

Please see the attached statement of support for Shirley Sherrod, who was forced to resign yesterday from her position as Georgia State Director for Rural Development, USDA, because of a misleading video tape circulated by a conservative group.

We ask you to write to USDA Secretary Vilsack c/o Carole Jett, Deputy Chief of Staff Jett@usda.gov or call 202-720-3631 urging that Shirley be reinstated and that an investigation be launched to determine how this injustice happened.

We suggest you also write to the White House (202)514-2001, Attorney General Eric Holder's office (202)514-2001 or (202)353-1555 since he has called for a dialogue on race, your members of Congress (Congress.org) and all news outlets.

Thank you for your cooperation,

Starry

Starry Krueger
Rural Development Leadership Network

2

P.O. Box 98 Prince St. Station
New York, NY 10012
(212)777-9137/(212)477-0367 (Fax)
rdln@ruraldevelopment.org
www.ruraldevelopment.org

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] *Ex (b)(6)*
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 4:52 AM
To: Tonsager, Dallas
Subject: Shirley Sherrod

Please restore Shirley Sherrod to her position with the Department. I watched MSNBC coverage of her being quoted out of context by some rightwing creep and am appalled. You can do the right thing by correcting the wrong done to her. She sounds like a truly wonderful American and an incredible asset to your agency.

Thank you.

Jim Keck

[REDACTED]
Ex (b)(6)

From: sara@agri-pulse.com
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:28 AM
To: Tonsager, Dallas
Subject: Your Agri-Pulse has arrived!

Date: 7/21/2010 10:27:32 AM

Agri-Pulse Newsletter: 07212010

Link to Download this Issue: [Click Here to Download Issue \(please allow 30 seconds\)](#)

Greetings,

With all due respect to Alice in Wonderland, the curious case of Shirley Sherrod, the former USDA Rural Development Director for the state of Georgia who was forced to resign on Monday, continues to grow "curiouser and curiouser." Undoubtedly, there are a few people at the White House and the NAACP who probably wish they could join Alice in escaping for awhile. Unfortunately for them, the story continued to unfold on all of the major networks and Hill publications this morning. As Jim Webster points out, Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack fanned a political brush fire into a

1

nationwide firestorm. Since Monday, Vilsack has issued three separate statements on the topic, ranging from announcing Sherrod's resignation and the department's "zero tolerance" policy on racial discrimination Monday to a late night statement issued Tuesday where he offered to conduct "a thorough review and consider additional facts." More on the controversy in this issue and at www.Agri-Pulse.com Other highlights in this issue.

- Senate clears key roadblock on unemployment.
- Lawmakers lash out at USDA over proposed livestock rule
- House members & USDA agree on need to streamline rural programs
- Vilsack calls for farm sector sacrifice & understanding
- NACD's Robinson fighting hard to keep conservation funds flowing
- Demand for EQIP funds continues to outpace supply
- Climate change challenges expected to continue
- Administration's Climate Change task force grapples with impact on agriculture
- Pork and beef exports soar
- NMPF plan would moderate milk market volatility, FAPRI says
- For future vets, the government giveth and taketh away
- CARD study looks at life without current ethanol policies
- News briefs: Liberty link, BP buys out Verenum venture, Dole Foods

2

tainted trial, Genetically modified crops, Domino's "Smart Slice" program, Protecting big oil, and Lonely Beef debate.

- Farm Hands: Sherrod, Paige, Cook, Steen, Potts, Adcock, McKinney, Kruse, Serra, Snyder, Davis, Nelsen, Gumina, Curtis, Vinduska, Fruth, Shauman, Fast, Schaaf, USDA's National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection, and Sanderson,

New audio update for Tuesday - USDA's Avalos says regs for revamped animal ID program will be proposed next spring.

<http://www.agri-pulse.com/uploaded/AnimalID072010.mp3>

Please let me know if you have any comments or questions. You can reach me at www.Agri-Pulse.com

Best regards,

Sara R. Wyant

Editor

Agri-Pulse

Exemption (b)(6)

573-873-0802 (Camdenton, MO. office)

3

202-547-5588 (Washington, DC office)

www.Agri-Pulse.com



4

[REDACTED]

From: Ex (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:45 AM
To: Tonsager, Dallas
Subject: Shirley Sherrod issue

I would like the issue with Ms. Sherrod considered further and her employment with the USDA be reevaluated. If the story in its entirety is about her personal journey over the last twenty four years to see beyond race, then I appreciate her honesty about her previous feelings and how she has progressed beyond those feelings.

Tommy Dowling

From: The Office of the Secretary
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 3:45 PM
To: ALL-USDA-2K
Subject: Message from Secretary Vilsack

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

Many of you have contacted me to offer your support, and for those comments, I am appreciative. This has been a very difficult week for many of us at USDA because of a decision I made regarding the employment of Shirley Sherrod. For that, I want to apologize to all of you.

I reacted too quickly. I should have taken the time to listen and learn.

I apologized to Mrs. Sherrod on Wednesday and told her I was sorry for any pain this caused her and her family. Thankfully, she graciously accepted my apology. I also offered her a unique

1

opportunity to continue her service in federal government at USDA and I am hopeful that she accepts.

As we all have learned, Mrs. Sherrod has a compelling story to tell. She and her family endured discrimination and overcame adversity. Fighting to advance justice and equality, she has helped farmers who were struggling to keep their land, fought for women in need of social and economic justice, and also for African-American men and women who faced discrimination. With all that she has seen, endured and accomplished, it would be invaluable to have her experience, commitment and record of service at USDA.

We continue to make important progress correcting USDA's record on civil rights, but obviously, there is still a lot more work to do. You have heard me talk about my commitment to fairness and equality through the last 18 months, and I ask that you continue working with me to correct injustices of the past.

Thank you for your commitment to USDA and your continued service to the American people.

Tom Vilsack

Secretary of Agriculture

2

[REDACTED]

From: Tonsager, Dallas
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:51 PM
To: [REDACTED] Exemption (b)(6)

Shirley Sherrod has resigned.
Dallas

Dallas Tonsager | Under Secretary
Rural Development
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W. | Washington, D.C. 20250
Phone: 202.720.4581 | Fax: 202.720.2080
www.rurdev.usda.gov

[REDACTED]

From: Tonsager, Dallas
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:56 AM
To: Bittleman, Sarah
Subject: RE: Statements

Got it thanks.

From: Bittleman, Sarah
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:14 PM
To: Tonsager, Dallas
Subject: FW: Statements

Dallas – Wanted to make sure you had these in preparation for tomorrow. Call me if you need me [REDACTED] Exemption (b)(6) sb

From: Weaver, Caleb
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:07 PM
To: May, Tina; Bittleman, Sarah
Subject: FW: Statements

Below are the statements and the CNN clip.

1

Today

Statement by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack

Yesterday, I asked for and accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation for two reasons. First, for the past 18 months, we have been working to turn the page on the sordid civil rights record at USDA and this controversy could make it more difficult to move forward on correcting injustices. Second, state rural development directors make many decisions and are often called to use their discretion. The controversy surrounding her comments would create situations where her decisions, rightly or wrongly, would be called into question making it difficult for her to bring jobs to Georgia.

Our policy is clear. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA and we strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have a duty to ensure that when we provide services to the American people we do so in an equitable manner. But equally important is our duty to instill confidence in the American people that we are fair service providers.

Yesterday

Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.

2

CNN clip with Secretary's comments today highlighted

let me just look at some notes here. suzanne malveaux, one of our correspondents is recording this from the white house. the white house did not pressure her. it was the secretary's decision as he has said.

that's not what they told me. that's not what cheryl cooke conveyed to me. each time she said it she said the white house.

are you still there?

i'm still here.

sorry about that. shirley, hold on just a moment. i understand we just got some sound with your boss, the secretary of agriculture. that would be tom vilsack. we just now concluded an interview with him. i think we're ready to turn some sound around on this. let's do it. rog, if you've got it, go ahead.

this is obviously a very difficult circumstance for all concerned. but when you're the state rural development director your principal job is to try to develop job growth in the state of georgia. unfortunately the statements and the context of the statements created a circumstance where in the future if people were not satisfied with the decisions that the rural development director made they could attribute the decision to a wide variety of reasons that weren't necessarily related to the job.

did you hear what he said there, shirley? that's part of it.

what did he say?

well, he went back to the comment that you made and he referred specifically to the context of the comment in the way it was -- he seemed to be indicating the way it was broadcast. so he says that -- do we have some more? all right. let's go ahead and listen to some more of this. can you hear it, shirley?

3

yes, i can hear it.

all right. let's play some more of this. it's coming in in parts. as we get it, we'll share it with you.

when i saw the statements and the context of the statements, i determined that it would make it difficult for her to do her job as rural development director and potentially compromise our capacity to close the chapter on civil rights cases. i didn't want to do anything to jeopardize her job in terms of getting people to work in georgia. i certainly didn't want us to have a controversy making it more difficult to turn the page. it was my decision. nobody from the white house contacted me about this at all.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Exemption (b)(6)

4

[REDACTED]

From: Tonsager, Dallas
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:38 AM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: RE: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

Great I am in my office.

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:38 AM
To: Tonsager, Dallas
Subject: Re: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

On my way in.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

1

From: Tonsager, Dallas
To: Jett, Carole; Cook, Cheryl; Vasquez, Victor
Cc: Zaina, Lisa
Sent: Wed Jul 21 06:31:25 2010
Subject: RE: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod
Thank you Carole, I think it would be helpful if I could speak with you for a moment before my hearing. I leave at 8:15.

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:04 AM
To: Tonsager, Dallas; Cook, Cheryl; Vasquez, Victor
Cc: Zaina, Lisa
Subject: Fw: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

From: Mather, Chris
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wed Jul 21 05:17:54 2010
Subject: Fw: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

2

This went at 2
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie

Sent: Wed Jul 21 02:07:06 2010

Subject: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod



Release No. PENDING

Contact:
USDA Office of Communications
(202) 720-4623

**Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video
From Shirley Sherrod**

WASHINGTON, July 21, 2010 - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack tonight released the following statement in response to the release of remarks in video from Shirley

3

Sherrod:

"I am of course willing and will conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts to ensure to the American people we are providing services in a fair and equitable manner."

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice), or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture

Exemption (b)(6)



From: Tonsager, Dallas
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:31 PM
To: TJV

Mr. Secretary

I had tried you earlier today on a different email address which failed.

I am shocked by the comments made by State Director Shirley Sherrod and posted on the internet. She was immediately suspended and my understanding is she has resigned.

Dallas

From: Tonsager, Dallas
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:54 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: Is this okay to send?

Dear Mr. Secretary

We have just seen the video of Georgia State Director Shirley Sherrod and are deeply disturbed. Cheryl has put her on administrative leave pending a full investigation. Of course, the video suggests that this is about a farm loan, and those programs were transferred to the Farm Service Agency in 1995.

Shirley explained to Cheryl that this piece of tape shows only one small part of a longer story she told of her personal transformation beyond race, and is about a farmer who came to see her in 1986 when she was working as a farm advocate. The rest of the story apparently explains how she came to assist this farmer and many other white farmers during this time period. She said there is a copy of the entire speech, and Cheryl asked her to provide it as quickly as possible.

Dallas and Cheryl

Dallas Tonsager | Under Secretary

1

Rural Development
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Phone: 202.720.4581 | Fax: 202.720.2080
www.rurdev.usda.gov

2

[REDACTED]

From: Tonsager, Dallas
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:26 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin; Wyant, Monica; Cook, Cheryl; Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Subject: RE: Hey

Thanks.

-----Original Message-----

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:26 PM
To: Tonsager, Dallas; Washo, Kevin; Wyant, Monica; Cook, Cheryl; Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Subject: Re: Hey

We will get you covered and OC will go with you tomorrow.

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

Exemption (b)(6)

----- Original Message -----

1

From: Tonsager, Dallas
To: Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin; Wyant, Monica; Cook, Cheryl; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 17:12:57 2010
Subject: RE: Hey

I wouldn't be surprised to get a question over this matter during my hearings this week. Would appreciate some help on a response.

-----Original Message-----

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:33 PM
To: Washo, Kevin; Wyant, Monica; Tonsager, Dallas; Cook, Cheryl
Subject: FW: Hey

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:32 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Jett, Carole
Subject: Hey

The S is absolutely sick and mad over the S Sherrod issue. He wants her immediately on Adm leave, Justin is working on a strong statement and I need to call Rep Bishop as soon as ya'll give me the go ahead.

2

From: Tonsager, Dallas
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:13 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin; Wyant, Monica; Cook, Cheryl; Harden, Krysta
Subject: RE: Hey

I wouldn't be surprised to get a question over this matter during my hearings this week. Would appreciate some help on a response.

-----Original Message-----

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:33 PM
To: Washo, Kevin; Wyant, Monica; Tonsager, Dallas; Cook, Cheryl
Subject: FW: Hey

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:32 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Jett, Carole
Subject: Hey

1

The S is absolutely sick and mad over the S Sherrod issue. He wants her immediately on Adm leave, Justin is working on a strong statement and I need to call Rep Bishop as soon as ya'll give me the go ahead.

2

[REDACTED]

From: Tonsager, Dallas
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:04 PM
To: [REDACTED] *Exemption (b)(6)*
Cc: Russ, Karen; Chierostan, Jett; Carole; Washo, Kevin
Subject: Shirley Sherrod

Dear Mr. Secretary

We have just seen the video of Georgia State Director Shirley Sherrod and are deeply disturbed. Cheryl has put her on administrative leave pending a full investigation. Of course, the video suggests that this is about a farm loan, and those programs were transferred to the Farm Service Agency in 1995.

Shirley explained to Cheryl that this piece of tape shows only one small part of a longer story she told of her personal transformation beyond race, and is about a farmer who came to see her in 1986 when she was working as a farm advocate. The rest of the story apparently explains how she came to assist this farmer and many other white farmers during this time period. She said there is a copy of the entire speech, and Cheryl asked her to provide it as quickly as possible.

Dallas and Cheryl

1

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Phone: 202.720.4581 | Fax: 202.720.2080
www.rurdev.usda.gov

2

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] *Ex (b)(6)*
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:03 PM
To: Tonsager, Dallas
Subject: The public actions of Ms. Shirley Sherrod

Mr. Tonsager,

One of the directors reporting to you, Shirley Sherrod, was recently reported to have boasted of discriminating against taxpayers on the basis of race.

You can read Andrew Breitbart's report on this subject at the following internet address: <http://biggovernment.com/abreitbart/2010/07/19/video-proof-the-naacp-awards-racism2010/>

As a taxpayer and voter, I respectfully submit that you ask for Ms. Sherrod's resignation. The content of her public remarks as reported would seem to disqualify her from continuing to hold an appointed office. A Director of Rural Development working for the federal government should in no way be allowed to discriminate against citizens in a manner prohibited by federal law.

Thank you for taking this time to read this message.

1

Sincerely,

Stephen Wagstaff

[REDACTED]
Ex (b)(6)

2

[REDACTED]

From: Tonsager, Dallas
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:04 PM
To: [REDACTED] Exemption (b)(6)
Cc: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin
Subject: Shirley Sherrod

Dear Mr. Secretary

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Dallas and Cheryl

1

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2

[REDACTED]

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Thank you for taking this time to read this message.

1

Sincerely,

Stephen Wagstaff

[REDACTED]
Ex (b)(6)

2



RURAL DEVELOPMENT LEADERSHIP NETWORK

rdln@ruraldevelopment.org <http://www.ruraldevelopment.org>
P.O. Box 98 Prince St. Station, New York, NY 10012
Phone (212)777-9137 FAX (212)777-9137

July 20, 2010

Support for Shirley Sherrod

Shirley Sherrod, who has devoted her life to racial justice, was forced to resign yesterday as Georgia State Director of Rural Development for the United States Department of Agriculture, caught in the crossfire of discrimination charges between the Tea Party and the National Association of Colored People (NAACP).

On July 13, the NAACP charged elements of the Tea Party with racism. On July 18, Fox News began playing a video clip circulated by a conservative activist that was framed to show Ms. Sherrod telling an NAACP audience last March that she was reluctant to help a white farmer, whereas the point of the story she was telling was that her experience with this farmer "opened her eyes" to the fact that poor white farmers could be ill treated also. It's not just black and white, she said, even on the part of the speech that was shown, "It's about the poor versus those who have."

The story is presented on the internet with a text panel stating that "Ms. Sherrod admits that in her federally appointed position, overseeing over a billion dollars, she discriminates against people due to their race." This statement is false, but apparently was accepted at face value by Fox News, MSNBC, the Department of Agriculture, the White House and the NAACP.

The events in the story she was told in her speech about how her eyes were opened, actually took place twenty-four years ago, when she worked for a nonprofit organization that grew out of the Civil Rights movement with a mission to save black-owned land. In that capacity, she did in fact help the white farmer in question. She worked hard, as she related in a phone conversation and as the full story would have shown, on an emergency basis over a Memorial Day weekend, finding a more responsive lawyer than the one initially contacted, and she actually was successful in saving this white farmer's farm. She and the family became so close that the farmer and his wife drove four hours to a meeting in Atlanta several months later to attend a conference on saving black-owned land. Mrs. Eloise Spooner, the farmer's wife, spoke by phone to CNN this morning and testified to the family's friendship with Ms. Sherrod and their gratitude toward her.

Ms. Sherrod understands discrimination well. When she was sixteen, her father was murdered by a white man, who, although he was known in the community, was not brought to justice.

As the first African-American Georgia State Director for Rural Development, USDA, Ms. Sherrod was in a position to help many people of all races, and she was reaching out to many under-served communities to do just that.

In the 1960's, Ms. Sherrod and her husband, Charles, the first field secretary for the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) withdrew from SNCC and formed the Southwest

Georgia Project in response to SNCC's new policy, under Stokely Carmichael's leadership, that white people could no longer be members of SNCC.

In 1985, Ms. Sherrod became a participant in the Rural Development Leadership Network, a national, multicultural social change organization. She earned her master's degree from Antioch University through RDLN and became Vice Chair of our Board of Directors, working closely with our white President, our diverse Board, which includes white members, and helping to orient each new group of participants who have been black, American Indian, Latina/o, Asian, and white.

Ms. Sherrod has worked constructively with a number of other organizations with white staff and constituencies, including the Farmers Legal Action Group based in Minnesota.

In announcing Ms. Sherrod's resignation, Secretary Vilsack stated that the Department has "zero tolerance" for discrimination. We are disappointed that the Department of Agriculture, the Obama Administration, the NAACP, and several news outlets did not look into the facts and did not stand up for Ms. Sherrod.

We call upon Secretary Vilsack to reinstate Ms. Sherrod and investigate how this injustice was allowed to happen.

RDLN Board of Directors

Moises Loza, Chairman, Executive Director, Housing Assistance Council

John Zippert, Director of Program Operations, Federation of Southern Cooperatives (AL)

G. David Singleton, California Native American Heritage Commission; Applied Development Economics (CA)

Twila Martin-Kekahbah, United Tribes Technical College; former chair, Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians (ND)

Anita LaRan, Collaborative Visions; President, Sangre de Cristo Livestock Growers Assoc. (NM)

Mily Treviño-Sauceda, President Emerita, Lideeres Campesinas (CA)

Starry Krueger, President (NY)

[REDACTED]

From: TJV
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:37 PM
To: Tonsager, Dallas
Subject: Re:

[REDACTED]

Ex (b)(5)

TV

----- Original Message -----

From: Tonsager, Dallas
To: TJV
Sent: Mon Jul 19 17:30:47 2010
Subject:

Mr. Secretary

I had tried you earlier today on a different email address which failed.

1

I am shocked by the comments made by State Director Shirley Sherrod and posted on the internet. She was immediately suspended and my understanding is she has resigned.

Dallas

[REDACTED]

From: Tonsager, Dallas
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 4:47 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: FW: Shirley Sherrod

From: Tonsager, Dallas
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:04 PM
To: [REDACTED] Exemption (b)(6)
Cc: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin
Subject: Shirley Sherrod

Dear Mr. Secretary

We have just seen the video of Georgia State Director Shirley Sherrod and are deeply disturbed. Cheryl has put her on administrative leave pending a full investigation. Of course, the video suggests that this is about a farm loan, and those programs were transferred to the Farm Service Agency in 1995.

1

Shirley explained to Cheryl that this piece of tape shows only one small part of a longer story she told of her personal transformation beyond race, and is about a farmer who came to see her in 1986 when she was working as a farm advocate. The rest of the story apparently explains how she came to assist this farmer and many other white farmers during this time period. She said there is a copy of the entire speech, and Cheryl asked her to provide it as quickly as possible.

Dallas and Cheryl

Dallas Tonsager | Under Secretary
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U.S. Department of Agriculture
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Phone: 202.720.4581 | Fax: 202.720.2080
www.rurdev.usda.gov

2

Berge, John

From: Greenawalt, Andrei M. [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:36 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: RE: HELP

Just sent you the right number: [REDACTED]

From: Berge, John [mailto:John.Berge@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:35 PM
To: Greenawalt, Andrei M.; Heimbach, James T.
Subject: RE: HELP

Youre my hero.

From: Greenawalt, Andrei M. [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:34 PM
To: Berge, John; Heimbach, James T.
Subject: RE: HELP

[REDACTED]

From: Berge, John [mailto:John.Berge@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:33 PM
To: Greenawalt, Andrei M.; Heimbach, James T.
Subject: HELP
Importance: High

Need a phone number for Tom Gavin ASAP.

John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Cherlin, Reid H. [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:29 PM
To: Berge, John; Greenawalt, Andrei M.
Subject: RE: do you have a cell or direct number for Gibbs?

perfect

From: Berge, John [mailto:John.Berge@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:29 PM
To: Cherlin, Reid H.; Greenawalt, Andrei M.
Subject: RE: do you have a cell or direct number for Gibbs?

When Secretary needs to call him, we'll reach back out. Thanks.

From: Cherlin, Reid H. [mailto:[REDACTED]]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:27 PM
To: Berge, John; Greenawalt, Andrei M.
Subject: RE: do you have a cell or direct number for Gibbs?

Ok. I have his cell if you do need it. Works best to give him a time range when he should have his cell with him. But if this isn't happening, that's fine too. Gibbs is aware of the GA situation and the actions you guys have taken.

From: Berge, John [mailto:John.Berge@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:25 PM
To: Greenawalt, Andrei M.
Cc: Cherlin, Reid H.
Subject: RE: do you have a cell or direct number for Gibbs?

Nevermind.

From: Greenawalt, Andrei M. [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:24 PM
To: Berge, John
Cc: Cherlin, Reid H.
Subject: RE: do you have a cell or direct number for Gibbs?

Adding Reid who will know the best way to reach him and has been working on this

From: Berge, John [mailto:John.Berge@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:22 PM
To: Greenawalt, Andrei M.
Subject: do you have a cell or direct number for Gibbs?

Secretary will likely want to call him this evening.

John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Got it and will follow up.

----- Original Message -----

From: Wilson, Denise R. <[REDACTED]>

To: Berge, John

Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:21:22 2010

Subject: Chairman Towns

His staff director, Ron Stroman just called. Towns wants to be briefed on Shirley Sherrod.

Ron's number is [REDACTED].

Denise Wilson

Special Assistant to the President

Office of Legislative Affairs

The White House

Berge, John

From: Wilson, Denise R. [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:41 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns

Whew. Great
Denise Wilson
Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

From: Berge, John <John.Berge@osec.usda.gov>
To: Wilson, Denise R.
Sent: Tue Jul 20 18:35:19 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns

I spoke with Ron. We're hooking the Secretary up with the Chairman.

From: Wilson, Denise R.
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 18:29:43 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns
You have to connect with Ron. I better check his website. No telling what they have released
Denise Wilson
Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

From: Berge, John <John.Berge@osec.usda.gov>
To: Wilson, Denise R.
Sent: Tue Jul 20 18:27:51 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns

Not yet.

From: Wilson, Denise R.
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 18:20:50 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns
Any new news?
Denise Wilson
Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

From: Berge, John <John.Berge@osec.usda.gov>
To: Wilson, Denise R.
Sent: Tue Jul 20 17:09:14 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns

Very helpful.

From: Wilson, Denise R.
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 17:07:00 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns
[REDACTED] Towns mobile

[REDACTED] Ron mobile
Denise Wilson
Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

From: Berge, John <John.Berge@osec.usda.gov>
To: Wilson, Denise R.
Sent: Tue Jul 20 17:03:09 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns

Concur, and that is what I offered on voicemail, but need best number for later tonight. S is in OH travelling and won't be available to call until after 6 or 630 EDT. Do you have a good number?

From: Wilson, Denise R.
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:58:25 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns
Maybe the secretary should just put in a call to Towns. Maybe Towns/ Ron feel left out on the calls.
Denise Wilson
Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

From: Wilson, Denise R.
To: 'John.Berge@osec.usda.gov' <John.Berge@osec.usda.gov>
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:48:12 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns

Good. Not sure why Ron wants to make an issue of this without the facts
Denise Wilson
Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

From: Berge, John <John.Berge@osec.usda.gov>
To: Wilson, Denise R.
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:37:37 2010
Subject: RE: Chairman Towns

They are speaking at 515.

From: Wilson, Denise R. [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:31 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns

Did he speak with Barbara Lee
Denise Wilson
Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

From: Berge, John <John.Berge@osec.usda.gov>
To: Wilson, Denise R.
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:29:27 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns

The opposite. The Secretary spoke with several members of the CBC today who were all supportive.

From: Wilson, Denise R.
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:28:00 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns
Ron is way too wound up on this. He's saying the CBC will be all over this. What have you heard?
Denise Wilson
Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

From: Berge, John <John.Berge@osec.usda.gov>
To: Wilson, Denise R.
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:26:03 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns

Got it and will follow up.

----- Original Message -----

From: Wilson, Denise R. <[REDACTED]>
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:21:22 2010
Subject: Chairman Towns

His staff director, Ron Stroman just called. Towns wants to be briefed on Shirley Sherrod.
Ron's number is [REDACTED]
Denise Wilson
Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

McNeil, Mary

From: Leonard, Joe
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 5:30 PM
To: McNeil, Mary
Subject: Fw: Help

Do you know anything about 

----- Original Message -----

From: Jett, Carole
To: Heard, Robin; Jeanquart, Bobbi; Leonard, Joe
Cc: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tue Jul 20 17:23:42 2010
Subject: Help

I need to get the facts around the  go last year.

Mather needs for press inquiries tonight.

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA



McNeil, Mary

From: Pfaeffle, Frederick [Frederick.Pfaeffle@OGC.USDA.GOV]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 5:53 PM
To: McNeil, Mary
Subject: RE: Help

I think [REDACTED] -- is that what you mean? I'm following up

-----Original Message-----
From: McNeil, Mary [mailto:Mary.McNeil@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 5:50 PM
To: Pfaeffle, Frederick; BUMBARY-LANGSTON, INGA
Subject: FW: Help

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] See email exchange below. Thanks.

Mary

-----Original Message-----
From: McNeil, Mary
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 5:41 PM
To: 'Pfaeffle, Frederick'
Subject: FW: Help

Can you check to see if you have any records regarding [REDACTED] See
email exchange. Thanks.

-----Original Message-----
From: Jeanquart, Bobbi
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 5:25 PM
To: McNeil, Mary
Subject: Fw: Help

Can you help get this info or follow up with dr leonard

----- Original Message -----
From: Jett, Carole
To: Heard, Robin; Jeanquart, Bobbi; Leonard, Joe
Cc: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tue Jul 20 17:23:42 2010
Subject: Help

I need to get the facts around the [REDACTED] go last year.

Mather needs for press inquiries tonight.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA
[REDACTED]

McNeil, Mary

From: Knishkowsky, Jeff
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:40 AM
To: Leonard, Joe; McNeil, Mary
Subject: Shirley Sherrod

Please let me know if there is any way I can be helpful.

This seems like a natural place for Special Counsel for Civil Rights to contribute in some way. On the other hand, I know there's a lot going on with program adjudication, so I'm not looking to over-commit myself. Just wanting to provide options in a sensitive situation.

Jeff

Jeff Knishkowsky
Special Counsel for Civil Rights
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights

[REDACTED]
(202) 205-3579
202-302-8900

McNeil, Mary

From: Porto, Stacy
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:40 AM
To: McNeil, Mary
Subject: Fw: Shirley Sherrod Resigns Over USDA Race Remark Furor - Political Hotsheet - CBS News

Mary
I'm assuming you all are doing something with this. Yikes.
SP

----- Original Message -----
From: Bryson, John M. II (DC) <[REDACTED]>
To: Porto, Stacy
Sent: Tue Jul 20 10:30:49 2010
Subject: Shirley Sherrod Resigns Over USDA Race Remark Furor - Political Hotsheet - CBS News

http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-503544_162-20011026-503544.html

Representing management exclusively in workplace law and related litigation

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Political Hotsheet

July 20, 2010 9:53 AM

Shirley Sherrod Resigns from USDA over Race Remark Furor

Posted by David S Morgan



Shirley Sherrod, the USDA's Georgia State Director of Rural Development, speaking at an NAACP Freedom Fund banquet in Douglas, Ga., on March 27, 2010.

(Credit: YouTube)

A high-ranking black employee of the U.S. Department of Agriculture has resigned after remarks she made about race were distributed by conservative web sites and aired on Fox News.

A video clip of Shirley Sherrod, the USDA's Georgia State Director of Rural Development, was circulated by conservative blogger Andrew Breitbart and his site, biggovernment.com, in which Sherrod talked of withholding help to a white man facing the loss of his family farm.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack released a statement Tuesday saying he had accepted Sherrod's resignation, and added that the department has no tolerance for discrimination.

The remarks was purportedly from a speech Sherrod gave at an NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet on March 27, 2010, in Douglas, Ga. The video clip has inflamed innumerable conservative bloggers and has lit up YouTube.

The news came a week after the NAACP and the Tea Party movement each became embroiled in accusations of racism and bigotry within the other group, and after a high-ranking Tea Party spokesperson was expelled by other movement officials after he published a blog about slavery that was deemed racist.

In a statement released Monday, NAACP President Benjamin Jealous said that the organization concurred with Vilsack accepting Sherrod's resignation, adding, "Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race."

But in an interview with the Atlanta Journal Constitution, Sherrod said the clip doesn't tell the whole story. And indeed, it is a story that pre-dates her tenure at the USDA by more than two decades.

Sherrod is a graduate of Albany State University in Albany, Ga., with a masters degree in Community Development from Antioch University in Ohio. Beginning in 1985 she served as Director of the Georgia State Office for the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund, which works to help family farmers retain and develop their property.

Last July Vilsack appointed her to head the USDA's Rural Development office in Georgia.

In the video clip (which you can watch at left), Sherrod is heard telling a story about a white man who came to her for help:

"The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking, but he was trying to show me he was superior to me. I know what he was doing. But he had come to me for help.

"What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was, I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him. I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough, so that when he - I assumed the Department of Agriculture had sent him to me, either that or the Georgia Department of Agriculture, and he needed to go back and report that I did try to help him.

"So I took him to a white lawyer that had attended some of the training that we had provided because Chapter 12 bankruptcy had just been enacted for the family farm. So I figured if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him.

"That's when it was revealed to me that it's about poor versus those who have. It's not so much about white -- It IS about white and black, because I took him to one of his own . . . "

The clip ends just as Sherrod has begun talking about a realization that it is class -- not race -- that is the issue, which is ironic given how Sherrod's critics are trying to take her remarks to prove racism exists.

What's more, Sherrod told the Journal-Constitution, the encounter she's relating occurred 24 years ago, long before she was a government employee. [Indeed, Chapter 12 bankruptcy, which she says in the video had just been enacted, was instituted for family farmers in 1986.]

Sherrod also told the paper that the video excerpt did not include the full story of her relationship with the farmer, working with him for two years to help his fight off foreclosure and keep his land, and even becoming friends with him and his wife.

"And I went on to work with many more white farmers," she said. "The story helped me realize that race is not the issue, it's about the people who have and the people who don't. When I speak to groups, I try to speak about getting beyond the issue of race."

Sherrod told the paper the USDA forced her out of her position because "They were just looking at what the Tea Party and what Fox said, and thought it was too (politically) dangerous for them."

The Journal-Constitution, the Huffington Post and other media outlets have called for a release of the complete tape, in order to better judge the context of Sherrod's remarks. There is more recording available, as Breitbart has managed to release a second clip in which Sherrod discusses the paucity of black employees in government positions relating to agriculture.

Sherrod suggests it would be a good career move, even in hard economic times: "You've heard of a lot of lay-offs. Have you heard of anybody in the federal government losing their job?"

What's Your Take? Awesome1 Shocking2 Infuriating5 Important6
Connect with CBS News [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [X](#)

Mr. Silverman, I had a confidential discussion with the Secretary concerning Mrs. Sherrod on the evening of July 20, 2010. If you need to know what we discussed you should see him.

Pearlie S. Reed

August 5, 2010

Hill, Shirley

From: Reed, Pearlie
Sent: Thursday, July 29, 2010 2:21 PM
To: Hill, Shirley
Subject: FW: Call to Shirley Sherrod

From: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 7:49 PM
To: Reed, Pearlie
Subject: RE: Call to Shirley Sherrod

Thanks for letting me know.

Karen Ross
Chief of Staff
Office of the Secretary
(202) 720-3631
karen.ross@osec.usda.gov

From: Reed, Pearlie
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 7:45 PM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: RE: Call to Shirley Sherrod

Karen, I have not been able to reach Ms. Sherrod.
Pearlie

From: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 9:47 AM
To: Reed, Pearlie
Subject: Call to Shirley Sherrod

Mr. Reed,

Her cell phone number is [REDACTED]
Her home number is: [REDACTED]
Her e-mail address is: [REDACTED]

Karen Ross

Chief of Staff
Office of the Secretary
(202) 720-3631
karen.ross@osec.usda.gov

Hill, Shirley

From: Reed, Pearlie
Sent: Thursday, July 29, 2010 2:26 PM
To: Hill, Shirley
Subject: FW: Position at USDA

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 11:32 PM
To: Reed, Pearlie
Subject: Re: Position at USDA

I will call you tomorrow.

-----Original Message-----

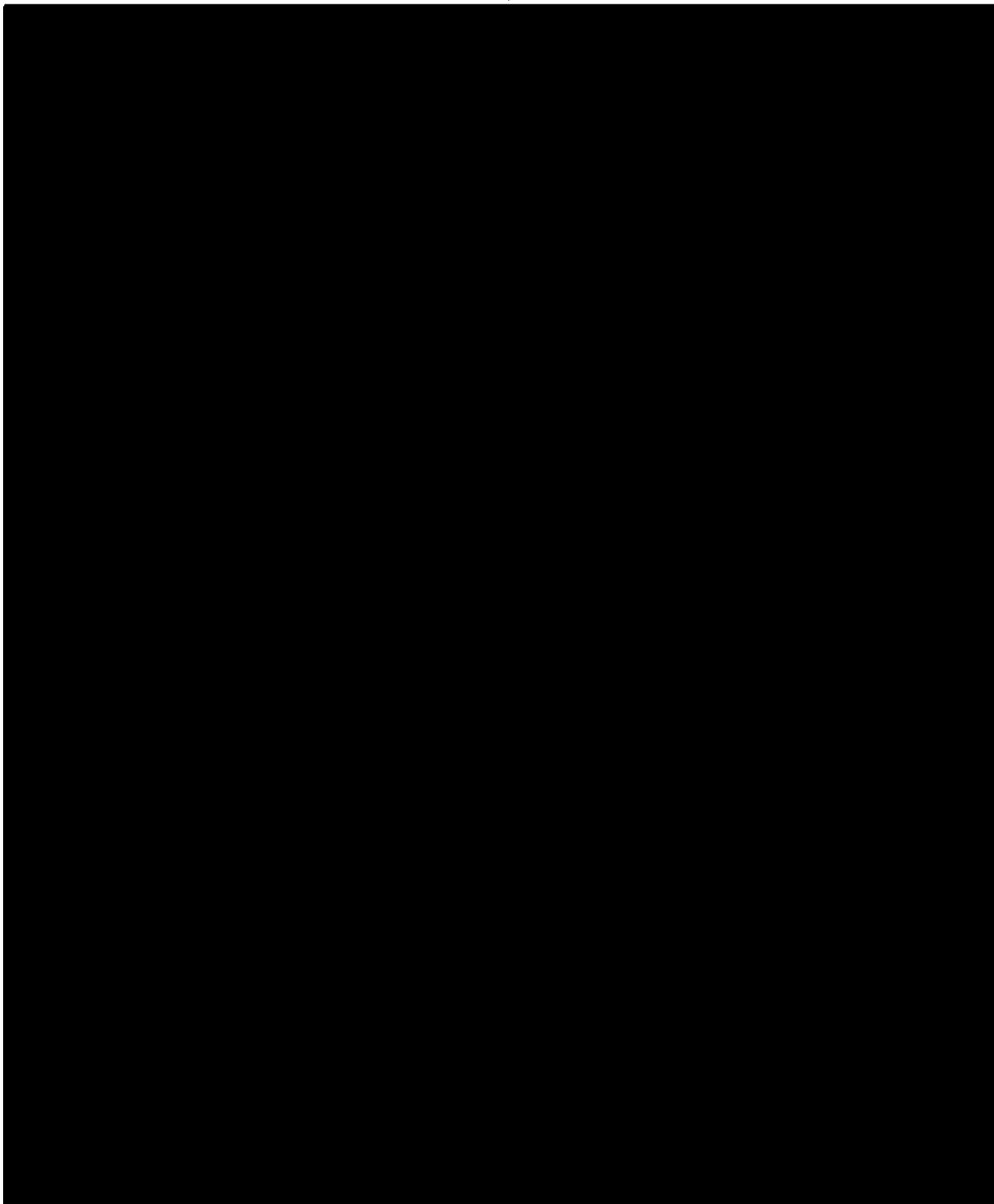
From: "Reed, Pearlie"
Sent: Jul 22, 2010 7:31 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: "Reed, Pearlie"
Subject: Position at USDA

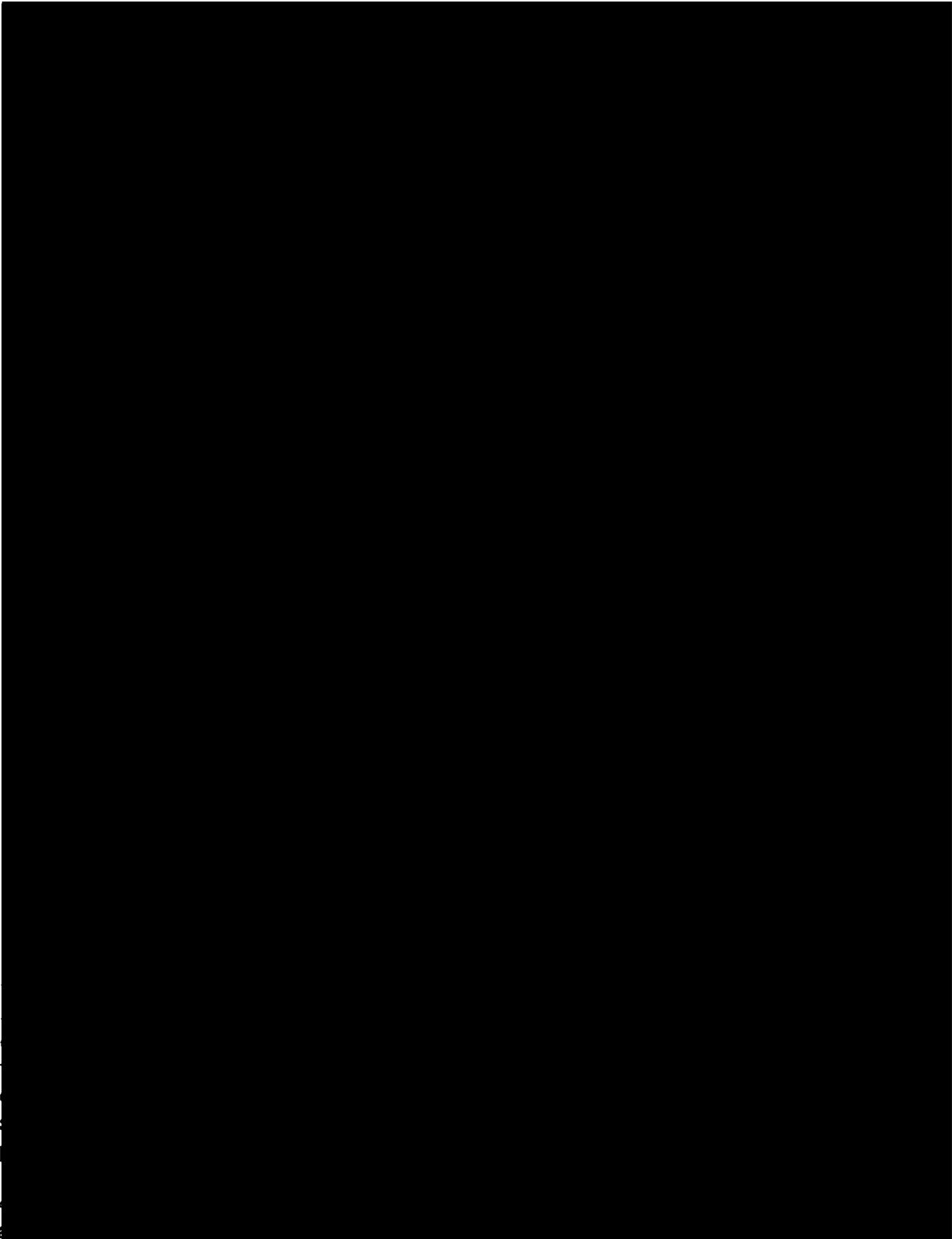
Ms. Sherrod, Secretary Vilsack asked me to provide you with additional information on the position he discussed with you yesterday. I can be reached at [REDACTED] (cell) or 202-720-3291 (office).

Pearlie S. Reed

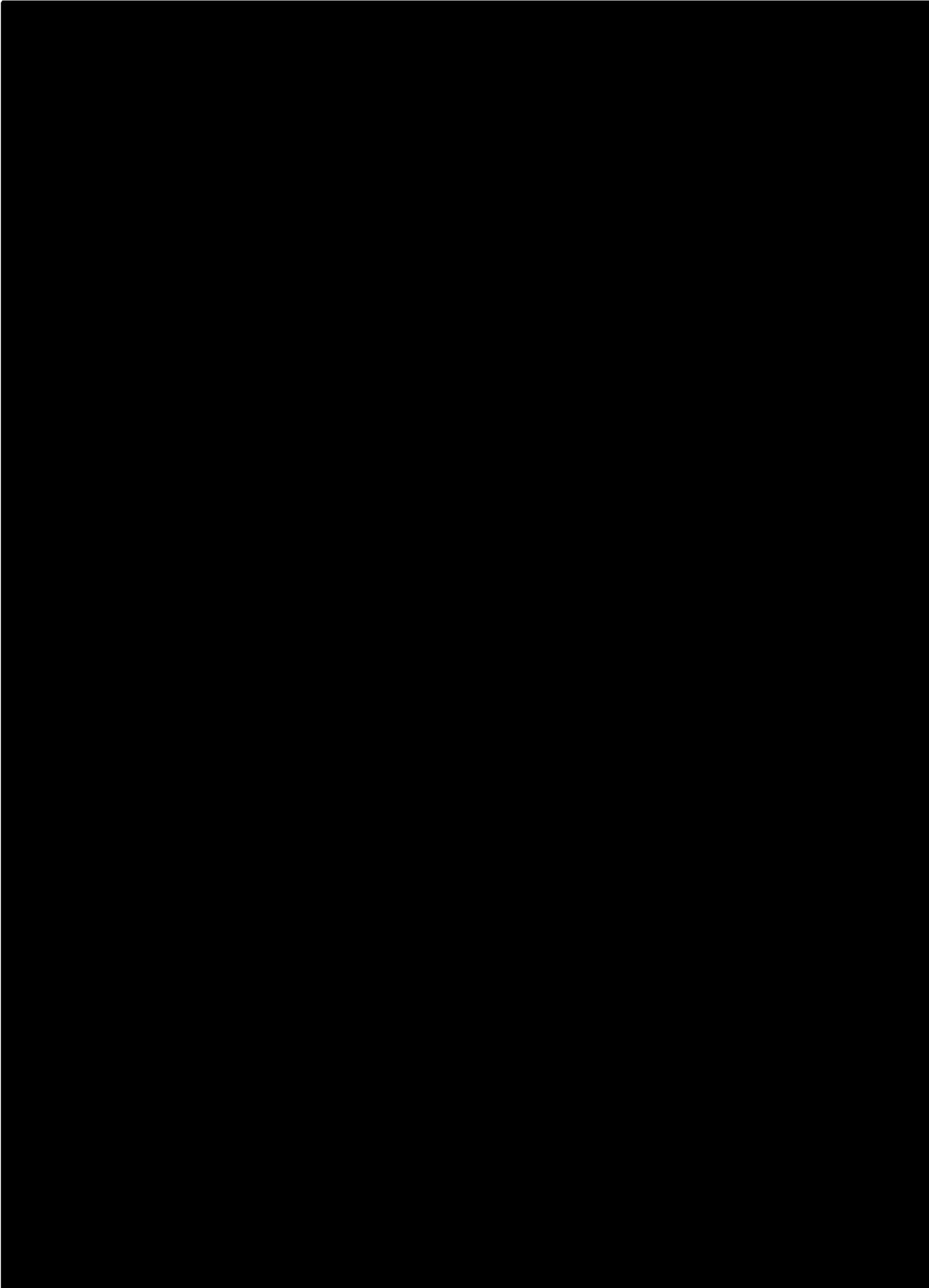
**U.S. Department of Agriculture
Departmental Management
Office of Advocacy and Outreach
Deputy Director of Advocacy and Outreach
ES-0340**

DRAFT

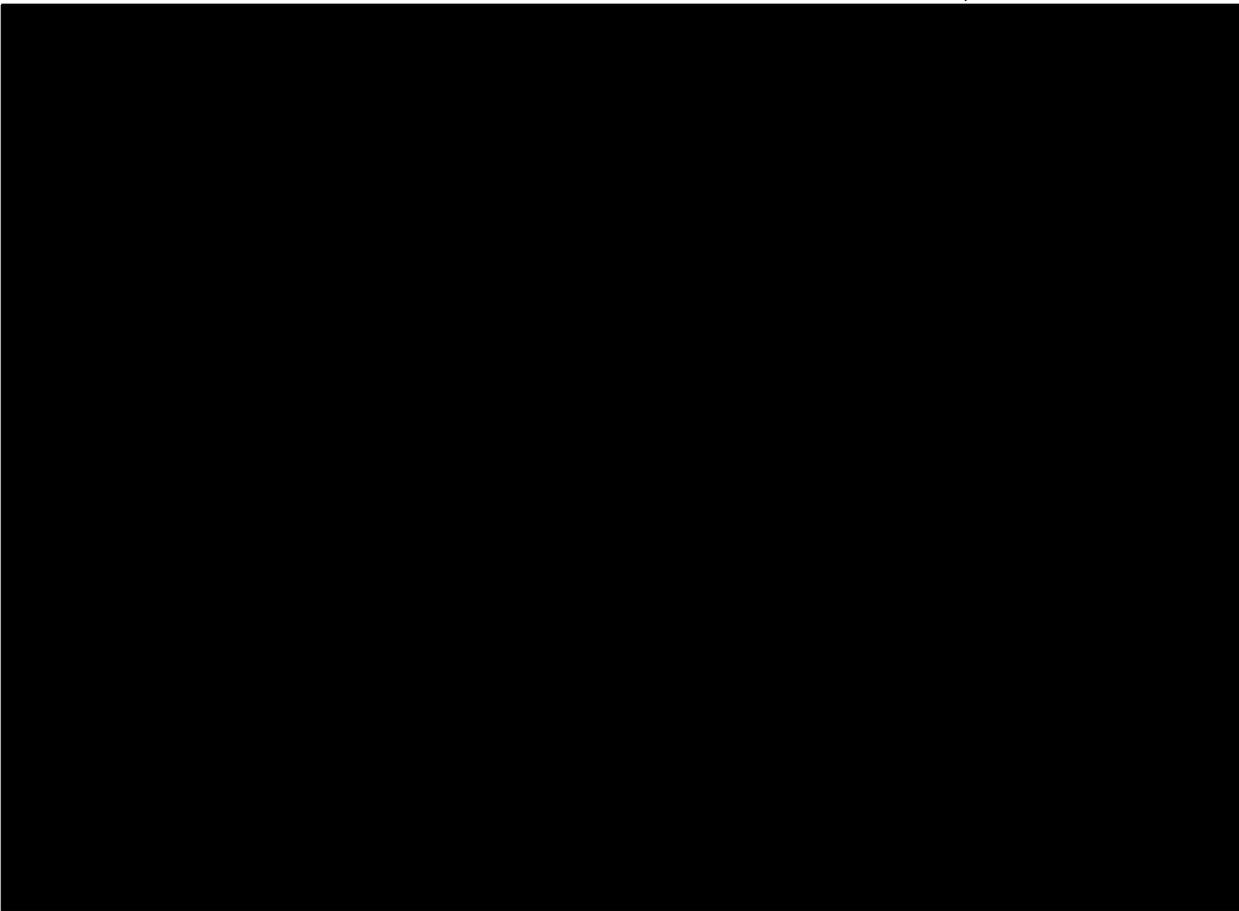




DRAFT



DRAFT



DRAFT

SECRET

Washo, Kevin

From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:57 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fw:

----- Original Message -----

From: Cook, Cheryl
To: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:56:14 2010
Subject: FW:

-----Original Message-----

From: Sherrod, Shirley - Athens, GA [mailto:[REDACTED]]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:55 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject:

Cheryl

I feel so disappointed that the Secretary and President let a misrepresentation of my words on the part of th Tea Party be the reason to ask me to resign

Please look at the tape and see that I use the story from 1986 to show people that the issue is not about race but about those who have v ersus those who do not

I used everything and everyone I could to help me to save that white farmers land. That family has the land because of what I did. He became a very good friend. I went on to help save many other white land owners thru the years

I submit my resignation but in doing so want to put the administration on notice that I will get the whole story out.

My whole life speaks for my commitment to fairness whether white or black.

Shirley sherrod

Sent using BlackBerry

Washo, Kevin

From: Green, Valerie E. [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:47 PM
To: Washo, Kevin
Subject: RE: Transcript

Thanks, but I think we still need the rest of her speech if we can get it.

From: Washo, Kevin [mailto:Kevin.Washo@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:46 PM
To: Green, Valerie E.
Subject: Fw: Transcript

From: Mather, Chris
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Washo, Kevin; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah; Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:53:35 2010
Subject: Fw: Transcript

Thanks Sarah.
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:42:36 2010
Subject: Transcript
Chris, please see below for transcript

Video: [Link](#)

On July 25, 2009 Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack appointed Shirley Sherrod as Georgia Director of Rural Development. USDA Rural Development spends over \$1.2 Billion in the state of Georgia each year. On March 27, 2010, while speaking at the NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet, Ms. Sherrod admits that in her federally appointed position, overseeing over a billion dollars, she discriminates against people due to their race.

Shirley Sherrod: The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking but he was trying to show me he was superior to me, I know what he was doing. But he had to come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me, was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him. I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land. And here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So, I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough. So that when he, I assumed the Department of Agriculture had sent him to me, either that or the Georgia Department of Agriculture. And he needed to go back and report that I did try and help him. So I took him to a white lawyer that had attended some of the training that we had provided because of Chapter 12 bankruptcy had just been enacted for the family farm. So I figured if I take him to one of them that his own kind would take care of him. That's when it was revealed to me that its about poor versus those who have. It's not so much about white...it is about white and black. It is about white and black but its not you know...it opened my eyes because I took him to one of his own.

Fox News Clip:

Geraldo Rivera: Do you denounce in the way that you ask the Tea Parties denounce racists within your ranks?

Hilary Shelton: Yes we do, we repudiate racists within our ranks.

Back to Shirley Sherrod Clip:

I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farm land and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]

Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

Washo, Kevin

From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:58 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: 13 point

Thanks, I am here with Chris Mather our comms director...

From: Green, Valerie E.
To: Washo, Kevin; Wyant, Monica; O'Neil, Michael P.
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:44:56 2010
Subject: RE: 13 point
Tracking it down now.

From: Washo, Kevin [mailto:Kevin.Washo@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:43 PM
To: Green, Valerie E.; Wyant, Monica; O'Neil, Michael P.
Subject: 13 point

I am on my bb can you send me our friend from georgias 13 point.

Washo, Kevin

From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:36 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re:

Let me know, I want to get her resignat. letter in hand.

From: Green, Valerie E.
To: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 17:28:42 2010
Subject: RE:
Tom Gavin is going to reach out to Chris.

From: Washo, Kevin [mailto:Kevin.Washo@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:20 PM
To: Green, Valerie E.
Subject: Fw:

Fyi

----- Original Message -----
From: Mather, Chris
To: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 17:17:38 2010
Subject:

In the event we do this, okay?

[REDACTED]

Chris Mather

Washo, Kevin

From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:22 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Resign

[REDACTED]

Washo, Kevin

From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:28 PM
To: 'Green, Valerie E.'
Subject: RE: Sherrod

I tried calling you.

From: Green, Valerie E. [mailto: [REDACTED]]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:24 PM
To: Washo, Kevin
Subject: Sherrod

You gotta loop me on regional stuff. Please. Please. Please.

Valerie Green
The White House | Presidential Personnel Office
Direct: [REDACTED] | Cell: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Washo, Kevin

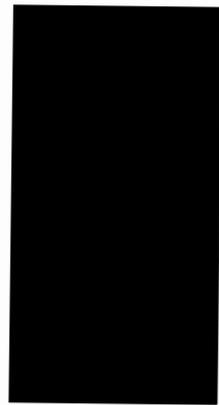
From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:34 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Call my cell

[REDACTED]

Washo, Kevin

From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:43 PM
To: [REDACTED] Wyant, Monica; [REDACTED]
Subject: 13 point

I am on my bb can you send me our friend from georgias 13 point.



Washo, Kevin

From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:55 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: 13 point

No worries, let me know what counsel says so we can be decisive on this.

From: Green, Valerie E.
To: Washo, Kevin; Wyant, Monica; O'Neil, Michael P.
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:44:56 2010
Subject: RE: 13 point
Tracking it down now.

From: Washo, Kevin [mailto:Kevin.Washo@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:43 PM
To: Green, Valerie E.; Wyant, Monica; O'Neil, Michael P.
Subject: 13 point

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Washo, Kevin

From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:20 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fw:

Fyi

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 17:17:38 2010
Subject:

[REDACTED]

Chris Mather

Washo, Kevin

From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:46 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fw: Transcript

From: Mather, Chris
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Washo, Kevin; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah; Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:53:35 2010
Subject: Fw: Transcript

Thanks Sarah.
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:42:36 2010
Subject: Transcript
Chris, please see below for transcript

Video: [Link](#)

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Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]

Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

Washo, Kevin

From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:12 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Transcript

Can you call me.....

From: Green, Valerie E.
To: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 17:46:33 2010
Subject: RE: Transcript

Thanks, but I think we still need the rest of her speech if we can get it.

From: Washo, Kevin [mailto:Kevin.Washo@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:46 PM
To: Green, Valerie E.
Subject: Fw: Transcript

From: Mather, Chris
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Washo, Kevin; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah; Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:53:35 2010
Subject: Fw: Transcript

Thanks Sarah.
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
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Subject: Transcript
Chris, please see below for transcript

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Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]

Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

Washo, Kevin

From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:38 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Naacp

Who is calling them?

Washo, Kevin

From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:52 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: FW: Shirley Sherrod on CNN

Another one.

-----Original Message-----

From: Green, Valerie E. [mailto: [REDACTED]]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:49 AM
To: Washo, Kevin
Subject: Fw: Shirley Sherrod on CNN

Sent using BlackBerry

----- Original Message -----

From: Bates, Andrew J.
To: Bates, Andrew J.; Pfeiffer, Dan; Hogan, Nancy D.; Gavin, Tom
Cc: Messina, Jim; Green, Valerie E.
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:54:14 2010
Subject: RE: Shirley Sherrod on CNN

And FOX News:

<http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2010/07/19/clip-shows-usda-official-admitting-withheld-help-white-farmer/?test=latestnews>

Video Shows USDA Official Saying She Didn't Give 'Full Force' of Help to White Farmer

Published July 20, 2010
| FoxNews.com

Days after the NAACP clashed with Tea Party members over allegations of racism, a video has surfaced showing an Agriculture Department official regaling an NAACP audience with a story about how she withheld help to a white farmer facing bankruptcy -- video that now has forced the official to resign.

Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, is shown in the clip describing "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." Sherrod, who is black, claimed the farmer took a long time trying to show he was "superior" to her. The audience laughed as she described how she determined his fate.

"He had to come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," she said. "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land -- so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough."

The Agriculture Department announced Monday, shortly after FoxNews.com published its initial report on the video, that Sherrod had resigned.

"There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person," Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a written statement. "We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.

The NAACP released a statement late Monday condemning Sherrod's admission.

"We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers," the statement said.

"Her actions were shameful," it continued. "While she went on to explain in the story that she ultimately realized her mistake, as well as the common predicament of working people of all races, she gave no indication she had attempted to right the wrong she had done to this man."

Sherrod explained in the video that, at the time, she assumed the state or national Department of Agriculture had referred the white farmer to her. In order to ensure that the farmer could report back that she was indeed helpful, she said she took him to see "one of his own" -- a white lawyer.

"I figured that if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him," she said.

The point of the story wasn't entirely clear; only an excerpt of the speech is included in the video clip.

"It was revealed to me that it's about poor versus those who have," she said, suggesting she had learned that race is less important.

The video clip was first posted by BigGovernment.com. The clip is dated March 27 from an NAACP Freedom Fund banquet.

The clip adds to the firestorm of debate over the NAACP's decision to approve a resolution at its convention last week accusing some Tea Party activists of racism -- a charge Tea Party leaders deny.

In a second clip from the same event posted online, Sherrod appeared to urge black job seekers to find work at the Department of Agriculture because the federal government won't lay people off.

"There are jobs at USDA and many times there are no people of color to fill those jobs because we shy away from agriculture. We hear the word agriculture and think, why are we working in the fields?" she said. "You've heard of a lot of layoffs. Have you heard of anybody in the federal government losing their job? That's all I need to say."

-----Original Message-----

From: Bates, Andrew J.

Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:53 AM

To: Bates, Andrew J.; Pfeiffer, Dan; Hogan, Nancy D.; Gavin, Tom

Cc: Messina, Jim; Green, Valerie E.

Subject: RE: Shirley Sherrod on CNN

Here's an Atlanta Journal Constitution blog post with full tape of her comments:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WrNww7TGkjo&feature=player_embedded

http://blogs.ajc.com/jay-bookman-blog/2010/07/20/in-the-curious-case-of-shirley-sherrod-lets-see-the-whole-tape/?cxntfid=blogs_jay_bookman_blog

Jay Bookman In the curious case of Shirley Sherrod, let's see the whole tape
7:31 am July 20, 2010, by Jay

A couple of folks in comments yesterday brought up the case of USDA official Shirley Sherrod, a black woman caught on tape at an NAACP meeting here in Georgia apparently bragging about being less than diligent in helping a white farmer. The folks at Big Government posted a portion of her speech as part of the running feud between the NAACP and the Tea Party over which organization is more racist.

By the end of the day Monday, Sherrod had been forced to resign her post, and NAACP President Ben Jealous had released a statement agreeing with the forced resignation:

"Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race.

We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers.

Her actions were shameful. While she went on to explain in the story that she ultimately realized her mistake, as well as the common predicament of working people of all races, she gave no indication she had attempted to right the wrong she had done to this man."

After watching the video Monday evening, I wrote in comments that "what Sherrod says in that video - and what she apparently did - are deeply troubling... She might very well have earned a firing. But I'd like to see that rest of that video as well, because at the point it abruptly ends, she appears to be saying that it's wrong to think in terms of black and white, that she came to see things as more accurately divided between poor and rich than by race."

As I also noted, the folks at Big Government seem to have the whole video, since they also posted another segment, and it would be useful to see the rest of it.

Sherrod gets a chance to tell her side of the story in an AJC story by Marcus Garner:

"But Tuesday morning, Sherrod said what online viewers weren't told in reports posted throughout the day Monday was that the tale she told at the banquet happened 24 years ago - before she got the USDA job - when she worked with the Georgia field office for the Federation of Southern Cooperative/Land Assistance Fund.

Sherrod said the short video clip excluded the breadth of the story about how she eventually worked with the man over a two-year period to help ward off foreclosure of his farm, and how she eventually became friends with the farmer and his wife.

"And I went on to work with many more white farmers," she said. "The story helped me realize that race is not the issue, it's about the people who have and the people who don't. When I speak to groups, I try to speak about getting beyond the issue of race."

So let's see the rest of the tape, Big Government. Was Sherrod giggling among black folk about the time she put it to the white man, as the leaked excerpt suggests, or was the tape a

deceptively edited excerpt of a longer story about getting beyond the issue of race, as she claims?

Let's see the tape. The evidence apparently exists to settle the question. Cough it up.

-----Original Message-----

From: Bates, Andrew J.

Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:50 AM

To: Bates, Andrew J.; Pfeiffer, Dan; Hogan, Nancy D.; Gavin, Tom

Cc: Messina, Jim; Green, Valerie E.

Subject: RE: Shirley Sherrod on CNN

Here's trans. It's near verbatim, but went with rough for speed:

<http://www.shadowtv.com/redirect/notification.jsp?vid=86e15cb25493301e7aee306262074d24>

JOHN ROBERTS: The U.S. Department of Agriculture accepts the resignation of an employee after a video surfaced showing her telling an audience that she withheld assistance to a white farmer because of his race. Let's listen to what she told the NAACP.

[BEGIN VIDEO]

SHIRLEY SHERROD: I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land. And here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So, I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough

[END VIDEO]

KIRAN CHETRY: Does that video tell the whole story? Joining us now on the phone from Albany, Georgia is Shirley Sherrod herself. Thanks for being with us this morning, Shirley.

SHERROD: Thank you.

CHETRY: You say this was part of the story and that it was part that was spliced enough to show you in a bad light, that this isn't the whole story. Will you finish for us how this ended?

SHERROD: Okay. I was speaking to that group like I've done many groups and I tell them about a time when I thought the issue was race and race only. And I tell them the story of how I worked with a white farmer back in 1986. I was not working for the Department of Agriculture. I was working with and non-profit organization assisting farmers throughout south Georgia and the southeast. And this farmer came to me for help. I was telling the story about how working with him helped me to see that the issue is not about race, it's about those who have versus those who do not have. And I tell how I took him to a lawyer who I thought would help him. In the end, that lawyer didn't. In the end, I had to frantically look for a lawyer because when USDA lifted - I'm sorry, when the court lifted the injunction against USDA in may of 1987, this white farmer was 1 of 13 that was foreclosed on by the state of Georgia. I had to frantically find a lawyer who would file a chapter 11 to stop the foreclosure. He couldn't - at that time we had chapter 12 -

CHETRY: Yes, but let me said - you said you didn't know enough, didn't give him the full force of what you could do. You said you did enough, and then you referred to the race of the lawyer as well, saying that perhaps because the lawyer was white that perhaps he could help him. What did you mean by that?

SHERROD: What I meant was, I didn't know anyone else. I didn't know another lawyer at that time who was local, who knew something about chapter 12. But I thought if I took him to a white lawyer, he would definitely do all that he could to help save his farm.

ROBERTS: Miss Sherrod, let's make it clear though, this happened 24 years ago. You eventually worked with this white farmer. You eventually became friends, you say, with the farmer and his wife.

SHERROD: Yes.

ROBERTS: So the question I have is, when the U.S. Department of Agriculture came to you and said you have to step down, why didn't you just say, "Wait a minute, you don't know the full story. Here's the full story, why should I step down?"

SHERROD: I did say that. But they, for, some reason, the stuff that FOX and the Tea Party does is scaring the administration. I told them, get the whole tape and look at the whole tape and look at how I tell people we have to get beyond race and start working together.

ROBERTS: Many people at home might be thinking, well, if you're recounting an old story, why did you succumb to pressure to step down? Why didn't you try to fight this?

SHERROD: If I tried to fight it and didn't have any support from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, what would I do?

CHETRY: Let me ask you this. Did you talk to the NAACP about it? Because I just want to read for our audience what Ben Jealous, the president, said. He said, referring to you and this surfacing of the tape, "Her actions were shameful. While she went on to explain in the story, she ultimately realized her mistake, as well as the common predicament of working people of all races. She gave no indication she had attempted to right the wrong she had done to this man, and the reaction from many in the audience is disturbing." This is from Ben Jealous. Did you try to clarify with the NAACP your story?

SHERROD: No, I haven't had a chance to talk to anyone. All of this was happening so fast. And it's unfortunate that the NAACP would make a statement without even checking to see what happened. This was 24 years ago, and I'm telling a story to try to unite people with that now.

ROBERTS: Certainly you're coming out and telling your story now takes it to a different level, and obviously we're going to keep following this. It is good to get your side of it. Sherri Sherrod, former Agriculture Department official. Perhaps we can get you back on again, get your face on TV as well and talk to you more about this as this story continues to develop.

SHERROD: I don't mind.

ROBERTS: Thanks a lot.

-----Original Message-----

From: Bates, Andrew J.

Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:39 AM

To: Bates, Andrew J.; Pfeiffer, Dan; Hogan, Nancy D.; Gavin, Tom

Cc: Messina, Jim; Green, Valerie E.

Subject: RE: Shirley Sherrod on CNN

Here's video. I'm doing the transcript now.

<http://www.shadowtv.com/redirect/notification.jsp?vid=86e15cb25493301e7aee306262074d24>

-----Original Message-----

From: Bates, Andrew J.
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:33 AM
To: Pfeiffer, Dan; Hogan, Nancy D.; Gavin, Tom
Cc: Messina, Jim; Green, Valerie E.
Subject: RE: Shirley Sherrod on CNN

Sure thing, I'll get it

-----Original Message-----

From: Pfeiffer, Dan
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:27 AM
To: Hogan, Nancy D.; Gavin, Tom
Cc: Messina, Jim; Green, Valerie E.; Bates, Andrew J.
Subject: RE: Shirley Sherrod on CNN

Looping bates

-----Original Message-----

From: Hogan, Nancy D.
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:27 AM
To: Gavin, Tom
Cc: Messina, Jim; Pfeiffer, Dan; Green, Valerie E.
Subject: FW: Shirley Sherrod on CNN

Shirley Sherrod is the USDA regional from last evening. I have not seen yet. Gavin, can someone from your team get transcript?

Washo, Kevin

From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:27 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: are you watching cnn? she is on

I am

From: Green, Valerie E.
To: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 11:21:59 2010
Subject: RE: are you watching cnn? she is on
I hope someone there is Watching.

From: Washo, Kevin [mailto:Kevin.Washo@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:20 AM
To: Green, Valerie E.
Subject: Re: are you watching cnn? she is on

No, will call you

From: Green, Valerie E.
To: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 11:08:12 2010
Subject: are you watching cnn? she is on

Valerie Green
The White House | Presidential Personnel Office
Direct: [REDACTED] | Cell: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Washo, Kevin

From: Green, Valerie E. [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:24 PM
To: Washo, Kevin
Subject: Sherrod

You gotta loop me on regional stuff. Please. Please. Please.

Valerie Green
The White House | Presidential Personnel Office

Direct: [REDACTED] | Cell: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Washo, Kevin

From: O'Neil, Michael P. [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:57 PM
To: Green, Valerie E.; Washo, Kevin
Subject: FW: Urgent
Attachments: Sherrod, Shirley Georgia Recommendation USDA.pdf; Letter to Carole Jett-S. Sherrod.doc

FYI support letters.

Michael

[REDACTED] (o)

-----Original Message-----

From: O'Neil, Michael P.
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:53 PM
To: Kennedy, Sean D.; McBride, Jonathan D.
Cc: Neralla, Venkateswar N.
Subject: RE: Urgent

Yes, entire GA delegation (please see attached letter):

Sanford Bishop Jr (D GA2)
John Lewis (D GA5)
Jim Marshall (D GA8)
David Scott (D GA13)
John Barrow (D GA12)
Hank Johnson (D GA4)

Also

The Federation of Southern Cooperatives Land Assistance Fund

Michael

[REDACTED] (o)

-----Original Message-----

From: Kennedy, Sean D.
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:41 PM
To: McBride, Jonathan D.
Cc: O'Neil, Michael P.
Subject: RE: Urgent

Will look at this now... [REDACTED]

-----Original Message-----

From: McBride, Jonathan D.
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:40 PM
To: Kennedy, Sean D.
Cc: O'Neil, Michael P.
Subject: FW: Urgent

Sean:

Want to be certain that you know about this USDA appointee (Georgia).
JM

Jonathan
[REDACTED] (o)

-----Original Message-----

From: Green, Valerie E.
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:37 PM
To: O'Neil, Michael P.; McBride, Jonathan D.; Burman, Kendall C.; Hogan, Nancy D.
Subject: RE: Urgent

[REDACTED]

-----Original Message-----

From: O'Neil, Michael P.
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:25 PM
To: Green, Valerie E.; McBride, Jonathan D.; Burman, Kendall C.
Subject: Re: Urgent

[REDACTED]

Michael P. O'Neil
[REDACTED]

----- Original Message -----

From: Green, Valerie E.
To: McBride, Jonathan D.; Burman, Kendall C.
Cc: O'Neil, Michael P.
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:23:29 2010
Subject: RE: Urgent

[REDACTED]

-----Original Message-----

From: McBride, Jonathan D.
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:02 PM
To: Burman, Kendall C.; Green, Valerie E.
Subject: FW: Urgent

Kendall:
You should watch this...
jm

Jonathan
[REDACTED] (o)

-----Original Message-----

From: O'Neil, Michael P.
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:51 PM
To: McBride, Jonathan D.
Subject: Fw: Urgent

You should take a look at this.

Assuming we should forward to press folks as an FYI, but want to know your thoughts.

Michael P. O'Neil
[REDACTED]

----- Original Message -----

From: Washo, Kevin <Kevin.Washo@osec.usda.gov>
To: O'Neil, Michael P.
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:49:24 2010
Subject: FW: Urgent

-----Original Message-----

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:06 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl; Tonsager, Dallas; Washo, Kevin
Cc: Wyant, Monica
Subject: Urgent

Sherliy Sherrod is on tape and you need to see/hear immediately

<http://hotair.com>

In upper right search Sherrod

We need to take immediate action.

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA
[REDACTED]

Washo, Kevin

From: Green, Valerie E. [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:29 PM
To: Washo, Kevin
Subject: RE:

Tom Gavin is going to reach out to Chris.

From: Washo, Kevin [mailto:Kevin.Washo@oséc.usda.gov]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:20 PM
To: Green, Valerie E.
Subject: Fw:

Fyi

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 17:17:38 2010
Subject:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Chris Mather

Washo, Kevin

From: Green, Valerie E. [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:38 PM
To: Washo, Kevin
Subject: RE:

Working it.

From: Washo, Kevin [mailto:Kevin.Washo@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:36 PM
To: Green, Valerie E.
Subject: Re:

Let me know, I want to get her resignat. letter in hand.

From: Green, Valerie E.
To: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 17:28:42 2010
Subject: RE:
Tom Gavin is going to reach out to Chris.

From: Washo, Kevin [mailto:Kevin.Washo@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:20 PM
To: Green, Valerie E.
Subject: Fw:

Fyi

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 17:17:38 2010
Subject:

[REDACTED]

Chris Mather

Washo, Kevin

From: Green, Valerie E. [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:47 AM
To: Washo, Kevin
Subject: Fw: Shirley Sherrod on CNN

Sent using BlackBerry

----- Original Message -----

From: McLaughlin, Margaret T.
To: Hogan, Nancy D.; Green, Valerie E.
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:05:55 2010
Subject: Shirley Sherrod on CNN

She is doing phone interview
Meg McLaughlin

Washo, Kevin

From: Green, Valerie E. [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:49 AM
To: Washo, Kevin
Subject: Fw: Shirley Sherrod on CNN

Sent using BlackBerry

----- Original Message -----

From: Bates, Andrew J.
To: Bates, Andrew J.; Pfeiffer, Dan; Hogan, Nancy D.; Gavin, Tom
Cc: Messina, Jim; Green, Valerie E.
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:50:11 2010
Subject: RE: Shirley Sherrod on CNN

Here's trans. It's near verbatim, but went with rough for speed:

<http://www.shadowtv.com/redirect/notification.jsp?vid=86e15cb25493301e7aee306262074d24>

JOHN ROBERTS: The U.S. Department of Agriculture accepts the resignation of an employee after a video surfaced showing her telling an audience that she withheld assistance to a white farmer because of his race. Let's listen to what she told the NAACP.

[BEGIN VIDEO]

SHIRLEY SHERROD: I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land. And here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So, I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough

[END VIDEO]

KIRAN CHETRY: Does that video tell the whole story? Joining us now on the phone from Albany, Georgia is Shirley Sherrod herself. Thanks for being with us this morning, Shirley.

SHERROD: Thank you.

CHETRY: You say this was part of the story and that it was part that was spliced enough to show you in a bad light, that this isn't the whole story. Will you finish for us how this ended?

SHERROD: Okay. I was speaking to that group like I've done many groups and I tell them about a time when I thought the issue was race and race only. And I tell them the story of how I worked with a white farmer back in 1986. I was not working for the Department of Agriculture. I was working with and non-profit organization assisting farmers throughout south Georgia and the southeast. And this farmer came to me for help. I was telling the story about how working with him helped me to see that the issue is not about race, it's about those who have versus those who do not have. And I tell how I took him to a lawyer who I thought would help him. In the end, that lawyer didn't. In the end, I had to frantically look for a lawyer because when USDA lifted - I'm sorry, when the court lifted the injunction against USDA in may of 1987, this white farmer was 1 of 13 that was foreclosed on by the state of Georgia. I had to

frantically find a lawyer who would file a chapter 11 to stop the foreclosure. He couldn't - at that time we had chapter 12 -

CHETRY: Yes, but let me said - you said you didn't know enough, didn't give him the full force of what you could do. You said you did enough, and then you referred to the race of the lawyer as well, saying that perhaps because the lawyer was white that perhaps he could help him. What did you mean by that?

SHERROD: What I meant was, I didn't know anyone else. I didn't know another lawyer at that time who was local, who knew something about chapter 12. But I thought if I took him to a white lawyer, he would definitely do all that he could to help save his farm.

ROBERTS: Miss Sherrod, let's make it clear though, this happened 24 years ago. You eventually worked with this white farmer. You eventually became friends, you say, with the farmer and his wife.

SHERROD: Yes.

ROBERTS: So the question I have is, when the U.S. Department of Agriculture came to you and said you have to step down, why didn't you just say, "Wait a minute, you don't know the full story. Here's the full story, why should I step down?"

SHERROD: I did say that. But they, for, some reason, the stuff that FOX and the Tea Party does is scaring the administration. I told them, get the whole tape and look at the whole tape and look at how I tell people we have to get beyond race and start working together.

ROBERTS: Many people at home might be thinking, well, if you're recounting an old story, why did you succumb to pressure to step down? Why didn't you try to fight this?

SHERROD: If I tried to fight it and didn't have any support from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, what would I do?

CHETRY: Let me ask you this. Did you talk to the NAACP about it? Because I just want to read for our audience what Ben Jealous, the president, said. He said, referring to you and this surfacing of the tape, "Her actions were shameful. While she went on to explain in the story, she ultimately realized her mistake, as well as the common predicament of working people of all races. She gave no indication she had attempted to right the wrong she had done to this man, and the reaction from many in the audience is disturbing." This is from Ben Jealous. Did you try to clarify with the NAACP your story?

SHERROD: No, I haven't had a chance to talk to anyone. All of this was happening so fast. And it's unfortunate that the NAACP would make a statement without even checking to see what happened. This was 24 years ago, and I'm telling a story to try to unite people with that now.

ROBERTS: Certainly you're coming out and telling your story now takes it to a different level, and obviously we're going to keep following this. It is good to get your side of it. Sherri Sherrod, former Agriculture Department official. Perhaps we can get you back on again, get your face on TV as well and talk to you more about this as this story continues to develop.

SHERROD: I don't mind.

ROBERTS: Thanks a lot.

-----Original Message-----

From: Bates, Andrew J.

Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:39 AM

To: Bates, Andrew J.; Pfeiffer, Dan; Hogan, Nancy D.; Gavin, Tom
Cc: Messina, Jim; Green, Valerie E.
Subject: RE: Shirley Sherrod on CNN

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Cc: Messina, Jim; Green, Valerie E.; Bates, Andrew J.
Subject: RE: Shirley Sherrod on CNN

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To: Gavin, Tom
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Subject: FW: Shirley Sherrod on CNN

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From: McLaughlin, Margaret T.
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:06 AM
To: Hogan, Nancy D.; Green, Valerie E.
Subject: Shirley Sherrod on CNN

She is doing phone interview
Meg McLaughlin

Washo, Kevin

From: Green, Valerie E. [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:22 AM
To: Washo, Kevin
Subject: RE: are you watching cnn? she is on

I hope someone there is Watching.

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Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:20 AM
To: Green, Valerie E.
Subject: Re: are you watching cnn? she is on

No, will call you

From: Green, Valerie E.
To: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 11:08:12 2010
Subject: are you watching cnn? she is on

Valerie Green
The White House | Presidential Personnel Office
Direct: [REDACTED] | Cell: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Washo, Kevin

From: Bates, Andrew J. [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:52 AM
To: Misailidis, Sarah; Gavin, Tom; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Justin, DeJong; Chan, Stephanie
Cc: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: RE: Rural Development summary clips

Full rough transcript & video

<http://www.shadowtv.com/redirect/notification.jsp?vid=f9a43c4a2746dbe5d8a2c6ec2d76317d>

<http://www.shadowtv.com/redirect/notification.jsp?vid=36ced10c7c8095c5487cflbbc27393a5>

<http://www.shadowtv.com/redirect/notification.jsp?vid=d329d73be7f05d01ba585c41238d2a6b>

<http://www.shadowtv.com/redirect/notification.jsp?vid=d294212084d738d6e41147e2f150d8d4>

TONY HARRIS: And Shirley Sherrod is with me now from Albany, Georgia. And, Shirley, let's take our time and walk through this together. Is that okay with you?

SHIRLEY SHERROD: Yes.

HARRIS: Okay. Shirley, just a straightforward, fundamental question here. Did you discriminate against this white farmer, Roger Spooner? He was facing foreclosure 24 years ago and, again, this was before you were working for the united states Department of Agriculture. Did you discriminate against him?

SHERROD: No, I did not discriminate against him. And, in fact, I went all out. I had to frantically look for a lawyer at the last minute because the first lawyer we went to was not doing anything to really help him. In fact, that lawyer suggested they should just let the farm go. All of that process – that's why I tell it, because everything that happened in dealing with him – he was the first white farmer that had come to me for help. Everything that I did working with him helped me to see that it wasn't about race. It's about those who have and those who don't. The farmer's home had done something to him that I hadn't seen them do to any black farmer. They had actually rented his land to someone else, when they didn't have a right to do that. He still had title to the land. That's why he couldn't qualify to file chapter 12 bankruptcy. That's why in the end we had to try to file chapter 11 bankruptcy to stop the forced sale the first Tuesday in June.

HARRIS: I'm going to ask it again slightly differently. Did you discriminate against this white farmer 24 years ago, when you were, I guess, about 38 years old, because he brought you what you described in your March NAACP Speech as a "superior attitude?"

SHERROD: You know, initially – and that's why I say that. I took the time to weave what was happening there. He did come with a superior attitude, but I didn't discriminate. If I had discriminated against him, I would not have given him any help at all because I wasn't obligated by anyone. I wasn't working for the government. I didn't have to help him, but I did. And I went on – that was the first white farmer I helped. I went on to help hundreds of others through the years.

HARRIS: Was your – I'm trying to understand your reaction to what you described as a "superior attitude." Was your reaction, perhaps, "Look, why are you taking this attitude with me? I sit here in a position to help you, and yet you bring this attitude to me." Did that cross your mind at all and did you act upon those feelings?

SHERROD: Certainly, I didn't act upon it. You know, I'm from the South. I've lived in the South all my life, and I know how black people were treated by white people during those years. My own father was murdered by one. But I didn't let that get in the way of trying to help. I don't know why it's so difficult to see. I didn't have to help that farmer. I could have

sent him out the door without giving him any help at all. But in the end we became very good friends, and that friendship lasted for some years.

HARRIS: Explain the statement in the recording that goes, "So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do."

SHERROD: You know, I could have tried to rally other farmers in support of him. I didn't know of any black farmers who would come out to try to support a white farmer at that point. That's something I could have done for black farmers. This was my first time trying to help a white farmer save his land. I wasn't really sure what I could do, because I thought at that time they had the advantages. I learned that that was not the case in working with this farmer.

HARRIS: And then you went on to say, "I did enough." What was "enough" in the case of Roger Spooner?

SHERROD: I took him – you mean initially? I took him to a lawyer who had attended some training for lawyers on chapter 12 bankruptcy. But in the end, that lawyer wasn't doing anything. And when the Spooners said that he wasn't, I jumped into action. It took me a couple of hours calling everyone I knew. I even called to other states trying to find a lawyer who would file a chapter 11 bankruptcy to stop the sale of his land at the courthouse steps. I was successful in the end.

HARRIS: During your time with the USDA was there ever a discrimination claim filed against you?

SHERROD: No, never. I went out of my way to – you know, and we didn't work directly with farmers at Rural Development. We were working with cities, with sewer problems, with police cars, with health centers, with housing. That agency is the one agency, so we say, that could build a city. I didn't do any work – and I didn't discriminate and I went out of my way to make sure no one who came to the agency was discriminated against. And, in fact, during my tenure there, I targeted nine of the poorest counties in the state to do outreach work. I had outreach meetings in all of those counties. I even started working with other USDA agencies and state agencies so that we could coordinate our efforts in these areas, and, in fact, this coming Thursday was the first meeting where we were going to pilot that, and that was in a county here in southwest Georgia, Calhoun county.

HARRIS: So, Shirley, if you didn't discriminate during your time at USDA and at least no one filed such a claim, do you accept the statement from agriculture secretary Tom Vilsack that there is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA?

SHERROD: I don't know, but I'm assuming there is. I know I didn't discriminate, and I made it very clear to the staff there at USDA that it wouldn't be tolerated during my tenure. I said it over and over again.

HARRIS: So why are you out?

SHERROD: Pardon?

HARRIS: Why are you out?

SHERROD: Why am I out? They asked me to resign, and, in fact, they harassed me as I was driving back to the state office from west point, Georgia yesterday. I had at least three calls telling me the White House wanted me to resign.

HARRIS: So the pressure came from the White House?

SHERROD: And the last one asked me to pull over to the side of the road and do it.

HARRIS: Are you willing to name names?

SHERROD: That's what I did.

HARRIS: Are you willing to name names.

SHERROD: That was Cheryl Cook, the deputy undersecretary. She called me and I said, Cheryl, I have a 3 1/2 hour ride to get into Athens. She called me a second time, where are you now? I said I'm just going through Atlanta. She called me

again and I said, I'm at least 45 minutes to an hour from Athens. She said, well, Shirley, they want you to pull over to the side of the road and do it because you're going to be on Glenn Beck tonight.

HARRIS: Wow. So the administration pressured you out?

SHERROD: Yes.

HARRIS: How do you feel about that?

SHERROD: I don't feel good about it because I know I didn't do anything wrong, and I know during my time at USDA I gave it all I had. I worked when I didn't feel like it. I pushed the staff to get out there in places they had not been into before. Like I said, the nine counties I targeted, I asked them shortly after getting there, tell me what rural development has been doing in these areas, and when they did that, there were zeros in a lot of places, and I knew this was an area where we needed to target. We needed to get programs out into some of these areas that need it, just like some other areas that had gotten the funding over and over again.

HARRIS: I So I want to be really specific here and I apologize. I just have to do it. You get, one, two, three calls from miss cook, and at the point that it is made clear to you that you need to go, how does that conversation go?

SHERROD: Yes.

HARRIS: What is said to you?

SHERROD: The very first one -- I guess there were like four calls because the very first one was before I got in my car to go to Athens. She said I was being put on administrative leave. The next call after I sat waiting and waiting because she told me she would call me right back, the next call said that they're going to have to ask me to resign.

HARRIS: Do you feel as though you had an opportunity to state your side of the story?

SHERROD: No, I didn't. The administration, they were not interested in hearing the truth. No one wanted to hear the truth.

HARRIS: The NAACP released a statement late last night saying in part we are appalled by her actions. That is an opportunity to explain what happened 24 years ago. Do you feel as though you got the opportunity, even in a phone call with the NAACP?

SHERROD: No, I didn't. The NAACP has not tried to contact me one time, and they are the reason why this happened they got into a fight with the tea party, and all of this came out as a result of that.

HARRIS: Your reaction --

SHERROD: I would have appreciated -- when you look at my history of civil rights, I would have appreciated having the NAACP at least contact me and Roland martin, too, contact me to try to get the truth about what happened.

HARRIS: The reaction to your reaction to essentially being condemned by the NAACP?

SHERROD: That hurts. Because if you look at my history, that's what I'm saying -- I've done more to advance the causes of civil rights in this area than some of them who are sitting in those positions now with the NAACP. They need to learn something about me. Ey need to know about my work. They need to know what I've contributed through the years.

HARRIS: What was the point of the story you were telling to the NAACP in March? What was the point?

SHERROD: The point was to get them to understand we need to look beyond race; to look at working together. I've said to audiences here, not just that one -- in fact, I spoke at a housing conference in a county just south of here, and I said,

look, we need to get beyond the Civil War. I tell them, there are good things about history from the white side and good things about history and culture from the black side. People love to come into this part of the state to see that. I tell them, we need to make the most of it, and if we work together, can do that.

HARRIS: Do you believe as a principle -- do you believe black people in power can make or have the ability -- can make race-based discriminatory decisions?

SHERROD: I'm sure that can happen. I can tell you I didn't do it.

HARRIS: Okay, that was my follow-up.

SHERROD: And you could go to any of the communities that I worked with and if the staff were free to tell you, you could talk to any of the people I've worked with since I've been at USDA, and they can tell you what my record is.

HARRIS: Shirley, stay right there. I have someone who wants to speak to this whole controversy. Her name is Eloise Spooner. She is Roger Spooner's wife -- widow this point.

SHERROD: Yes.

HARRIS: Widow at this point.

SHERROD: Yes.

HARRIS: Eloise, thanks for taking the time to talk to me.

ELOISE SPOONER: Thank you.

HARRIS: What do you think of this whole controversy? First of all, what do you think of Shirley?

SPOONER: She's a good friend.

HARRIS: Describe your relationship with her through the years.

SPOONER: She helped us save our farm.

How did she do that?

SPOONER: By getting in there and doing all she could do to help us.

What did your husband, your late husband, think of Shirley?

SPOONER: He's not dead. He's very much alive.

HARRIS: Really?

SPOONER: He's 87 and he's on his peterbuilt truck this morning.

HARRIS: Then I apologize. I've got incorrect information from one of the newspapers writing on this. I apologize for that.

SPOONER: That's okay.

HARRIS: Is he aware of the controversy swirling around?

SPOONER: Yes, our son, he came up and said, mama, turn on the TV to CNN and he said, it's about your friend Shirley Sherrod. And I said, what. I listened and said, that's not right. They have not treated her right because she's the one that I give credit for helping us save our farm.

HARRIS: Some of the story is that you met in the '80s, and it was a bad time?

SPOONER: Mm-hmm.

HARRIS: It was a bad time in the family's life at the time. Tell me why you were in trouble with the farm.

SPOONER: Well, we had a lot of dry weather, and we had to run the irrigation a lot. And when you'd make a good crop, you wouldn't get a good price. And just a number of things together caused it.

HARRIS: Do you remember your first interaction with Shirley?

SPOONER: Yeah. At first I looked into -- it was the market bulletin from Atlanta that we get. We've gotten it for years and years and years, and it said, if you were having trouble and about to lose your farm torque get with them. And I said, by George, I'm going to try that. And so I did, and he told us to go see a lawyer in Cairo. He said, you all might as well just go ahead and do what Diane said to do. And I was so mad when we came home. So, anyway, a few weeks later, the guy from Atlanta, the Market Bulletin, he said, what happened over in Cairo? And I said, exactly nothing. He didn't help us at all. He said, well, I'm going to get you with somebody that will help you, I think. And that's when he told us to call Shirley. And we did, and we started right then. She said there's too lawyers, there's a black lawyer and there's a white lawyer, and one -- the black lawyer is in Albany and the white lawyer is in [inaudible]. So I said, he's closer, so maybe we'll try him, the black one. We went through him for months and months and months and paid him some money, which was hard to scrape up. And he finally got with the lawyer in Donaldsonville that I had talked to, and he called and told me at the lawyer in Albany, called and told me that he could not handle us anymore, that he had this client that he had had for ten years, and he was going to have to spend a lot of time on that. He couldn't help us.

HARRIS: Hey, Eloise, a couple of quick questions here about this relationship.

SPOONER: Okay.

HARRIS: I'm just trying to establish this relationship. Explain to me -- I have a line here that says that you guys picked a bunch of tomatoes?

SPOONER: Yeah. One year, after things kind of settled down, I had a really pretty garden that year, and we going up to Albany for some reason, so I told Roger I was going to pick Shirley some tomatoes. And I did, and we carried them by to her and had a good visit.

HARRIS: You know, what do you think of the statement that's on the tape. It's undeniable, it is there, where Shirley essentially says, so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do.

SPOONER: Well, she gave enough that it helped us save our farm. And she went two trips -- after the lawyer in Albany did us like he did, well, then I called Shirley and told her, and she said, you're kidding me. I said, no, I'm not. That's the words she told me. She said, well, do you want us to try the one in Easterland? I said, yes, get us an appointment and we'll be ready to go.

HARRIS: Eloise, thank you for your time.

SHERROD: Please tell her want -- can you -- I don't know that she can hear me, but I haven't talked to here in years, and I'm so happy to hear that both of them are still living. And Miss Spooner, I definitely want to contact you. It's great to hear.

SPOONER: When we heard about it we tried to call you, but Roger couldn't get ahold of you.

SHERROD: Okay. Maybe you can get him.

HARRIS: We will make the connection. How's that? We will make that happen?

SHERROD: Thank you so much. It is so great to hear your voice.

HARRIS: And, Shirley, thanks to you. Thanks for your time, and a fuller explanation of your comments. Appreciate it.

SHERROD: Thank you so much.

From: Misailidis, Sarah [mailto:Sarah.Misailidis@oc.usda.gov]

Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:01 AM

To: Bates, Andrew J.; Gavin, Tom; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Justin, DeJong; Chan, Stephanie

Cc: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

Subject: Rural Development summary clips



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE

Office of Communications (202) 720-4623

USDA Clips

Tuesday, July 20, 2010

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Rural Development clips

USDA worker quits over racism charge from video (AP 7/20)

A black federal worker has resigned from a Georgia agricultural job after a video clip showed her saying she had not helped a farmer as much as she could have because he was white. U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a statement Tuesday he had accepted the resignation of Shirley Sherrod. Vilsack says the USDA has no tolerance for discrimination. Sherrod told the Atlanta-Journal Constitution she was forced out of her job as the USDA's rural development director for Georgia. She said the two-minute, 38-second video posted online Monday misconstrued her message. Sherrod's taped remarks were from a local meeting of the civil rights group NAACP. National NAACP President Benjamin Todd Jealous welcomed the resignation because the group opposes racism of all kinds. [Link](#)

Dismissed employee blames media (UPI 7/20)

An employee of the U.S. Department of Agriculture says she lost her job because the media misconstrued a speech she gave at an NAACP banquet. Shirley Sherrod, who was forced out as the USDA's rural development director for Georgia, is seen on a video admitting she didn't do everything she could to help a white farmer who needed aid, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported Tuesday. What the media didn't report, Sherrod says, was that the incident she was relating on the video happened 24 years ago when she was working for another organization, not the federal government. Also left out, Sherrod says, is the part where she says she was trying to figure out how to help someone who was condescending. [Link](#)

USDA employee says statements on white farmer misconstrued (CNN 7/20)

A black Agriculture Department employee who resigned after a video clip showed her talking about a white farmer said Tuesday her remarks were taken out of context. Shirley Sherrod, the department's former state director of rural development for Georgia, told CNN on Tuesday the incident she discusses in the clip

took place more than two decades ago -- and she recounted it to an audience to make the point that people should move beyond race. "I was speaking to that group, like I've done many groups, and I tell them about a time when I thought the issue was race and race only," Sherrod told CNN's "American Morning" from her home in Albany, Georgia. The incident took place in 1986, while she worked for a nonprofit and before she worked for the USDA, she said. "I was telling the story of how working with him helped me to see the issue is not about race. It's about those who have versus those who do not have." [Link](#)

Race remarks cost USDA official her job (CNN Blog 7/20)

An African-American Agriculture Department worker resigns over her handling of a white Georgia farmer's case when she worked for a nonprofit group in 1986. It came to light when Shirley Sherrod talked about the case at an NAACP banquet earlier this year. Were her remarks a teaching moment that backfired, or evidence of racism? Sherrod says her comments were taken out of context -- that the point of her story was to unite people. Tony Harris will be talking to Sherrod at 11:00am ET on CNN, and we'll post that interview here. Watch some of her speech and phone interview with CNN's American Morning below, then tell us what you think. We'll share some of your comments on air in the CNN Newsroom, 11:00am -- 1:00pm ET. [Link](#)

Video Shows USDA Official Saying She Didn't Give 'Full Force' of Help to White Farmer (FOX News 7/20)

Days after the NAACP clashed with Tea Party members over allegations of racism, a video has surfaced showing an Agriculture Department official regaling an NAACP audience with a story about how she withheld help to a white farmer facing bankruptcy -- video that now has forced the official to resign. Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, is shown in the clip describing "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." Sherrod, who is black, claimed the farmer took a long time trying to show he was "superior" to her. The audience laughed as she described how she determined his fate... "There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person," Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a written statement. "We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously." [Link](#)

Gingrich Responds to Discrimination at USDA (Fox News 7/20)

SEAN HANNITY, HOST: And this is a Fox News alert. An Obama administration official resigned just a short time ago after she was caught on tape appearing to tell an audience that she had used her position to racially discriminate against white farmers. Now the woman, Shirley Sherrod, was the Georgia state director at the Department of Agricultural. Now the president's Agricultural Secretary Tom Vilsack just released a statement saying the USDA has a zero tolerance policy against discrimination. Here's part of the shocking video that ignited this controversy. (BEGIN VIDEO CLIP) SHIRLEY SHERROD, FORMER USDA GA STATE DIRECTOR: The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking but he was trying to show me he was superior to me. I know what he was doing. But he had come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him. [Request Story](#)

Black USDA official resigns after admitting she only 'did enough' for white farmer (MSNBC 7/20)

A black USDA official in Georgia has resigned after publicly admitting she didn't help a white man trying to save his farm to the "full force" of her power and instead referred him to "one of his own." Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said he had accepted Shirley Sherrod's resignation, saying there was "zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA." The NAACP, which recently condemned racism in tea party groups, also issued a statement Monday night saying: "Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race." [Link](#)

Morning Joe (MSNBC 7/20)

Well, another story of reverse discrimination comes out today. This one is really interesting. I'm thinking that this woman regrets this comment. a USDA official in Georgia has resigned after I YouTube clip shows her admitting that race helped determine how much aid would be given to a white farmer. You're not supposed to do that, are you? I mean, I'm not --it's probably not a good idea. for being so stupid. It's not

even -- well, how about you just don't do it. Anyway, the state's director of rural development apparently made the comments during an NAACP banquet in March. Take a listen. The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking, but he was trying to show me he was superior to me. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time to show me he was superior to me was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him. I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So, I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. [Request Story](#)

Shirley Sherrod Resigns Over USDA Race Remark Furor (CBS News 7/20)

A high-ranking black employee of the U.S. Department of Agriculture has resigned after remarks she made about race were distributed by conservative web sites and aired on Fox News. A video clip of Shirley Sherrod, the USDA's Georgia State Director of Rural Development, was circulated by conservative blogger Andrew Breitbart and his site, biggovernment.com, in which Sherrod talked of withholding help to a white man facing the loss of his family farm. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack released a statement Tuesday saying he had accepted Sherrod's resignation, and added that the department has no tolerance for discrimination. [Link](#)

USDA worker quits over 1986 racial incident (The Washington Post 7/20)

A U.S. Agriculture Department official from Georgia resigned late Monday after she was caught on tape admitting that she had not helped a farmer as much as she could have because he was white. Shirley Sherrod, USDA state director of rural development, made the remarks on March 27 at an NAACP Freedom Fund banquet. Her videotaped remarks surfaced on YouTube on Monday. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack accepted Sherrod's resignation, saying, "There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously." NAACP President and Benjamin Jealous called Sherrod's actions shameful and agreed with the decision to fire her. [Link](#)

In the curious case of Shirley Sherrod, let's see the whole tape (Atlanta Journal Constitution 7/20)

A couple of folks in comments yesterday brought up the case of USDA official Shirley Sherrod, a black woman caught on tape at an NAACP meeting here in Georgia apparently bragging about being less than diligent in helping a white farmer. The folks at Big Government posted a portion of her speech as part of the running feud between the NAACP and the Tea Party over which organization is more racist. By the end of the day Monday, Sherrod had been forced to resign her post, and NAACP President Ben Jealous had released a statement agreeing with the forced resignation: "Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race. [Link](#)

Resigned USDA official says racial story misconstrued (Atlanta Journal Constitution 7/20)

The USDA's rural development director for Georgia says she was forced out of her federally appointed job after a "snippet" of a speech she gave in March appeared to show her admission to only half-heartedly aiding a struggling white farmer because of his race. But in a phone interview from her home in Albany early Tuesday morning, Shirley Sherrod told the Atlanta-Journal Constitution that the two-minute, 38-second video posted online Monday by biggovernment.com and reported on by FoxNews.com and the AJC completely misconstrued the message she was trying to convey. Sherrod, 62, insisted her statements in the video were not racist. "For Fox to take a spin on this like they have done, and know it's not the truth ... it's very upsetting," she said. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Resigns USDA Job After Admitting Use Of Racial Preference During NAACP Banquet (VIDEO) (The Huffington Post 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod, who resigned Monday from the USDA. Shirley Sherrod, a USDA official in Georgia, has resigned after publicly admitting that race played a factor in her decision to limit how much aid would be given to a white farmer. Sherrod, who is African American, made the comments during a local NAACP banquet on March 27, according to information displayed on the video. A clip of her speech first appeared Monday morning on BigGovernment.com and aired that evening on Fox News. Her resignation as the agency's state director of rural development was quickly accepted by U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. He cited a zero-tolerance policy and told CNN that he was working to "reverse the checkered civil

rights history at the department." In her controversial speech, Sherrod discussed the first time she was "faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." She claimed that during the conversation, the man "was trying to show me he was superior to me." [Link](#)

NAACP Slams Shirley Sherrod's Actions As 'Shameful' (My Fox New York 7/20)

The actions of a black U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) official who admitted withholding help to a white farmer facing bankruptcy were late Monday described as "shameful" by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, was exposed in a video recorded at an NAACP banquet describing "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." Sherrod claimed the farmer took a long time trying to show he was "superior" to her. "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land -- so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough," she said in the video. The Agriculture Department announced Monday, shortly after FOXNews.com published its initial report on the video, that Sherrod had resigned. [Link](#)

Ga. USDA Official Resigns Over Comments (My Fox Atlanta 7/19)

Racially charged comments have led to the abrupt resignation of an agriculture department official. Shirley Sherrod was the top official who oversaw rural development in the state of Georgia. According to FOX News, Sherrod, the director of the USDA's rural development agency, resigned over comments she made at an NAACP meeting. FOX News obtained taped comments from an NAACP meeting that took place in Douglas, Georgia in March. According to FOX News, Sherrod is seen talking about how she withheld help to a white farmer who was facing bankruptcy. "I didn't give him the full force of what I could do, I did enough," Sherrod said during the meeting. In the video, Sherrod said she was struggling with the fact so many black people have lost their farmland and she was faced with having to help a white person save their land. Sherrod said she took him to see a white lawyer. "I figured if I took him to one of them his own kind, [they] would take care of him," said Sherrod. According to FOX News, the agriculture department announced Monday that Sherrod had resigned. [Link](#)

USDA big quits in bias-boast shock (The New York Post 7/20)

A black official in the US Agriculture Department resigned yesterday after a video surfaced of her bragging to the NAACP that she didn't do everything she could to help a white farmer facing bankruptcy. Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, told the audience at a March banquet in Atlanta that she claimed the man felt "superior" to her, according to FoxNews.com. "He had come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was talking all that time, trying to show me he was superior to me, was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," Sherrod said. "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land -- so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do." "I did enough," she said. [Link](#)

NAACP 'appalled' by black USDA official's racial discrimination (Daily Caller 7/20)

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People President Benjamin Todd Jealous said late Monday he was "appalled" by the actions of U.S. Department of Agriculture official Shirley Sherrod, who resigned earlier in the day after video surfaced of her speaking at an NAACP event about discriminating against a white farmer seeking government help. Jealous also promised to look into why members of the audience at an NAACP fundraiser in Georgia this past March reacted, as shown in the video, by nodding and in some cases laughing at Sherrod's remarks. But Jealous distanced the national NAACP from the incident. Coming just days after the NAACP condemned racist elements inside the Tea Party movement, Sherrod's remarks place the storied civil rights organization in an uncomfortable position. "Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race," Jealous said. "We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers." "Her actions were shameful. While she went on to explain in the story that she ultimately realized her mistake, as well as the common predicament of working people of all races, she gave no indication she had attempted to right the wrong she had done to this man," Jealous said (read his full statement below). [Link](#)

BREAKING: Racist Obama administration member resigns (Manhattan Conservative Examiner 7/19)

Shirley Sherrod of the USDA's Georgia Rural Development office has resigned following the airing of overtly racist remarks she made in a speech before—of all organizations—the NAACP. At a local NAACP meeting in March of 2010, Sherrod boasted of withholding assistance to a farmer based on the color of his skin, which happened to be white. Sherrod (surprise!) is black. In her comments, which are captured in the video below, Sherrod freely admits to "struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land." She further confesses to abusing her position by refusing to "give him the full force of what I could do." The remarks conclude with a racist gem: "I took him to a white lawyer... I figured that if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him." [Link](#)

USDA Official Implicated in NAACP Racism Flap (Buckeye Ag Network 7/20)

Days after the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) denounced the Conservative Tea Party movement on allegations of racism, the organization was itself implicated in charges of racism involving a USDA official. In a video released at BigGovernment.com, USDA's Director of Rural Development in Georgia Shirley Sherrod was depicted acknowledging discriminating against white farmers. The video, of a speech Sherrod gave to the NAACP's Freedom Fund banquet in March of this year, stirred quite a controversy on the internet this week, forcing Sherrod's resignation from the department Monday. Sherrod's remarks in the NAACP speech indicated that she "didn't give [a white farmer] the full force of what I could do," because "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land." [Link](#)

USDA worker quits over racism charge from video (Salon 7/20)

A black federal worker has resigned from a Georgia agricultural job after a video clip showed her saying she had not helped a farmer as much as she could have because he was white. U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a statement Tuesday he had accepted the resignation of Shirley Sherrod. Vilsack says the USDA has no tolerance for discrimination. Sherrod told the Atlanta-Journal Constitution she was forced out of her job as the USDA's rural development director for Georgia. She said the two-minute, 38-second video posted online Monday misconstrued her message. [Link](#)

Justice Not Only Obama Department Not Equally Enforcing Law (Heritage Foundation Blog 7/20)

This morning we reviewed the still unfolding New Black Panther Party scandal at the Department of Justice where a whistle bower, testifying under oath, quoted Deputy Assistant Attorney General Julie Fernandes as saying that "the Voting Section will never or will not, at least while she is there, bring any more cases against blacks or other national minorities." In other words, Fernandes has reportedly admitted that the Obama Justice Department is not enforcing the nation's civil rights law equally and in a race-neutral manner. The Obama Justice Department has refused to confirm or deny that Fernandes made this statement. Now Andrew Breitbart has unearthed a very similar statement from another Obama political appointee, this time from the Department of Agriculture. In the video, U.S. Department of Agriculture Director of Rural Development for Georgia Shirley Sherrod tells an NAACP audience . . . First Justice. Now Agriculture. How many other Obama Department's are refusing to enforce our nation's laws equally? [Link](#)

NAACP meeting calmly listened to racist remarks from black fed official (American Thinker 7/20)

Andrew Breitbart has scored another bullseye, revealing hypocrisy of the highest order on the part of another leftist establishment organization, the NAACP. On March 27 of this year, speaking before an NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet, Shirley Sherrod, the Department of Agriculture director for the State of Georgia -- responsible for over a billion dollars a year in spending -- boasts of denying a white farmer her full efforts because of his race. The audience does not react with shock or disapproval, but rather just sits there. So much for NAACP President Ben Jealous denouncing the tea parties for tolerating racists. Only after Breitbart gave the incriminating video national exposure did the NAACP issue the obligatory denunciation, to prevent further embarrassment. But when nobody was looking, the NAACP audience was totally cool with the racism expressed by their speaker. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Comments Results in Resignation (Lalate Blog 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod has resigned following her comments about a white farmer. Shirley Sherrod's remarks appeared in a video from BigGovernment.com, dated by the website as March 27. Shirley Sherrod has been the USDA's Georgia director of Rural Development. In the video, Sherrod addresses an NAACP

banquet stating "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land — so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough". Late Monday the USDA announced Sherrod had resigned. NAACP President and CEO Benjamin Todd Jealous issued a statement against Sherrod's comments. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod of USDA resigns (Buzz Tab 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod, USDA's black employee has resigned from her post on Monday in the wake of outburst of a video at conservative media outlets in which Shirley Sherrod is shown telling one of the audience that she had not given a white farmer the full force of what I could do to help him save his family farm. Tom Vilsack, the Agriculture Secretary said that he had accepted Shirley Sherrod's resignation. Shirley Sherrod was working as USDA's State Director of Rural Development for Georgia. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said he had accepted the resignation of Shirley Sherrod, the department's state director of rural development for Georgia. Tom Vilsack further added that in USDA, they are following a zero tolerance for discrimination. He said that being Secretary Agriculture he condemns any discriminatory act against any person. He further added that at USDA, they are working hard for past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history and they are taking fairness and equality as a serious matter at USDA. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Has Officially Resigned From Her Job Due To Racial Preference! (Moms Word Blog 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod, who is known as a USDA official in Georgia, has finally resigned after publicly admitting that race played a factor in her decision to limit how much aid would be given to a white farmer. Sherrod, who is African American, made the comments during an NAACP banquet on March 27, according to the information in the video above. In fact a clip of her speech was being aired on BigGovernment.com and also Fox News Monday morning. Sherrod said during the now famous speech about the first time she was "faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." She claims that during the conversation, the man "was trying to show me he was superior to me." "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland," Sherrod told the crowd. "And here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land." [Link](#)

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Washo, Kevin

From: Bates, Andrew J. [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:11 PM
To: Misailidis, Sarah; Gavin, Tom; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Justin, DeJong; Chan, Stephanie; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen - ChiefOfStaff
Subject: RE: Rural Development summary clips

AP Update

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5hvdRMs5hKNrXK9GHagILBpYrD8AD9H2SEJO0>

USDA worker quits over racism charge from video
By BEN EVANS and MARY CLARE JALONICK (AP)

WASHINGTON — A black employee who resigned from the Agriculture Department over comments at a Georgia NAACP meeting said Tuesday the White House forced her out of her job over a manufactured racial controversy.

Shirley Sherrod said she was on the road Monday after an event in rural Georgia when USDA deputy undersecretary Cheryl Cook called her and told her the White House wanted her to resign. "They called me twice," Sherrod told The Associated Press in an interview. "The last time they asked me to pull over the side of the road and submit my resignation on my Blackberry, and that's what I did."

The controversy began Monday when the conservative website biggovernment.com posted a two-minute, 38-second video clip of Sherrod's remarks to a local NAACP chapter.

In the video, she says the first time a white farmer came in for help, he was acting "superior" to her and that she struggled to decide how much help to provide him when so many black farmers were struggling. She said she didn't give him the full force of help she could have, but gave him enough.

The website called it proof that the NAACP — which recently accused the Tea Party of including racist elements — condones racism.

Sherrod said her comments to the local NAACP group that she withheld support some 24 years ago from a farmer because he was white are really part of a story of racial reconciliation. She said she ultimately became friends with the farmer and worked closely with him for two years to keep him from losing his farm. At the time, she worked for a nonprofit farm aid group.

"My point in telling that story is that working with him helped me to see that it wasn't just a black and white issue," she told The AP. "It was about those who have and those who do not. That's why I take the time to tell that story is to tell people we need to get beyond it and work together."

Hours after her resignation, Sherrod accused administration officials of lacking backbone. A USDA spokesman would not comment on whether the White House was involved.

Secretary Tom Vilsack issued a statement saying the agency has no tolerance for discrimination.

"We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously," the statement said.

National NAACP President Benjamin Todd Jealous issued a statement Monday night — before Sherrod's explanation — supporting the resignation. Jealous said the group opposes racism of all kinds.

"According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race," she said. "We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers."

From: Bates, Andrew J.

Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:52 AM

To: Misailidis, Sarah; Gavin, Tom; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Justin, DeJong; Chan, Stephanie

Cc: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

Subject: RE: Rural Development summary clips

Full rough transcript & video

<http://www.shadowtv.com/redirect/notification.jsp?vid=f9a43c4a2746dbe5d8a2c6ec2d76317d>

<http://www.shadowtv.com/redirect/notification.jsp?vid=36ced10c7e8095c5487cf1bbc27393a5>

<http://www.shadowtv.com/redirect/notification.jsp?vid=d329d73be7f05d01ba585c41238d2a6b>

<http://www.shadowtv.com/redirect/notification.jsp?vid=d294212084d738d6e41147e2f150d8d4>

TONY HARRIS: And Shirley Sherrod is with me now from Albany, Georgia. And, Shirley, let's take our time and walk through this together. Is that okay with you?

SHIRLEY SHERROD: Yes.

HARRIS: Okay. Shirley, just a straightforward, fundamental question here. Did you discriminate against this white farmer, Roger Spooner? He was facing foreclosure 24 years ago and, again, this was before you were working for the united states Department of Agriculture. Did you discriminate against him?

SHERROD: No, I did not discriminate against him. And, in fact, I went all out. I had to frantically look for a lawyer at the last minute because the first lawyer we went to was not doing anything to really help him. In fact, that lawyer suggested they should just let the farm go. All of that process – that's why I tell it, because everything that happened in dealing with him – he was the first white farmer that had come to me for help. Everything that I did working with him helped me to see that it wasn't about race. It's about those who have and those who don't. The farmer's home had done something to him that I hadn't seen them do to any black farmer. They had actually rented his land to someone else, when they didn't are a right to do that. He still had title to the land. That's why he couldn't qualify to file chapter 12 bankruptcy. That's why in the end we had to try to file chapter 11 bankruptcy to stop the forced sale the first Tuesday in June.

HARRIS: I'm going to ask it again slightly differently. Did you discriminate against this white farmer 24 years ago, when you were, I guess, about 38 years old, because he brought you what you described in your March NAACP Speech as a "superior attitude?"

SHERROD: You know, initially – and that's why I say that. I took the time to weave what was happening there. He did come with a superior attitude, but I didn't discriminate. If I had discriminated against him, I would not have given him any help at all because I wasn't obligated by anyone. I wasn't working for the government. I didn't have to help him, but I did. And I went on – that was the first white farmer I helped. I went on to help hundreds of others through the years.

HARRIS: Was your -- I'm trying to understand your reaction to what you described as a "superior attitude." Was your reaction, perhaps, "Look, why are you taking this attitude with me? I sit here in a position to help you, and yet you bring this attitude to me." Did that cross your mind at all and did you act upon those feelings?

SHERROD: Certainly, I didn't act upon it. You know, I'm from the South. I've lived in the South all my life, and I know how black people were treated by white people during those years. My own father was murdered by one. But I didn't let that get in the way of trying to help. I don't know why it's so difficult to see. I didn't have to help that farmer. I could have

sent him out the door without giving him any help at all. But in the end we became very good friends, and that friendship lasted for some years.

HARRIS: Explain the statement in the recording that goes, "So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do."

SHERROD: You know, I could have tried to rally other farmers in support of him. I didn't know of any black farmers who would come out to try to support a white farmer at that point. That's something I could have done for black farmers. This was my first time trying to help a white farmer save his land. I wasn't really sure what I could do, because I thought at that time they had the advantages. I learned that that was not the case in working with this farmer.

HARRIS: And then you went on to say, "I did enough." What was "enough" in the case of Roger Spooner?

SHERROD: I took him – you mean initially? I took him to a lawyer who had attended some training for lawyers on chapter 12 bankruptcy. But in the end, that lawyer wasn't doing anything. And when the Spooners said that he wasn't, I jumped into action. It took me a couple of hours calling everyone I knew. I even called to other states trying to find a lawyer who would file a chapter 11 bankruptcy to stop the sale of his land at the courthouse steps. I was successful in the end.

HARRIS: During your time with the USDA was there ever a discrimination claim filed against you?

SHERROD: No, never. I went out of my way to – you know, and we didn't work directly with farmers at Rural Development. We were working with cities, with sewer problems, with police cars, with health centers, with housing. That agency is the one agency, so we say, that could build a city. I didn't do any work – and I didn't discriminate and I went out of my way to make sure no one who came to the agency was discriminated against. And, in fact, during my tenure there, I targeted nine of the poorest counties in the state to do outreach work. I had outreach meetings in all of those counties. I even started working with other USDA agencies and state agencies so that we could coordinate our efforts in these areas, and, in fact, this coming Thursday was the first meeting where we were going to pilot that, and that was in a county here in southwest Georgia, Calhoun county.

HARRIS: So, Shirley, if you didn't discriminate during your time at USDA and at least no one filed such a claim, do you accept the statement from agriculture secretary Tom Vilsack that there is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA?

SHERROD: I don't know, but I'm assuming there is. I know I didn't discriminate, and I made it very clear to the staff there at USDA that it wouldn't be tolerated during my tenure. I said it over and over again.

HARRIS: So why are you out?

SHERROD: Pardon?

HARRIS: Why are you out?

SHERROD: Why am I out? They asked me to resign, and, in fact, they harassed me as I was driving back to the state office from west point, Georgia yesterday. I had a least three calls telling me the White House wanted me to resign.

HARRIS: So the pressure came from the White House?

SHERROD: And the last one asked me to pull over to the side of the road and do it.

HARRIS: Are you willing to name names?

SHERROD: That's what I did.

HARRIS: Are you willing to name names.

SHERROD: That was Cheryl Cook, the deputy undersecretary. She called me and I said, Cheryl, I have a 3 1/2 hour ride to get into Athens. She called me a second time, where are you now? I said I'm just going through Atlanta. She call me

again and I said, I'm at least 45 minutes to an hour from Athens. She said, well, Shirley, they want you to pull over to the side of the road and do it because you're going to be on Glenn Beck tonight.

HARRIS: Wow. So the administration pressured you out?

SHERROD: Yes.

HARRIS: How do you feel about that?

SHERROD: I don't feel good about it because I know I didn't do anything wrong, and I know during my time at USDA I gave it all I had. I worked when I didn't feel like it. I pushed the staff to get out there in places they had not been into before. Like I said, the nine counties I targeted, I asked them shortly after getting there, tell me what rural development has been doing in these areas, and when they did that, there were zeros in a lot of places, and I knew this was an area where we needed to target. We needed to get programs out into some of these areas that need it, just like some other areas that had gotten the funding over and over again.

HARRIS: I So I want to be really specific here and I apologize. I just have to do it. You get, one, two, three calls from miss cook, and at the point that it is made clear to you that you need to go, how does that conversation go?

SHERROD: Yes.

HARRIS: What is said to you?

SHERROD: The very first one -- I guess there were like four calls because the very first one was before I got in my car to go to Athens. She said I was being put on administrative leave. The next call after I sat waiting and waiting because she told me she would call me right back, the next call said that they're going to have to ask me to resign.

HARRIS: Do you feel as though you had an opportunity to state your side of the story?

SHERROD: No, I didn't. The administration, they were not interested in hearing the truth. No one wanted to hear the truth.

HARRIS: The NAACP released a statement late last night saying in part we are appalled by her actions. That is an opportunity to explain what happened 24 years ago. Do you feel as though you got the opportunity, even in a phone call with the NAACP?

SHERROD: No, I didn't. The NAACP has not tried to contact me one time, and they are the reason why this happened they got into a fight with the tea party, and all of this came out as a result of that.

HARRIS: Your reaction --

SHERROD: I would have appreciated -- when you look at my history of civil rights, I would have appreciated having the NAACP at least contact me and Roland martin, too, contact me to try to get the truth about what happened.

HARRIS: The reaction to your reaction to essentially being condemned by the NAACP?

SHERROD: That hurts. Because if you look at my history, that's what I'm saying -- I've done more to advance the causes of civil rights in this area than some of them who are sitting in those positions now with the NAACP. They need to learn something about me. Ey need to know about my work. They need to know what I've contributed through the years.

HARRIS: What was the point of the story you were telling to the NAACP in March? What was the point?

SHERROD: The point was to get them to understand we need to look beyond race; to look at working together. I've said to audiences here, not just that one -- in fact, I spoke at a housing conference in a county just south of here, and I said,

look, we need to get beyond the Civil War. I tell them, there are good things about history from the white side and good things about history and culture from the black side. People love to come into this part of the state to see that. I tell them, we need to make the most of it, and if we work together, can do that.

HARRIS: Do you believe as a principle – do you believe black people in power can make or have the ability – can make race-based discriminatory decisions?

SHERROD: I'm sure that can happen. I can tell you I didn't do it.

HARRIS: Okay, that was my follow-up.

SHERROD: And you could go to any of the communities that I worked with and if the staff were free to tell you, you could talk to any of the people I've worked with since I've been at USDA, and they can tell you what my record is.

HARRIS: Shirley, stay right there. I have someone who wants to speak to this whole controversy. Her name is Eloise Spooner. She is Roger Spooner's wife – widow this point.

SHERROD: Yes.

HARRIS: Widow at this point.

SHERROD: Yes.

HARRIS: Eloise, thanks for taking the time to talk to me.

ELOISE SPOONER: Thank you.

HARRIS: What do you think of this whole controversy? First of all, what do you think of Shirley?

SPOONER: She's a good friend.

HARRIS: Describe your relationship with her through the years.

SPOONER: She helped us save our farm.

How did she do that?

SPOONER: By getting in there and doing all she could do to help us.

What did your husband, your late husband, think of Shirley?

SPOONER: He's not dead. He's very much alive.

HARRIS: Really?

SPOONER: He's 87 and he's on his peterbuilt truck this morning.

HARRIS: Then I apologize. I've got incorrect information from one of the newspapers writing on this. I apologize for that.

SPOONER: That's okay.

HARRIS: Is he aware of the controversy swirling around?

SPOONER: Yes, our son, he came up and said, mama, turn on the TV to CNN and he said, it's about your friend Shirley Sherrod. And I said, what. I listened and said, that's not right. They have not treated her right because she's the one that I give credit for helping us save our farm.

HARRIS: Some of the story is that you met in the '80s, and it was a bad time?

SPOONER: Mm-hmm.

HARRIS: It was a bad time in the family's life at the time. Tell me why you were in trouble with the farm.

SPOONER: Well, we had a lot of dry weather, and we had to run the irrigation a lot. And when you'd make a good crop, you wouldn't get a good price. And just a number of things together caused it.

HARRIS: Do you remember your first interaction with Shirley?

SPOONER: Yeah. At first I looked into -- it was the market bulletin from Atlanta that we get. We've gotten it for years and years and years, and it said, if you were having trouble and about to lose your farm torque get with them. And I said, by George, I'm going to try that. And so I did, and he told us to go see a lawyer in Cairo. He said, you all might as well just go ahead and do what Diane said to do. And I was so mad when we came home. So, anyway, a few weeks later, the guy from Atlanta, the Market Bulletin, he said, what happened over in Cairo? And I said, exactly nothing. He didn't help us at all. He said, well, I'm going to get you with somebody that will help you, I think. And that's when he told us to call Shirley. And we did, and we started right then. She said there's too lawyers, there's a black lawyer and there's a white lawyer, and one -- the black lawyer is in Albany and the white lawyer is in [inaudible]. So I said, he's closer, so maybe we'll try him, the black one. We went through him for months and months and months and paid him some money, which was hard to scrape up. And he finally got with the lawyer in Donaldsonville that I had talked to, and he called and told me at the lawyer in Albany, called and told me that he could not handle us anymore, that he had this client that he had had for ten years, and he was going to have to spend a lot of time on that. He couldn't help us.

HARRIS: Hey, Eloise, a couple of quick questions here about this relationship.

SPOONER: Okay.

HARRIS: I'm just trying to establish this relationship. Explain to me -- I have a line here that says that you guys picked a bunch of tomatoes?

SPOONER: Yeah. One year, after things kind of settled down, I had a really pretty garden that year, and we going up to Albany for some reason, so I told Roger I was going to pick Shirley some tomatoes. And I did, and we carried them by to her and had a good visit.

HARRIS: You know, what do you think of the statement that's on the tape. It's undeniable, it is there, where Shirley essentially says, so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do.

SPOONER: Well, she gave enough that it helped us save our farm. And she went two trips -- after the lawyer in Albany did us like he did, well, then I called Shirley and told her, and she said, you're kidding me. I said, no, I'm not. That's the words she told me. She said, well, do you want us to try the one in Easterland? I said, yes, get us an appointment and we'll be ready to go.

HARRIS: Eloise, thank you for your time.

SHERROD: Please tell her want -- can you -- I don't know that she can hear me, but I haven't talked to here in years, and I'm so happy to hear that both of them are still living. And Miss Spooner, I definitely want to contact you. It's great to hear.

SPOONER: When we heard about it we tried to call you, but Roger couldn't get ahold of you.

SHERROD: Okay. Maybe you can get him.

HARRIS: We will make the connection. How's that? We will make that happen?

SHERROD: Thank you so much. It is so great to hear your voice.

HARRIS: And, Shirley, thanks to you. Thanks for your time, and a fuller explanation of your comments. Appreciate it.

SHERROD: Thank you so much.

From: Misailidis, Sarah [mailto:Sarah.Misailidis@oc.usda.gov]

Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:01 AM

To: Bates, Andrew J.; Gavin, Tom; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Justin, DeJong; Chan, Stephanie

Cc: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

Subject: Rural Development summary clips



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE

Office of Communications (202) 720-4623

USDA Clips

Tuesday, July 20, 2010

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Rural Development clips

USDA worker quits over racism charge from video (AP 7/20)

A black federal worker has resigned from a Georgia agricultural job after a video clip showed her saying she had not helped a farmer as much as she could have because he was white. U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a statement Tuesday he had accepted the resignation of Shirley Sherrod. Vilsack says the USDA has no tolerance for discrimination. Sherrod told the Atlanta-Journal Constitution she was forced out of her job as the USDA's rural development director for Georgia. She said the two-minute, 38-second video posted online Monday misconstrued her message. Sherrod's taped remarks were from a local meeting of the civil rights group NAACP. National NAACP President Benjamin Todd Jealous welcomed the resignation because the group opposes racism of all kinds. [Link](#)

Dismissed employee blames media (UPI 7/20)

An employee of the U.S. Department of Agriculture says she lost her job because the media misconstrued a speech she gave at an NAACP banquet. Shirley Sherrod, who was forced out as the USDA's rural development director for Georgia, is seen on a video admitting she didn't do everything she could to help a white farmer who needed aid, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported Tuesday. What the media didn't report, Sherrod says, was that the incident she was relating on the video happened 24 years ago when she was working for another organization, not the federal government. Also left out, Sherrod says, is the part where she says she was trying to figure out how to help someone who was condescending. [Link](#)

USDA employee says statements on white farmer misconstrued (CNN 7/20)

A black Agriculture Department employee who resigned after a video clip showed her talking about a white farmer said Tuesday her remarks were taken out of context. Shirley Sherrod, the department's former state director of rural development for Georgia, told CNN on Tuesday the incident she discusses in the clip

took place more than two decades ago -- and she recounted it to an audience to make the point that people should move beyond race. "I was speaking to that group, like I've done many groups, and I tell them about a time when I thought the issue was race and race only," Sherrod told CNN's "American Morning" from her home in Albany, Georgia. The incident took place in 1986, while she worked for a nonprofit and before she worked for the USDA, she said. "I was telling the story of how working with him helped me to see the issue is not about race. It's about those who have versus those who do not have." [Link](#)

Race remarks cost USDA official her job (CNN Blog 7/20)

An African-American Agriculture Department worker resigns over her handling of a white Georgia farmer's case when she worked for a nonprofit group in 1986. It came to light when Shirley Sherrod talked about the case at an NAACP banquet earlier this year. Were her remarks a teaching moment that backfired, or evidence of racism? Sherrod says her comments were taken out of context -- that the point of her story was to unite people. Tony Harris will be talking to Sherrod at 11:00am ET on CNN, and we'll post that interview here. Watch some of her speech and phone interview with CNN's American Morning below, then tell us what you think. We'll share some of your comments on air in the CNN Newsroom, 11:00am -- 1:00pm ET. [Link](#)

Video Shows USDA Official Saying She Didn't Give 'Full Force' of Help to White Farmer (FOX News 7/20)

Days after the NAACP clashed with Tea Party members over allegations of racism, a video has surfaced showing an Agriculture Department official regaling an NAACP audience with a story about how she withheld help to a white farmer facing bankruptcy -- video that now has forced the official to resign. Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, is shown in the clip describing "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." Sherrod, who is black, claimed the farmer took a long time trying to show he was "superior" to her. The audience laughed as she described how she determined his fate... "There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person," Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a written statement. "We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously." [Link](#)

Gingrich Responds to Discrimination at USDA (Fox News 7/20)

SEAN HANNITY, HOST: And this is a Fox News alert. An Obama administration official resigned just a short time ago after she was caught on tape appearing to tell an audience that she had used her position to racially discriminate against white farmers. Now the woman, Shirley Sherrod, was the Georgia state director at the Department of Agricultural. Now the president's Agricultural Secretary Tom Vilsack just released a statement saying the USDA has a zero tolerance policy against discrimination. Here's part of the shocking video that ignited this controversy. (BEGIN VIDEO CLIP) SHIRLEY SHERROD, FORMER USDA GA STATE DIRECTOR: The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking but he was trying to show me he was superior to me. I know what he was doing. But he had come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him. [Request Story](#)

Black USDA official resigns after admitting she only 'did enough' for white farmer (MSNBC 7/20)

A black USDA official in Georgia has resigned after publicly admitting she didn't help a white man trying to save his farm to the "full force" of her power and instead referred him to "one of his own." Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said he had accepted Shirley Sherrod's resignation, saying there was "zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA." The NAACP, which recently condemned racism in tea party groups, also issued a statement Monday night saying: "Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race." [Link](#)

Morning Joe (MSNBC 7/20)

Well, another story of reverse discrimination comes out today. This one is really interesting. I'm thinking that this woman regrets this comment. a USDA official in Georgia has resigned after I YouTube clip shows her admitting that race helped determine how much aid would be given to a white farmer. You're not supposed to do that, are you? I mean, I'm not --it's probably not a good idea. for being so stupid. It's not

even -- well, how about you just don't do it. Anyway, the state's director of rural development apparently made the comments during an NAACP banquet in March. Take a listen. The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking, but he was trying to show me he was superior to me. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time to show me he was superior to me was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him. I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So, I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. [Request Story](#)

Shirley Sherrod Resigns Over USDA Race Remark Furor (CBS News 7/20)

A high-ranking black employee of the U.S. Department of Agriculture has resigned after remarks she made about race were distributed by conservative web sites and aired on Fox News. A video clip of Shirley Sherrod, the USDA's Georgia State Director of Rural Development, was circulated by conservative blogger Andrew Breitbart and his site, [biggovernment.com](#), in which Sherrod talked of withholding help to a white man facing the loss of his family farm. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack released a statement Tuesday saying he had accepted Sherrod's resignation, and added that the department has no tolerance for discrimination. [Link](#)

USDA worker quits over 1986 racial incident (The Washington Post 7/20)

A U.S. Agriculture Department official from Georgia resigned late Monday after she was caught on tape admitting that she had not helped a farmer as much as she could have because he was white. Shirley Sherrod, USDA state director of rural development, made the remarks on March 27 at an NAACP Freedom Fund banquet. Her videotaped remarks surfaced on YouTube on Monday. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack accepted Sherrod's resignation, saying, "There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously." NAACP President and Benjamin Jealous called Sherrod's actions shameful and agreed with the decision to fire her. [Link](#)

In the curious case of Shirley Sherrod, let's see the whole tape (Atlanta Journal Constitution 7/20)

A couple of folks in comments yesterday brought up the case of USDA official Shirley Sherrod, a black woman caught on tape at an NAACP meeting here in Georgia apparently bragging about being less than diligent in helping a white farmer. The folks at Big Government posted a portion of her speech as part of the running feud between the NAACP and the Tea Party over which organization is more racist. By the end of the day Monday, Sherrod had been forced to resign her post, and NAACP President Ben Jealous had released a statement agreeing with the forced resignation: "Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race. [Link](#)

Resigned USDA official says racial story misconstrued (Atlanta Journal Constitution 7/20)

The USDA's rural development director for Georgia says she was forced out of her federally appointed job after a "snippet" of a speech she gave in March appeared to show her admission to only half-heartedly aiding a struggling white farmer because of his race. But in a phone interview from her home in Albany early Tuesday morning, Shirley Sherrod told the Atlanta-Journal Constitution that the two-minute, 38-second video posted online Monday by [biggovernment.com](#) and reported on by [FoxNews.com](#) and the [AJC](#) completely misconstrued the message she was trying to convey. Sherrod, 62, insisted her statements in the video were not racist. "For Fox to take a spin on this like they have done, and know it's not the truth ... it's very upsetting," she said. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Resigns USDA Job After Admitting Use Of Racial Preference During NAACP Banquet (VIDEO) (The Huffington Post 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod, who resigned Monday from the USDA. 756 Shirley Sherrod, a USDA official in Georgia, has resigned after publicly admitting that race played a factor in her decision to limit how much aid would be given to a white farmer. Sherrod, who is African American, made the comments during a local NAACP banquet on March 27; according to information displayed on the video. A clip of her speech first appeared Monday morning on [BigGovernment.com](#) and aired that evening on Fox News. Her resignation as the agency's state director of rural development was quickly accepted by U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. He cited a zero-tolerance policy and told CNN that he was working to "reverse the checkered civil

rights history at the department." In her controversial speech, Sherrod discussed the first time she was "faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." She claimed that during the conversation, the man "was trying to show me he was superior to me." [Link](#)

NAACP Slams Shirley Sherrod's Actions As 'Shameful' (My Fox New York 7/20)

The actions of a black U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) official who admitted withholding help to a white farmer facing bankruptcy were late Monday described as "shameful" by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, was exposed in a video recorded at an NAACP banquet describing "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." Sherrod claimed the farmer took a long time trying to show he was "superior" to her. "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land -- so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough," she said in the video. The Agriculture Department announced Monday, shortly after FOXNews.com published its initial report on the video, that Sherrod had resigned. [Link](#)

Ga. USDA Official Resigns Over Comments (My Fox Atlanta 7/19)

Racially charged comments have led to the abrupt resignation of an agriculture department official. Shirley Sherrod was the top official who oversaw rural development in the state of Georgia. According to FOX News, Sherrod, the director of the USDA's rural development agency, resigned over comments she made at an NAACP meeting. FOX News obtained taped comments from an NAACP meeting that took place in Douglas, Georgia in March. According to FOX News, Sherrod is seen talking about how she withheld help to a white farmer who was facing bankruptcy. "I didn't give him the full force of what I could do, I did enough," Sherrod said during the meeting. In the video, Sherrod said she was struggling with the fact so many black people have lost their farmland and she was faced with having to help a white person save their land. Sherrod said she took him to see a white lawyer. "I figured if I took him to one of them his own kind, [they] would take care of him," said Sherrod. According to FOX News, the agriculture department announced Monday that Sherrod had resigned. [Link](#)

USDA big quits in bias-boast shock (The New York Post 7/20)

A black official in the US Agriculture Department resigned yesterday after a video surfaced of her bragging to the NAACP that she didn't do everything she could to help a white farmer facing bankruptcy. Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, told the audience at a March banquet in Atlanta that she claimed the man felt "superior" to her, according to FoxNews.com. "He had come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was talking all that time, trying to show me he was superior to me, was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," Sherrod said. "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land -- so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do." "I did enough," she said. [Link](#)

NAACP 'appalled' by black USDA official's racial discrimination (Daily Caller 7/20)

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People President Benjamin Todd Jealous said late Monday he was "appalled" by the actions of U.S. Department of Agriculture official Shirley Sherrod, who resigned earlier in the day after video surfaced of her speaking at an NAACP event about discriminating against a white farmer seeking government help. Jealous also promised to look into why members of the audience at an NAACP fundraiser in Georgia this past March reacted, as shown in the video, by nodding and in some cases laughing at Sherrod's remarks. But Jealous distanced the national NAACP from the incident. Coming just days after the NAACP condemned racist elements inside the Tea Party movement, Sherrod's remarks place the storied civil rights organization in an uncomfortable position. "Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race," Jealous said. "We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers." "Her actions were shameful. While she went on to explain in the story that she ultimately realized her mistake, as well as the common predicament of working people of all races, she gave no indication she had attempted to right the wrong she had done to this man," Jealous said (read his full statement below). [Link](#)

BREAKING: Racist Obama administration member resigns (Manhattan Conservative Examiner 7/19)

Shirley Sherrod of the USDA's Georgia Rural Development office has resigned following the airing of overtly racist remarks she made in a speech before—of all organizations—the NAACP. At a local NAACP meeting in March of 2010, Sherrod boasted of withholding assistance to a farmer based on the color of his skin, which happened to be white. Sherrod (surprise!) is black. In her comments, which are captured in the video below, Sherrod freely admits to "struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land." She further confesses to abusing her position by refusing to "give him the full force of what I could do." The remarks conclude with a racist gem: "I took him to a white lawyer... I figured that if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him." [Link](#)

USDA Official Implicated in NAACP Racism Flap (Buckeye Ag Network 7/20)

Days after the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) denounced the Conservative Tea Party movement on allegations of racism, the organization was itself implicated in charges of racism involving a USDA official. In a video released at BigGovernment.com, USDA's Director of Rural Development in Georgia Shirley Sherrod was depicted acknowledging discriminating against white farmers. The video, of a speech Sherrod gave to the NAACP's Freedom Fund banquet in March of this year, stirred quite a controversy on the internet this week, forcing Sherrod's resignation from the department Monday. Sherrod's remarks in the NAACP speech indicated that she "didn't give [a white farmer] the full force of what I could do," because "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land." [Link](#)

USDA worker quits over racism charge from video (Salon 7/20)

A black federal worker has resigned from a Georgia agricultural job after a video clip showed her saying she had not helped a farmer as much as she could have because he was white. U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a statement Tuesday he had accepted the resignation of Shirley Sherrod. Vilsack says the USDA has no tolerance for discrimination. Sherrod told the Atlanta-Journal Constitution she was forced out of her job as the USDA's rural development director for Georgia. She said the two-minute, 38-second video posted online Monday misconstrued her message. [Link](#)

Justice Not Only Obama Department Not Equally Enforcing Law (Heritage Foundation Blog 7/20)

This morning we reviewed the still unfolding New Black Panther Party scandal at the Department of Justice where a whistle blower, testifying under oath, quoted Deputy Assistant Attorney General Julie Fernandes as saying that "the Voting Section will never or will not, at least while she is there, bring any more cases against blacks or other national minorities." In other words, Fernandes has reportedly admitted that the Obama Justice Department is not enforcing the nation's civil rights law equally and in a race-neutral manner. The Obama Justice Department has refused to confirm or deny that Fernandes made this statement. Now Andrew Breitbart has unearthed a very similar statement from another Obama political appointee, this time from the Department of Agriculture. In the video, U.S. Department of Agriculture Director of Rural Development for Georgia Shirley Sherrod tells an NAACP audience . . . First Justice. Now Agriculture. How many other Obama Department's are refusing to enforce our nation's laws equally? [Link](#)

NAACP meeting calmly listened to racist remarks from black fed official (American Thinker 7/20)

Andrew Breitbart has scored another bullseye, revealing hypocrisy of the highest order on the part of another leftist establishment organization, the NAACP. On March 27 of this year, speaking before an NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet, Shirley Sherrod, the Department of Agriculture director for the State of Georgia -- responsible for over a billion dollars a year in spending -- boasts of denying a white farmer her full efforts because of his race. The audience does not react with shock or disapproval, but rather just sits there. So much for NAACP President Ben Jealous denouncing the tea parties for tolerating racists. Only after Breitbart gave the incriminating video national exposure did the NAACP issue the obligatory denunciation, to prevent further embarrassment. But when nobody was looking, the NAACP audience was totally cool with the racism expressed by their speaker. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Comments Results in Resignation (Lalate Blog 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod has resigned following her comments about a white farmer. Shirley Sherrod's remarks appeared in a video from BigGovernment.com, dated by the website as March 27. Shirley Sherrod has been the USDA's Georgia director of Rural Development. In the video, Sherrod addresses an NAACP

banquet stating "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land — so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough". Late Monday the USDA announced Sherrod had resigned. NAACP President and CEO Benjamin Todd Jealous issued a statement against Sherrod's comments. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod of USDA resigns (Buzz Tab 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod, USDA's black employee has resigned from her post on Monday in the wake of outburst of a video at conservative media outlets in which Shirley Sherrod is shown telling one of the audience that she had not given a white farmer the full force of what I could do to help him save his family farm. Tom Vilsack, the Agriculture Secretary said that he had accepted Shirley Sherrod's resignation. Shirley Sherrod was working as USDA's State Director of Rural Development for Georgia. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said he had accepted the resignation of Shirley Sherrod, the department's state director of rural development for Georgia. Tom Vilsack further added that in USDA, they are following a zero tolerance for discrimination. He said that being Secretary Agriculture he condemns any discriminatory act against any person. He further added that at USDA, they are working hard for past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history and they are taking fairness and equality as a serious matter at USDA. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Has Officially Resigned From Her Job Due To Racial Preference! (Moms Word Blog 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod, who is known as a USDA official in Georgia, has finally resigned after publicly admitting that race played a factor in her decision to limit how much aid would be given to a white farmer. Sherrod, who is African American, made the comments during an NAACP banquet on March 27, according to the information in the video above. In fact a clip of her speech was being aired on BigGovernment.com and also Fox News Monday morning. Sherrod said during the now famous speech about the first time she was "faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." She claims that during the conversation, the man "was trying to show me he was superior to me." "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland," Sherrod told the crowd. "And here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land." [Link](#)

*Sarah Misailidis
Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
(202) 720-4691
Sarah.Misailidis@oc.usda.gov*

Washo, Kevin

From: Green, Valerie E. [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:38 PM
To: Washo, Kevin
Subject: Re: You free

Will call asap

Sent using BlackBerry

From: Washo, Kevin <Kevin.Washo@osec.usda.gov>
To: Green, Valerie E.
Sent: Tue Jul 20 12:36:07 2010
Subject: You free

Washo, Kevin

From: Green, Valerie E. [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:13 PM
To: Washo, Kevin

Still on a call. Sorry

Sent using BlackBerry

Washo, Kevin

From: O'Neil, Michael P. [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:03 PM
To: Washo, Kevin
Subject: you around?

Michael

Michael P. O'Neil
Presidential Personnel
The White House
[REDACTED] (o)
www.whitehouse.gov

Washo, Kevin

From: Green, Valerie E. [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:12 PM
To: Hogan, Nancy D.; Washo, Kevin; Greenawalt, Andrei M.
Subject: FYI

<http://www.naacp.org/press/entry/naacp-statement-on-the-resignation-of-shirley-sherrod1/>

Valerie Green
The White House | Presidential Personnel Office
Direct: [REDACTED] | Cell: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Washo, Kevin

From: Green, Valerie E. [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:45 AM
To: Washo, Kevin
Subject: Re: Call me you get into office

On my way

Sent using BlackBerry

From: Washo, Kevin <Kevin.Washo@osec.usda.gov>
To: Green, Valerie E.
Sent: Wed Jul 21 07:42:29 2010
Subject: Call me you get into office

Washo, Kevin

From: Green, Valerie E. [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:33 PM
To: Washo, Kevin
Subject: RE: Sherrod

I am calling you now. I am sorry I couldn't pick up when you called. Call when you can.

From: Washo, Kevin [mailto:Kevin.Washo@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:28 PM
To: Green, Valerie E.
Subject: RE: Sherrod

I tried calling you.

From: Green, Valerie E. [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:24 PM
To: Washo, Kevin
Subject: Sherrod

You gotta loop me on regional stuff. Please. Please. Please.

Valerie Green
The White House | Presidential Personnel Office
Direct: [REDACTED] | Cell: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Washo, Kevin

From: Green, Valerie E. [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:45 PM
To: Washo, Kevin; Wyant, Monica; O'Neil, Michael P.
Subject: RE: 13 point

Tracking it down now.

From: Washo, Kevin [mailto:Kevin.Washo@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:43 PM
To: Green, Valerie E.; Wyant, Monica; O'Neil, Michael P.
Subject: 13 point

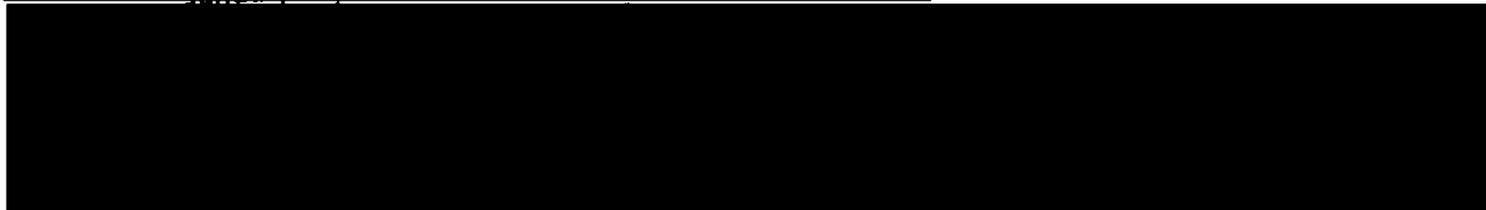
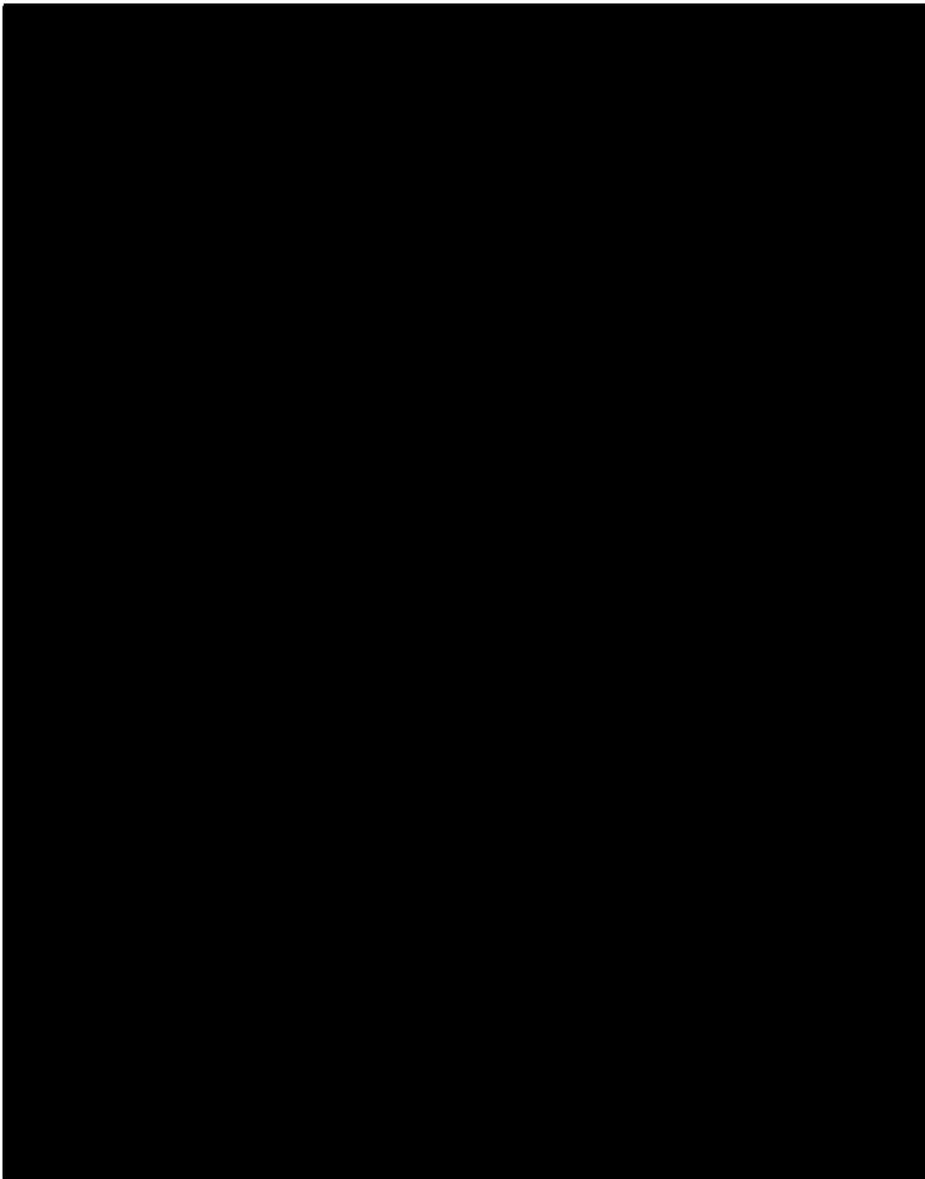
I am on my bb can you send me our friend from georgias 13 point.

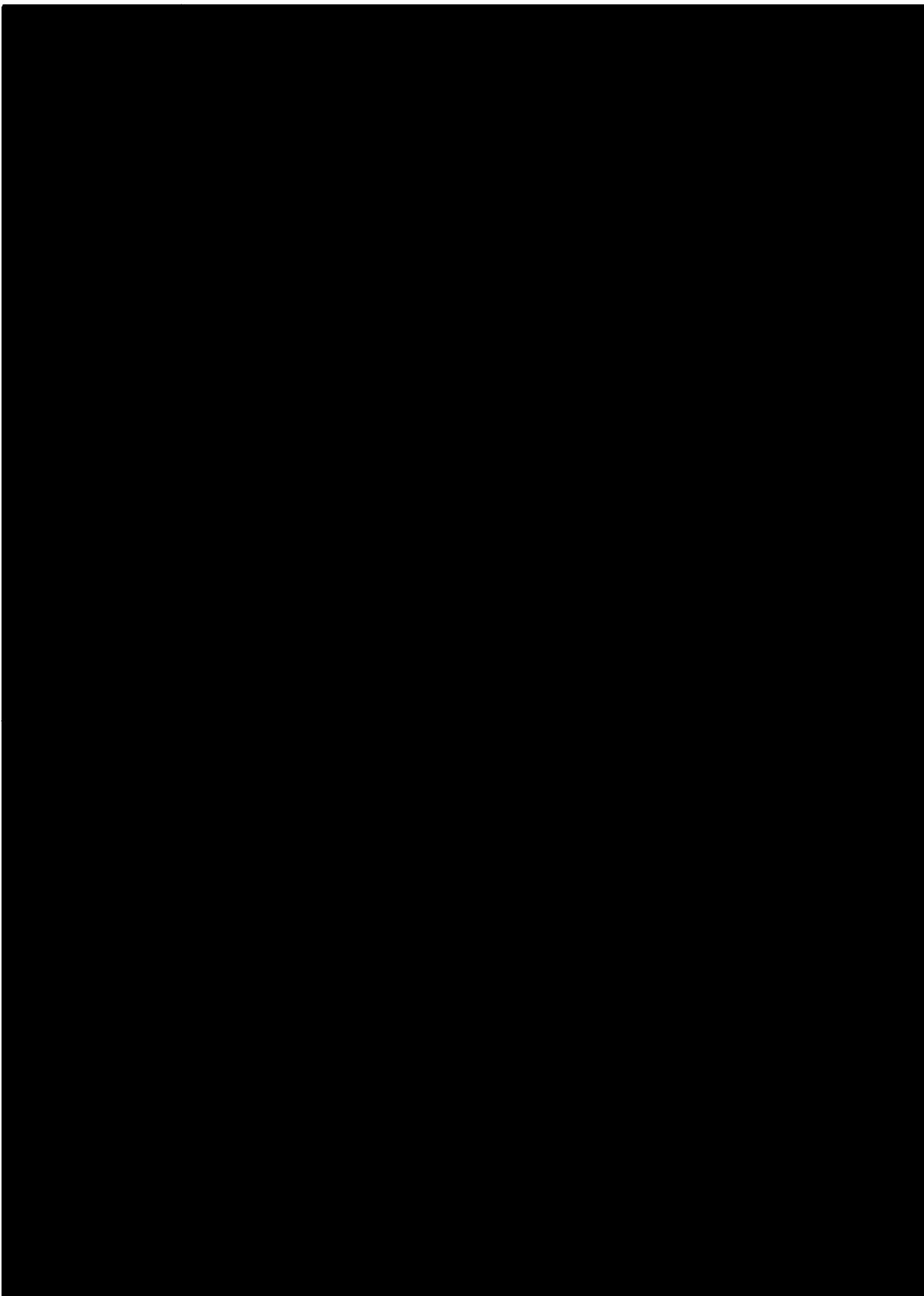
Washo, Kevin

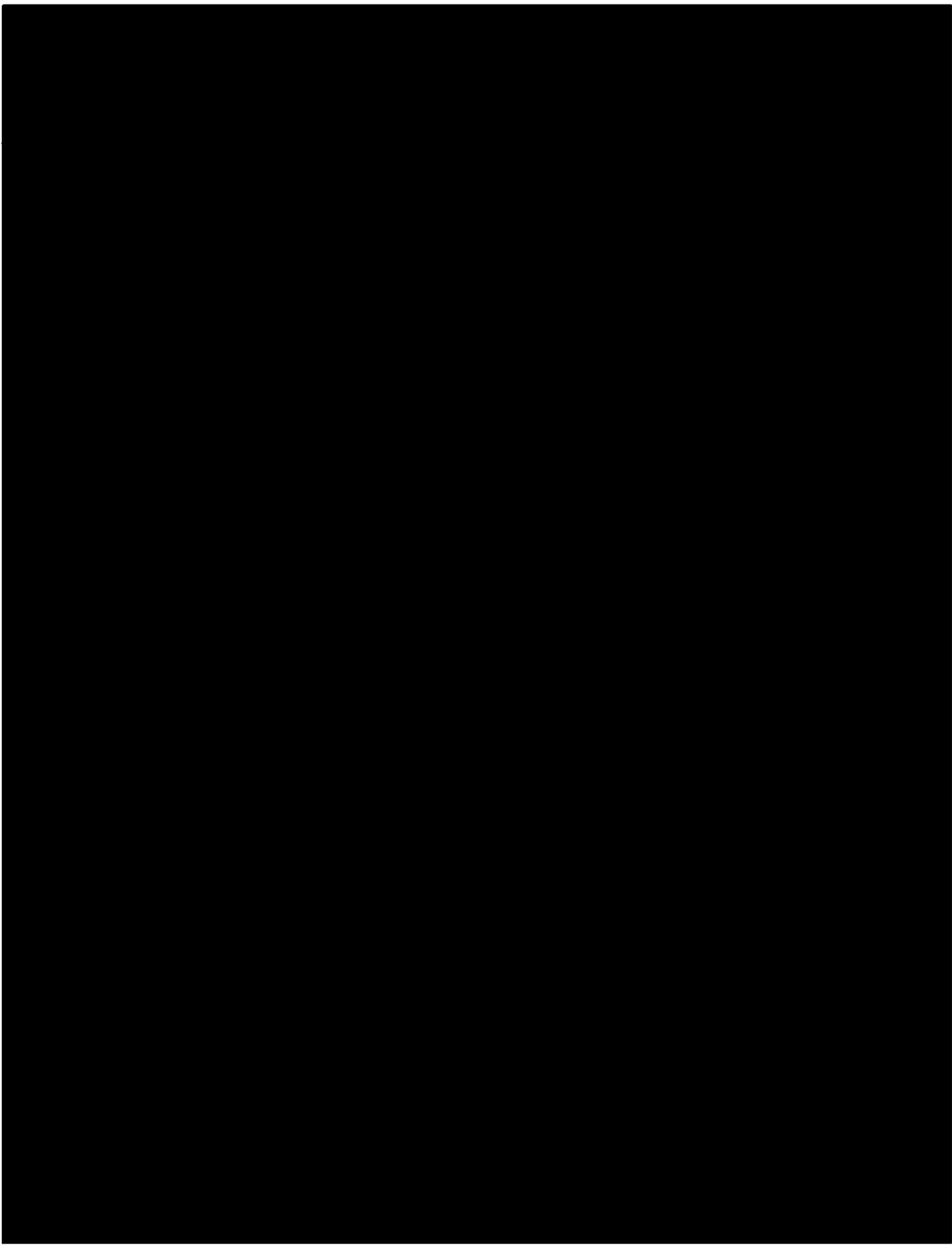
From: Rivadeneira, Shirley C. [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:49 PM
To: Washo, Kevin
Cc: Green, Valerie E.
Subject: Shirley Sherrod
Attachments: Shirley Miller Sherrod vet results.docx

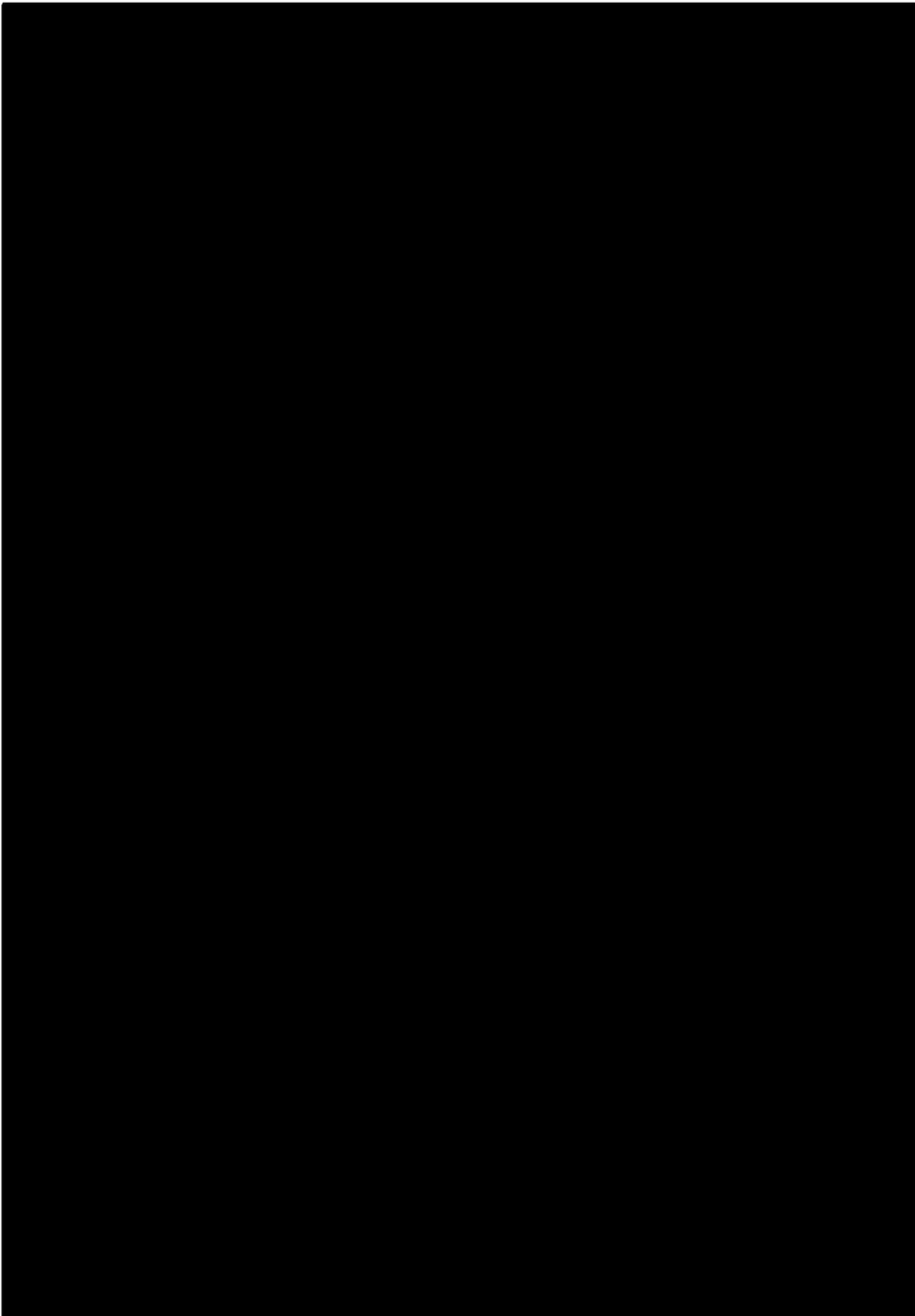
Attached and copied below is Ms. Sherrod's vet results report.

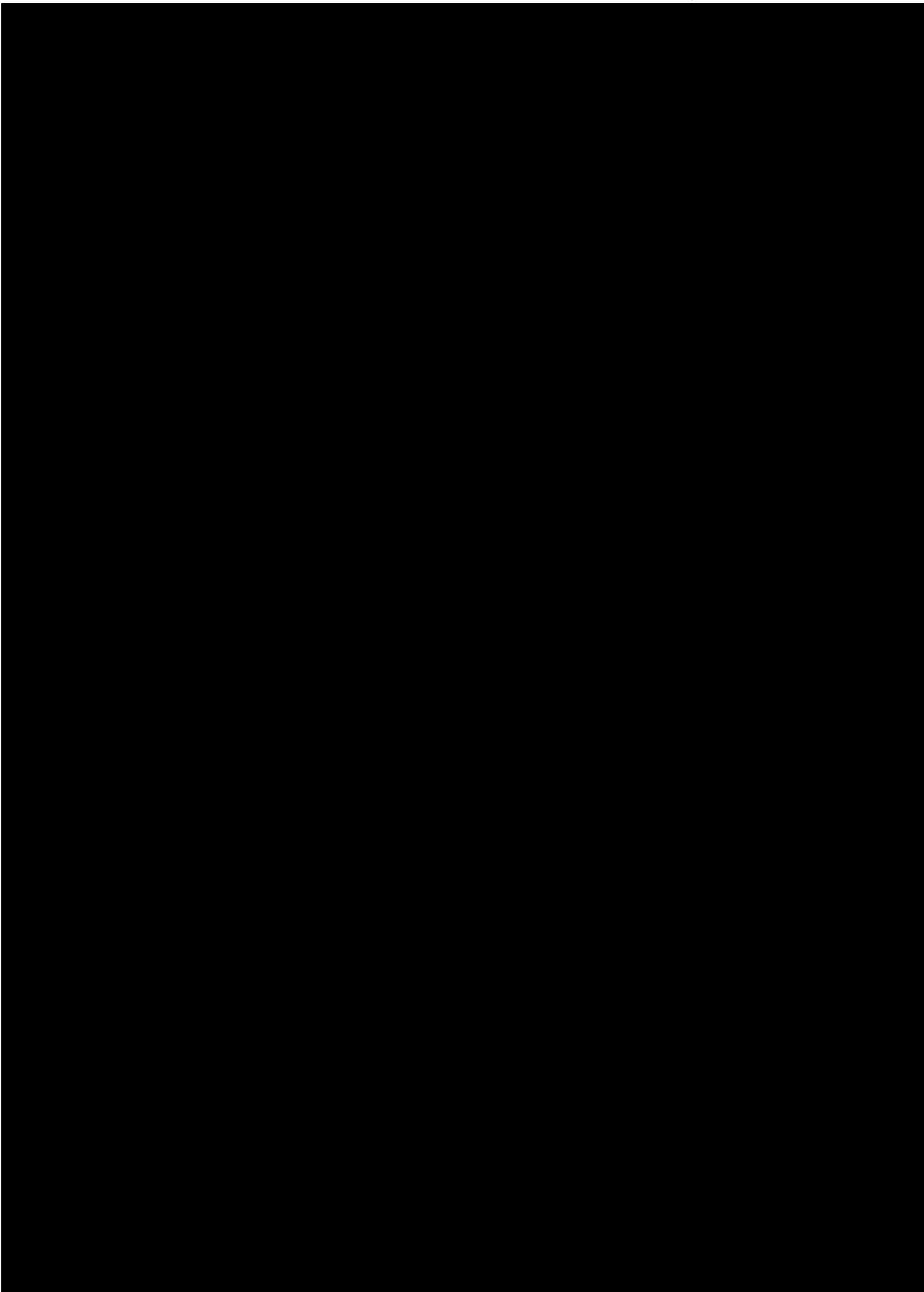
Shirley Miller Sherrod

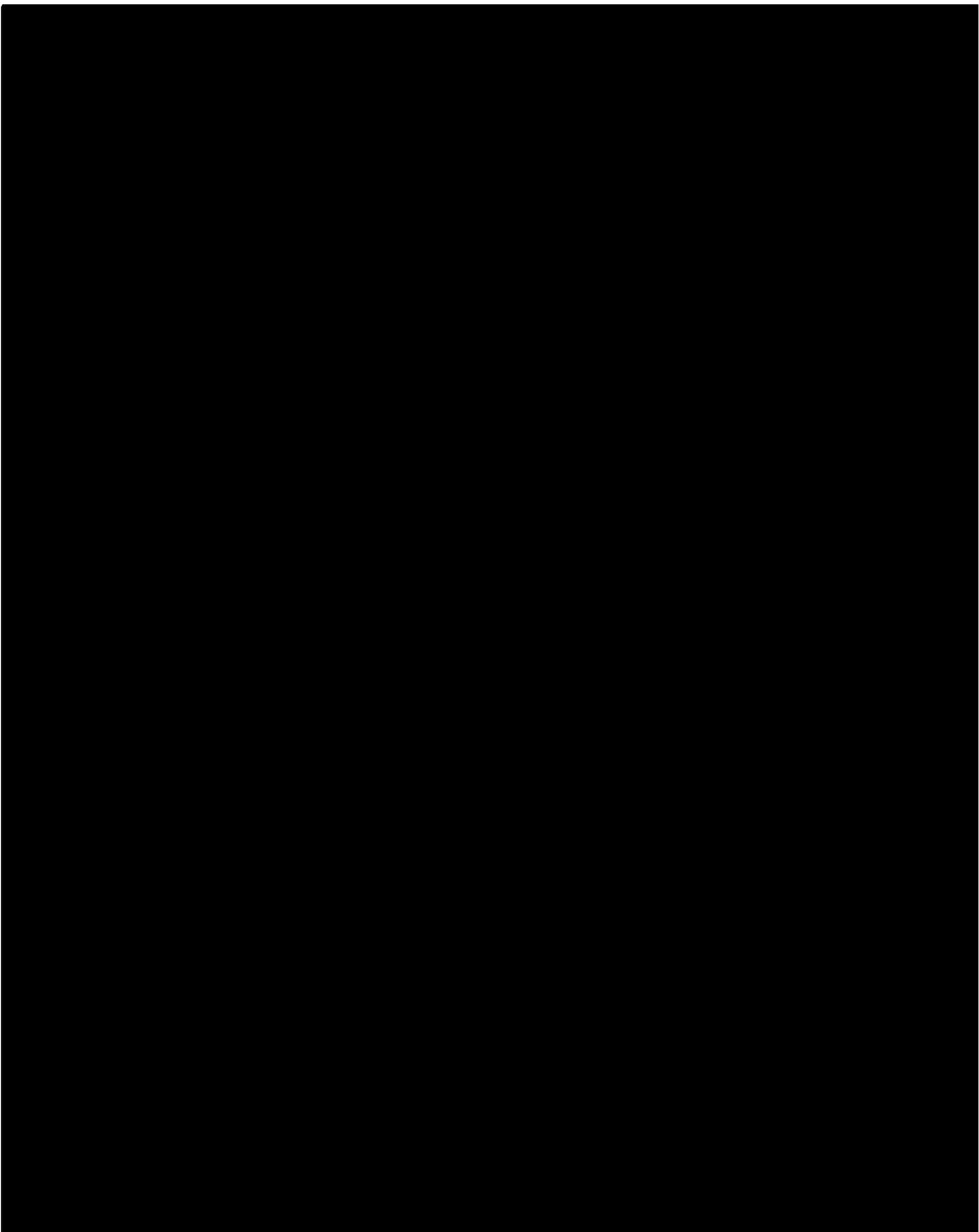














Washo, Kevin

From: O'Neil, Michael P. [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:57 PM
To: Green, Valerie E.; Washo, Kevin
Subject: FW: Urgent
Attachments: Sherrod, Shirley Georgia Recommendation USDA.pdf; Letter to Carole Jett-S. Sherrod.doc

FYI support letters.

Michael

[REDACTED] (o)

-----Original Message-----

From: O'Neil, Michael P.
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:53 PM
To: Kennedy, Sean D.; McBride, Jonathan D.
Cc: Neralla, Venkateswar N.
Subject: RE: Urgent

Yes, entire GA delegation (please see attached letter):

Sanford Bishop Jr (D GA2)
John Lewis (D GA5)
Jim Marshall (D GA8)
David Scott (D GA13)
John Barrow (D GA12)
Hank Johnson (D GA4)

Also

The Federation of Southern Cooperatives Land Assistance Fund

Michael

[REDACTED] (o)

-----Original Message-----

From: Kennedy, Sean D.
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:41 PM
To: McBride, Jonathan D.
Cc: O'Neil, Michael P.
Subject: RE: Urgent

Will look at this now... [REDACTED]

-----Original Message-----

From: McBride, Jonathan D.
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:40 PM
To: Kennedy, Sean D.
Cc: O'Neil, Michael P.
Subject: FW: Urgent

Sean:

Want to be certain that you know about this USDA appointee (Georgia).
JM

Jonathan
[REDACTED] (o)

-----Original Message-----

From: Green, Valerie E.
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:37 PM
To: O'Neil, Michael P.; McBride, Jonathan D.; Burman, Kendall C.; Hogan, Nancy D.
Subject: RE: Urgent

[REDACTED]

-----Original Message-----

From: O'Neil, Michael P.
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:25 PM
To: Green, Valerie E.; McBride, Jonathan D.; Burman, Kendall C.
Subject: Re: Urgent

[REDACTED]

Michael P. O'Neil
[REDACTED]

----- Original Message -----

From: Green, Valerie E.
To: McBride, Jonathan D.; Burman, Kendall C.
Cc: O'Neil, Michael P.
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:23:29 2010
Subject: RE: Urgent

[REDACTED]

-----Original Message-----

From: McBride, Jonathan D.
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:02 PM
To: Burman, Kendall C.; Green, Valerie E.
Subject: FW: Urgent

Kendall:
You should watch this...
jm

Jonathan
[REDACTED] (o)

-----Original Message-----

From: O'Neil, Michael P.
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:51 PM
To: McBride, Jonathan D.
Subject: Fw: Urgent

You should take a look at this.

Assuming we should forward to press folks as an FYI, but want to know your thoughts.

Michael P. O'Neil
[REDACTED]

----- Original Message -----

From: Washo, Kevin <Kevin.Washo@osec.usda.gov>
To: O'Neil, Michael P.
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:49:24 2010
Subject: FW: Urgent

-----Original Message-----

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:06 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl; Tonsager, Dallas; Washo, Kevin
Cc: Wyant, Monica
Subject: Urgent

Sherliy Sherrod is on tape and you need to see/hear immediately

<http://hotair.com>

In upper right search Sherrod

We need to take immediate action.

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA
[REDACTED]

who is
Michael
O'Neil?

Washo, Kevin

From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:49 PM
To: 'O'Neil, Michael P.'
Subject: FW: Urgent

-----Original Message-----

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:06 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl; Tonsager, Dallas; Washo, Kevin
Cc: Wyant, Monica
Subject: Urgent

Sherliy Sherrod is on tape and you need to see/hear immediately

<http://hotair.com>

In upper right search Sherrod

We need to take immediate action.

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA


Washo, Kevin

From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:07 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Call me

Abebe, Yeshimebet

From: Shirley.Sherrod@one.usda.gov
Sent: Thursday, July 15, 2010 11:43 AM
To: Abebe, Yeshimebet
Subject: Fw: Question

I received this a short time ago. I sent a response to the individual and I will share that with you. I feel so hurt that someone will take something out of context and try to make it mean something else

I told the students about a time when I didn't realize that some white farmers faced some of the same discrimination we faced.

Working with that farmer opened my eyes and I told the students it helped me to see that it is more about poor people and those who have versus those who do not. I save that farmer's land and helped hundred's of white farmers since that time. That was 1986

Sent using BlackBerry

From: J C [REDACTED]
To: Sherrod, Shirley - Athens, GA
Sent: Thu Jul 15 09:03:36 2010
Subject: Question

I just saw this <http://usactionnews.com/2010/07/usda-state-director-admits-race-effects-benefits/>

and thought what a world we live in. You took the White Farmer to a white lawyer since he was one of his own kind. Hello, I am white and everyone is one of my own kind. Color makes no difference to me. You also admitted that you never gave him what you could have since he was white. You should be fired for this alone. Until people like you, Al Sharpton, Jesse Jackson Jackons Lewis F and the BPP get a grip on reality Race will always be a factor. It's really sad that so many people of all races work in jobs that give them power over people not of the same race. I hope you can sleep well knowing that the video I watched is nationwide now. Hopefully your superiors will step in and relieve of your position and give it to someone who will work with everyone, not just the black community.

James Cruey

Abebe, Yeshimebet

From: Shirley.Sherrod@one.usda.gov
Sent: Thursday, July 15, 2010 11:46 AM
To: Abebe, Yeshimebet
Subject: Fw: Question

Sent using BlackBerry

From: [REDACTED]
To: Sherrod, Shirley - Athens, GA
Sent: Thu Jul 15 09:37:24 2010
Subject: Re: Question

If you can link me to the entire tape and I see this was out of context I will do what I can to get your entire message out.

From: "Sherrod, Shirley - Athens, GA" <shirley.sherrod@ga.usda.gov>
To: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thu, July 15, 2010 10:29:37 AM
Subject: Re: Question

You are so wrong. If you had listened to the whole tape you would have heard me say that that whole situation helped me to see what the real problem is. I actually found a lawyer who did work with us to save that farmer's land and I had a long relationship with him and later helped hundreds of white farmers in south Georgia and northern Florida. If asked I know some of them would step forward and tell you what I did for them

Sent using BlackBerry

From: J C [REDACTED]
To: Sherrod, Shirley - Athens, GA
Sent: Thu Jul 15 09:03:36 2010
Subject: Question

I just saw this <http://usactionnews.com/2010/07/usda-state-director-admits-race-effects-benefits/>

and thought what a world we live in. You took the White Farmer to a white lawyer since he was one of his own kind. Hello, I am white and everyone is one of my own kind. Color makes no difference to me. You also admitted that you never gave him what you could have since he was white. You should be fired for this alone. Until people like you, Al Sharpton, Jesse Jackson Jackons Lewis F and the BPP get a grip on reality Race will always be a factor. It's really sad that so many people of all races work in jobs that give them power over people not of the same race. I hope you can sleep well knowing that the video I watched is nationwide now. Hopefully your superiors will step in and relieve of your position and give it to someone who will work with everyone, not just the black community.

James Cruey

Abebe, Yeshimebet

From: Abebe, Yeshimebet
Sent: Thursday, July 15, 2010 11:51 AM
To: 'Shirley.Sherrod@one.usda.gov'
Subject: Re: Question

I am changing office location and my phone line has not been transferred. You can reach me at [REDACTED]

Sent using BlackBerry

From: Shirley.Sherrod@one.usda.gov
To: Abebe, Yeshimebet
Sent: Thu Jul 15 11:49:16 2010
Subject: Re: Question
I will call at 4:00

Sent using BlackBerry

From: Abebe, Yeshimebet <Yeshimebet.Abebe@osec.usda.gov>
To: Sherrod, Shirley - Athens, GA
Sent: Thu Jul 15 10:48:04 2010
Subject: Re: Question

Thank you. Let's talk today. Are you available around 4?

Sent using BlackBerry

From: Shirley.Sherrod@one.usda.gov
To: Abebe, Yeshimebet
Sent: Thu Jul 15 11:44:25 2010
Subject: Fw: Question

Sent using BlackBerry

From: Sherrod, Shirley - Athens, GA
To: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thu Jul 15 09:29:37 2010
Subject: Re: Question

You are so wrong. If you had listened to the whole tape you would have heard me say that that whole situation helped me to see what the real problem is. I actually found a lawyer who did work with us to save that farmer's land and I had a long relationship with him and later helped hundreds of white farmers in south Georgia and northern Florida. If asked I know some of them would step forward and tell you what I did for them

Sent using BlackBerry

From: J C [REDACTED]
To: Sherrod, Shirley - Athens, GA

Sent: Thu Jul 15 09:03:36 2010

Subject: Question

I just saw this <http://usactionnews.com/2010/07/usda-state-director-admits-race-effects-benefits/>

and thought what a world we live in. You took the White Farmer to a white lawyer since he was one of his own kind. Hello, I am white and everyone is one of my own kind. Color makes no difference to me. You also admitted that you never gave him what you could have since he was white. You should be fired for this alone. Until people like you, Al Sharpton, Jesse Jackson Jackons Lewis F and the BPP get a grip on reality Race will always be a factor. It's really sad that so many people of all races work in jobs that give them power over people not of the same race. I hope you can sleep well knowing that the video I watched is nationwide now. Hopefully your superiors will step in and relieve of your position and give it to someone who will work with everyone, not just the black community.

James Cruey

Abebe, Yeshimebet

From: Shirley.Sherrod@one.usda.gov
Sent: Thursday, July 15, 2010 11:53 AM
To: Abebe, Yeshimebet
Subject: Fw: Question

Sent using BlackBerry

From: Sherrod, Shirley - Athens, GA
To: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thu Jul 15 09:45:12 2010
Subject: Re: Question

I would suggest that you contact Albany State University. That is where I spoke last year in October. It is located in Albany GA.

It is so disturbing to me that someone would try to turn my statements into something negative. It was meant to show that we need to work together. If that farmer were alive today he would certainly tell you just how far I went to solve his problem. My point was that we can't look at race. In many ways we are treated the same whether white or black. This case helped me to see that and if I had not helped this farmer the family would not have the land now. With this case my eyes were opened and that was my whole point

Sent using BlackBerry

From: J C [REDACTED]
To: Sherrod, Shirley - Athens, GA
Sent: Thu Jul 15 09:37:24 2010
Subject: Re: Question

If you can link me to the entire tape and I see this was out of context I will do what I can to get your entire message out.

From: "Sherrod, Shirley - Athens, GA" <shirley.sherrod@ga.usda.gov>
To: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thu, July 15, 2010 10:29:37 AM
Subject: Re: Question

You are so wrong. If you had listened to the whole tape you would have heard me say that that whole situation helped me to see what the real problem is. I actually found a lawyer who did work with us to save that farmer's land and I had a long relationship with him and later helped hundreds of white farmers in south Georgia and northern Florida. If asked I know some of them would step forward and tell you what I did for them

Sent using BlackBerry

From: J C [REDACTED]
To: Sherrod, Shirley - Athens, GA
Sent: Thu Jul 15 09:03:36 2010
Subject: Question

I just saw this <http://usactionnews.com/2010/07/usda-state-director-admits-race-effects-benefits/>

and thought what a world we live in. You took the White Farmer to a white lawyer since he was one of his own kind. Hello, I am white and everyone is one of my own kind. Color makes no difference to me. You also admitted that you never gave him what you could have since he was white. You should be fired for this alone. Until people like you, Al Sharpton, Jesse Jackson Jackons Lewis F and the BPP get a grip on reality Race will always be a factor. It's really sad that so many people of all races work in jobs that give them power over people not of the same race. I hope you can sleep well knowing that the video I watched is nationwide now. Hopefully your superiors will step in and relieve of your position and give it to someone who will work with everyone, not just the black community.

James Cruey

Abebe, Yeshimebet

From: Abebe, Yeshimebet
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 2:03 PM
To: 'Shirley.Sherrod@one.usda.gov'
Subject: RE: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Thank you. However, please refrain from any additional responses until further notice. Thanks.

From: Shirley.Sherrod@one.usda.gov [mailto:Shirley.Sherrod@one.usda.gov]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 2:00 PM
To: Abebe, Yeshimebet
Subject: Fw: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Yeshi
This is a response I sent Thurs

Sent using BlackBerry

From: Sherrod, Shirley - Athens, GA
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]; Merrigan, Kathleen (OSEC); [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]; Thomas, Donnie - Athens, GA
Sent: Thu Jul 15 18:07:13 2010
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

My words were taken out of context. I told about something that happened in 1986 when I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm. When so many black farmers were losing their. My point was that I initially did not do all that I could but in the process realized it was not about black versus white but about poor people or those who have versus those who do not.
If they will use all that I said you see that I talked about what I did to save that white farmers farm and from there went to help hundreds of other white farmers

I use the story to try to get people to move beyond race and work together
I feel deeply hurt that someone would take my words out of context and try to make them mean something else
My record of work for others for 45 years will show my love for people and for fairness

Shirley Sherrod

Sent using BlackBerry

From: [REDACTED]
To: Sherrod, Shirley - Athens, GA
Cc: [REDACTED]; Merrigan, Kathleen (OSEC); [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]; Thomas, Donnie - Athens, GA
Sent: Thu Jul 15 15:33:41 2010
Subject: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Dear Ms. Sherrod:

I recently came across a video of your speech at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet in Douglas Coffee County, GA: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=62hPa37v2J4>

In the video, you stated that you did not help a white farmer with the "full force of what [you] could do" when he sought your help. From the context of your speech, you seem to imply that the "amount" of help you provided was due to the color of his skin (white) and because of your sympathy and preference for black farmers.

Are your comments and the context of the comments in your speech correct? As Georgia's USDA Rural Development State Director, do you believe your comments were appropriate?

Thank you,

George Ko

--

George Ko



Abebe, Yeshimebet

From: Abebe, Yeshimebet
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 2:38 PM
To: Maloney, Wayne
Subject: RE: Georgia

I also advised Shirley not to respond to others until further notice.

-----Original Message-----

From: Abebe, Yeshimebet
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 2:36 PM
To: Maloney, Wayne
Subject: RE: Georgia

No.

-----Original Message-----

From: Maloney, Wayne
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 2:30 PM
To: Abebe, Yeshimebet; 'Timothy.McNeilly@one.usda.gov'; Cook, Cheryl
Subject: RE: Georgia

Media? Congressional?

-----Original Message-----

From: Abebe, Yeshimebet
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 2:20 PM
To: 'Timothy.McNeilly@one.usda.gov'; Cook, Cheryl
Cc: Maloney, Wayne
Subject: RE: Georgia

FYI: USEC's office is getting calls on this matter.

-----Original Message-----

From: Timothy.McNeilly@one.usda.gov [mailto:Timothy.McNeilly@one.usda.gov]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 1:33 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Cc: Abebe, Yeshimebet; Maloney, Wayne
Subject: Georgia
Importance: High

Georgia PIC just called to alert us to a campaign underway involving Shirley Sherrod vs. the Tea Party people. I understand that this may have been brought to your attention already, but in case it hasn't..... The PIC is looking for guidance if (and I think there will be) media contact regarding the below video.

<http://hotair.com/archives/2010/07/19/breitbart-hits-naacp-with-promised-video-of-racism/>

Looking for guidance on how you would like to prepare and handle any inquiries that result.

Thanks.

Timothy J. McNeilly | Director, Legislative and Public Affairs Rural Development U.S.
Department of Agriculture 1400 Independence Ave., S.W. | Washington, D.C. 20250
Phone: 202.720.1019 | Fax: 202.690.4083

www.rurdev.usda.gov

"Committed to the future of rural communities"

"Estamos dedicados al futuro de las comunidades rurales"

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:48 PM
To: 'Cherlin, Reid H.'; 'Tom Gavin' [REDACTED]
Subject: URGENT

Importance: High

See below. Just posted online. There is video. CBS NY just ran something. FOX News ran something yesterday but out TV Eyes did not pick up.

<http://hotair.com/archives/2010/07/19/breitbart-hits-naacp-with-promised-video-of-racism/>

here is beginning on whats online

The NAACP is about to learn one of the most basic of all lessons in life – those who live in glass houses should avoid provoking a stone-throwing war. After the civil-rights organization threatened to issue a condemnation of Tea Party activism by equating it with racism (a position from which they ultimately retreated), Andrew Breitbart announced that he would publish at least one video of the NAACP itself cheering racism. Breitbart delivers on that promise today at Big Government, showing USDA official Shirley Sherrod explain to an appreciative NAACP audience in July 2009 how she deliberately withheld information from a white farmer in Georgia trying to save his land and his business:

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:19 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: URGENT

Video of GA Rural Development State Director saying at a NAACP meeting that when a white farmer came to her for services, she knowingly didn't give him all the help he needed. She goes on to make it a larger case about understanding race... but looks bad. O'Reilly just called us for statement.

Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Cherlin, Reid H. [REDACTED]
To: Mather, Chris; Gavin, Tom [REDACTED]
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:49:56 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT

Can you explain a little about what this is and what we should do?

-----Original Message-----

From: Mather, Chris [mailto:Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:48 PM
To: Cherlin, Reid H.; Gavin, Tom
Subject: URGENT
Importance: High

See below. Just posted online. There is video. CBS NY just ran something. FOX News ran something yesterday but out TV Eyes did not pick up.

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Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:40 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: URGENT

Said nothing yet. Guess some folks over there are circling wagons. Been placed on admin leave.
Chris Mather

From: Cherlin, Reid H.
To: Mather, Chris; Gavin, Tom
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:24:42 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT

ok - what are you going to say, and has she been fired? I'm going to alert folks here.

From: Mather, Chris [mailto:Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:19 PM
To: Cherlin, Reid H.; Gavin, Tom
Subject: Re: URGENT

Video of GA Rural Development State Director saying at a NAACP meeting that when a white farmer came to her for services, she knowingly didn't give him all the help he needed. She goes on to make it a larger case about understanding race... but looks bad. O'Reilly just called us for statement.
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position from which they ultimately retreated), Andrew Breitbart announced that he would publish at least one video of the NAACP itself cheering racism. Breitbart delivers on that promise today at Big Government, showing USDA official Shirley Sherrod explain to an appreciative NAACP audience in July 2009 how she deliberately withheld information from a white farmer in Georgia trying to save his land and his business:

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:50 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Fw: URGENT

Chris Mather

From: Cherlin, Reid H.
To: Mather, Chris; Gavin, Tom
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:24:42 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT

ok - what are you going to say, and has she been fired? I'm going to alert folks here.

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Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:19 PM
To: Cherlin, Reid H.; Gavin, Tom
Subject: Re: URGENT

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Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:48 PM
To: Cherlin, Reid H.; Gavin, Tom
Subject: URGENT
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Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:47 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: URGENT

Political
Chris Mather

From: Cherlin, Reid H.
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 17:37:50 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT
Is she political or career

From: Mather, Chris [mailto:Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:40 PM
To: Cherlin, Reid H.; Gavin, Tom
Subject: Re: URGENT

Said nothing yet. Guess some folks over there are circling wagons. Been placed on admin leave.
Chris Mather

From: Cherlin, Reid H.
To: Mather, Chris; Gavin, Tom
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:24:42 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT
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From: Mather, Chris [mailto:Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:19 PM
To: Cherlin, Reid H.; Gavin, Tom
Subject: Re: URGENT

Video of GA Rural Development State Directo saying at a NAACP meeting that when a white farmer came to her for services, she knowingly didn't give him all the help he needed. She goes on to make it a larger case about understanding race... but looks bad.
O'Reilly just called us for statement.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Cherlin, Reid H. <[REDACTED]>
To: Mather, Chris; Gavin, Tom <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:49:56 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT

Can you explain a little about what this is and what we should do?

-----Original Message-----

From: Mather, Chris [mailto:Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:48 PM

To: Cherlin, Reid H.; Gavin, Tom
Subject: URGENT
Importance: High

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Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:05 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re:

Just talked to Gavin and Shin. You in loop?
Chris Mather

From: Cherlin, Reid H.
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 17:45:30 2010
Subject:
Just tried your phones. Can you call me about this so I can make sure that folks here are up to speed?

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:34 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: final

Sending now.
Chris Mather

From: Gavin, Tom
To: Mather, Chris; [REDACTED]
Cc: Cherlin, Reid H.
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:32:13 2010
Subject: final
Chris –

We are good with this version on this end. Counsel has cleared the language. Only change is in the first sentence.

Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:38 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: final

Did you connect with NAACP?
Chris Mather

From: Gavin, Tom
To: Mather, Chris; [REDACTED]
Cc: Cherlin, Reid H.
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:32:13 2010
Subject: final
Chris –

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Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:44 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: final

Great thanks.
Chris Mather

From: Gavin, Tom
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:41:30 2010
Subject: RE: final
OPE did. We'll be fine.

From: Mather, Chris [mailto:Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:38 PM
To: Gavin, Tom
Subject: Re: final

Did you connect with NAACP?
Chris Mather

From: Gavin, Tom
To: Mather, Chris; [REDACTED]
Cc: Cherlin, Reid H.
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Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:52 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: final

And again, only upon request.
Chris Mather

From: Gavin, Tom
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:46:40 2010
Subject: RE: final
absolutely

From: Mather, Chris [mailto:Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:45 PM
To: Gavin, Tom
Subject: Re: final

I think it should be don't you?
Chris Mather

From: Gavin, Tom
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:42:08 2010
Subject: RE: final
Just o be clear, this is the Secretary's quote, right?

From: Mather, Chris [mailto:Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:38 PM
To: Gavin, Tom
Subject: Re: final

Did you connect with NAACP?
Chris Mather

From: Gavin, Tom
To: Mather, Chris; [REDACTED]
Cc: Cherlin, Reid H.
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:32:13 2010
Subject: final
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Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 7:11 PM
To: 'Gavin, Tom'; Cherlin, Reid H.
Subject: RE:

[REDACTED]

From: Gavin, Tom [mailto:[REDACTED]]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 7:06 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Cherlin, Reid H.
Subject: FW:

FYI. Confidential for you only.

From: Green, Valerie E.
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:59 PM
To: Gavin, Tom
Subject: FW:

From: Washo, Kevin [mailto:Kevin.Washo@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:57 PM
To: Green, Valerie E.
Subject: Fw:

----- Original Message -----
From: Cook, Cheryl
To: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:56:14 2010
Subject: FW:

-----Original Message-----
From: Sherrod, Shirley - Athens, GA [mailto:[REDACTED]]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:55 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject:

Cheryl

I feel so disappointed that the Secretary and President let a misrepresentation of my words on the part of th Tea Party be the reason to ask me to resign

Please look at the tape and see that I use the story from 1986 to show people that the issue is not about race but about those who have v ersus those who do not

I used everything and everyone I could to help me to save that white farmers land. That family has the land because of what I did. He

became a very good friend. I went on to help save many other white land owners thru the years

I submit my resignation but in doing so want to put the administration on notice that I will get the whole story out.

My whole life speaks for my commitment to fairness whether white or black.

Shirley sherrod

Sent using BlackBerry

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 11:47 PM
To: [REDACTED] 'Ed.Henry@turner.com'
Subject: Re: Usda story

Ed, how can I help?
Chris Mather

From: Cherlin, Reid H.
To: Ed.Henry@turner.com
Cc: Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 23:00:56 2010
Subject: Re: Usda story
Adding chris mather at usda

From: Henry, Ed <Ed.Henry@turner.com>
To: Cherlin, Reid H.
Sent: Mon Jul 19 21:49:11 2010
Subject: Usda story

Hi reid -- is there something u can give me on this?

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:54 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Shirley Sherrod on CNN

That's all we have so far.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Gavin, Tom <[REDACTED]>
To: Mather, Chris; Cherlin, Reid H. [REDACTED]
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:47:40 2010
Subject: FW: Shirley Sherrod on CNN

+ Reid and to Chris' USDA address.

We've got AP, CNN, AJC, MSNBC, others.

Chris, what are you tracking?

-----Original Message-----

From: Gavin, Tom
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:04 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fw: Shirley Sherrod on CNN

Are you getting a lot of inquiries?

We are tracking cnn, AJC, msnbc.

Others?

----- Original Message -----

From: Bates, Andrew J.
To: Bates, Andrew J.; Pfeiffer, Dan; Hogan, Nancy D.; Gavin, Tom
Cc: Messina, Jim; Green, Valerie E.
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:56:06 2010
Subject: RE: Shirley Sherrod on CNN

She spoke to the AJC for an article that ran this morning:

<http://www.ajc.com/news/resigned-usda-official-says-574027.html?printArticle=y>

Resigned USDA official says racial story misconstrued

By Marcus K. Garner

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

5:42 a.m. Tuesday, July 20, 2010

The USDA's rural development director for Georgia says she was forced out of her federally appointed job after a "snippet" of a speech she gave in March appeared to show her admission to only half-heartedly aiding a struggling white farmer because of his race.

But in a phone interview from her home in Albany early Tuesday morning, Shirley Sherrod told the Atlanta-Journal Constitution that the two-minute, 38-second video posted online Monday by biggovernment.com and reported on by FoxNews.com and the AJC completely misconstrued the message she was trying to convey.

Sherrod, 62, insisted her statements in the video were not racist.

"For Fox to take a spin on this like they have done, and know it's not the truth ... it's very upsetting," she said.

In the video Sherrod, who is black, admits to the crowd at the NAACP banquet she didn't do everything she could to help a white farmer whom she said was condescending when he came to her for aid.

"What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was, I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," Sherrod said in the video recorded March 27 in Douglas in southeast Georgia.

"I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough."

But Tuesday morning, Sherrod said what online viewers weren't told in reports posted throughout the day Monday was that the tale she told at the banquet happened 24 years ago -- before she got the USDA job -- when she worked with the Georgia field office for the Federation of Southern Cooperative/Land Assistance Fund.

Sherrod said the short video clip excluded the breadth of the story about how she eventually worked with the man over a two-year period to help ward off foreclosure of his farm, and how she eventually became friends with the farmer and his wife.

"And I went on to work with many more white farmers," she said. "The story helped me realize that race is not the issue, it's about the people who have and the people who don't. When I speak to groups, I try to speak about getting beyond the issue of race."

Responding to what he knew of the video Monday evening, Atlanta NAACP chapter president R.L. White recalled many years of unfair treatment against minority farmers when he told the AJC that the footage, at face value, "does suggest unfair treatment."

"The playing table should be leveled," said White, who wasn't at the March event. "Everyone, regardless of race, creed or color, should be treated same way, regardless of the race of the administrator."

And in a statement released to Fox News, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced Sherrod's resignation.

"There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person," Vilsack said in the statement.

An AJC reporter called Sherrod's Albany home Monday evening but was unable to contact her until she reached out shortly after midnight.

"They were just looking at what the Tea Party and what Fox said, and thought it was too (politically) dangerous for them," she said of the agriculture department.

The revelation of Sherrod's statements came a week after the NAACP issued a resolution calling the National Tea Party racist for comments made against President Barack Obama and African-American congressmen during the health care debate.

Sherrod, 62, was appointed to her position in by Obama's administration in July 2009 to manage more than 40 housing, business and community infrastructure and facility programs, and more than \$114 billion in federal loans.

The AJC is trying to recover the full video footage of Sherrod's speech to the Douglas NAACP.

She said the circumstances made it absurd for her to have made any racist comment.

"There were some white people there. The mayor (of Douglas) was there," Sherrod recalled. "Why would I do something racist if they were there?"

Return to [AJC.com](http://ajc.com) for more updates.

-----Original Message-----

From: Bates, Andrew J.

Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:55 AM

To: Bates, Andrew J.; Pfeiffer, Dan; Hogan, Nancy D.; Gavin, Tom

Cc: Messina, Jim; Green, Valerie E.

Subject: RE: Shirley Sherrod on CNN

Daily Caller:

<http://dailycaller.com/2010/07/20/naacp-appalled-by-black-usda-officials-racial-discrimination/print/>

NAACP 'appalled' by black USDA official's racial discrimination

By Jon Ward - The Daily Caller 7:02 AM 07/20/2010

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People President Benjamin Todd Jealous said late Monday he was "appalled" by the actions of U.S. Department of Agriculture official Shirley Sherrod, who resigned earlier in the day after video surfaced of her speaking at an NAACP event about discriminating against a white farmer seeking government help.

Jealous also promised to look into why members of the audience at an NAACP fundraiser in Georgia this past March reacted, as shown in the video, by nodding and in some cases laughing at Sherrod's remarks. But Jealous distanced the national NAACP from the incident.

Coming just days after the NAACP condemned racist elements inside the Tea Party movement, Sherrod's remarks place the storied civil rights organization in an uncomfortable position.

"Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race," Jealous said. "We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers."

"Her actions were shameful. While she went on to explain in the story that she ultimately realized her mistake, as well as the common predicament of working people of all races, she gave no indication she had attempted to right the wrong she had done to this man," Jealous said (read his full statement below).

In the video, which was first posted Monday on biggovernment.com, a conservative site run by Andrew Breitbart, Sherrod is shown speaking on March 27, 2010, at what is labeled as a "Freedom Fund" dinner in Georgia, though the exact location is not clear. The Daily Caller has asked the NAACP to clarify that detail.

"I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land, so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do," Sherrod said.

"I did enough," she said.

Sherrod said the only reason she helped the man at all was because she knew that the federal or state department of agriculture had sent him to her and "he needed to go back and report that I had tried to help him."

"So I took him to a white lawyer," she said. "So I figured if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him."

Sherrod then said it was "revealed" to her, though she did not explain how, that "it's about the poor versus those who have."

"It's not so much about white - it is about white and black - but it's not, you know," she said, failing to finish the thought. "It opened my eyes, because I took him to one of his own."

The video, a less than three-minute excerpt of Sherrod's remarks, ends at that point.

Jealous promised an internal probe at the NAACP to examine why audience members appeared to agree with and support Sherrod's expressions of hostility to another person based on the color of their skin.

"The reaction from many in the audience is disturbing. We will be looking into the behavior of NAACP representatives at this local event and take any appropriate action," Jealous said, though he sought to distance the national NAACP from any responsibility for the incident.

"We thank those who brought this to our national office's attention, as there are hundreds of local fundraising dinners each year," he said.

After the video of Sherrod's remarks were posted on biggovernment.com Monday, the story was picked up by Fox News, which posted it on their website and showed the video footage on the air. A short time later Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said he had accepted Sherrod's resignation.

"There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person," Vilsack said in a statement. "We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously."

Here is the full statement released by the NAACP:

NAACP STATEMENT ON THE RESIGNATION OF SHIRLEY SHERROD

(BALTIMORE, MD) NAACP President and CEO Benjamin Todd Jealous issued the following statement today after learning of the resignation of Shirley Sherrod of the United States Department of Agriculture.

"Since our founding in 1909, the NAACP has been a multi-racial, multi-faith organization that- while generally rooted in African American communities- fights to end racial discrimination against all Americans.

We concur with US Agriculture Secretary Vilsack in accepting the resignation of Shirley Sherrod for her remarks at a local NAACP Freedom Fund banquet.

Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race.

We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers.

Her actions were shameful. While she went on to explain in the story that she ultimately realized her mistake, as well as the common predicament of working people of all races, she gave no indication she had attempted to right the wrong she had done to this man.

The reaction from many in the audience is disturbing. We will be looking into the behavior of NAACP representatives at this local event and take any appropriate action.

We thank those who brought this to our national office's attention, as there are hundreds of local fundraising dinners each year.

Sherrod's behavior is even more intolerable in light of the US Department of Agriculture's well documented history of denying opportunities to African American, Latino, Asian American, and Native American farmers, as well as female farmers of all races. Currently, justice for many of these farmers is being held up by Congress. We would hope all who share our outrage at Sherrod's statements would join us in pushing for these cases to be remedied.

The NAACP will continue to advance the ideals of America and fight for freedom, justice and fairness for all Americans."

Founded in 1909, the NAACP is the nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization. Its members throughout the United States and the world are the premier advocates for civil rights in their communities, conducting voter mobilization and monitoring equal opportunity in the public and private sectors.

Read more: <http://dailycaller.com/2010/07/20/naacp-appalled-by-black-usda-officials-racial-discrimination/print/#ixzz0uDsQAQKu>

-----Original Message-----

From: Bates, Andrew J.

Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:54 AM

To: Bates, Andrew J.; Pfeiffer, Dan; Hogan, Nancy D.; Gavin, Tom

Cc: Messina, Jim; Green, Valerie E.

Subject: RE: Shirley Sherrod on CNN

And FOX News:

<http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2010/07/19/clip-shows-usda-official-admitting-withheld-help-white-farmer/?test=latestnews>

Video Shows USDA Official Saying She Didn't Give 'Full Force' of Help to White Farmer

Days after the NAACP clashed with Tea Party members over allegations of racism, a video has surfaced showing an Agriculture Department official regaling an NAACP audience with a story about how she withheld help to a white farmer facing bankruptcy -- video that now has forced the official to resign.

Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, is shown in the clip describing "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." Sherrod, who is black, claimed the farmer took a long time trying to show he was "superior" to her. The audience laughed as she described how she determined his fate.

"He had to come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," she said. "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land -- so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough."

The Agriculture Department announced Monday, shortly after FoxNews.com published its initial report on the video, that Sherrod had resigned.

"There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person," Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a written statement. "We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously."

The NAACP released a statement late Monday condemning Sherrod's admission.

"We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers," the statement said.

"Her actions were shameful," it continued. "While she went on to explain in the story that she ultimately realized her mistake, as well as the common predicament of working people of all races, she gave no indication she had attempted to right the wrong she had done to this man."

Sherrod explained in the video that, at the time, she assumed the state or national Department of Agriculture had referred the white farmer to her. In order to ensure that the farmer could report back that she was indeed helpful, she said she took him to see "one of his own" -- a white lawyer.

"I figured that if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him," she said.

The point of the story wasn't entirely clear; only an excerpt of the speech is included in the video clip.

"It was revealed to me that it's about poor versus those who have," she said, suggesting she had learned that race is less important.

The video clip was first posted by BigGovernment.com. The clip is dated March 27 from an NAACP Freedom Fund banquet.

The clip adds to the firestorm of debate over the NAACP's decision to approve a resolution at its convention last week accusing some Tea Party activists of racism -- a charge Tea Party leaders deny.

In a second clip from the same event posted online, Sherrod appeared to urge black job seekers to find work at the Department of Agriculture because the federal government won't lay people off.

"There are jobs at USDA and many times there are no people of color to fill those jobs because we shy away from agriculture. We hear the word agriculture and think, why are we working in the fields?" she said. "You've heard of a lot of layoffs. Have you heard of anybody in the federal government losing their job? That's all I need to say."

-----Original Message-----

From: Bates, Andrew J.

Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:53 AM

To: Bates, Andrew J.; Pfeiffer, Dan; Hogan, Nancy D.; Gavin, Tom

Cc: Messina, Jim; Green, Valerie E.

Subject: RE: Shirley Sherrod on CNN

Here's an Atlanta Journal Constitution blog post with full tape of her comments:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WrNwW7TGkjo&feature=player_embedded

http://blogs.ajc.com/jay-bookman-blog/2010/07/20/in-the-curious-case-of-shirley-sherrod-lets-see-the-whole-tape/?cxntfid=blogs_jay_bookman_blog

Jay Bookman In the curious case of Shirley Sherrod, let's see the whole tape
7:31 am July 20, 2010, by Jay

A couple of folks in comments yesterday brought up the case of USDA official Shirley Sherrod, a black woman caught on tape at an NAACP meeting here in Georgia apparently bragging about being less than diligent in helping a white farmer. The folks at Big Government posted a portion of her speech as part of the running feud between the NAACP and the Tea Party over which organization is more racist.

By the end of the day Monday, Sherrod had been forced to resign her post, and NAACP President Ben Jealous had released a statement agreeing with the forced resignation:

"Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race.

We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers.

Her actions were shameful. While she went on to explain in the story that she ultimately realized her mistake, as well as the common predicament of working people of all races, she gave no indication she had attempted to right the wrong she had done to this man."

After watching the video Monday evening, I wrote in comments that "what Sherrod says in that video -- and what she apparently did -- are deeply troubling... She might very well have earned a firing. But I'd like to see that rest of that video as well, because at the point it abruptly

ends, she appears to be saying that it's wrong to think in terms of black and white, that she came to see things as more accurately divided between poor and rich than by race."

As I also noted, the folks at Big Government seem to have the whole video, since they also posted another segment, and it would be useful to see the rest of it.

Sherrod gets a chance to tell her side of the story in an AJC story by Marcus Garner:

"But Tuesday morning, Sherrod said what online viewers weren't told in reports posted throughout the day Monday was that the tale she told at the banquet happened 24 years ago - before she got the USDA job - when she worked with the Georgia field office for the Federation of Southern Cooperative/Land Assistance Fund.

Sherrod said the short video clip excluded the breadth of the story about how she eventually worked with the man over a two-year period to help ward off foreclosure of his farm, and how she eventually became friends with the farmer and his wife.

"And I went on to work with many more white farmers," she said. "The story helped me realize that race is not the issue, it's about the people who have and the people who don't. When I speak to groups, I try to speak about getting beyond the issue of race."

So let's see the rest of the tape, Big Government. Was Sherrod giggling among black folk about the time she put it to the white man, as the leaked excerpt suggests, or was the tape a deceptively edited excerpt of a longer story about getting beyond the issue of race, as she claims?

Let's see the tape. The evidence apparently exists to settle the question. Cough it up.

-----Original Message-----

From: Bates, Andrew J.

Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:50 AM

To: Bates, Andrew J.; Pfeiffer, Dan; Hogan, Nancy D.; Gavin, Tom

Cc: Messina, Jim; Green, Valerie E.

Subject: RE: Shirley Sherrod on CNN

Here's trans. It's near verbatim, but went with rough for speed:

<http://www.shadowtv.com/redirect/notification.jsp?vid=86e15cb25493301e7aee306262074d24>

JOHN ROBERTS: The U.S. Department of Agriculture accepts the resignation of an employee after a video surfaced showing her telling an audience that she withheld assistance to a white farmer because of his race. Let's listen to what she told the NAACP.

[BEGIN VIDEO]

SHIRLEY SHERROD: I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land. And here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So, I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough

[END VIDEO]

KIRAN CHETRY: Does that video tell the whole story? Joining us now on the phone from Albany, Georgia is Shirley Sherrod herself. Thanks for being with us this morning, Shirley.

SHERROD: Thank you.

CHETRY: You say this was part of the story and that it was part that was spliced enough to show you in a bad light, that this isn't the whole story. Will you finish for us how this ended?

SHERROD: Okay. I was speaking to that group like I've done many groups and I tell them about a time when I thought the issue was race and race only. And I tell them the story of how I worked with a white farmer back in 1986. I was not working for the Department of Agriculture. I was working with a non-profit organization assisting farmers throughout south Georgia and the southeast. And this farmer came to me for help. I was telling the story about how working with him helped me to see that the issue is not about race, it's about those who have versus those who do not have. And I tell how I took him to a lawyer who I thought would help him. In the end, that lawyer didn't. In the end, I had to frantically look for a lawyer because when USDA lifted - I'm sorry, when the court lifted the injunction against USDA in May of 1987, this white farmer was 1 of 13 that was foreclosed on by the state of Georgia. I had to frantically find a lawyer who would file a chapter 11 to stop the foreclosure. He couldn't - at that time we had chapter 12 -

CHETRY: Yes, but let me say - you said you didn't know enough, didn't give him the full force of what you could do. You said you did enough, and then you referred to the race of the lawyer as well, saying that perhaps because the lawyer was white that perhaps he could help him. What did you mean by that?

SHERROD: What I meant was, I didn't know anyone else. I didn't know another lawyer at that time who was local, who knew something about chapter 12. But I thought if I took him to a white lawyer, he would definitely do all that he could to help save his farm.

ROBERTS: Miss Sherrod, let's make it clear though, this happened 24 years ago. You eventually worked with this white farmer. You eventually became friends, you say, with the farmer and his wife.

SHERROD: Yes.

ROBERTS: So the question I have is, when the U.S. Department of Agriculture came to you and said you have to step down, why didn't you just say, "Wait a minute, you don't know the full story. Here's the full story, why should I step down?"

SHERROD: I did say that. But they, for some reason, the stuff that FOX and the Tea Party does is scaring the administration. I told them, get the whole tape and look at the whole tape and look at how I tell people we have to get beyond race and start working together.

ROBERTS: Many people at home might be thinking, well, if you're recounting an old story, why did you succumb to pressure to step down? Why didn't you try to fight this?

SHERROD: If I tried to fight it and didn't have any support from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, what would I do?

CHETRY: Let me ask you this. Did you talk to the NAACP about it? Because I just want to read for our audience what Ben Jealous, the president, said. He said, referring to you and this surfacing of the tape, "Her actions were shameful. While she went on to explain in the story, she ultimately realized her mistake, as well as the common predicament of working people of all races. She gave no indication she had attempted to right the wrong she had done to this man, and the reaction from many in the audience is disturbing." This is from Ben Jealous. Did you try to clarify with the NAACP your story?

SHERROD: No, I haven't had a chance to talk to anyone. All of this was happening so fast. And it's unfortunate that the NAACP would make a statement without even checking to see what

happened. This was 24 years ago, and I'm telling a story to try to unite people with that now.

ROBERTS: Certainly you're coming out and telling your story now takes it to a different level, and obviously we're going to keep following this. It is good to get your side of it. Sherri Sherrod, former Agriculture Department official. Perhaps we can get you back on again, get your face on TV as well and talk to you more about this as this story continues to develop.

SHERROD: I don't mind.

ROBERTS: Thanks a lot.

-----Original Message-----

From: Bates, Andrew J.
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:39 AM
To: Bates, Andrew J.; Pfeiffer, Dan; Hogan, Nancy D.; Gavin, Tom
Cc: Messina, Jim; Green, Valerie E.
Subject: RE: Shirley Sherrod on CNN

Here's video. I'm doing the transcript now.

<http://www.shadowtv.com/redirect/notification.jsp?vid=86e15cb25493301e7aee306262074d24>

-----Original Message-----

From: Bates, Andrew J.
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:33 AM
To: Pfeiffer, Dan; Hogan, Nancy D.; Gavin, Tom
Cc: Messina, Jim; Green, Valerie E.
Subject: RE: Shirley Sherrod on CNN

Sure thing, I'll get it

-----Original Message-----

From: Pfeiffer, Dan
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:27 AM
To: Hogan, Nancy D.; Gavin, Tom
Cc: Messina, Jim; Green, Valerie E.; Bates, Andrew J.
Subject: RE: Shirley Sherrod on CNN

Looping bates

-----Original Message-----

From: Hogan, Nancy D.
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:27 AM
To: Gavin, Tom
Cc: Messina, Jim; Pfeiffer, Dan; Green, Valerie E.
Subject: FW: Shirley Sherrod on CNN

Shirley Sherrod is the USDA regional from last evening. I have not seen yet. Gavin, can someone from your team get transcript?

-----Original Message-----

From: McLaughlin, Margaret T.
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:06 AM
To: Hogan, Nancy D.; Green, Valerie E.
Subject: Shirley Sherrod on CNN

She is doing phone interview
Meg McLaughlin

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:55 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fw: UPI: Dismissed employee blames media

Sorry just saw this one.
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:36:06 2010
Subject: UPI: Dismissed employee blames media
UPI: Dismissed employee blames media

An employee of the U.S. Department of Agriculture says she lost her job because the media misconstrued a speech she gave at an NAACP banquet.

Shirley Sherrod, who was forced out as the USDA's rural development director for Georgia, is seen on a video admitting she didn't do everything she could to help a white farmer who needed aid, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported Tuesday.

What the media didn't report, Sherrod says, was that the incident she was relating on the video happened 24 years ago when she was working for another organization, not the federal government.

Also left out, Sherrod says, is the part where she says she was trying to figure out how to help someone who was condescending.

Sherrod, who is black, says she eventually worked with the man over a two-year period and helped ward off foreclosure of his farm.

The Journal-Constitution reports it is trying to recover the full video footage of Sherrod's speech.

Stephanie C. Chan
Press Assistant
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 2050

Office: (202) 720-5555
Cell: [REDACTED]
Email: Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:59 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fw: NAACP Statement on Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

Chris Mather

From: Stephanie Chan
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:50:30 2010
Subject: NAACP Statement on Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

fyi-

NAACP Statement on Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

by **Publius**

July 19, 2010

(BALTIMORE, MD) NAACP President and CEO Benjamin Todd Jealous issued the following statement today after learning of the resignation of Shirley Sherrod of the United States Department of Agriculture:

“Since our founding in 1909, the NAACP has been a multi-racial, multi-faith organization that— while generally rooted in African American communities— fights to end racial discrimination against all Americans.

We concur with US Agriculture Secretary Vilsack in accepting the resignation of Shirley Sherrod for her remarks at a local NAACP Freedom Fund banquet.

Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race.

We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers.

Her actions were shameful. While she went on to explain in the story that she ultimately realized her mistake, as well as the common predicament of working people of all races, she gave no indication she had attempted to right the wrong she had done to this man.

The reaction from many in the audience is disturbing. We will be looking into the behavior of NAACP representatives at this local event and take any appropriate action.

We thank those who brought this to our national office’s attention, as there are hundreds of local fundraising dinners each year.

Sherrod’s behavior is even more intolerable in light of the US Department of Agriculture’s well documented history of denying opportunities to African American, Latino, Asian American, and Native American farmers,

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:37 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: Re: Shirley Sherrod Clip Compilation

Nice to meet you. Andrew I am connecting you with Sarah so you two can coordinate your clipping?
Chris Mather

From: Gavin, Tom
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: Bates, Andrew J.
Sent: Tue Jul 20 10:28:13 2010
Subject: FW: Shirley Sherrod Clip Compilation
Andrew, meet Chris.

Chris, Andrew.

Chris – this is the clip pack that we've got so far this morning. Anything more on your end?

From: Bates, Andrew J.
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:25 AM
To: Gavin, Tom; Pfeiffer, Dan; Hogan, Nancy D.; Jarvis-Shean, Elizabeth; Gibbs, Robert L.; Burton, William A.
Cc: Messina, Jim; Green, Valerie E.; Cherlin, Reid H.; Bedingfield, Katherine
Subject: Shirley Sherrod Clip Compilation

Sherrod clips so far with CNN – American Morning & FOX & Friends transcripts below, both of which are rough. On American Morning Roberts expressed an intention to continue coverage and have her back on:

ROBERTS: Certainly you're coming out and telling your story now takes it to a different level, and obviously we're going to keep following this. It is good to get your side of it. Sherri Sherrod, former Agriculture Department official. Perhaps we can get you back on again, get your face on TV as well and talk to you more about this as this story continues to develop.

Associated Press (staff) "USDA worker quits over racism charge from video": A black federal worker has resigned from a Georgia agricultural job after a video clip showed her saying she had not helped a farmer as much as she could have because he was white. U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a statement Tuesday he had accepted the resignation of Shirley Sherrod. Vilsack says the USDA has no tolerance for

discrimination. Sherrod told the Atlanta-Journal Constitution she was forced out of her job as the USDA's rural development director for Georgia. She said the two-minute, 38-second video posted online Monday misconstrued her message. Sherrod's taped remarks were from a local meeting of the civil rights group NAACP. National NAACP President Benjamin Todd Jealous welcomed the resignation because the group opposes racism of all kinds. [LINK](#)

Washington Post – Federal Eye (Ed O'Keefe, Krissah Thompson) “USDA worker quits over 1986 racial incident”: A U.S. Agriculture Department official from Georgia resigned late Monday after she was caught on tape admitting that 24 years ago she did not help a white farmer as much as she could have because of his race. Shirley Sherrod, USDA state director of rural development, made the remarks on March 27 at an NAACP Freedom Fund banquet. Her videotaped remarks surfaced online on Monday. Sherrod reminded the crowd that black farmers have faced years of discrimination and difficulty saving their farmland. She recounted the story of a white farmer who visited her asking for assistance keeping his farm. "Here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land," she said (see above). "So, I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough so that when he, I assumed the Department of Agriculture had sent him to me. Either that or the Georgia Department of Agriculture. He needed to go back and report that I did try to help him." As Sherrod tells the story of denying aid to the white farmer, she explains that she ultimately realized her mistake, but did not give any indication that she had rectified the situation. The incident took place in 1986 when she was working for a nonprofit group and long before she joined USDA, Sherrod said Tuesday. "I was speaking to that group, like I've done many groups, and I tell them about a time when I thought the issue was race and race only," she said in an interview on CNN. "I was telling the story of how working with him helped me to see the issue is not about race. It's about those who have versus those who do not have." [LINK](#)

Big Government (Andrew Breitbart) “Video Proof: The NAACP Awards Racism–2010 by Andrew Breitbart”: In this piece you will see video evidence of racism coming from a federal appointee and NAACP award recipient and in another clip from the same event a perfect rationalization for why the Tea Party needs to exist. But first the context: For the past week, Americans who consider themselves aligned with the Tea Party movement have suffered the indignity of being falsely labeled racist by the NAACP and their pro-bono publicity managers, the main stream media. The constant calls to “repudiate the racists from your ranks” have not only been insulting, but have also served to force a false standard upon America’s fastest-growing and most vibrant political movement that no other group could ever live up to nor would ever be asked to live up to. While the media has chosen to do the Democratic Party’s bidding in allowing for the NAACP to negatively and falsely brand the millions strong, loosely affiliated tea party phenomenon as “racist”, the moral indignation over race and racism has taken center stage in a summer of economic and political discontent. The NAACP, an undeniable weapon in the Democratic Party’s arsenal, was more than happy to exploit this nation’s sensitive racial schism for possible political gain. The Democratic Party and the NAACP, needless to say, are playing with fire. [LINK](#)

FOX News (staff) “Video Shows USDA Official Saying She Didn't Give 'Full Force' of Help to White Farmer”: Days after the NAACP clashed with Tea Party members over allegations of racism, a video has surfaced showing an Agriculture Department official regaling an NAACP audience with a story about how she withheld help to a white farmer facing bankruptcy -- video that now has forced the official to resign. Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, is shown in the clip describing "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." Sherrod, who is black, claimed the farmer took a long time trying to show he was "superior" to her. The audience laughed as she described how she determined his fate. "He had to come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," she said. "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land -- so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough." The Agriculture Department announced Monday, shortly after FoxNews.com published its initial report on the video, that Sherrod had resigned. "There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person," Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a

written statement. "We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously. [LINK](#)

Atlanta Journal Constitution (Marcus K. Garner) "Resigned USDA official says racial story misconstrued": The USDA's rural development director for Georgia says she was forced out of her federally appointed job after a "snippet" of a speech she gave in March appeared to show her admission to only half-heartedly aiding a struggling white farmer because of his race. But in a phone interview from her home in Albany early Tuesday morning, Shirley Sherrod told the Atlanta-Journal Constitution that the two-minute, 38-second video posted online Monday by biggovernment.com and reported on by FoxNews.com and the AJC completely misconstrued the message she was trying to convey. Sherrod, 62, insisted her statements in the video were not racist. "For Fox to take a spin on this like they have done, and know it's not the truth ... it's very upsetting," she said. In the video Sherrod, who is black, admits to the crowd at the NAACP banquet she didn't do everything she could to help a white farmer whom she said was condescending when he came to her for aid. "What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was, I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," Sherrod said in the video recorded March 27 in Douglas in southeast Georgia. "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough." [LINK](#)

Atlanta Journal Constitution – Jay Bookman blog (Jay Bookman) "In the curious case of Shirley Sherrod, let's see the whole tape": A couple of folks in comments yesterday brought up the case of USDA official Shirley Sherrod, a black woman caught on tape at an NAACP meeting here in Georgia apparently bragging about being less than diligent in helping a white farmer. The folks at Big Government posted a portion of her speech as part of the running feud between the NAACP and the Tea Party over which organization is more racist. By the end of the day Monday, Sherrod had been forced to resign her post, and NAACP President Ben Jealous had released a statement agreeing with the forced resignation: "Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race. We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers. Her actions were shameful. While she went on to explain in the story that she ultimately realized her mistake, as well as the common predicament of working people of all races, she gave no indication she had attempted to right the wrong she had done to this man." After watching the video Monday evening, I wrote in comments that "what Sherrod says in that video — and what she apparently did — are deeply troubling... She might very well have earned a firing. [LINK](#)

CNN (staff) "USDA employee says statements on white farmer misconstrued": A black Agriculture Department employee who resigned after a video clip showed her talking about a white farmer said Tuesday her remarks were taken out of context. Shirley Sherrod, the department's former state director of rural development for Georgia, told CNN on Tuesday the incident she discusses in the clip took place more than two decades ago - - and she recounted it to an audience to make the point that people should move beyond race. "I was speaking to that group, like I've done many groups, and I tell them about a time when I thought the issue was race and race only," Sherrod told CNN's "American Morning" from her home in Albany, Georgia. The incident took place in 1986, while she worked for a nonprofit and before she worked for the USDA, she said. "I was telling the story of how working with him helped me to see the issue is not about race. It's about those who have versus those who do not have." Sherrod resigned Monday after conservative media outlets aired the video, in which she says she did not give the white farmer "the full force of what I could do" to help him avoid foreclosure. Conservative website publisher Andrew Breitbart originally posted the video, which was quickly picked up by Fox News. The video claims Sherrod's remarks were delivered March 27 to an NAACP Freedom Fund banquet, but it is not clear that is the case, nor is it clear where the event was held or how many people were in attendance. [LINK](#)

MSNBC (staff) "Black USDA official resigns after admitting she only 'did enough' for white farmer": A black USDA official in Georgia has resigned after publicly admitting she didn't help a white man trying to save his farm to the "full force" of her power and instead referred him to "own of his own." Agriculture Secretary

Tom Vilsack said he had accepted Shirley Sherrod's resignation, saying there was "zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA." The NAACP, which recently condemned racism in tea party groups, also issued a statement Monday night saying: "Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race." The Huffington Post said a YouTube video clip of her speech was first posted on the biggovernment.com blog and a report was then aired by Fox News. Sherrod, who resigned late Monday from her job as USDA's Georgia director of rural development, is shown talking about "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." Her remarks came at a local NAACP Freedom Fund banquet, which the video says took place in March this year. She says in the clip that the farmer had tried to show he was "superior" to her. "He had to come to me for help. What he didn't know, while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me, was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," she says in the film.

[LINK](#)

Daily Caller (Jon Ward) "NAACP 'appalled' by black USDA official's racial discrimination": National Association for the Advancement of Colored People President Benjamin Todd Jealous said late Monday he was "appalled" by the actions of U.S. Department of Agriculture official Shirley Sherrod, who resigned earlier in the day after video surfaced of her speaking at an NAACP event about discriminating against a white farmer seeking government help. Jealous also promised to look into why members of the audience at an NAACP fundraiser in Georgia this past March reacted, as shown in the video, by nodding and in some cases laughing at Sherrod's remarks. But Jealous distanced the national NAACP from the incident. Coming just days after the NAACP condemned racist elements inside the Tea Party movement, Sherrod's remarks place the storied civil rights organization in an uncomfortable position. "Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race," Jealous said. "We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers." "Her actions were shameful. While she went on to explain in the story that she ultimately realized her mistake, as well as the common predicament of working people of all races, she gave no indication she had attempted to right the wrong she had done to this man," Jealous said (read his full statement below).

[LINK](#)

New York Post (Tim Perone) "USDA big quits in bias-boast shock": A black official in the US Agriculture Department resigned yesterday after a video surfaced of her bragging to the NAACP that she didn't do everything she could to help a white farmer facing bankruptcy. Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, told the audience at a March banquet in Atlanta that she claimed the man felt "superior" to her, according to FoxNews.com. "He had come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was talking all that time, trying to show me he was superior to me, was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," Sherrod said. "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land -- so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. "I did enough," she said. Sherrod said she passed him off to "one of his own -- a white lawyer," so she could claim she was helpful. Sherrod, who was appointed to her position in July 2009, didn't say what ultimately happened to the farmer's case. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack accepted her resignation yesterday and said, "There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA." [LINK](#)

Heritage Foundation – The Foundry (Conn Carroll) "Justice Not Only Obama Department Not Equally Enforcing Law": This morning we reviewed the still unfolding New Black Panther Party scandal at the Department of Justice where a whistle blower, testifying under oath, quoted Deputy Assistant Attorney General Julie Fernandes as saying that "the Voting Section will never or will not, at least while she is there, bring any more cases against blacks or other national minorities." In other words, Fernandes has reportedly admitted that the Obama Justice Department is not enforcing the nation's civil rights law equally and in a race-neutral manner. The Obama Justice Department has refused to confirm or deny that Fernandes made this statement. Now Andrew Breitbart has unearthed a very similar statement from another Obama political appointee, this time from the Department of Agriculture. In the video, U.S. Department of Agriculture Director of Rural

Development for Georgia Shirley Sherrod tells an NAACP audience . . . First Justice. Now Agriculture. How many other Obama Department's are refusing to enforce our nation's laws equally? [LINK](#)

CNN – AMERICAN MORNING

<http://www.shadowtv.com/redirect/notification.jsp?vid=86e15cb25493301e7ace306262074d24>

JOHN ROBERTS: The U.S. Department of Agriculture accepts the resignation of an employee after a video surfaced showing her telling an audience that she withheld assistance to a white farmer because of his race. Let's listen to what she told the NAACP.

[BEGIN VIDEO]

SHIRLEY SHERROD: I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land. And here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So, I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough

[END VIDEO]

KIRAN CHETRY: Does that video tell the whole story? Joining us now on the phone from Albany, Georgia is Shirley Sherrod herself. Thanks for being with us this morning, Shirley.

SHERROD: Thank you.

CHETRY: You say this was part of the story and that it was part that was spliced enough to show you in a bad light, that this isn't the whole story. Will you finish for us how this ended?

SHERROD: Okay. I was speaking to that group like I've done many groups and I tell them about a time when I thought the issue was race and race only. And I tell them the story of how I worked with a white farmer back in 1986. I was not working for the Department of Agriculture. I was working with and non-profit organization assisting farmers throughout south Georgia and the southeast. And this farmer came to me for help. I was telling the story about how working with him helped me to see that the issue is not about race, it's about those who have versus those who do not have. And I tell how I took him to a lawyer who I thought would help him. In the end, that lawyer didn't. In the end, I had to frantically look for a lawyer because when USDA lifted – I'm sorry, when the court lifted the injunction against USDA in may of 1987, this white farmer was 1 of 13 that was foreclosed on by the state of Georgia. I had to frantically find a lawyer who would file a chapter 11 to stop the foreclosure. He couldn't – at that time we had chapter 12 –

CHETRY: Yes, but let me said – you said you didn't know enough, didn't give him the full force of what you could do. You said you did enough, and then you referred to the race of the lawyer as well, saying that perhaps because the lawyer was white that perhaps he could help him. What did you mean by that?

SHERROD: What I meant was, I didn't know anyone else. I didn't know another lawyer at that time who was local, who knew something about chapter 12. But I thought if I took him to a white lawyer, he would definitely do all that he could to help save his farm.

ROBERTS: Miss Sherrod, let's make it clear though, this happened 24 years ago. You eventually worked with this white farmer. You eventually became friends, you say, with the farmer and his wife.

SHERROD: Yes.

ROBERTS: So the question I have is, when the U.S. Department of Agriculture came to you and said you have to step down, why didn't you just say, "Wait a minute, you don't know the full story. Here's the full story, why should I step down?"

SHERROD: I did say that. But they, for, some reason, the stuff that FOX and the Tea Party does is scaring the administration. I told them, get the whole tape and look at the whole tape and look at how I tell people we have to get beyond race and start working together.

ROBERTS: Many people at home might be thinking, well, if you're recounting an old story, why did you succumb to pressure to step down? Why didn't you try to fight this?

SHERROD: If I tried to fight it and didn't have any support from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, what would I do?

CHETRY: Let me ask you this. Did you talk to the NAACP about it? Because I just want to read for our audience what Ben Jealous, the president, said. He said, referring to you and this surfacing of the tape, "Her actions were shameful. While she went on to explain in the story, she ultimately realized her mistake, as well as the common predicament of working people of all races. She gave no indication she had attempted to right the wrong she had done to this man, and the reaction from many in the audience is disturbing." This is from Ben Jealous. Did you try to clarify with the NAACP your story?

SHERROD: No, I haven't had had a chance to talk to anyone. All of this was happening so fast. And it's unfortunate that the NAACP would make a statement without even checking to see what happened. This was 24 years ago, and I'm telling a story to try to unite people with that now.

ROBERTS: Certainly you're coming out and telling your story now takes it to a different level, and obviously we're going to keep following this. It is good to get your side of it. Sherri Sherrod, former Agriculture Department official. Perhaps we can get you back on again, get your face on TV as well and talk to you more about this as this story continues to develop.

SHERROD: I don't mind.

ROBERTS: Thanks a lot.

FOX NEWS – FOX & FRIENDS

<http://www.shadowtv.com/redirect/notification.jsp?vid=fb2bebb1b33be32a4e316ddced48d667>

ALISYN CAMEROTA: Well, an official with the Agriculture Department is out of a job this morning after making these controversial comments on race at an NAACP event.

[BEGIN VIDEO]

SHIRLEY SHERROD: I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land. And here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So, I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough

[END VIDEO]

CAMEROTA: That was Shirley Sherrod -- she's the former USDA Georgia director of rural development talking about how she purposely did not help a white farmer. The NAACP later released a statement saying, "We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers. Her actions were shameful." The organization, of course, recently sponsored a resolution accusing the Tea Party movement of racial bias.

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:04 AM
To: 'Gavin, Tom'; Cherlin, Reid H.
Subject: FW: Ap on sherrod

FYI

-----Original Message-----

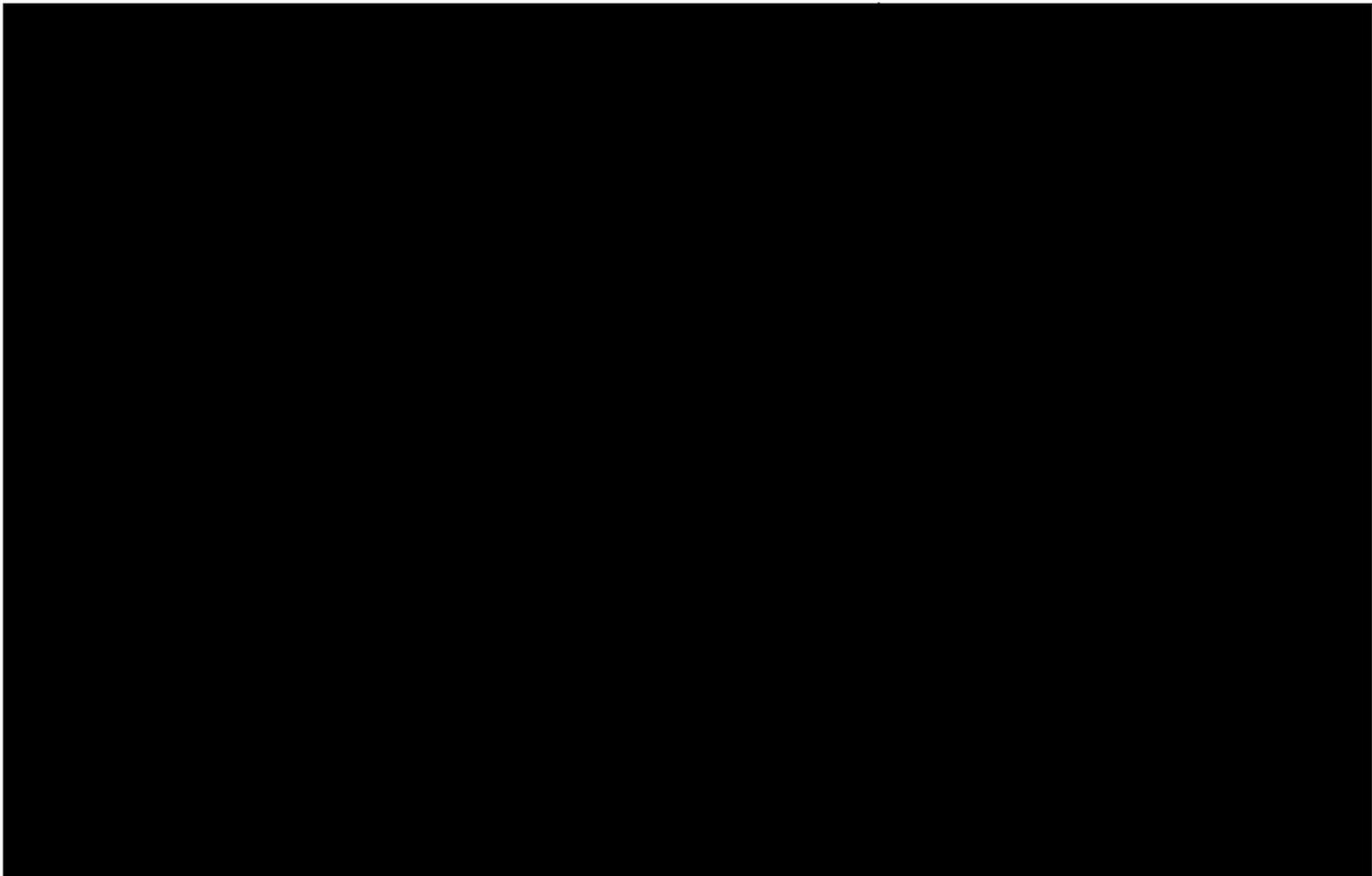
From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:02 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: Ap on sherrod



Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:39 AM
To: 'Cherlin, Reid H.'; Gavin, Tom; DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: Now seeking clarification

FYI. Mostly for hill conversations.



From: Cherlin, Reid H. [mailto: [REDACTED]]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:34 AM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin
Subject: FW: Now seeking clarification



From: Ed O'Keefe [mailto:ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:31 AM
To: Cherlin, Reid H.; Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Now seeking clarification

Reid:

I'm assuming y'all have seen Ms. Sherrod on CNN saying that undersecretary of Agriculture Cheryi Cook called her several times to ask for resignation and that the administration forced her out without letting her tell her side of the story.

Looking to see once again if the White House or USDA has further comment? Thanks in advance.

Ed O'Keefe

The Federal Eye

The Washington Post

ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com

202.334.5546. (o) | [REDACTED] (c)

AIM: edatpost | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [GovLoop](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:45 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fw: Now seeking clarification

She did tell her side but it didn't matter. Her comments undermine the public's trust that we are equal and fair.
Chris Mather

From: Ed O'Keefe
To: Cherlin, Reid H. ; Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 11:31:04 2010
Subject: Now seeking clarification
Reid:

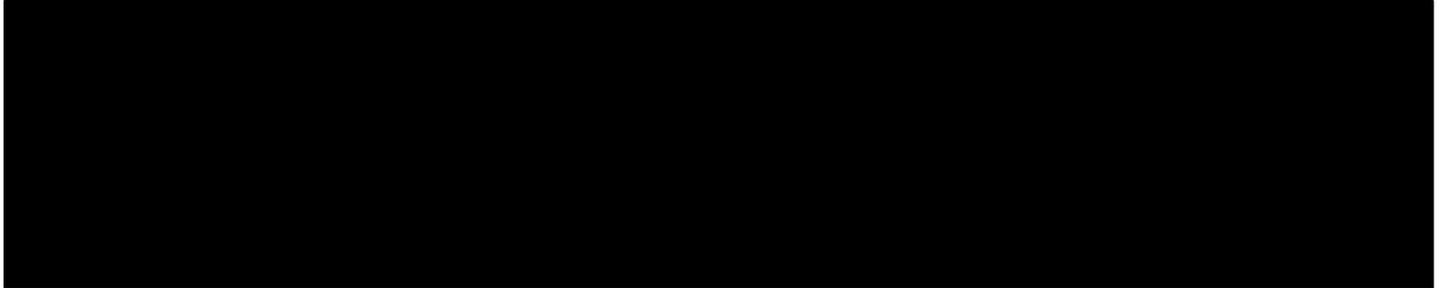
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Ed O'Keefe
The Federal Eye
The Washington Post
ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com
202.334.5546. (o) | [REDACTED] (c)
AIM: edatpost | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [GovLoop](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:53 AM
To: Cherlin, Reid H.; 'Gavin, Tom'
Subject: FW: Now seeking clarification



From: Ed O'Keefe [mailto:ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:31 AM
To: Cherlin, Reid H.; Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Now seeking clarification

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Ed O'Keefe
The Federal Eye
The Washington Post
ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com
202.334.5546. (o) | [REDACTED] (c)
AIM: edatpost | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [GovLoop](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:54 AM
To: 'Gavin, Tom'; Cherlin, Reid H.
Subject: FW: ABC News (Jake Tapper): Interview with Secretary re:Shirley Sharrod

This is the Tapper request

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:51 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Subject: ABC News (Jake Tapper): Interview with Secretary re:Shirley Sharrod

FYI- ABC thinks they may do a story on this and are requesting an on-camera interview with the Secretary and would like to know if we can give additional comments on the story because it is more nuanced than originally portrayed (I already sent him the statement).

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Tapper, Jake [mailto:Jake.Tapper@abc.com]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:43 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Please call asap [REDACTED]

Jake Tapper
[REDACTED]
ABC News

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:54 PM
To: [REDACTED]

Call me. Have an idea. [REDACTED]
Chris Mather

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:07 PM
To: [REDACTED]

Called you
Chris Mather

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:38 PM
To: Cherlin, Reid H.
Subject: Call me

Chris Mather
Director of Communications
USDA
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 402A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0060
chris.mather@usda.gov

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:15 PM
To: 'Cherlin, Reid H.'
Subject: RE: received

CNN at our next event.

From: Cherlin, Reid H. [mailto: [REDACTED]]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:15 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: received

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:24 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: received

345.
Chris Mather

From: Cherlin, Reid H.
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tue Jul 20 15:19:17 2010
Subject: RE: received
Cool. what time

From: Mather, Chris [mailto:Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:15 PM
To: Cherlin, Reid H.
Subject: RE: received

CNN at our next event.

From: Cherlin, Reid H. [mailto:[REDACTED]]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:15 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: received

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:46 PM
To: 'Cherlin, Reid H.'
Subject: FW: Statement by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:39 PM
Subject: Statement by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack

Statement by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack

Yesterday, I asked for and accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation for two reasons. First, for the past 18 months, we have been working to turn the page on the sordid civil rights record at USDA and this controversy could make it more difficult to move forward on correcting injustices. Second, state rural development directors make many decisions and are often called to use their discretion. The controversy surrounding her comments would create situations where her decisions, rightly or wrongly, would be called into question making it difficult for her to bring jobs to Georgia.

Our policy is clear. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA and we strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have a duty to ensure that when we provide services to the American people we do so in an equitable manner. But equally important is our duty to instill confidence in the American people that we are fair service providers.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

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Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]

Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:19 PM
To: 'Cherlin, Reid H.'

Should we be coordinating call backs?

Chris Mather
Director of Communications
USDA
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 402A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0060
chris.mather@usda.gov

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:27 PM
To: 'Cherlin, Reid H.'
Subject: RE:

Please call asap

From: Cherlin, Reid H. [mailto:]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:21 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: RE:

I think we both probably will need to talk to everyone
sigh

From: Mather, Chris [mailto:Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:19 PM
To: Cherlin, Reid H.
Subject:

Should we be coordinating call backs?

Chris Mather

Director of Communications

USDA

1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 402A

Washington, DC 20250

202-690-0060

chris.mather@usda.gov

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:35 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re:

Just tried you back
Chris Mather

From: Cherlin, Reid H.
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:33:13 2010
Subject: RE:
Just tried you at both numbers

From: Mather, Chris [mailto:Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:27 PM
To: Cherlin, Reid H.
Subject: RE:

Please call asap

From: Cherlin, Reid H. [mailto:[REDACTED]]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:21 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: RE:

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sigh

From: Mather, Chris [mailto:Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:19 PM
To: Cherlin, Reid H.
Subject:

Should we be coordinating call backs?

Chris Mather

Director of Communications

USDA

1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 402A

Washington, DC 20250

202-690-0060

chris.mather@usda.gov

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:36 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fw: Cnn interview

Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; O'Brien, Doug
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:34:18 2010
Subject: Cnn interview

Cnn crew was on farm when we arrived. Secretary did interview hitting key points that this was about making sure usda wasn't distracted from correcting injustices of the past, and that it is important that we are singularly focused on job creation and that this could cause people to question and undermine decisions in georgia. He said he doesn't believe she is racist, this was about poor word choice. He was asked about wh involvement and he said he didn't talk to anyone at wh, that he took action after learning about the situation.

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 5:52 PM
To: 'Cherlin, Reid H.'
Subject: FW: Ben Evans

I talked to Mary Clare Jalonick.

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:46 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: Ben Evans

Phone: [REDACTED]
bevans@ap.org

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:24 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: Re: Jalonick (USDA worker quits over racism charge from video, 3...)

Hmmm just saw jalonick on others

From: Mather, Chris
To: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie; Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Tue Jul 20 12:21:00 2010
Subject: Re: Jalonick (USDA worker quits over racism charge from video, 3...)

He wrote first two.
Chris Mather

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie; Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Tue Jul 20 12:19:28 2010
Subject: Fw: Jalonick (USDA worker quits over racism charge from video, 3...)

Fyi that next write thru will include more context about civil rights at usda. Looks like ben evans our ap civil rights reporter has joined the story.

From: Jalonick, Mary Clare
To: DeJong, Justin

Sent: Tue Jul 20 12:14:01 2010

Subject: FW: Jalonick (USDA worker quits over racism charge from video, 3...)

Hey Justin, here is latest writethru. We are going to add background in next writethru

From: AP Exchange notification [mailto:noreply.apexchange@notification.ap.org]

Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:04 PM

To: Jalonick, Mary Clare

Subject: Jalonick (USDA worker quits over racism charge from video, 3...)

Date: 07/20/2010 12:02 PM

US--USDA-Racism-Resignation/490

Eds: Replaces last graf to correct reference to 'he said'.

USDA worker quits over racism charge from video

Associated Press Writers

WASHINGTON (AP) - A black employee who resigned from the Agriculture Department over comments at a Georgia NAACP meeting said Tuesday the White House forced her out of her job over a manufactured racial controversy.

Shirley Sherrod said she was on the road Monday after an event in rural Georgia when USDA deputy undersecretary Cheryl Cook called her and told her the White House wanted her to resign. "They called me twice," Sherrod told The Associated Press in an interview. "The last time they asked me to pull over the side of the road and submit my resignation on my Blackberry, and that's what I did."

The controversy began Monday when the conservative website biggovernment.com posted a two-minute, 38-second video clip of Sherrod's remarks to a local NAACP chapter.

In the video, she says the first time a white farmer came in for help, he was acting "superior" to her and that she struggled to decide how much help to provide him when so many black farmers were struggling. She said she didn't give him the full force of help she could have, but gave him enough.

The website called it proof that the NAACP - which recently accused the Tea Party of including racist elements - condones racism.

Sherrod said her comments to the local NAACP group that she withheld support some 24 years ago from a farmer because he was white are really part of a story of racial reconciliation. She said she ultimately became friends with the farmer and worked closely with him for two years to keep him from losing his farm. At the time, she worked for a nonprofit farm aid group.

"My point in telling that story is that working with him helped me to see that it wasn't just a black and white issue," she told The AP. "It was about those who have and those who do not. That's why I take the time to tell that story is to tell people we need to get beyond it and work together."

Hours after her resignation, Sherrod accused administration officials of lacking backbone. A USDA spokesman would not comment on whether the White House was involved.

Secretary Tom Vilsack issued a statement saying the agency has no tolerance for discrimination.

"We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously," the statement said.

National NAACP President Benjamin Todd Jealous issued a statement Monday night - before Sherrod's explanation - supporting the resignation. Jealous said the group opposes racism of all kinds.

"According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race," he said. "We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers."

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Summary

Date: 07/20/2010 12:02 PM
Slug: US--USDA-Racism-Resignation
Headline: USDA worker quits over racism charge from video
Byline: BEN EVANS
Byline Title: Associated Press Writers
Copyright Holder: AP
Priority: r (4)
With Photo:
Dateline: WASHINGTON
Lead
Editors' Note: Eds: Replaces last graf to correct reference to 'he said'.
Word Count: 490
File Name (Transref):
Editorial Type: Lead
AP Category: w
Format:

mjalonick@ap.org - ec2092fe2fbb4232bcd31de0f3a3e569

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[IP_US_DISC]msk dccc60c6d2c3a6438f0cf467d9a4938

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:27 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re:

Us too.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Cherlin, Reid H. <[REDACTED]>
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:15:30 2010
Subject:

We're declining morning show invites...

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:09 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fw: Sherrod back on the job?

Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Ed O'Keefe <ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com>
To: Mather, Chris; justin.dejong@usda.gov <justin.dejong@usda.gov>; [REDACTED]
<[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:56:37 2010
Subject: Sherrod back on the job?

Hey guys:

Just trying to confirm or debunk chatter that Sherrod may get her job back in light of the infamous clip's selective editing?

Ed O'Keefe

The Federal Eye, The Washington Post

ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:09 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fw: Monday Calls

These were only calls we got.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----
From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:57:47 2010
Subject: Monday Calls

These are the only inquiries we received yesterday:

Fox News (Ron Mitchell)
Fox News (Judd Berger)
Fox News (Joy Lin)

Stephanie Chan

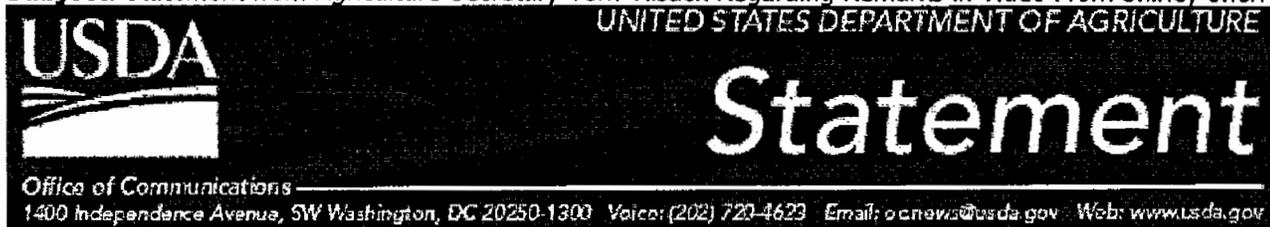
Press Assistant, Office of Communications U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED] Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:17 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fw: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod
Attachments: image001.jpg

Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wed Jul 21 02:07:06 2010
Subject: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod



Release No. PENDING

Contact:
USDA Office of Communications
(202) 720-4623

Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

WASHINGTON, July 21, 2010 - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack tonight released the following statement in response to the release of remarks in video from Shirley Sherrod:

"I am of course willing and will conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts to ensure to the American people we are providing services in a fair and equitable manner."

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice), or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:47 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: URGENT

Political
Chris Mather

From: Cherlin, Reid H.
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 17:37:50 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT
Is she political or career

From: Mather, Chris [mailto:Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:40 PM
To: Cherlin, Reid H.; Gavin, Tom
Subject: Re: URGENT

Said nothing yet. Guess some folks over there are circling wagons. Been placed on admin leave.
Chris Mather

From: Cherlin, Reid H.
To: Mather, Chris; Gavin, Tom
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:24:42 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT
ok - what are you going to say, and has she been fired? I'm going to alert folks here.

From: Mather, Chris [mailto:Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:19 PM
To: Cherlin, Reid H.; Gavin, Tom
Subject: Re: URGENT

Video of GA Rural Development State Director saying at a NAACP meeting that when a white farmer came to her for services, she knowingly didn't give him all the help he needed. She goes on to make it a larger case about understanding race... but looks bad.
O'Reilly just called us for statement.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Cherlin, Reid H. <[REDACTED]>
To: Mather, Chris; Gavin, Tom <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:49:56 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT

Can you explain a little about what this is and what we should do?

-----Original Message-----

From: Mather, Chris [mailto:Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:48 PM

To: Cherlin, Reid H.; Gavin, Tom
Subject: URGENT
Importance: High

See below. Just posted online. There is video. CBS NY just ran something. FOX News ran something yesterday but out TV Eyes did not pick up.

<http://hotair.com/archives/2010/07/19/breitbart-hits-naacp-with-promised-video-of-racism/>

here is beginning on whats online

The NAACP is about to learn one of the most basic of all lessons in life - those who live in glass houses should avoid provoking a stone-throwing war. After the civil-rights organization threatened to issue a condemnation of Tea Party activism by equating it with racism (a position from which they ultimately retreated), Andrew Breitbart announced that he would publish at least one video of the NAACP itself cheering racism. Breitbart delivers on that promise today at Big Government, showing USDA official Shirley Sherrod explain to an appreciative NAACP audience in July 2009 how she deliberately withheld information from a white farmer in Georgia trying to save his land and his business:

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:05 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re:

Just talked to Gavin and Shin. You in loop?
Chris Mather

From: Cherlin, Reid H.
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 17:45:30 2010
Subject:
Just tried your phones. Can you call me about this so I can make sure that folks here are up to speed?

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:34 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc:
Subject: Re: final

Sending now.
Chris Mather

From: Gavin, Tom
To: Mather, Chris; [REDACTED]
Cc: Cherlin, Reid H.
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:32:13 2010
Subject: final
Chris –

We are good with this version on this end. Counsel has cleared the language. Only change is in the first sentence.

Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:38 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: final

Did you connect with NAACP?
Chris Mather

From: Gavin, Tom
To: Mather, Chris; [REDACTED]
Cc: Cherlin, Reid H.
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:32:13 2010
Subject: final
Chris -

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Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:44 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: final

Great thanks.
Chris Mather

From: Gavin, Tom
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:41:30 2010
Subject: RE: final
OPE did. We'll be fine.

From: Mather, Chris [mailto:Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:38 PM
To: Gavin, Tom
Subject: Re: final

Did you connect with NAACP?
Chris Mather

From: Gavin, Tom
To: Mather, Chris; [REDACTED]
Cc: Cherlin, Reid H.
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:32:13 2010
Subject: final
Chris –

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Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:52 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: final

And again, only upon request.
Chris Mather

From: Gavin, Tom
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:46:40 2010
Subject: RE: final
absolutely

From: Mather, Chris [mailto:Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:45 PM
To: Gavin, Tom
Subject: Re: final

I think it should be don't you?
Chris Mather

From: Gavin, Tom
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:42:08 2010
Subject: RE: final
Just o be clear, this is the Secretary's quote, right?

From: Mather, Chris [mailto:Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:38 PM
To: Gavin, Tom
Subject: Re: final

Did you connect with NAACP?
Chris Mather

From: Gavin, Tom
To: Mather, Chris; [REDACTED]
Cc: Cherlin, Reid H.
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:32:13 2010
Subject: final
Chris -

We are good with this version on this end. Counsel has cleared the language. Only change is in the first sentence.

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Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 7:11 PM
To: 'Gavin, Tom'; Cherlin, Reid H.
Subject: RE:

[REDACTED]

From: Gavin, Tom [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 7:06 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Cherlin, Reid H.
Subject: FW:

FYI. Confidential for you only.

From: Green, Valerie E.
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:59 PM
To: Gavin, Tom
Subject: FW:

From: Washo, Kevin [mailto:Kevin.Washo@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:57 PM
To: Green, Valerie E.
Subject: Fw:

----- Original Message -----
From: Cook, Cheryl
To: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:56:14 2010
Subject: FW:

-----Original Message-----
From: Sherrod, Shirley - Athens, GA [mailto:[REDACTED]]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:55 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject:

Cheryl

I feel so disappointed that the Secretary and President let a misrepresentation of my words on the part of th Tea Party be the reason to ask me to resign

Please look at the tape and see that I use the story from 1986 to show people that the issue is not about race but about those who have v ersus those who do not

I used everything and everyone I could to help me to save that white farmers land. That family has the land because of what I did. He

became a very good friend. I went on to help save many other white land owners thru the years

I submit my resignation but in doing so want to put the administration on notice that I will get the whole story out.

My whole life speaks for my commitment to fairness whether white or black.

Shirley sherrod

Sent using BlackBerry

O'Brien, Doug

From: Green, Jason G. [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 7:13 PM
To: O'Brien, Doug
Subject: FW:

If you didn't already see this....

From: Washo, Kevin [mailto:Kevin.Washo@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:57 PM
To: Green, Valerie E.
Subject: Fw:

----- Original Message -----

From: Cook, Cheryl
To: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:56:14 2010
Subject: FW:

-----Original Message-----

From: Sherrod, Shirley - Athens, GA [mailto:shirley.sherrod@ga.usda.gov]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:55 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject:

Cheryl

I feel so disappointed that the Secretary and President let a misrepresentation of my words on the part of th Tea Party be the reason to ask me to resign

Please look at the tape and see that I use the story from 1986 to show people that the issue is not about race but about those who have v ersus those who do not

I used everything and everyone I could to help me to save that white farmers land. That family has the land because of what I did. He became a very good friend. I went on to help save many other white land owners thru the years

I submit my resignation but in doing so want to put the administration on notice that I will get the whole story out.

My whole life speaks for my commitment to fairness whether white or black.

Shirley sherrod

Sent using BlackBerry

O'Brien, Doug

From: Blake, Michael A. [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:57 PM
To: Leonard, Joe; O'Brien, Doug
Subject: Can we talk?

O'Brien, Doug

From: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:17 PM
To: Jett, Carole; O'Brien, Doug
Subject: RE: Urgent. Fw: Can we talk?

thanks

Karen Ross
Chief of Staff
Office of the Secretary
(202) 720-3631
karen.ross@osec.usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:15 PM
To: O'Brien, Doug; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: Re: Urgent. Fw: Can we talk?

We talked. Doug will call Michael and then we ill talk agin.

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA
[REDACTED]

----- Original Message -----

From: O'Brien, Doug
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:05:50 2010
Subject: Re: Urgent. Fw: Can we talk?

I will try to get his number and send it on to you or three way.

----- Original Message -----

From: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
To: O'Brien, Doug; Jett, Carole
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:02:02 2010
Subject: RE: Urgent. Fw: Can we talk?

Now - what number? I think I could figure out how to do a three-way. But since I've been gone, it is best for you to talk with Carole who is in the midst of everything.

Karen Ross
Chief of Staff
Office of the Secretary
(202) 720-3631
karen.ross@osec.usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: O'Brien, Doug
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:59 PM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole

Subject: Urgent. Fw: Can we talk?
Importance: High

I will wait for your direction before responding. Not sure what Joe will do.

----- Original Message -----

From: Blake, Michael A. [REDACTED]
To: Leonard, Joe; O'Brien, Doug
Sent: Tue Jul 20 19:56:39 2010
Subject: Can we talk?

TJV

From: Lu, Christopher P. [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:38 PM
To: TJV
Subject: President wasn't asked about today's issue at his press conference

Washo, Kevin

From: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:41 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole
Subject: FW: CNN NewsroomAM w/Tony Harris...

Chris, is this program on the list to receive a call from OC?

From: Durham, Diane [mailto:Diane.Durham@turner.com]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:33 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: CNN NewsroomAM w/Tony Harris...

Ms. Cook, CNN NewsroomAM w/Tony Harris is requesting a live interview as soon as possible with you regarding Shirley Sherrod's dismissal. Please call me so we might discuss the possibility of this interview. Thank you.

Diane Durham
Editorial Producer/NewsroomAM
404-827-4102
[REDACTED] cell

Washo, Kevin

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:12 PM
To: Berge, John; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole
Subject: Can we huddle - WH just called.

Categories: Red Category

Chris Mather
Director of Communications
USDA
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 402A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0060
chris.mather@usda.gov

Washo, Kevin

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:07 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Berge, John; Washo, Kevin
Subject: S's statement

He sent back. We should huddle. Another update

Chris Mather
Director of Communications
USDA
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 402A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0060
chris.mather@usda.gov

Washo, Kevin

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:39 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin
Subject: IMP

I need to talk to press very soon and need some background info from you all. Can you come to my office?

Chris Mather
Director of Communications
USDA
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 402A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0060
chris.mather@usda.gov

Washo, Kevin

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:45 PM
To: Washo, Kevin
Cc: Jett, Carole
Subject: Re: IMP

Get tick tock

Chris Mather

From: Washo, Kevin
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tue Jul 20 15:42:08 2010
Subject: Re: IMP

Talking with cheryl

From: Mather, Chris
To: Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 15:39:13 2010
Subject: IMP

I need to talk to press very soon and need some background info from you all. Can you come to my office?

Chris Mather

Director of Communications

USDA

1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 402A

Washington, DC 20250

202-690-0060

chris.mather@usda.gov

Washo, Kevin

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:46 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Washo, Kevin
Subject: Re: Hey

Rural Directors are Schedule C Presidential Appointees. Their appointments go through Presidential Personnel.

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 15:43:55 2010
Subject: Hey

Just to confirm that Rural Directors are appointed by the Pres not just the Secy.

Washo, Kevin

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:52 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Washo, Kevin; Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: Mail

Cheryl has six hate mail emails.

Carole Jett

Deputy Chief of Staff

USDA
[REDACTED]

Washo, Kevin

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 5:08 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin; Berge, John

Did Shirley ever send us whole tape?
Chris Mather

Washo, Kevin

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 5:11 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Washo, Kevin; Berge, John
Subject: Re:

I never heard from her.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA
[REDACTED]

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin; Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 17:07:37 2010

Did Shirley ever send us whole tape?
Chris Mather

Washo, Kevin

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 5:11 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin
Subject: Re:

Don't know.

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin; Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 17:07:37 2010

Did Shirley ever send us whole tape?
Chris Mather

Washo, Kevin

From: CJ [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:18 PM
To: Washo, Kevin
Subject: Call us.

[REDACTED]

naacp bailed.
Sent from my Verizon Wireless BlackBerry

Washo, Kevin

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:03 PM
To: Washo, Kevin
Subject: Re: Can you call me at [REDACTED]

Not right now. With S and he is on phone with Members.

----- Original Message -----

From: Washo, Kevin
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:01:43 2010
Subject: Can you call me at [REDACTED]

Washo, Kevin

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:05 PM
To: Washo, Kevin
Subject: Re: Can you call me at [REDACTED]

Ok with most. Push back from Waters most others ok

----- Original Message -----

From: Washo, Kevin
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:04:19 2010
Subject: Re: Can you call me at [REDACTED]

How's it going

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:03:20 2010
Subject: Re: Can you call me at [REDACTED]

Not right now. With S and he is on phone with Members.

----- Original Message -----

From: Washo, Kevin
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:01:43 2010
Subject: Can you call me at [REDACTED]

Washo, Kevin

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:36 PM
To: Washo, Kevin
Subject: Fw: Jesse Jackson

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA
[REDACTED]

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Jett, Carole; Mather, Chris
Cc: Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:35:15 2010
Subject: Re: Jesse Jackson

Rahm calling Secy now

----- Original Message -----

From: Jett, Carole
To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Cc: Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:27:36 2010
Subject: Re: Jesse Jackson

Looping in Mather.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA
[REDACTED]

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: O'Brien, Doug
Cc: Berge, John; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:15:32 2010
Subject: Re: Jesse Jackson

Secy talking with The Rev now

----- Original Message -----

From: O'Brien, Doug
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 19:49:19 2010
Subject: Jesse Jackson

John Mitchell with rev jackson just called my number.

He can connect the secr to rev jackson anytime. I think he expects it tonight.
[REDACTED]

Washo, Kevin

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:13 PM
To: Washo, Kevin
Cc: Berge, John
Subject: Hey



Washo, Kevin

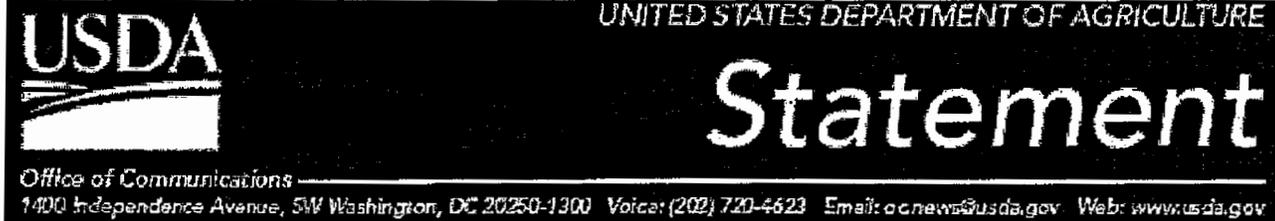
From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:34 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Washo, Kevin
Subject: Re: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

Chan should get pig.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA
[REDACTED]

From: Mather, Chris
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wed Jul 21 05:17:54 2010
Subject: Fw: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

This went at 2
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wed Jul 21 02:07:06 2010
Subject: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod



Release No. PENDING

Contact:
USDA Office of Communications
(202) 720-4623

Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

WASHINGTON, July 21, 2010 - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack tonight released the following statement in response to the release of remarks in video from Shirley Sherrod:

"I am of course willing and will conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts to ensure to the American people we are providing services in a fair and equitable manner."

(voice), or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]

Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

Washo, Kevin

From: Jackie Ward [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 8:53 AM
To: Harden, Krysta; Dallas Tonsager; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Corey Ealons
Cc: Washo, Kevin; Leonard, Joe; Wright, Lloyd; Reed, Pearlle
Subject: Letter from Ralph Paige Re: Shirley Sherrod

Please see the attached letter from Mr. Ralph Paige regarding Shirley Sherrod.

Jacqueline B. Ward
Executive Assistant
Federation of Southern Cooperatives/
Land Assistance Fund
2769 Church Street
East Point, GA 30344
Phone: 404.765.0991
Fax: 404.765.9178
Web: www.federation.coop

Washo, Kevin

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:04 AM
To: Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta

CNN reporting that WH asked TV to reconsider and therefore we did

Chris Mather
Director of Communications
USDA
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 402A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0060
chris.mather@usda.gov

Washo, Kevin

From: Scott, Denise
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:22 PM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Cc: Washo, Kevin
Subject: contacts

Per your previous request – Kevin, these numbers may be different than the ones that I just gave you.

HOME [REDACTED]
Mobile [REDACTED]

Warm Regards

Denise

Denise N. Scott
Confidential Assistant/ Scheduler
USDA, Rural Development
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Suite 205-W
Washington, DC 20250
Office: 202-720-4581
Fax: 202-690-0273
Email: dnsconfig@osec.usda.gov

"Committed to the future of rural communities"

"Estamos dedicados al futuro de las comunidades rurales"

Washo, Kevin

From: Scott, Denise
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:27 PM
To: Washo, Kevin
Cc: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: RE: Numbers

The [REDACTED] number is a personal mobile number for her. Yeshi tried returning her call yesterday, and her voice mailbox was full. The [REDACTED] number is listed as her emergency contact number so, it's our best bet.

Warm Regards

~Denise

Denise N. Scott
Confidential Assistant/ Scheduler
USDA, Rural Development
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Suite 205-W
Washington, DC 20250
Office: 202-720-4581
Fax: 202-690-0273
Email: dnsconfig@osec.usda.gov

"Committed to the future of rural communities"

"Estamos dedicados al futuro de las comunidades rurales"

From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:23 PM
To: Scott, Denise
Cc: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Re: Numbers

Can you triple check that these are the best numbers.

From: Scott, Denise
To: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Wed Jul 21 12:19:26 2010
Subject: Numbers

Warm Regards

~Denise

Denise N. Scott
Confidential Assistant/ Scheduler
USDA, Rural Development
1400 Independence Ave., SW

Suite 205-W
Washington, DC 20250
Office: 202-720-4581
Fax: 202-690-0273
Email: [dnscott@osec.usda.gov](mailto:djscott@osec.usda.gov)

"Committed to the future of rural communities"

"Estamos dedicados al futuro de las comunidades rurales"

Washo, Kevin

From: Robert Jackson [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 3:06 PM
To: Jackie Ward; Zena Guiles; Wood, Dee (GE Indust, ConsInd, consultant); William M. Buster; Willard Tillman; Vivian Dickson; Vickie Lane; Vaughn, Gladys; Vanessa Hayes; Tucker, Nyota; Trina; Thompson, Clyde - Washington, DC; Susan Stokes; Stephen Carpenter; [REDACTED]; Shy Cullars; Shirley Blakley; Sherie Henry, USDA; Henry, Sherie -RD; Savi Horne; Sarah Bobrow-Williams; Rosemary Mahoney; Ron Brown; Robert Zabawa; Robert Watson; Robert Jackson; Robert Jackson; Rev. Wendell Paris, Jr.; Allen, Renee - USDA; Rayne Pegg; Robinson, Quinton; Pridgen, Kim - Auburn, AL; Precious Williams; Precious Williams; Picciano, Lorette, Rural Coalition/Coalicion Rural; Phil Fraas; Reed, Pearl; O'Brien, Doug; Noelle Pinckney; Mr. Woodrow Keown; Mr. Edward Cline; Morgan, Martina; [REDACTED]; Melbah Smith; McBride, Pauline; M. Sherrod; Loretta Horton; Wright, Lloyd; Liebrand, Carolyn - Washington, DC; LeAnn M. Oliver; Miles, Loretta; laura pressley; Latrice Hill; LaShaunda Scales; Harden, Krysta; Kolu Zigbi; Kimberly McFarland; Washo, Kevin; Kennedy, Joseph; Kay Doherty; Kathy Ozer; Karla Hawley; Karis Gutter; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: Re: Letter to Secretary Vilsack RE: Shirley Sherrod

Thank you Ralph, I would suggest that you go to the White House Facebook page and send a quick note. I just did, they would be more apt at looking at that in the short term as opposed to a letter and the facebook page is instant. Thank you though for a very well crafted letter. I was so proud of Shirley on The Today Show this morning (their lead story) they dedicated over 15 minutes of primetime to Shirley and her situation. I am so proud of her and the way she has handled this whole situation. What was meant for bad was turned into good.

Senator Robert L. Jackson
CEO, Quitman County Dev. Org. Inc.
Co-founder & Board Member of First Delta Federal Credit Union
P O Box 386
Marks, MS 38646
662.326.4000
www.qedo.org

From: Jackie Ward <fsc@mindspring.com>
To: Zena Guiles <[REDACTED]>; "Wood, Dee (GE Indust, ConsInd, consultant)" <[REDACTED]>; William M. Buster <[REDACTED]>; Willard Tillman <[REDACTED]>; Vivian Dickson <vivian.dickson@wdc.usda.gov>; Vickie Lane <Vickie.Lane@al.usda.gov>; "Vaughn, Gladys" <Gladys.Vaughn@ascr.usda.gov>; Vanessa Hayes <[REDACTED]>; "Tucker, Nyota" <[REDACTED]>; Trina <[REDACTED]>; "Thompson, Clyde - Washington, DC" <Clyde.Thompson@wdc.usda.gov>; Susan Stokes <[REDACTED]>; Stephen Carpenter <sc@pigfordmonitor.org>; [REDACTED]; Shy Cullars <[REDACTED]>; Shirley Blakley <[REDACTED]>; "Sherie Henry, USDA" <Sherie.Henry@wdc.usda.gov>; Sherie Henry <Sherie.Henry@usda.gov>; Savi Horne <[REDACTED]>; Sarah Bobrow-Williams <[REDACTED]>; Rosemary Mahoney <[REDACTED]>; Ron Brown <ron.brown@rma.usda.gov>; Robert Zabawa <[REDACTED]>; Robert Watson <[REDACTED]>; Robert Jackson <[REDACTED]>; Robert Jackson <[REDACTED]>; "Rev. Wendell Paris, Jr." <[REDACTED]>; Renee Allen <Renee.Allen@usda.gov>; Rayne Pegg <rayne.pegg@ams.usda.gov>; Quinton Robinson <quinton.robinson@da.usda.gov>; "Pridgen, Kim - Auburn, AL" <Kim.Pridgen@al.usda.gov>; Precious Williams <[REDACTED]>; Precious Williams <[REDACTED]>; "Picciano, Lorette, Rural Coalition/Coalicion Rural" <[REDACTED]>; Phil Fraas <[REDACTED]>; Pearl Reed <Pearlie.reed@osec.usda.gov>; "O'Brien, Doug" <Doug.O'Brien@osec.usda.gov>; Noelle Pinckney <Noelle.Pinckney@wdc.usda.gov>; Mr. Woodrow Keown <[REDACTED]>; Mr. Edward Cline <[REDACTED]>; "Morgan, Martina" <Martina.Morgan@mail.house.gov>; mmcnair007 <[REDACTED]>; mmccraven@mail.house.gov; Melbah Smith <[REDACTED]>; "McBride, Pauline" <Pauline.McBride@osec.usda.gov>; M Sherrod <[REDACTED]>; Loretta Horton <[REDACTED]>; Lloyd Wright <lloyd.wright@ascr.usda.gov>; "Liebrand, Carolyn - Washington, DC" <[REDACTED]>

<Carolyn.Liebrand@wdc.usda.gov>; LeAnn M. Oliver <leann.oliver@wdc.usda.gov>; Laretta.Miles@usda.gov; laura
pressley <[REDACTED]>; Latrice Hill <Latrice.Hill@ms.usda.gov>; LaShaunda Scales
<[REDACTED]>; Krysta Harden <krysta.harden@osec.usda.gov>; Kolu Zigbi <[REDACTED]>;
Kimberly McFarland <[REDACTED]>; Kevin Washo <kevin.washo@osec.usda.gov>; "Kennedy, Joseph"
<Joseph_Kennedy@who.eop.gov>; Kay Doherty <[REDACTED]>; Kathy Ozer <[REDACTED]>; Karla Hawley
<kjhawley@fs.fed.us>; Karis Gutter <karis.gutter@wdc.usda.gov>; Karen Ross <karen.ross@osec.usda.gov>

Sent: Wed, July 21, 2010 12:48:04 PM

Subject: Letter to Secretary Vilsack RE: Shirley Sherrod

Please see the attached letter to Secretary Vilvack from Mr. Ralph Paige regarding Mrs. Shirley Sherrod.

Jacqueline B. Ward
Sr. Executive Assistant
Federation of Southern Cooperatives/
Land Assistance Fund
2769 Church Street
East Point, GA 30344
Phone: 404.765.0991
Fax: 404.765.9178
Web: www.federation.coop

Washo, Kevin

From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:08 PM
To: Wyant, Monica
Subject: Fw: Urgent

----- Original Message -----

From: Jett, Carole
To: Cook, Cheryl; Tonsager, Dallas; Washo, Kevin
Cc: Wyant, Monica
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:05:47 2010
Subject: Urgent

Sherliy Sherrod is on tape and you need to see/hear immediately

<http://hotair.com>

In upper right search Sherrod

We need to take immediate action.

Carole Jett

Deputy Chief of Staff

USDA



Washo, Kevin

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:54 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Washo, Kevin; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Fw: Transcript

Thanks Sarah.
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:42:36 2010
Subject: Transcript
Chris, please see below for transcript

Video: [Link](#)

On July 25, 2009 Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack appointed Shirley Sherrod as Georgia Director of Rural Development. USDA Rural Development spends over \$1.2 Billion in the state of Georgia each year. On March 27, 2010, while speaking at the NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet, Ms. Sherrod admits that in her federally appointed position, overseeing over a billion dollars, she discriminates against people due to their race.

Shirley Sherrod: The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking but he was trying to show me he was superior to me, I know what he was doing. But he had to come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me, was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him. I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land. And here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So, I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough. So that when he, I assumed the Department of Agriculture had sent him to me, either that or the Georgia Department of Agriculture. And he needed to go back and report that I did try and help him. So I took him to a white lawyer that had attended some of the training that we had provided because of Chapter 12 bankruptcy had just been enacted for the family farm. So I figured if I take him to one of them that his own kind would take care of him. That's when it was revealed to me that its about poor versus those who have. It's not so much about white...it is about white and black. It is about white and black but its not you know...it opened my eyes because I took him to one of his own.

Fox News Clip:

Geraldo Rivera: Do you denounce in the way that you ask the Tea Parties denounce racists within your ranks?

Hilary Shelton: Yes we do, we repudiate racists within our ranks.

Back to Shirley Sherrod Clip:

I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farm land and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]

Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

Washo, Kevin

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:18 PM
To: Washo, Kevin



Chris Mather

Washo, Kevin

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:30 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Washo, Kevin
Subject: Re: IMP

[REDACTED]
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:28:57 2010
Subject: Re: IMP

[REDACTED]
----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:28:22 2010
Subject: IMP

[REDACTED]
Chris Mather

Washo, Kevin

From: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:46 PM
To: Washo, Kevin
Subject: RE: Let me know as soon as its in your inbox

You'll be the second to know.

From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:46 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Let me know as soon as its in your inbox

Washo, Kevin

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:09 PM
To: Washo, Kevin
Cc: Jett, Carole
Subject: Re: Did they get back to you?

[REDACTED]

Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Washo, Kevin
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: Jett, Carole
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:07:41 2010
Subject: Re: Did they get back to you?

[REDACTED]

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Washo, Kevin
Cc: Jett, Carole
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:04:33 2010
Subject: Re: Did they get back to you?

[REDACTED]

Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Washo, Kevin
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 17:52:39 2010
Subject: [REDACTED]

Washo, Kevin

From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:28 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: RE: Come to berge office

ok

-----Original Message-----

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:28 PM
To: Washo, Kevin
Subject: Come to berge office

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA


Washo, Kevin

From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:09 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: Re: Did they get back to you?

Where r u

----- Original Message -----
From: Mather, Chris
To: Washo, Kevin
Cc: Jett, Carole
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:08:39 2010
Subject: Re: Did they get back to you?

[REDACTED]

Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----
From: Washo, Kevin
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: Jett, Carole
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:07:41 2010
Subject: Re: Did they get back to you?

[REDACTED]

----- Original Message -----
From: Mather, Chris
To: Washo, Kevin
Cc: Jett, Carole
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:04:33 2010
Subject: Re: Did they get back to you?

[REDACTED]

Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----
From: Washo, Kevin
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 17:52:39 2010
Subject: [REDACTED]

Washo, Kevin

From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:15 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Email

You have it?

Washo, Kevin

From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:44 PM
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Subject: Re: Statements

Yes she was emplotyed

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Washo, Kevin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:41:57 2010
Subject: RE: Statements

I don't think so. Looks like a hotel. We don't know.

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:42 PM
To: Washo, Kevin; Berge, John
Subject: Statements

Was Shirley at USDA when she made the statement?

Washo, Kevin

From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:46 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Let me know as soon as its in your inbox

Washo, Kevin

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:49 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Washo, Kevin
Subject: Fw: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod

Its out.
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:48:05 2010
Subject: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod
Good evening,

Please see below for statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack regarding Shirley Sherrod's resignation:

Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

Washo, Kevin

From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:56 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: Re: Letter?

Coming

----- Original Message -----

From: Jett, Carole
To: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:55:59 2010
Subject: Letter?

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA
[REDACTED]

Washo, Kevin

From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 7:17 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: Fw:

----- Original Message -----

From: Washo, Kevin
To: Jett, Carole; Mather, Chris; Berge, John
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:58:12 2010
Subject: Fw:

----- Original Message -----

From: Cook, Cheryl
To: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:56:14 2010
Subject: FW:

-----Original Message-----

From: Sherrod, Shirley - Athens, GA [mailto:shirley.sherrod@ga.usda.gov]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:55 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject:

Cheryl

I feel so disappointed that the Secretary and President let a misrepresentation of my words on the part of th Tea Party be the reason to ask me to resign

Please look at the tape and see that I use the story from 1986 to show people that the issue is not about race but about those who have v ersus those who do not

I used everything and everyone I could to help me to save that white farmers land. That family has the land because of what I did. He became a very good friend. I went on to help save many other white land owners thru the years

I submit my resignation but in doing so want to put the administration on notice that I will get the whole story out.

My whole life speaks for my commitment to fairness whether white or black.

Shirley sherrod

Sent using BlackBerry

Washo, Kevin

From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 7:36 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: You ok

Washo, Kevin

From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 7:41 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Re: You ok

Yes, enjoy, did we ever get the full copy of the speech?

----- Original Message -----

From: Cook, Cheryl
To: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 19:39:26 2010
Subject: Re: You ok

Yes, thanks for asking. Heading home - always a morale boost. Once again, I find myself grateful for a long ride home.

----- Original Message -----

From: Washo, Kevin
To: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Mon Jul 19 19:35:48 2010
Subject: You ok

Washo, Kevin

From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 8:51 PM
To: TJV
Cc: Harden, Krysta; Jett, Carole
Subject: Resign. Letter

Importance: High

Sir,

Below is a copy of Shirley's letter.

Kevin

Cheryl

I feel so disappointed that the Secretary and President let a misrepresentation of my words on the part of the Tea Party be the reason to ask me to resign

Please look at the tape and see that I use the story from 1986 to show people that the issue is not about race but about those who have versus those who do not

I used everything and everyone I could to help me to save that white farmers land. That family has the land because of what I did. He became a very good friend. I went on to help save many other white land owners thru the years

I submit my resignation but in doing so want to put the administration on notice that I will get the whole story out.

My whole life speaks for my commitment to fairness whether white or black.

Shirley Sherrod

Washo, Kevin

From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 8:24 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: Re: Are you alone?

Can you call me 

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 20:23:14 2010
Subject: Re: Are you alone?

Yes

----- Original Message -----

From: Washo, Kevin
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 20:19:06 2010
Subject: Are you alone?

Washo, Kevin

From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 7:17 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: Fw:

----- Original Message -----

From: Washo, Kevin
To: Jett, Carole; Mather, Chris; Berge, John
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:58:12 2010
Subject: Fw:

----- Original Message -----

From: Cook, Cheryl
To: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:56:14 2010
Subject: FW:

-----Original Message-----

From: Sherrod, Shirley - Athens, GA [mailto:shirley.sherrod@ga.usda.gov]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:55 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject:

Cheryl

I feel so disappointed that the Secretary and President let a misrepresentation of my words on the part of th Tea Party be the reason to ask me to resign

Please look at the tape and see that I use the story from 1986 to show people that the issue is not about race but about those who have v ersus those who do not

I used everything and everyone I could to help me to save that white farmers land. That family has the land because of what I did. He became a very good friend. I went on to help save many other white land owners thru the years

I submit my resignation but in doing so want to put the administration on notice that I will get the whole story out.

My whole life speaks for my commitment to fairness whether white or black.

Shirley sherrod

Sent using BlackBerry

Washo, Kevin

From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:09 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: Re: Did they get back to you?

Where r u

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Washo, Kevin
Cc: Jett, Carole
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:08:39 2010
Subject: Re: Did they get back to you?

Let's discuss. Not sure why comms would not have gotten this from ppo

Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Washo, Kevin
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: Jett, Carole
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:07:41 2010
Subject: Re: Did they get back to you?

Coming up. [REDACTED]

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Washo, Kevin
Cc: Jett, Carole
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:04:33 2010
Subject: Re: Did they get back to you?

Yes. [REDACTED] S called us too. Looping in Carole.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Washo, Kevin
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 17:52:39 2010
Subject: Did they get back to you?

Washo, Kevin

From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:49 PM
To: 'O'Neil, Michael P.'
Subject: FW: Urgent

-----Original Message-----

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:06 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl; Tonsager, Dallas; Washo, Kevin
Cc: Wyant, Monica
Subject: Urgent

Sherliy Sherrod is on tape and you need to see/hear immediately

<http://hotair.com>

In upper right search Sherrod

We need to take immediate action.

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA



Washo, Kevin

From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 8:23 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: Fw: Shirley Sherrod

Did S ever see this email?

From: Washo, Kevin
To: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 20:20:29 2010
Subject: Fw: Shirley Sherrod

From: Tonsager, Dallas
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:04:06 2010
Subject: Shirley Sherrod

Dear Mr. Secretary

We have just seen the video of Georgia State Director Shirley Sherrod and are deeply disturbed. Cheryl has put her on administrative leave pending a full investigation. Of course, the video suggests that this is about a farm loan, and those programs were transferred to the Farm Service Agency in 1995.

Shirley explained to Cheryl that this piece of tape shows only one small part of a longer story she told of her personal transformation beyond race, and is about a farmer who came to see her in 1986 when she was working as a farm advocate. The rest of the story apparently explains how she came to assist this farmer and many other white farmers during this time period. She said there is a copy of the entire speech, and Cheryl asked her to provide it as quickly as possible.

Dallas and Cheryl

Dallas Tonsager | Under Secretary

Rural Development

U.S. Department of Agriculture

1400 Independence Ave., S.W. | Washington, D.C. 20250

Phone: 202.720.4581 | Fax: 202.720.2080

www.rurdev.usda.gov

Washo, Kevin

From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 8:24 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: Re: Are you alone?

Can you call me 

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 20:23:14 2010
Subject: Re: Are you alone?

Yes

----- Original Message -----

From: Washo, Kevin
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 20:19:06 2010
Subject: Are you alone?

May 4, 2001, Friday, BC cycle

American farmers visiting Cuba propose visits to US by Cuban farmers

BYLINE: By ANITA SNOW, Associated Press Writer

SECTION: State and Regional

LENGTH: 381 words

DATELINE: HAVANA

After touring agricultural cooperatives where oxen till the soil and crops grow pesticide-free, black farmers from America's South said Friday that Cuban farmers could teach them much about the advantages of producing food the simple way their grandfathers did.

"We would like to bring some our farmers here so they can really get the feel of a typical farm family," said Ben Burkett, who still runs the family farm in Petal, Miss., that his great-grandfather founded 116 years ago.

"Our impression of Cuban farming has been very interesting," Burkett said as he and other representatives of the Federation of Southern Cooperatives prepared to wrap up their visit here this week.

Burkett said the federation would also like to bring Cuban farmers to the South to see how their American counterparts live and work.

The U.S. federation represents 75 cooperatives of small farmers and credit **unions** and more than 10,000 mostly black families in 11 southern states. Oxfam America, which provides funds to agricultural cooperatives in both the United States and Cuba, helped put together the federation's trip here this week.

"I think it would be important for more of our cooperative farmers to meet with people from the Cuban cooperatives," agreed **Shirley Sherrod**, the federation's Georgia director. "Every day here has been good, getting out and meeting with the farmers, seeing the similarities, making the connections."

Those connections will be invaluable when the U.S. trade sanctions are eliminated and federation members, as well as other American farmers, will be able to sell their rice, poultry and other products to Cuba, Sherrod said.

"The United States trades with China," said Mike Espy, a former U.S. Secretary of Agriculture and a former U.S. congressman from Mississippi who joined the trip. "The United States trades with Vietnam. To isolate Cuba and not trade with it is illogical."

Cuba, he said, "is a natural market for U.S. agriculture."

The U.S. Congress last year passed a law allowing the direct sale of American goods to Cuba for the first time in four decades but barred the American government and banks from financing such sales.

Havana has said that it would not buy a single grain of American rice under the existing legislation.

Washo, Kevin

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:05 PM
To: Washo, Kevin
Subject: Re: Can you call me at [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

----- Original Message -----

From: Washo, Kevin
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:04:19 2010
Subject: Re: Can you call me at [REDACTED]

How's it going

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:03:20 2010
Subject: Re: Can you call me at [REDACTED]

Not right now. With S and he is on phone with Members.

----- Original Message -----

From: Washo, Kevin
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:01:43 2010
Subject: Can you call me at [REDACTED]

Allen, Julie -USDA

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 12:01 PM
To: Allen, Julie -USDA
Subject: FW: Chairman Towns

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 5:13 PM
To: Berge, John; Cluthe, Sally
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns

Ok

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Cluthe, Sally
Sent: Tue Jul 20 17:10:33 2010
Subject: Fw: Chairman Towns

WH would like Secretary to reach out to towns directly. Numbers below.

From: Wilson, Denise R.
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 17:07:00 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns
[REDACTED] Towns mobile

[REDACTED] Ron mobile
Denise Wilson
Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

From: Berge, John <John.Berge@osec.usda.gov>
To: Wilson, Denise R.
Sent: Tue Jul 20 17:03:09 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns

Concur, and that is what I offered on voicemail, but need best number for later tonight. S is in OH travelling and won't be available to call until after 6 or 630 EDT. Do you have a good number?

From: Wilson, Denise R.
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:58:25 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns

Maybe the secretary should just put in a call to Towns. Maybe Towns/ Ron feel left out on the calls.
Denise Wilson
Special Assistant to the President

Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

From: Wilson, Denise R.
To: 'John.Berge@osec.usda.gov' <John.Berge@osec.usda.gov>
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:48:12 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns

Good. Not sure why Ron wants to make an issue of this without the facts
Denise Wilson
Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

From: Berge, John <John.Berge@osec.usda.gov>
To: Wilson, Denise R.
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:37:37 2010
Subject: RE: Chairman Towns

They are speaking at 515.

From: Wilson, Denise R. [mailto:████████████████████]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:31 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns

Did he speak with Barbara Lee
Denise Wilson
Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

From: Berge, John <John.Berge@osec.usda.gov>
To: Wilson, Denise R.
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:29:27 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns

The opposite. The Secretary spoke with several members of the CBC today who were all supportive.

From: Wilson, Denise R.
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:28:00 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns
Ron is way too wound up on this. He's saying the CBC will be all over this. What have you heard?
Denise Wilson
Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

From: Berge, John <John.Berge@osec.usda.gov>
To: Wilson, Denise R.
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:26:03 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns

Got it and will follow up.

----- Original Message -----

From: Wilson, Denise R. <[REDACTED]>
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:21:22 2010
Subject: Chairman Towns

His staff director, Ron Stroman just called. Towns wants to be briefed on Shirley Sherrod.

Ron's number is [REDACTED]

Denise Wilson

Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

Allen, Julie -USDA

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 12:07 PM
To: Allen, Julie -USDA
Subject: FW: CBC NEWS: CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod
Attachments: image001.png; image002.png; image003.png

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:55 AM
To: Berge, John; Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: RE: CBC NEWS: CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

Yes, I share with the S.

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:41 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: FW: CBC NEWS: CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

I'm sure you've seen this.

From: Wilson, Denise R. [mailto: [REDACTED]]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:39 AM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Fw: CBC NEWS: CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

FYI
Denise Wilson
Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

From: Schwoeffermann, Irene (CBC) < [REDACTED] >
Sent: Wed Jul 21 10:46:38 2010
Subject: CBC NEWS: CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

Trouble viewing this press release? [Click here.](#)



CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS

Contact Us

Congressional Black Caucus
2444 Rayburn Building
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 226-9776 (T)
(202) 225-9817 (F)

[click here to email us](#)

CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

Wednesday, July 21, 2010

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact : J. Jioni Palmer

(Washington, D.C.)- Congressional Black Caucus Chairwoman Barbara Lee and members of the CBC released the following statement today on the firing of USDA employee Shirley Sherrod:

“It is troubling that Shirley Sherrod was asked for her resignation as Georgia State Director for Rural Development at the U.S. Department of Agriculture because of an edited video clip. A full review of the clip demonstrates Ms. Sherrod’s personal transformation. She was clearly educating the public about the power of redemption. It is now apparent that Secretary Vilsack did not have all of the facts available to him and overreacted.

“The Congressional Black Caucus continues to believe that Ms. Sherrod was unfairly asked to resign, without due process and should be reinstated immediately. There are many individuals still serving in the Department of Agriculture who were responsible for years of discrimination against African American farmers.

“We also believe that a national dialogue on race must be held. Last November, we held a forum on race in Washington DC to begin the discussion. The basis for Ms. Sherrod’s resignation is another example of why we must not sweep race under the rug. Rather, we must come together as a nation and recognize that we do not live in a post-racial era and that, while difficult, we must confront these issues head on with clarity and without fear.

“Ms. Sherrod has been an effective public servant and it would be tragic to lose a person of such caliber, competence and commitment to fairness and equality and one who has dedicated her life to working for a more perfect union.”

- 30 -

J. Jioni Palmer
Communications Director
Congressional Black Caucus
(202) 226-1912 - office
[REDACTED] - cell

Allen, Julie -USDA

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 12:07 PM
To: Allen, Julie -USDA
Subject: FW: CBC NEWS: CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod
Attachments: image001.png; image002.png; image003.png

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:56 AM
To: Berge, John; 'Wilson, Denise R.'
Subject: RE: CBC NEWS: CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:40 AM
To: Wilson, Denise R.; Harden, Krysta
Subject: RE: CBC NEWS: CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

Got it.

From: Wilson, Denise R. [mailto:[REDACTED]]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:39 AM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Fw: CBC NEWS: CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

FYI
Denise Wilson
Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

From: Schwoeffermann, Irene (CBC) <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wed Jul 21 10:46:38 2010
Subject: CBC NEWS: CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

Trouble viewing this press release? [Click here.](#)



CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS

CHANGE COURSE, CONFRONT CRISES, CONTINUE THE LEGACY

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CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

Wednesday, July 21, 2010

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Contact : J. Jioni Palmer

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“The Congressional Black Caucus continues to believe that Ms. Sherrod was unfairly asked to resign, without due process and should be reinstated immediately. There are many individuals still serving in the Department of Agriculture who were responsible for years of discrimination against African American farmers.

“We also believe that a national dialogue on race must be held. Last November, we held a forum on race in Washington DC to begin the discussion. The basis for Ms. Sherrod’s resignation is another example of why we must not sweep race under the rug. Rather, we must come together as a nation and recognize that we do not live in a post-racial era and that, while difficult, we must confront these issues head on with clarity and without fear.

“Ms. Sherrod has been an effective public servant and it would be tragic to lose a person of such caliber, competence and commitment to fairness and equality and one who has dedicated her life to working for a more perfect union.”

www.thecongressionalblackcaucus.com

To unsubscribe, [click here](#).

J. Jioni Palmer
Communications Director
Congressional Black Caucus
(202) 226-1912 - office
[REDACTED] - cell

Harden, Krysta

From: Jackie Ward [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 8:53 AM
To: Harden, Krysta; Dallas Tonsager; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Corey Ealons
Cc: Washo, Kevin; Leonard, Joe; Wright, Lloyd; Reed, Pearlie
Subject: Letter from Ralph Paige Re: Shirley Sherrod

Please see the attached letter from Mr. Ralph Paige regarding Shirley Sherrod.

Jacqueline B. Ward
Executive Assistant
Federation of Southern Cooperatives/
Land Assistance Fund
2769 Church Street
East Point, GA 30344
Phone: 404.765.0991
Fax: 404.765.9178
Web: www.federation.coop

Secy is asking who is Hillary Shelton in this transcript

From: Mather, Chris
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Washo, Kevin; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah; Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:53:35 2010
Subject: Fw: Transcript

Thanks Sarah.
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:42:36 2010
Subject: Transcript
Chris, please see below for transcript

Video: [Link](#)

On July 25, 2009 Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack appointed Shirley Sherrod as Georgia Director of Rural Development. USDA Rural Development spends over \$1.2 Billion in the state of Georgia each year. On March 27, 2010, while speaking at the NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet, Ms. Sherrod admits that in her federally appointed position, overseeing over a billion dollars, she discriminates against people due to their race.

Shirley Sherrod: The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking but he was trying to show me he was superior to me, I know what he was doing. But he had to come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me, was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him. I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land. And here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So, I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough. So that when he, I assumed the Department of Agriculture had sent him to me, either that or the Georgia Department of Agriculture. And he needed to go back and report that I did try and help him. So I took him to a white lawyer that had attended some of the training that we had provided because of Chapter 12 bankruptcy had just been enacted for the family farm. So I figured if I take him to one of them that his own kind would take care of him. That's when it was revealed to me that its about poor versus those who have. It's not so much about white...it is about white and black. It is about white and black but its not you know...it opened my eyes because I took him to one of his own.

Fox News Clip:

Geraldo Rivera: Do you denounce in the way that you ask the Tea Parties denounce racists within your ranks?

Hilary Shelton: Yes we do, we repudiate racists within our ranks.

Back to Shirley Sherrod Clip:

I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farm land and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

Allen, Julie -USDA

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 12:02 PM
To: Allen, Julie -USDA
Subject: FW: Jesse Jackson

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:52 PM
To: O'Brien, Doug
Subject: Re: Jesse Jackson

He will call now

----- Original Message -----

From: O'Brien, Doug
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 19:49:19 2010
Subject: Jesse Jackson

John Mitchell with rev jackson just called my number.

He can connect the secr to rev jackson anytime. I think he expects it tonight.

Allen, Julie -USDA

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 11:45 AM
To: Allen, Julie -USDA
Subject: FW: Hey

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:10 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Hey

I left vm for Rep Bishop and Martha Scott.....general without many details

Allen, Julie -USDA

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 11:48 AM
To: Allen, Julie -USDA
Subject: FW: GA delegation

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:39 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Re: GA delegation

Ok good

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:37:48 2010
Subject: Re: GA delegation

I don't think its necessary. We're working through CoS'

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:36:58 2010
Subject: Re: GA delegation

I have Bishop's cell if needed

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:28:50 2010
Subject: RE: GA delegation

Erin, Todd and I are calling. Oscar is doing the State Government folks. We are calling, leaving messages if necessary, and following up with email.

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:28 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: GA delegation

Are you calling everyone.

Allen, Julie -USDA

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 11:49 AM
To: Allen, Julie -USDA
Subject: FW: Statements

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:42 PM
To: Washo, Kevin; Berge, John
Subject: Statements

Was Shirley at USDA when she made the statement?

Allen, Julie -USDA

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 11:49 AM
To: Allen, Julie -USDA
Subject: FW: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 7:28 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Berge, John; Washo, Kevin
Subject: Re: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod

Ok thanks

From: Mather, Chris
To: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Washo, Kevin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:49:25 2010
Subject: Fw: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod

Its out.
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:48:05 2010
Subject: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod
Good evening,

Please see below for statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack regarding Shirley Sherrod's resignation:

Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

Allen, Julie -USDA

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 11:49 AM
To: Allen, Julie -USDA
Subject: FW: Rural Development State Director

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 7:33 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Re: Rural Development State Director

Good
Erin's email to MSP is enough since I called earlier

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 19:32:19 2010
Subject: Fw: Rural Development State Director

Fyi.

From: Gonzales, Oscar
To: Berge, John
Cc: Yezak, Jennifer
Sent: Mon Jul 19 19:28:43 2010
Subject: FW: Rural Development State Director

John, I was able to connect and speak directly with the Governor's Washington D.C. office. Lee Anne who serves as the Federal Affairs Director will notify the appropriate individuals in her office.

As for Ag Commissioner Irvin, I left him a voice message asking him to call the IGA office.

-Oscar

From: Gonzales, Oscar
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 7:21 PM
To: 'GA-GOVERNOR (lfoster@gov.state.ga.us)'
Cc: Yezak, Jennifer
Subject: Rural Development State Director

Lee Anne, thank you very much for returning my phone call. Below is the statement issued by Secretary Vilsack regarding Shirley Sherrod, Rural Development's State Director in Georgia.

"Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously."

Allen, Julie -USDA

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 11:50 AM
To: Allen, Julie -USDA
Subject: FW: Georgia Rural Development State Director

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:01 AM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Boo

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 06:44:33 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

On MSNBC Morning Joe right now.

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John; Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 06:38:16 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Ok. I saw the story on FOX not good

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 21:41:28 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Yes. Am planning on it. Need to determine proper answers for his questions too.

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Hannigan, Erin; Berge, John
Sent: Mon Jul 19 21:39:48 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Berge can you call Fitz tomorrow? And if so Erin let him know tonight?

From: Hannigan, Erin
To: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Sent: Mon Jul 19 21:23:09 2010
Subject: Fw: Georgia Rural Development State Director

More from Fitz.

From: Elder, Fitzhugh (Appropriations)
To: Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 21:21:10 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director
Erin,

Can you tell me if USDA, under Secretary Vilsack, has accepted any other resignations or has it terminated any other RD State Director or FSA SED for similar reasons? What are the terms of Ms. Sherrod's resignation? Has USDA identified the producer she discriminated against? Are they offering any assistance to that individual? What is USDA's policy when discrimination has occurred? Has this been referred to the DoJ? Will it be? Will USDA provide any training to the federal employees in Georgia to make sure they understand the law and their responsibilities?

Fitz Elder


From: Hannigan, Erin <Erin.Hannigan@osec.usda.gov>
To: Elder, Fitzhugh (Appropriations)
Sent: Mon Jul 19 19:41:21 2010
Subject: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Fitz,

Secretary Vilsack has issued the following statement with regards to Shirley Sherrod, the State Director of Rural Development in Georgia:

"Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously."

Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

Allen, Julie -USDA

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 11:50 AM
To: Allen, Julie -USDA
Subject: FW: Morning Joe

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:01 AM
To: Cluthe, Sally
Subject: Re: Morning Joe

Not good, I saw FOX last night. I feel for Shirley

----- Original Message -----

From: Cluthe, Sally
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 06:40:46 2010
Subject: Morning Joe

Is running a story on the Georgia RD director.

Allen, Julie -USDA

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 11:50 AM
To: Allen, Julie -USDA
Subject: FW: Good Morning

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:43 AM
To: 'sanford.bishop@mail.house.gov'
Cc: Berge, John
Subject: Good Morning

Please feel free to call me if you have additional questions re the RD Director issue. We want to make sure you have all the information you need. I am copying my Deputy John Berge who is in office and be of help as well. I am traveling with the Secretary but available by cell at  KH

Allen, Julie -USDA

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 11:51 AM
To: Allen, Julie -USDA
Subject: FW: Hey

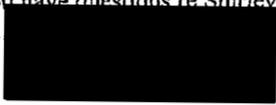
From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:14 AM
To: 'marthascott_poindexter@agriculture.senate.gov'
Subject: Re: Hey

Yes I will forward USDA's statement.

From: Poindexter, Martha Scott (Agriculture)
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:12:13 2010
Subject: Re: Hey
Will do...saw that she resigned.

From: Harden, Krysta <Krysta.Harden@osec.usda.gov>
To: Poindexter, Martha Scott (Agriculture)
Cc: Berge, John <John.Berge@osec.usda.gov>
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:39:28 2010
Subject: Hey

If you have questions re Shirley Sherrod and the issue of the day, feel free to call me or John Berge. I am traveling but on my cell..

KH 

Allen, Julie -USDA

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 11:51 AM
To: Allen, Julie -USDA
Subject: FW: GA

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:40 AM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Re: GA

Sounds good

From: Berge, John
To: phyllis.hallmon@mail.house.gov
Cc: Williams, Janice; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:37:44 2010
Subject: GA

Phyllis – I'd like to try to touch base with you as soon as possible this morning to discuss the GA RD situation. Krysta reached out to Congressman Bishop, but I wanted to be sure you had any questions that you might have answered. If you cannot reach me at the number direct below, I can be reached through my assistant Janice at 202-720-7095.

John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Allen, Julie -USDA

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 11:55 AM
To: Allen, Julie -USDA
Subject: FW: Quick Update

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:35 PM
To: Cluthe, Sally; Berge, John
Cc: McKalip, Doug; DeJong, Justin; Eve, Malcolm
Subject: Re: Quick Update

Will do for sure

From: Cluthe, Sally
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 12:28:02 2010
Subject: RE: Quick Update
Krysta – will you make sure S does the 2:30pm call?

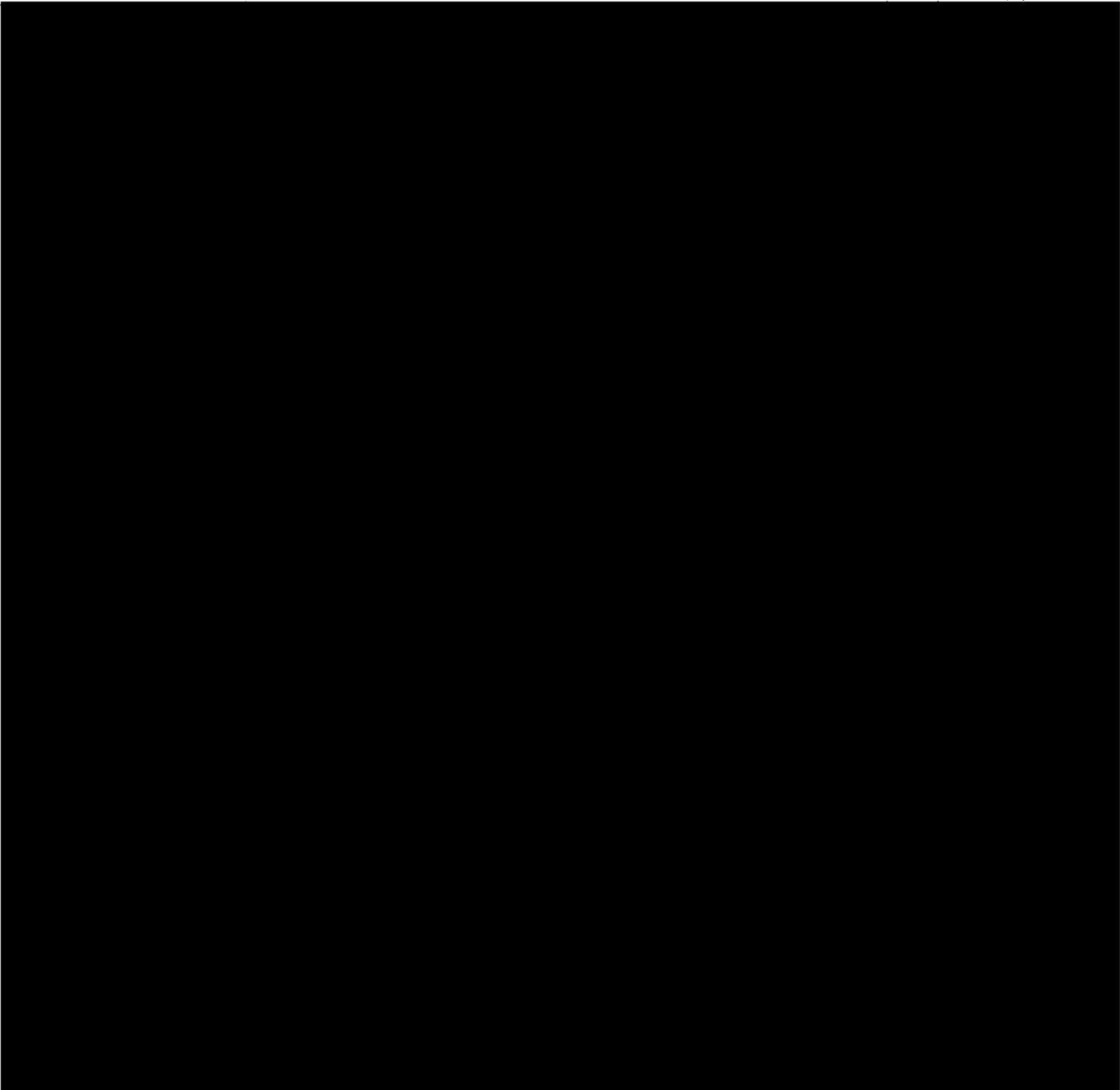
Thanks

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:25 PM
To: Cluthe, Sally; Harden, Krysta
Subject: RE: Quick Update

Thanks Sally.

From: Cluthe, Sally
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:24 PM
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Subject: Quick Update





John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Allen, Julie -USDA

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 11:57 AM
To: Allen, Julie -USDA
Subject: FW: Shirley Sherrod comments

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:27 PM
To: 'Carlisle_Clarke@agriculture.senate.gov'
Subject: Re: Shirley Sherrod comments

We will provide you something

From: Clarke, Carlisle (Agriculture)
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 14:25:13 2010
Subject: Shirley Sherrod comments

Hey Krysta – do y'all have an official release or any briefing materials on the Shirley Sherrod situation? We haven't gotten any press requests or anything yet, but I wanted to make sure we were up to speed.

Thanks!

Carlisle S. Clarke

U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
Ranking Member Saxby Chambliss
328-A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
(202) 224-2035

Allen, Julie -USDA

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 11:58 AM
To: Allen, Julie -USDA
Subject: FW: Right now

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:29 PM
To: Cluthe, Sally
Subject: Right now

The S is calling Clyburn and Bishop only

Allen, Julie -USDA

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 11:58 AM
To: Allen, Julie -USDA
Subject: FW: Need numbers and times for others

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:46 PM
To: Berge, John; Cluthe, Sally
Subject: Re: Need numbers and times for others

On with Bishop now.

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Cluthe, Sally
Sent: Tue Jul 20 14:45:03 2010
Subject: Re: Need numbers and times for others

Let us know how we can follow up if necessary.

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Cluthe, Sally; Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 14:43:07 2010
Subject: Re: Need numbers and times for others

Just talked to Clyburn. He was supportive. The S will call Bishop now. Not sure about others

From: Cluthe, Sally
To: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 14:40:10 2010
Subject: RE: Need numbers and times for others

James Clyburn – Scheduler – Alexandra Russell – 225-3315

Cong. Clyburn is available at 2:30pm.

Please call 202-226-3210 (Whip Office). Kelly Sheraton will connect the call from there.

Sanford Bishop – Scheduler – Martina Morgan – 225-3631

Cong. Bishop is available at anytime. His cell # is [REDACTED] Martina (202-225-3631) is happy to help make this happen anytime if needed.

John Lewis – Scheduler – Jacob Gillison – 225-3801

Spoke with Jacob. Waiting to hear back.

David Scott – Scheduler – Angie Borja – 225-2939

Spoke with Angie. Waiting to hear back.

I gave Krysta's cell # - Cong. is going to step out of his mark-up.

Hank Johnson – Scheduler – Ebony Simpson – 225-1605

Cong. Johnson is in the District. His primary is TODAY.

His cell # is 

Barbara Lee (Chairwoman) – Scheduler – ~~Allyson Feeman – 225-2665;~~

Tatiana Kalinga – 202-225-2661

On hold as I type this...

John Conyers – Scheduler – 225-5126

Bennie Thompson – Scheduler – Andrea Lee – 225-5876

GK Butterfield – Scheduler – Darnise Nelson – 225-3101

Maxine Waters – Scheduler – Angela Master – 225-2201

Sheila Jackson-Lee – Scheduler – 225-3816

Association of Black Legislators:

Rep. Calvin Smyre (D-Georgia House of Reps)

President

706-649-5533 office

calvinsmyre@synovus.com

Lakimba DeSadier

Executive Director

202-624-5457 office


lakimba@nbcsl.org

Rep. Helen Miller (D-Iowa House of Reps)

Chair of NBCSL Agriculture Committee


helen.miller@legis.state.ia.us


-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:35 PM
To: Berge, John
Cc: Cluthe, Sally
Subject: Need numbers and times for others

Besides Clyburn and Bishop

Allen, Julie -USDA

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 11:59 AM
To: Allen, Julie -USDA
Subject: FW: Shirley Sherrod comments

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:25 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Re: Shirley Sherrod comments

Talked to her earlier but free to call. 

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 15:19:27 2010
Subject: Re: Shirley Sherrod comments



From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 14:27:34 2010
Subject: Fw: Shirley Sherrod comments



From: Clarke, Carlisle (Agriculture)
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 14:25:13 2010
Subject: Shirley Sherrod comments

Hey Krysta – do y'all have an official release or any briefing materials on the Shirley Sherrod situation? We haven't gotten any press requests or anything yet, but I wanted to make sure we were up to speed.

Thanks!

Carlisle S. Clarke

U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
Ranking Member Saxby Chambliss
328-A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
(202) 224-2035

Allen, Julie -USDA

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 11:59 AM
To: Allen, Julie -USDA
Subject: FW: Calls

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:25 PM
To: Cluthe, Sally
Subject: Re: Calls

Clyburn, Bishop, Butterfield, Scott tried Lee

----- Original Message -----

From: Cluthe, Sally
To: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Cc: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tue Jul 20 15:21:43 2010
Subject: RE: Calls

Can you update on who he has talked to?

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:21 PM
To: Cluthe, Sally; Berge, John; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Cc: Mather, Chris
Subject: Calls

So far all calls with Hill have been supportive

Allen, Julie -USDA

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 12:00 PM
To: Allen, Julie -USDA
Subject: FW: Status of calls

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:36 PM
To: Cluthe, Sally
Subject: Re: Status of calls

Not yet but ask.

From: Cluthe, Sally
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 15:34:44 2010
Subject: Re: Status of calls

Excellent.
Should I reach out to Jesse Jackson or Sharpton?

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Cluthe, Sally
Cc: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 15:33:25 2010
Subject: Re: Status of calls

On phone with Maxine Waters now

From: Cluthe, Sally
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 15:31:52 2010
Subject: Status of calls

Not completed:

John Lewis – Scheduler – Jacob Gillison – 225-3801

- Spoke with Jacob. Emailed Jacob – no response. Waiting to hear back.

Hank Johnson – Scheduler – Ebony Simpson – 225-1605

- Cong. Johnson is in the District. His primary is TODAY.

o His cell # is [REDACTED]

Barbara Lee (Chairwoman) – Scheduler – Tatiana Kalinga – 202-225-2661

o TBD – Office isn't responding.

John Conyers – Scheduler – 225-5126

o In the District – Cynthia Martin (CoS) will connect the call. **Anytime before 6pm today.**

Scheduled:

4:15pm

Maxine Waters - Scheduler – Angela Master – 225-2201

o Available around 4:15pm – has Doug O'Brien's cell # & Krysta's cell #

5:00pm

Bennie Thompson – Scheduler – Andrea Lee – 225-5876

o **S to call at 5pm**

5:15pm

Sheila Jackson-Lee – Scheduler – 225-3816

o Available at 5:15pm. Call 202-225-3816

Completed:

James Clyburn

Sanford Bishop

David Scott

GK Butterfield

○ His cell # is 

Barbara Lee (Chairwoman) – Scheduler – Tatiana Kalinga – 202-225-2661

○ TBD – Office isn't responding.

John Conyers – Scheduler – 225-5126

○ In the District – Cynthia Martin (CoS) will connect the call. **Anytime before 6pm today.**

Scheduled:

4:15pm

Maxine Waters - Scheduler – Angela Master – 225-2201

○ Available around 4:15pm – has Doug O'Brien's cell # & Krysta's cell #

5:00pm

Bennie Thompson – Scheduler – Andrea Lee – 225-5876

○ **S to call at 5pm**

5:15pm

Sheila Jackson-Lee – Scheduler – 225-3816

○ Available at 5:15pm. Call 202-225-3816

Completed:

James Clyburn

Sanford Bishop

David Scott

GK Butterfield

Allen, Julie -USDA

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 12:00 PM
To: Allen, Julie -USDA
Subject: FW: Status of calls

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:53 PM
To: Cluthe, Sally
Cc: Berge, John
Subject: Re: Status of calls

Ok good

From: Cluthe, Sally
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 15:51:53 2010
Subject: RE: Status of calls
Rev. Jackson is on a plane and lands at 5pm PDT (8pm EDT).
I gave his office Doug & Krysta's cell #s.

FYI – Mr. Shelly Davis usually travels with him. His # is [REDACTED]
I've already left a message for Shelly.

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:47 PM
To: Cluthe, Sally
Cc: Berge, John
Subject: Re: Status of calls

You are wonderful

From: Cluthe, Sally
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 15:45:05 2010
Subject: RE: Status of calls
I have a couple but I am trying to track him down first so you don't have to ☺

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:45 PM
To: Cluthe, Sally
Cc: Berge, John
Subject: Re: Status of calls

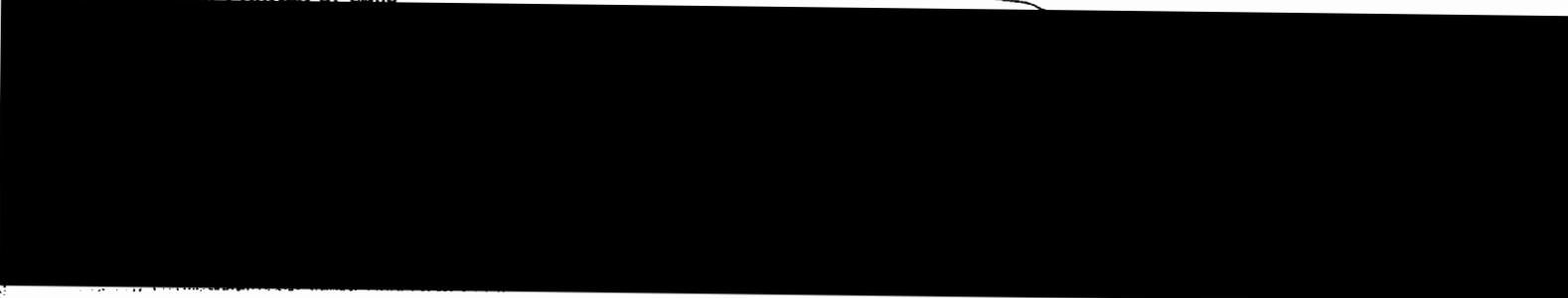
Do not have Jesse Jackson's number

From: Cluthe, Sally
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 15:42:21 2010
Subject: RE: Status of calls.
Do I need to call or do you have the #?

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:42 PM
To: Cluthe, Sally
Cc: Berge, John
Subject: Re: Status of calls



From: Cluthe, Sally
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 15:38:35 2010
Subject: RE: Status of calls



From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:35 PM
To: Cluthe, Sally
Cc: Berge, John
Subject: Re: Status of calls

Good work Sally! We have a few outstanding that can happen after 5 and Mr Lewis whenever we can.

From: Cluthe, Sally
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 15:31:52 2010
Subject: Status of calls

Not completed:

John Lewis – Scheduler – Jacob Gillison – 225-3801

- o Spoke with Jacob. Emailed Jacob – no response. Waiting to hear back.

Hank Johnson – Scheduler – Ebony Simpson – 225-1605

- Cong. Johnson is in the District. His primary is TODAY.
- His cell # is [REDACTED]

Barbara Lee (Chairwoman) – Scheduler – Tatiana Kalinga – 202-225-2661

- TBD – Office isn't responding.

John Conyers – Scheduler – 225-5126

- In the District – Cynthia Martin (CoS) will connect the call. Anytime before 6pm today.

Scheduled:

4:15pm

Maxine Waters - Scheduler – Angela Master – 225-2201

- Available around 4:15pm – has Doug O'Brien's cell # & Krysta's cell #

5:00pm

Bennie Thompson – Scheduler – Andrea Lee – 225-5876

- S to call at 5pm

5:15pm

Sheila Jackson-Lee – Scheduler – 225-3816

- Available at 5:15pm. Call 202-225-3816

Completed:

James Clyburn

Sanford Bishop

David Scott

GK Butterfield

Allen, Julie -USDA

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 12:00 PM
To: Allen, Julie -USDA
Subject: FW: Phone Call with Sec. Tom Vilsack

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:06 PM
To: Cluthe, Sally
Cc: Berge, John
Subject: Re: Phone Call with Sec. Tom Vilsack

The S will be in the middle of the meeting here after 5 would be better. Doing interview with CNN now

From: Cluthe, Sally
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:02:16 2010
Subject: FW: Phone Call with Sec. Tom Vilsack
Update from John Lewis....

From: Gillison, Jacob [mailto:Jacob.Gillison@mail.house.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:58 PM
To: Cluthe, Sally
Subject: RE: Phone Call with Sec. Tom Vilsack

He's in a meeting and when he's done I will inform him and hopefully make this happen... 20 mins?

Jacob

From: Cluthe, Sally [mailto:Sally.Cluthe@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:48 PM
To: Gillison, Jacob
Subject: Phone Call with Sec. Tom Vilsack

Hi Jacob –

Thank you for taking my call earlier today. Sec. Vilsack is currently in the car and was hoping to find a time to speak with the Congressman.

Would there be any time in the next hour or so?

Thanks again,
Sally

Sally Cluthe
Director of Scheduling and Advance

Office of the Secretary
United States Department of Agriculture
Washington, DC
Phone: 202-720-3631
Fax: 202-690-2400
www.usda.gov

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Allen, Julie -USDA

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 12:01 PM
To: Allen, Julie -USDA
Subject: FW: John Lewis

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 5:11 PM
To: Cluthe, Sally
Subject: Re: John Lewis

Winding up roundtable started late because of the CNN interview. Will have him call the min he leaves then Thompson, Lee

From: Cluthe, Sally
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 17:08:01 2010
Subject: John Lewis

From: Gillison, Jacob [mailto:Jacob.Gillison@mail.house.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 5:05 PM
To: Cluthe, Sally
Subject: RE: Phone Call with Sec. Tom Vilsack

He is now available...

Please call 202-225-3801 and ask for me and I will get you in touch with him...

Jacob

From: Cluthe, Sally [mailto:Sally.Cluthe@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:33 PM
To: Gillison, Jacob
Subject: RE: Phone Call with Sec. Tom Vilsack

Hi Jacob --

He is wrapping up a meeting. Would there be a time after 5pm?

Thanks
Sally

From: Gillison, Jacob [mailto:Jacob.Gillison@mail.house.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:58 PM
To: Cluthe, Sally
Subject: RE: Phone Call with Sec. Tom Vilsack

He's in a meeting and when he's done I will inform him and hopefully make this happen... 20 mins?

Jacob

From: Cluthe, Sally [mailto:Sally.Cluthe@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:48 PM
To: Gillison, Jacob
Subject: Phone Call with Sec. Tom Vilsack

Hi Jacob –

Thank you for taking my call earlier today. Sec. Vilsack is currently in the car and was hoping to find a time to speak with the Congressman.

Would there be any time in the next hour or so?

Thanks again,
Sally

Sally Cluthe
Director of Scheduling and Advance
Office of the Secretary
United States Department of Agriculture
Washington, DC
Phone: 202-720-3631
Fax: 202-690-2400
www.usda.gov

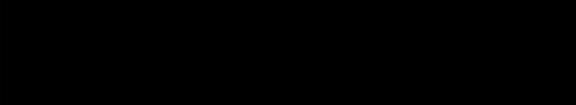
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Allen, Julie -USDA

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 12:05 PM
To: Allen, Julie -USDA
Subject: FW: Are things ok there?

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:10 PM
To: Cluthe, Sally
Subject: Re: Are things ok there?




----- Original Message -----

From: Cluthe, Sally
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 23:05:43 2010
Subject: Re: Are things ok there?

Do I need to change anything for tomorrow?

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Cluthe, Sally
Sent: Tue Jul 20 21:57:28 2010
Subject: Re: Are things ok there?

Crazy

----- Original Message -----

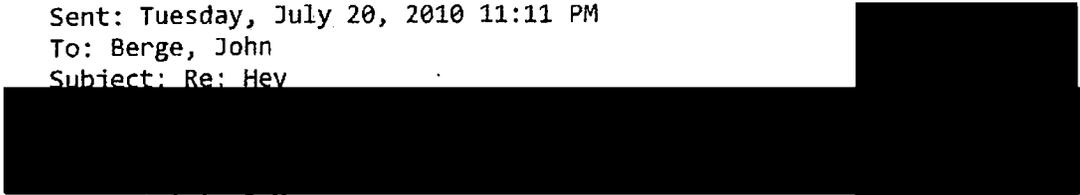
From: Cluthe, Sally
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 21:52:01 2010
Subject: Are things ok there?

Allen, Julie -USDA

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 12:05 PM
To: Allen, Julie -USDA
Subject: FW: Hey

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:11 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Re: Hey



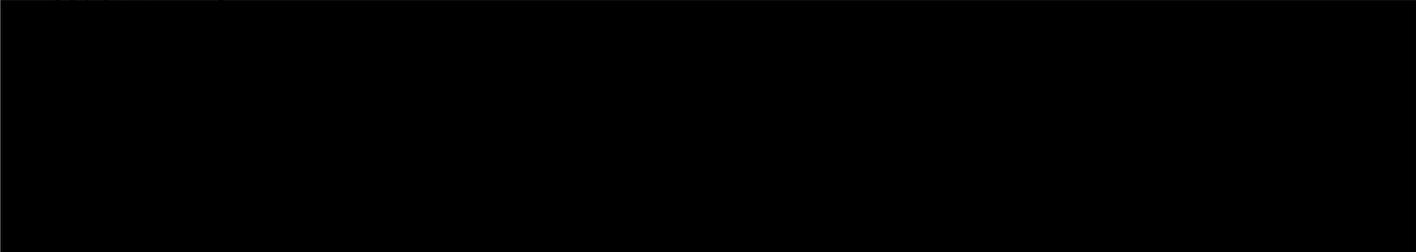
----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 23:01:22 2010
Subject: Re: Hey

Woah - what will it say?

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:42:16 2010
Subject: Hey

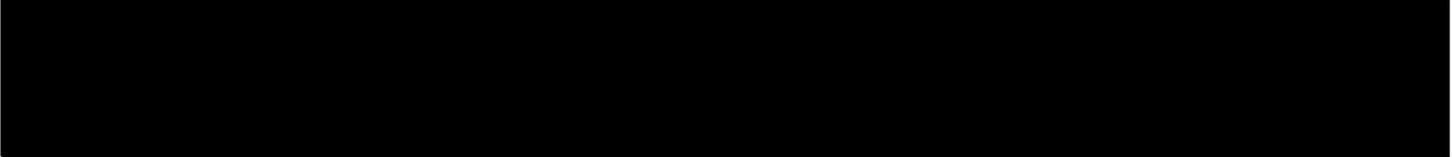


Allen, Julie -USDA

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 12:05 PM
To: Allen, Julie -USDA
Subject: FW: Hey

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:13 PM
To: Washo, Kevin
Cc: Berge, John
Subject: Hey



Allen, Julie -USDA

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 12:05 PM
To: Allen, Julie -USDA
Subject: FW: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod
Attachments: image001.jpg

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:32 AM
To: Cluthe, Sally
Subject: Fw: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks In Video From Shirley Sherrod

As promised

From: Mather, Chris
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wed Jul 21 05:17:54 2010
Subject: Fw: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

This went at 2
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wed Jul 21 02:07:06 2010



Release No. PENDING

Contact:
USDA Office of Communications
(202) 720-4623

Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

WASHINGTON, July 21, 2010 - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack tonight released the following statement in response to the release of remarks in video from Shirley Sherrod:

"I am of course willing and will conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts to ensure to the American people we are providing services in a fair and equitable manner."

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice), or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]

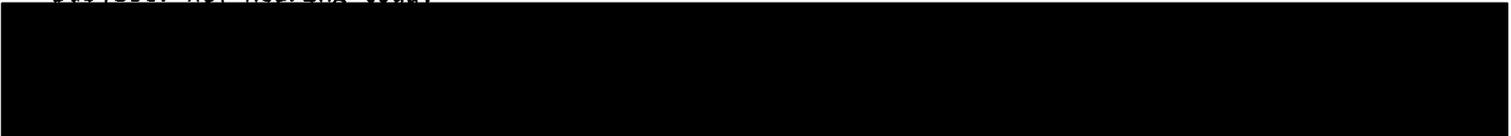
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

Allen, Julie -USDA

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 12:06 PM
To: Allen, Julie -USDA
Subject: FW: Hearing today

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:38 AM
To: May, Tina
Subject: Re: Hearing today



----- Original Message -----

From: May, Tina
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wed Jul 21 06:36:06 2010
Subject: Re: Hearing today



----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: May, Tina; Berge, John
Cc: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole
Sent: Wed Jul 21 06:24:07 2010



----- Original Message -----

From: May, Tina
To: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Cc: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole
Sent: Wed Jul 21 06:12:00 2010
Subject: Re: Hearing today

9am, we are leaving at 8:15.

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John; May, Tina
Cc: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole
Sent: Wed Jul 21 06:08:24 2010
Subject: Hearing today

We need to make sure Dallas is ready today. What time is his hearing?

Allen, Julie -USDA

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 12:06 PM
To: Allen, Julie -USDA
Subject: FW:

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:02 AM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Re:

Thank you

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Wed Jul 21 07:49:42 2010
Subject:

Notifications went out a few mins ago. GA delegation, authorizers, appropriators, CBC members he talked with or was to talk with.

John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Allen, Julie -USDA

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 12:06 PM
To: Allen, Julie -USDA
Subject: FW: Letter from Ralph Paige Re: Shirley Sherrod

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:04 AM
To: 'fsc@mindspring.com'
Subject: Re: Letter from Ralph Paige Re: Shirley Sherrod

Please send attachment again

From: Jackie Ward
To: Harden, Krysta; Dallas Tonsager ; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Corey Ealons
Cc: Washo, Kevin; Leonard, Joe; Wright, Lloyd; Reed, Pearlle
Sent: Wed Jul 21 08:53:07 2010
Subject: Letter from Ralph Paige Re: Shirley Sherrod
Please see the attached letter from Mr. Ralph Paige regarding Shirley Sherrod.

Jacqueline B. Ward
Executive Assistant
Federation of Southern Cooperatives/
Land Assistance Fund
2769 Church Street
East Point, GA 30344
Phone: 404.765.0991
Fax: 404.765.9178
Web: www.federation.coop

Allen, Julie -USDA

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 12:07 PM
To: Allen, Julie -USDA
Subject: FW: Email

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:02 AM
To: 'Rachel_McLocklin@agriculture.senate.gov'
Subject: Re: Email

Thank you Rachel. Yes when I get the email I will share it.

From: McLocklin, Rachel (Agriculture)
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wed Jul 21 10:00:58 2010
Subject: RE: Email

Krysta – MSP asked me to check into an email that Shirley Sherrod had copied SC on. I've checked with Teresa and there is no email in his personal email, and there is no email from her in our mail system. Would you be able to get us a copy of the letter and the email address that it was sent to?

Thank you!

Rachel McLocklin

--
Rachel McLocklin
Senate Agriculture Committee
328A Russell Building • Washington, D.C. 20510
T: 202.224.2035 • F: 202.224.1725
rachel_mclocklin@agriculture.senate.gov

Allen, Julie -USDA

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 12:07 PM
To: Allen, Julie -USDA
Subject: FW: CBC NEWS: CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod
Attachments: image001.png; image002.png; image003.png

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:56 AM
To: Berge, John; 'Wilson, Denise R.'
Subject: RE: CBC NEWS: CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

Thank you. I shared with S.

He has talked with at least 10 Members of the CBC and will continue to do so. KH

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:40 AM
To: Wilson, Denise R.; Harden, Krysta
Subject: RE: CBC NEWS: CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

Got it.

From: Wilson, Denise R. [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:39 AM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Fw: CBC NEWS: CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

FYI
Denise Wilson
Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

From: Schwoeffermann, Irene (CBC) <ibs@mail.house.gov>
Sent: Wed Jul 21 10:46:38 2010
Subject: CBC NEWS: CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

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(202) 225-9817 (F)

[click here to email us](#)

CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

Wednesday, July 21, 2010

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact : J. Jioni Palmer

(Washington, D.C.)- Congressional Black Caucus Chairwoman Barbara Lee and members of the CBC released the following statement today on the firing of USDA employee Shirley Sherrod:

“It is troubling that Shirley Sherrod was asked for her resignation as Georgia State Director for Rural Development at the U.S. Department of Agriculture because of an edited video clip. A full review of the clip demonstrates Ms. Sherrod’s personal transformation. She was clearly educating the public about the power of redemption. It is now apparent that Secretary Vilsack did not have all of the facts available to him and overreacted.

“The Congressional Black Caucus continues to believe that Ms. Sherrod was unfairly asked to resign, without due process and should be reinstated immediately. There are many individuals still serving in the Department of Agriculture who were responsible for years of discrimination against African American farmers.

“We also believe that a national dialogue on race must be held. Last November, we held a forum on race in Washington DC to begin the discussion. The basis for Ms. Sherrod’s resignation is another example of why we must not sweep race under the rug. Rather, we must come together as a nation and recognize that we do not live in a post-racial era and that, while difficult, we must confront these issues head on with clarity and without fear.

“Ms. Sherrod has been an effective public servant and it would be tragic to lose a person of such caliber, competence and commitment to fairness and equality and one who has dedicated her life to working for a more perfect union.”

www.thecongressionalblackcaucus.com

To unsubscribe, [click here](#).

J. Jioni Palmer
Communications Director
Congressional Black Caucus
(202) 226-1912 - office



Allen, Julie -USDA

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 12:08 PM
To: Allen, Julie -USDA
Subject: FW: GA

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:07 PM
To: 'marthascott_poindexter@agriculture.senate.gov'
Subject: Re: GA

We should have something more to share as early as later today

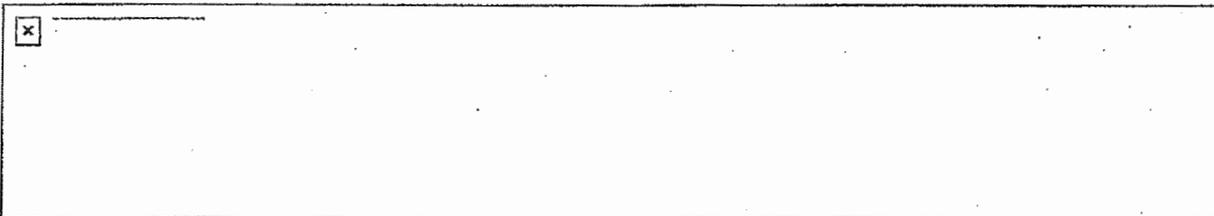
From: MarthaScott_Poindexter@agriculture.senate.gov
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wed Jul 21 13:01:59 2010
Subject: Re: GA

Thanks - the Chairman and Saxby spoke with Tonsanger privately and asked him to get them an explanation of everything asap. They will not comment publically until the Secretary's investigation is concluded and a decision is made by him.

From: Berge, John <John.Berge@osec.usda.gov>
To: Berge, John <John.Berge@osec.usda.gov>; Harden, Krysta <Krysta.Harden@osec.usda.gov>
Sent: Wed Jul 21 07:48:26 2010
Subject: GA

Good Morning -

Secretary Vilsack issued the following statement late last evening in reference to the situation in Georgia.



Release No. PENDING

Contact:
USDA Office of Communications
(202) 720-4623

**Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video
From Shirley Sherrod**

WASHINGTON, July 21, 2010 - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack tonight released the following statement in response to the release of remarks in video from Shirley Sherrod:

"I am of course willing and will conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts to ensure to the American people we are providing services in a fair and equitable manner."

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice), or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).

John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Allen, Julie -USDA

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 12:08 PM
To: Allen, Julie -USDA
Subject: FW: Letter

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:08 PM
To: 'Patrice.Willoughby@mail.house.gov'
Subject: Re: Letter

Thank you we will try to make this happen as soon as possible

From: Willoughby, Patrice
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wed Jul 21 12:18:55 2010
Subject: Letter

Dear Krysta:

Please find a letter of invitation to Secretary Vilsack to meet with the Congressional Black Caucus at his earliest convenience.

Thank you.

Patrice Willoughby

(202) 225-2398 desk


<<Letter - Meeting - Sec Vilsack 7-21-2010.pdf>>

Patrice Willoughby, J.D.

Executive Director

Congressional Black Caucus

Hon. Barbara Lee, Chairwoman

2444 Rayburn House Office Building

Washington, D.C. 20515

Telephone: (202) 226-9776

Fax: (202) 225-9817

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Spectemur Agendo

Harden, Krysta

From: Paradis, Julie [Julie.Paradis@fns.usda.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:32 PM
To: Carter, Scott; Alexander, Bruce; Concannon, Kevin; Thornton, Janey; Blake, Nathan; Deluhery, Norah; Pino, Lisa; Harden, Krysta; Daniel, Jean; Siemietkowski, Susan
Cc: Beard, Bob; Stansfield, Carol
Subject: RE: Mr. Vilsack's resignation - re: Shirley Sherrod

We don't need to respond – please note that this went to many folks at the department, too. This issue should be handled by OC and folks at the department. Thanks, Scott!

From: Carter, Scott
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:47 AM
To: Alexander, Bruce; Paradis, Julie; Concannon, Kevin; 'Thornton, Janey'; 'Blake, Nathan'; 'Deluhery, Norah'; Pino, Lisa; 'Harden, Krysta'; Daniel, Jean; Siemietkowski, Susan
Cc: Beard, Bob; Stansfield, Carol
Subject: FW: Mr. Vilsack's resignation - re: Shirley Sherrod
Importance: High

All,

FYI and I am not sure how far and wide this is, but wanted to send.

I have not and will not respond. I will save this.

Thanks and please advise.

Scott

Scott A. Carter
Director
Office of Congressional Affairs
USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS)
703-305-2313 - Direct
703-305-2312 - Fax

scott.carter@fns.usda.gov
www.fns.usda.gov

From: Douglas Montgomery [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:29 AM
To: Mather, Chris; david.sandretti@oc.usda.gov; caleb.weaver@oc.usda.gov; justin.dejong@oc.usda.gov; orrin.evans@oc.usda.gov; stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov; bobby.gravitz@oc.usda.gov; Normile, Cheryl -USDA; Hilt, Marci -USDA; aaron.lavalle@oc.usda.gov; Hill, Kathryn -USDA; Trotter, Mocile -USDA; Robinson, Barbara -USDA; Black, David -OC; pat.o'leary@usda.gov; Ellison, Bob -USDA; Crawford, Gary -USDA; rod.bain@usda.gov; Carter, Susan; Mitchell, Carrie -USDA; Hall, Ron - USDA; mark.palmer@wdc.usda.gov; james.meldinger@wdc.usda; kent.politsch@wdc.usda.gov; johnathan.groverman@wdc.usda.gov; andre.kok@wdc.usda.gov; jim.meisenheimer@mn.usda.gov; murray.watts@tn.usda.gov; brenda.carlson@tx.usda.gov; paul.lehman@ca.usda.gov; maryhelen.askins@wdc.usda.gov; latawnya.dia@wdc.usda.gov; shirley.pugh@usda.gov; Michelle.Bouchard@rma.usda.gov; michael.hand@usda.gov; heyward.baker@usda.gov; timwitt@rma.usda.gov; terrie.ray@usda.gov; Siemietkowski, Susan; Carter, Scott; Daniel, Jean; Acker, Susan; Billger, Hans
Subject: Mr. Vilsack's resignation - re: Shirley Sherrod

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to call for Mr. Vilsack's immediate resignation regarding his hasty and misguided action in the firing of Shirley Sherrod.

Fox New's obviously deceptive and dishonest journalism practices have egregiously slandered and libeled Ms. Sherrod and Mr. Vilsack and the USDA are party to these same injustices.

Please do the right thing and step down Mr. Vilsack. Defamation suits on behalf of Ms. Sherrod, against Fox News and the USDA should be the next step.

With Best Regards,
Douglas Montgomery

--

Douglas Montgomery

Independent Design Solutions LLC

1128 Central Avenue

Downers Grove, IL 60516 USA

Tel: 630-730-1790

www.Independentdesignsolutions.com

Harden, Krysta

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:51 PM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Mather, Chris; O'Brien, Doug
Subject: FW: Letter to USDA Secretary Vilsack on forced resignation of Shirley Sherrod

Fyi from Ralph Paige.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202 690 0548

justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Hagstrom, Jerry [mailto:JHagstrom@nationaljournal.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:47 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: FW: Letter to USDA Secretary Vilsack on forced resignation of Shirley Sherrod

This is the group to which Vilsack made his first out of town speech after becoming secretary. I was there.

I realize i do not have the CBC statement. One of my colleagues has written a little about it and you will have to go to Rep. Barbara Lee to get it.

I will send the Rural Coalition statement.

From: Heather Gray [mailto:heathergray@federation.coop]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:18 AM
To: Heather Gray
Subject: Letter to USDA Secretary Vilsack on forced resignation of Shirley Sherrod

For Immediate Release:

July 21, 2010
Contact: Ralph Paige
404 765 0991
Federation of Southern Cooperatives/
Land Assistance Fund
www.federation.coop

The Federation Sends Letter to USDA Secretary Vilsack Regarding Sherrod Resignation

ATLANTA....On July 19, former Federation staff member and head of the USDA's Rural Development Office in Georgia was asked by the USDA to resign her post. The reason was because of the ramifications of a distorted video from a March 2010 speech she gave at the NAACP in south Georgia that was publicized by Fox News. In response to this the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund has sent the letter below to Thomas Vilsack, Secretary of Agriculture.

July 21, 2010

The Honorable Thomas Vilsack
Secretary of Agriculture
Washington DC

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

We at the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund are writing regarding your decision to ask Shirley Sherrod to resign. We think you must reconsider and immediately reinstate her as Georgia USDA State Director of Rural Development.

Your decision to force Ms. Sherrod to resign was taken in haste without a thorough and complete review of the facts, context and circumstances of her actions. We feel you were unduly influenced by distorted and edited videotape that completely misrepresented a speech Ms. Sherrod made to the NAACP in Georgia.

It is a sign of leadership to admit to mistakes and quickly corrected them. We feel you as Secretary of Agriculture must quickly correct this injustice committed against Ms. Shirley Sherrod and the people she has struggled for years to serve. This is the transformative awareness and enlightened judgment we are expecting from you.

We note with interest that your concern is to move forward to solve the problems that USDA has had in the past in terms of its sad record on civil rights. Yet your decision to fire one of the few persons in the country who could likely do the most to help achieve that goal stubbornly negates your stated interest of moving forward toward equal access and equality of opportunity at USDA with integrity.

At the NAACP gathering in March this year, Shirley was sharing with the group her experience in the 1980's of assisting the white farmer Roger Spooner. She, in fact, was instrumental in helping to save his farm. She describes the process of getting beyond her assumption that whites didn't need services and assistance. She realized that being white did not make anyone immune to the problems of and to the lack of access to services. She realized rather that it was a matter of who has and how does not. This was a life changing experience for her. Her message was that all of us need to get beyond race and assist each other whether black or white.

Another of your interests we know is to finally resolve the lawsuits against USDA. Lack of access to services at USDA is the basis for the Pigford lawsuit. In addition to securing the necessary funding for settling Pigford from Congress to finally resolve this injustice to individual farmers, we know that another essential step in moving forward is to assist and assure farmers have access to the USDA programs. Programs, in fact, that are supposed to be available on an equitable basis to all farmers.

Shirley Sherrod in her remarkable career has been one of the most active practitioners in assisting untold numbers of black and white farmers to access the credit, conservation and other programs at USDA. Shirley has essentially been an ambassador for the USDA in her work at the Federation of Southern Cooperatives and as Georgia State Director of Rural Development. If anything, she deserves to be honored for this work and not falsely condemned and forced to retire in disgrace.

We find it ironic that in the one hundred years of USDA's history of discrimination, not a single white person has been dismissed for discrimination, however, a Black women who is doing her job well is falsely accused of discrimination in an altered video and you decide that she can no longer do a credible and nondiscriminatory job of dispensing USDA rural development programs and must resign.

Once Shirley is restored to her position, we feel it would enhance USDA's goals by utilizing her as an ambassador for USDA. She could offer USDA staff throughout the country training and teaching about transformation on the issue of race and what it means to offer service to all farmers with justice and integrity regardless of race.

In summary, the inference that Shirley Sherrod is a racist is beyond comprehension. For you to make a decision without consideration of Shirley's long and impressive work in civil rights is uncalled for. It is not only an insult to her, but also to the communities she has worked for and with all these many years as well as our organization that has for decades fought against racism and injustice in the rural South

We ask that you immediately reconsider your decision to fire Shirley Sherrod, apologize to her and consider instead the tremendous asset she has been and could continue to be for the USDA and rural America. We urge you to learn from this disagreeable incident and make it a shining example of a true change of heart and direction at USDA toward a brighter day of racial reconciliation and justice for all.

Cooperatively yours,

Ralph Paige
Executive Director

Harden, Krysta

From: Poindexter, Martha Scott (Agriculture) [MarthaScott_Poindexter@agriculture.senate.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:31 AM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: Re: Hey

I don't know. Will have to check --- was it the general email address to the office?

From: Harden, Krysta <Krysta.Harden@osec.usda.gov>
To: Poindexter, Martha Scott (Agriculture)
Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:01:08 2010
Subject: Hey

Did SC get an email from Shirley Sherrod re the video in question last Th? They are copied on an email she sent out. Just checking.
KH

Harden, Krysta

From: Willoughby, Patrice [Patrice.Willoughby@mail.house.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 3:34 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: RE: Letter

We can do 5:15 p.m. and I'll send a room number.

From: Harden, Krysta [mailto:Krysta.Harden@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 3:11 PM
To: Willoughby, Patrice
Subject: Re: Letter

We can come earlier or later if better

From: Willoughby, Patrice
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wed Jul 21 15:06:57 2010
Subject: RE: Letter
I'm checking on schedules and will be back in touch soon.

From: Harden, Krysta [mailto:Krysta.Harden@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:44 PM
To: Willoughby, Patrice
Subject: RE: Letter

Will this afternoon around 5 work?

From: Willoughby, Patrice [mailto:Patrice.Willoughby@mail.house.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:19 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: Letter

Dear Krysta:

Please find a letter of invitation to Secretary Vilsack to meet with the Congressional Black Caucus at his earliest convenience.

Thank you.

Patrice Willoughby

(202) 225-2398 desk


<<Letter - Meeting - Sec Vilsack 7-21-2010.pdf>>

Patrice Willoughby, J.D.

Executive Director

Congressional Black Caucus

Hon. Barbara Lee, Chairwoman

2444 Rayburn House Office Building

Washington, D.C. 20515

Telephone: (202) 226-9776

Fax: (202) 225-9817

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Harden, Krysta

From: Willoughby, Patrice [Patrice.Willoughby@mail.house.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 3:49 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: RE: Letter

5:15 p.m. in 441 Cannon House Office Building.

[REDACTED]

From: Harden, Krysta [mailto:Krysta.Harden@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:44 PM
To: Willoughby, Patrice
Subject: RE: Letter

Will this afternoon around 5 work?

From: Willoughby, Patrice [mailto:Patrice.Willoughby@mail.house.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:19 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: Letter

Dear Krysta:

Please find a letter of invitation to Secretary Vilsack to meet with the Congressional Black Caucus at his earliest convenience.

Thank you.

Patrice Willoughby

(202) 225-2398 desk

[REDACTED]

<<Letter - Meeting - Sec Vilsack 7-21-2010.pdf>>

Patrice Willoughby, J.D.

Executive Director

Congressional Black Caucus

Hon. Barbara Lee, Chairwoman

2444 Rayburn House Office Building

Washington, D.C. 20515

Telephone: (202) 226-9776

Fax: (202) 225-9817

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Spectemur Agendo

Harden, Krysta

From: Willoughby, Patrice [Patrice.Willoughby@mail.house.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 8:42 PM
To: Harden, Krysta; Leonard, Joe
Subject: CBC NEWS: Chairwoman Lee Releases Statement Following Meeting with Agriculture Secretary Vilsack
Attachments: Picture (Device Independent Bitmap); Picture (Device Independent Bitmap); Picture (Device Independent Bitmap)

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Chairwoman Lee Releases Statement Following Meeting with Agriculture Secretary Vilsack

Wednesday, July 21, 2010

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact : Nicole Y. Williams or J. Jioni Palmer

Washington D.C. – Today Congresswoman Barbara Lee (D-CA), Chairwoman of the Congressional Black Caucus, released the following statement following a meeting of the Congressional Black Caucus with Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack regarding the handling of matter resulting in the resignation of Shirley Sherrod.

“We want to thank Secretary Tom Vilsack for meeting with the Congressional Black Caucus today regarding the issues surrounding the resignation of Shirley Sherrod. During the meeting we expressed our concern regarding the handling of the situation. Secretary Vilsack assured us that there would be a full review of the process which led to this unfortunate situation.

“We appreciate the apology issued today by the Administration and Secretary Vilsack personally. He reiterated those same sentiments during our meeting.

“We expressed to Secretary Vilsack that as the Administration and Department of Agriculture begins the process of repairing the damage from this situation, we are willing to work with them to ensure an equitable and fair outcome for Ms. Sherrod. The meeting also provided an opportunity to openly discuss longstanding issues of equity within the U.S. Department of Agriculture such as funding for land grant colleges and the Black and Native American Farmers settlement to address decades-long discrimination.

“Shirley Sherrod’s story – the true story she told as evidenced in the full tape of her remarks that has now been released – is one that we can use as the starting point for a real dialogue on race.

“As Americans, we need to build a shared understanding of our country’s history as we work to build a more perfect union. We look forward to continued dialogue with Secretary Vilsack and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.”

###

www.thecongressionalblackcaucus.com

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J. Jioni Palmer
Communications Director
Congressional Black Caucus
(202) 226-1912 - office



Harden, Krysta

From: Aimee Wulfeck [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:21 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: Secretary Vilsack

Hi Krysta! We met at the event Tuesday evening in Ohio for Governor Strickland. I spoke to you about the Non-profit my sister and I started for a thoroughbred farm in Kentucky. I wanted to ask you to please pass on my support and prayers for Secretary Vilsack.

I find it refreshing for a politician to step up and take responsibility when necessary. After all he is human and said he made a mistake. Too often we hold those who are in office to a standard that is not capable for a human being to reach. He has apologized and offered to attempt to make amends. We all make mistakes but don't always own up to those mistakes. It takes a strong and confident person to stand in front of a nation and take full responsibility for something of that nature and I cannot imagine what he is going through. I have nothing but respect for him.

Please let him know my sister and I are thinking about him and send our full support from Kentucky!
Sincerely,
Aimee Wulfeck

Harden, Krysta

From: Foley, Martha [Martha.Foley@mail.house.gov]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 3:09 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Jones, Diem-Linh -OBPA; Fountain, Galen (Appropriations)
Subject: RE: Shirley Sherrod

How is it possible that what we get are just the top clips when they are now 20+ pages long, omit any bad news of any sort and include stuff like the following:

Local ag woman goes to Washington (Santa Maria News 7/22)

Ruth Jensen of Santa Maria was among the leaders of American Agri-Women from throughout the country who recently met with policy makers and consumers at the organization's 25th annual Fly-in to Washington, D.C.

Please send us the "all clips" version so we can see what they are like.

From: Harden, Krysta [mailto:Krysta.Harden@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 3:07 PM
To: Foley, Martha
Cc: Jones, Diem-Linh -OBPA
Subject: FW: Shirley Sherrod

Hey, see Karen's answer below re the question of the clips.

From: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 2:57 PM
To: 'Elder, Fitzhugh (Appropriations)'; Harden, Krysta
Cc: Fountain, Galen (Appropriations)
Subject: RE: Shirley Sherrod

RE: Daily Clips

Fitz,

The Office of Communications explained that it sends top clips to the Hill, not all clips. The clips that are sent highlight USDA efforts and programs. Staff at OC did not include Sherrod clips since it was the biggest story of the two days and there were hundreds of pages of clips that all said the same thing.

I hope this responds to your question.

Karen Ross
Chief of Staff
Office of the Secretary
(202) 720-3631
karen.ross@osec.usda.gov

From: Elder, Fitzhugh (Appropriations) [mailto:Fitzhugh_Elder@appro.senate.gov]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 1:45 PM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Harden, Krysta
Cc: Fountain, Galen (Appropriations)
Subject: RE: Shirley Sherrod

Thank you very much.

Fitz Elder
202.224.1522 (telephone)
[Fitzhugh Elder@appro.senate.gov](mailto:Fitzhugh_Elder@appro.senate.gov)

From: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff [mailto:Karen.Ross@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 1:45 PM
To: Elder, Fitzhugh (Appropriations); Harden, Krysta
Cc: Fountain, Galen (Appropriations)
Subject: Re: Shirley Sherrod

Fitz

We are happy to provide the information you requested and started putting together information yesterday. I will follow up with Chris. Thank you.

Karen Ross
Chief of Staff
Office of the Secretary

From: Elder, Fitzhugh (Appropriations)
To: Harden, Krysta; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Cc: Fountain, Galen (Appropriations)
Sent: Thu Jul 22 13:40:43 2010
Subject: Shirley Sherrod
Krysta and Karen,

I know that the last couple of days have been difficult. I certainly wish the circumstances were different. As I am certain you will understand, what transpired with regard to Ms. Sherrod has raised many questions. At this point, I am particularly interested in knowing what happened, when it happened, and who was involved. Please compile this information for me. A timeline of events would also be useful and should be included with the information you send me. I would like the information sent to me as soon as possible and I would like the information to be as specific as possible.

Also, I sent an email message to Chris Mather yesterday and never received a response. I would like the courtesy of an answer to my question.

Thank you.

Fitzhugh Elder IV
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate

202.224.1522 (telephone)
Fitzhugh Elder@appro.senate.gov

Harden, Krysta

From: Stroman, Ron [Ron.Stroman@mail.house.gov]
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 6:43 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: Re: hey

I will talk with him and get back to you.

Sent using BlackBerry

From: Harden, Krysta <Krysta.Harden@osec.usda.gov>
To: Stroman, Ron
Sent: Fri Jul 23 18:14:57 2010
Subject: RE: hey

The Secretary just wants to talk through the terrible situation with Mrs. Sherrod. He hoped to reach the Congressman earlier in the week or at the CBC meeting. As you may be aware, he has spoken with a number of Members and tried to express his sincere apologies and regrets.

We understand the Chairman has questions and maybe they cannot be fully answered by a single conversation. However, the Secretary does feel a one on one would be a good first step in the process of addressing the Chairman's concerns.

If you do not feel this is helpful or appropriate, please let me know. KH

From: Stroman, Ron [mailto:Ron.Stroman@mail.house.gov]
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 4:46 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: RE: hey

I'm not sure what you are trying to achieve.

From: Harden, Krysta [mailto:Krysta.Harden@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 4:46 PM
To: Stroman, Ron
Subject: RE: hey

Understood.

Do you think a call would be helpful next week?

From: Stroman, Ron [mailto:Ron.Stroman@mail.house.gov]
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 4:41 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: RE: hey

He is out of pocket today.

From: Harden, Krysta [mailto:Krysta.Harden@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 4:23 PM

To: Stroman, Ron
Subject: hey

My boss would like to talk with your boss today if that is at all possible. He just wants to walk through what happened with him. Anyway that can happen? Thanks.

Krysta Harden
Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations
USDA
202.720.7095

O'Brien, Doug

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:52 PM
To: O'Brien, Doug
Subject: Re: Jesse Jackson

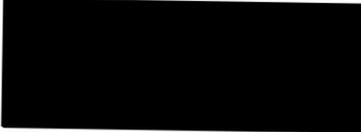
He will call now

----- Original Message -----

From: O'Brien, Doug
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 19:49:19 2010
Subject: Jesse Jackson

John Mitchell with rev jackson just called my number.

He can connect the secr to rev jackson anytime. I think he expects it tonight.



Harden, Krysta

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:10 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fw: URGENT

Importance: High

This is not good

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: [REDACTED]
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:09:04 2010
Subject: Fw: URGENT

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 14:34:25 2010
Subject: URGENT

This is horrible. Video just posted on Hotair.com.

The NAACP is about to learn one of the most basic of all lessons in life – those who live in glass houses should avoid provoking a stone-throwing war. After the civil-rights organization threatened to issue a condemnation of Tea Party activism by equating it with racism (a position from which they ultimately retreated), Andrew Breitbart announced that he would publish at least one video of the NAACP itself cheering racism. Breitbart delivers on that promise today at Big Government, showing USDA official Shirley Sherrod explain to an appreciative NAACP audience in July 2009 how she deliberately withheld information from a white farmer in Georgia trying to save his land and his business:

-----Original Message-----

From: Maloney, Wayne
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 1:56 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Zaina, Lisa
Subject: FW: Georgia
Importance: High

Chris,

I was just informed of a video of the Georgia State Director that was posted on the Internet earlier this afternoon. It speaks for itself and you need to watch it right away.

I have discussed this with Tim McNeilly. He has instructed the PIC and the State Director not to respond to media without checking with us first. We have not been contacted by any media outlet but expect that we will.

Tim has been asked by me to draft a statement for our review to be issued if necessary.

Wayne

###

Georgia PIC just called to alert us to a campaign underway involving Shirley Sherrod vs. the Tea Party people. I understand that this may have been brought to your attention already, but in case it hasn't..... The PIC is looking for guidance if (and I think there will be) media contact regarding the below video.

<http://hotair.com/archives/2010/07/19/breitbart-hits-naacp-with-promised-video-of-racism/>

Looking for guidance on how you would like to prepare and handle any inquiries that result.

Thanks.

Timothy J. McNeilly | Director, Legislative and Public Affairs Rural Development U.S.
Department of Agriculture 1400 Independence Ave., S.W. | Washington, D.C. 20250
Phone: 202.720.1019 | Fax: 202.690.4083

www.rurdev.usda.gov

"Committed to the future of rural communities"

"Estamos dedicados al futuro de las comunidades rurales"

Harden, Krysta

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:34 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: Re: IMP

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:32:54 2010
Subject: Re: IMP

Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:28:57 2010
Subject: Re: IMP

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:28:22 2010
Subject: IMP

Chris Mather

Harden, Krysta

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:01 AM
To: Cluthe, Sally
Subject: Re: Morning Joe

Not good, I saw FOX last night. I feel for Shirley

----- Original Message -----

From: Cluthe, Sally
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 06:40:46 2010
Subject: Morning Joe

Is running a story on the Georgia RD director.

Harden, Krysta

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:14 AM
To: 'marthascott_poindexter@agriculture.senate.gov'
Subject: Re: Hey

Yes I will forward USDA's statement.

From: Poindexter, Martha Scott (Agriculture)
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:12:13 2010
Subject: Re: Hey
Will do...saw that she resigned.

From: Harden, Krysta <Krysta.Harden@osec.usda.gov>
To: Poindexter, Martha Scott (Agriculture)
Cc: Berge, John <John.Berge@osec.usda.gov>
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:39:28 2010
Subject: Hey

If you have questions re Shirley Sherrod and the issue of the day, feel free to call me or John Berge. I am traveling but on my cell... [REDACTED]

KH

Harden, Krysta

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:15 AM
To: 'marthascott_poindexter@agriculture.senate.gov'
Subject: Fw: Statement from Monday

Fyi

----- Original Message -----

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:14:33 2010
Subject: Statement from Monday

Please see below for statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack regarding Shirley Sherrod's resignation:

Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.

Harden, Krysta

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:51 AM
To: Cluthe, Sally
Subject: Re: Secretary schedule

----- Original Message -----

From: Cluthe, Sally
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 10:42:31 2010
Subject: RE: Secretary schedule

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:29 AM
To: Cluthe, Sally; Jett, Carole
Cc: Berge, John; O'Brien, Doug
Subject: Re: Secretary schedule

do so at the lunch.

Can

----- Original Message -----

From: Cluthe, Sally
To: Jett, Carole
Cc: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 10:17:10 2010
Subject: Re: Secretary schedule

There are a couple of long driving stretches today.

- 10:00-11:20am - cell service becomes spotty about 11am
- 2:00-3:45pm - cell service is spotty on Verizon
- 5:00-5:40pm - cell service is spotty on Verizon

I'm thinking 2-3:45pm since it will give us time to set them up.

Any objections to that?

Krysta - Is it possible for Gov. to ride on his own during that time?

----- Original Message -----

From: Jett, Carole

To: Cluthe, Sally

Cc: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John

Sent: Tue Jul 20 10:05:35 2010

Subject: Secretary schedule

Sally

We likely need a couple hours carved out for Secretary to make calls related to shirley sherrod issue.

Berge is getting a list of who, why and numbers.

Carole Jett

Deputy Chief of Staff

USDA

[REDACTED]

Harden, Krysta

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:21 PM
To: Cluthe, Sally
Subject: Re: Will you send updated list for Congressional calls? In the car now

No one. We just got in the car. He really wants to call Clyburn, Bishop, Lewis and maybe a couple others

From: Cluthe, Sally
To: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Cc: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tue Jul 20 14:18:17 2010
Subject: RE: Will you send updated list for Congressional calls? In the car now
Who has he called already?

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:14 PM
To: Cluthe, Sally; Berge, John
Cc: Jett, Carole
Subject: Will you send updated list for Congressional calls? In the car now

Harden, Krysta

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:27 PM
To: 'Carlisle_Clarke@agriculture.senate.gov'
Subject: Re: Shirley Sherrod comments

We will provide you something

From: Clarke, Carlisle (Agriculture)
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 14:25:13 2010
Subject: Shirley Sherrod comments

Hey Krysta – do y'all have an official release or any briefing materials on the Shirley Sherrod situation? We haven't gotten any press requests or anything yet, but I wanted to make sure we were up to speed.

Thanks!

Carlisle S. Clarke

U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
Ranking Member Saxby Chambliss
328-A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
(202) 224-2035

Harden, Krysta

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:29 PM
To: Cluthe, Sally
Subject: Right now

The S is calling Clyburn and Bishop only

Harden, Krysta

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:05 PM
To: Cluthe, Sally
Subject: Re: Need numbers and times for others

He will call now

From: Cluthe, Sally
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 15:03:42 2010
Subject: RE: Need numbers and times for others
I think Barbara Lee is available now (according to the Staff Asst.) 202-225-2661

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:01 PM
To: Cluthe, Sally
Subject: Re: Need numbers and times for others

Do we have a time for Lewis and B Lee?

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Cluthe, Sally
Sent: Tue Jul 20 14:54:29 2010
Subject: Re: Need numbers and times for others

Should be but maybe not I am holding it with ringer on

From: Cluthe, Sally
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 14:49:48 2010
Subject: RE: Need numbers and times for others
Scott's office has been trying to reach you but getting your voicemail. Is your phone working?

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:47 PM
To: Cluthe, Sally; Berge, John
Subject: Re: Need numbers and times for others

Ok thanks

From: Cluthe, Sally
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 14:45:52 2010
Subject: RE: Need numbers and times for others
David Scott will call Krysta's cell # at 3pm

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:45 PM
To: Harden, Krysta; Cluthe, Sally
Subject: Re: Need numbers and times for others

Let us know how we can follow up if necessary.

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Cluthe, Sally; Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 14:43:07 2010
Subject: Re: Need numbers and times for others

Just talked to Clyburn. He was supportive. The S will call Bishop now. Not sure about others

From: Cluthe, Sally
To: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 14:40:10 2010
Subject: RE: Need numbers and times for others

James Clyburn – Scheduler – Alexandra Russell – 225-3315

Cong. Clyburn is available at 2:30pm.

Please call 202-226-3210 (Whip Office). Kelly Sheraton will connect the call from there.

Sanford Bishop – Scheduler – Martina Morgan – 225-3631

Cong. Bishop is available at anytime. His cell # is [REDACTED] Martina (202-225-3631) is happy to help make this happen anytime if needed.

John Lewis – Scheduler – Jacob Gillison – 225-3801

Spoke with Jacob. Waiting to hear back.

David Scott – Scheduler – Angie Borja – 225-2939

Spoke with Angie. Waiting to hear back.

I gave Krysta's cell # - Cong. is going to step out of his mark-up.

Hank Johnson – Scheduler – Ebony Simpson – 225-1605

Cong. Johnson is in the District. His primary is TODAY.

His cell # is [REDACTED]

Barbara Lee (Chairwoman) – Scheduler – ~~Allyson Feeman – 225-2665;~~

Tatiana Kalinga – 202-225-2661

On hold as I type this...

John Conyers – Scheduler – 225-5126

Bennie Thompson – Scheduler – Andrea Lee – 225-5876

GK Butterfield – Scheduler – Darnise Nelson – 225-3101

Maxine Waters – Scheduler – Angela Master – 225-2201

Sheila Jackson-Lee – Scheduler – 225-3816

Association of Black Legislators:

Rep. Calvin Smyre (D-Georgia House of Reps)

President

706-649-5533 office

calvinsmyre@synovus.com

Lakimba DeSadier

Executive Director

202-624-5457 office

cell

lakimba@nbcsl.org

Rep. Helen Miller (D-Iowa House of Reps)

Chair of NBCSL Agriculture Committee

cell

helen.miller@legis.state.ia.us

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta

Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:35 PM

To: Berge, John

Cc: Cluthe, Sally

Subject: Need numbers and times for others

Besides Clyburn and Bishop

Harden, Krysta

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:11 PM
To: Cluthe, Sally
Subject: Re: Need numbers and times for others

She was not available will call later

From: Cluthe, Sally
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 15:03:42 2010
Subject: RE: Need numbers and times for others
I think Barbara Lee is available now (according to the Staff Asst.) 202-225-2661

From: Harden, Krysta
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To: Cluthe, Sally
Sent: Tue Jul 20 14:54:29 2010
Subject: Re: Need numbers and times for others

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Sent: Tue Jul 20 14:49:48 2010
Subject: RE: Need numbers and times for others
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From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:47 PM
To: Cluthe, Sally; Berge, John
Subject: Re: Need numbers and times for others

Ok thanks

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To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 14:45:52 2010
Subject: RE: Need numbers and times for others
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From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:45 PM
To: Harden, Krysta; Cluthe, Sally
Subject: Re: Need numbers and times for others

Let us know how we can follow up if necessary.

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Cluthe, Sally; Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 14:43:07 2010
Subject: Re: Need numbers and times for others

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Spoke with Jacob. Waiting to hear back.

David Scott – Scheduler – Angie Borja – 225-2939

Spoke with Angie. Waiting to hear back.

I gave Krysta's cell # - Cong. is going to step out of his mark-up.

Hank Johnson – Scheduler – Ebony Simpson – 225-1605

Cong. Johnson is in the District. **His primary is TODAY.**

His cell # is [REDACTED]

Barbara Lee (Chairwoman) – Scheduler – ~~Allyson Feeman – 225-2665;~~

Tatiana Kalinga – 202-225-2661

On hold as I type this...

John Conyers – Scheduler – 225-5126

Bennie Thompson – Scheduler – Andrea Lee – 225-5876

GK Butterfield – Scheduler – Darnise Nelson – 225-3101

Maxine Waters – Scheduler – Angela Master – 225-2201

Sheila Jackson-Lee – Scheduler – 225-3816

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Rep. Helen Miller (D-Iowa House of Reps)

Chair of NBCSL Agriculture Committee

cell

helen.miller@legis.state.ia.us

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta

Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:35 PM

To: Berge, John

Cc: Cluthe, Sally

Subject: Need numbers and times for others

Besides Clyburn and Bishop

Harden, Krysta

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:36 PM
To: Cluthe, Sally
Subject: Re: Status of calls

Not yet but ask.

From: Cluthe, Sally
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 15:34:44 2010
Subject: Re: Status of calls

Excellent.
[REDACTED]

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Cluthe, Sally
Cc: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 15:33:25 2010
Subject: Re: Status of calls

On phone with Maxine Waters now

From: Cluthe, Sally
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 15:31:52 2010
Subject: Status of calls

Not completed:

John Lewis – Scheduler – Jacob Gillison – 225-3801

- Spoke with Jacob. Emailed Jacob – no response. Waiting to hear back.

Hank Johnson – Scheduler – Ebony Simpson – 225-1605

- Cong. Johnson is in the District. His primary is TODAY.
- His cell # is [REDACTED]

Barbara Lee (Chairwoman) – Scheduler – Tatiana Kalinga – 202-225-2661

- TBD – Office isn't responding.

John Conyers – Scheduler – 225-5126

- In the District – Cynthia Martin (CoS) will connect the call. **Anytime before 6pm today.**

Scheduled:

4:15pm

Maxine Waters - Scheduler – Angela Master – 225-2201

- Available around 4:15pm – has Doug O'Brien's cell # & Krysta's cell #

5:00pm

Bennie Thompson – Scheduler – Andrea Lee – 225-5876

- S to call at 5pm

5:15pm

Sheila Jackson-Lee – Scheduler – 225-3816

- Available at 5:15pm. Call 202-225-3816

Completed:

James Clyburn

Sanford Bishop

David Scott

GK Butterfield

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:57 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Politico Glen Thrush: WH did not know about resignation before seeing USDA statement?

Not first time
Chris Mather

From: Cherlin, Reid H.
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wed Jul 21 13:54:47 2010
Subject: RE: Politico Glen Thrush: WH did not know about resignation before seeing USDA statement?
I'm working on this
[REDACTED]

From: Mather, Chris [mailto:Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:52 PM
To: Cherlin, Reid H.
Subject: Fw: Politico Glen Thrush: WH did not know about resignation before seeing USDA statement?

See "two sources"
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Purchia, Liz
Sent: Wed Jul 21 13:42:25 2010
Subject: Politico Glen Thrush: WH did not know about resignation before seeing USDA statement?
He would like to talk to Chris/someone sometime before the briefing at 2 p.m.

Glen has 2 admin sources saying that Sherrod resignation was asked for and obtained before WH was notified of request. That WH's first understanding of it was when they saw statement.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Ross, Lori -USDA
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:28 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Cc: Mather, Chris
Subject: media inquiry - Politico

Glen Thrush
Politico
[REDACTED]

gthrush@politico.com

Re: would like to confirm some facts regarding Mrs. Sherrod

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:18 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re:

[REDACTED]

Chris Mather

From: Lu, Christopher P.
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wed Jul 21 14:09:43 2010
Subject: RE:

[REDACTED]

From: Mather, Chris [mailto:Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:46 PM
To: Lu, Christopher P.
Subject:

FYI

[REDACTED]

Chris Mather

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:19 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Fw: WaPo Ed Board (Eva Rodriguez): Administration's handling of Shirley Sherrod Resignation

Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Purchia, Liz
Sent: Wed Jul 21 14:15:04 2010
Subject: WaPo Ed Board (Eva Rodriguez): Administration's handling of Shirley Sherrod Resignation
Imagine this needs to be flagged for WH

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Eva Rodriguez [mailto:RodriguezE@washpost.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:01 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Washington Post editorial board re. SHERROD

Hi Stephanie,
I'm writing an editorial for publication tomorrow about the administration's handling of the Shirley Sherrod matter. I'd like to speak with you at your earlier convenience; my deadline is 5:30 p.m. In the meantime, I'd be grateful to receive any statements/press releases you've issued on this matter. I can be reached at this email and at the number below.
Thanks in advance,
Eva

Eva Rodriguez
The Washington Post
Editorial Board
[REDACTED]

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 3:06 PM
To: 'Cherlin, Reid H.'

FOR AFTER THEY CALL

STATEMENT BY AGRICULTURE SECRETARY TOM VILSACK REGARDING SHIRLEY SHERROD

Today, I reached out to Shirley Sherrod to apologize. I also told her I was sorry for the pain this caused her and her family and friends.

I reacted too quickly. I should have taken the time to listen and learn.

While I cannot change what happened, I can try to make something out of this difficult incident.

As we know, Shirley has a unique and compelling story to tell. She and her family endured discrimination and overcame adversity. Fighting to advance justice and equality, she has helped farmers who were struggling to keep their land, fought for women in need of social and economic justice, and African-American men and women who faced discrimination. As USDA's Georgia State Rural Development Director, she worked to promote economic opportunity for all people by enabling job creation and business growth. And Shirley has shown tremendous character through the events of the last few days.

Shirley and I talked about a unique opportunity at USDA. With all that she has seen, endured and accomplished, it would be invaluable to have her experience, commitment and record of service in USDA's Office of Advocacy and Outreach. This Office was established by the 2008 Farm bill to improve access to USDA programs and enhance the viability and profitability of small farms and ranches, beginning farmers and ranchers, and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. The American people would benefit greatly from Shirley's involvement in this Office, one which will ensure that access is provided to all USDA customers in an equal and fair manner and while enabling USDA employees to be increasingly responsive to the American people they serve.

I did not handle this situation well. I will continue to review the circumstances that brought us to this day and I am committed to making sure it does not happen again.

As part of this effort, I also want to renew my firm commitment to put behind all of us the USDA's past record on civil rights. While we have made some progress over the last 18 months, more work is needed.

Chris Mather
Director of Communications
USDA
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 402A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0060
chris.mather@usda.gov

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 3:06 PM
To: 'Cherlin, Reid H.'
Subject: URGENT

S needs to send something to Ax. Should I send to you so you can forward?

Chris Mather
Director of Communications
USDA
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 402A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0060
chris.mather@usda.gov

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 3:10 PM
To: 'Cherlin, Reid H.'
Subject: RE: URGENT

Is there ANY way someone can call me so that I do not do over email?

From: Cherlin, Reid H. [mailto: [REDACTED]]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 3:08 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: Re: URGENT

Sure - send to me and copy Eric Lesser [REDACTED] is it the statement?

From: Mather, Chris <Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov>
To: Cherlin, Reid H.
Sent: Wed Jul 21 15:06:20 2010
Subject: URGENT

S needs to send something to Ax. Should I send to you so you can forward?

Chris Mather

Director of Communications

USDA

1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 402A

Washington, DC 20250

202-690-0060

chris.mather@usda.gov

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 3:21 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: whats your direct line?

Chris Mather
Director of Communications
USDA
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 402A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0060
chris.mather@usda.gov

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:11 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Can you cut it off?

What did you think?
Chris Mather

From: Lesser, Eric P.
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wed Jul 21 17:02:31 2010
Subject: Can you cut it off?

Eric Lesser
Special Assistant to Senior Advisor David Axelrod
The White House
[REDACTED]

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:58 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: phone number for Shirley Sherrod

Getting

From: Lesser, Eric P. [mailto:[REDACTED]]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:58 PM
To: chrisemather@gmail.com; Mather, Chris
Subject: phone number for Shirley Sherrod

Hi Chris,

Do you have the phone numbers for Shirley Sherrod? (We need them if the President decides to call her).

Thanks,

Eric Lesser
Special Assistant to Senior Advisor David Axelrod
The White House
[REDACTED]

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:59 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Fromstein, Charles
Subject: ASAP

Who has Shirley number?

From: Lesser, Eric P. [mailto: [REDACTED]]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:58 PM
To: [REDACTED]; Mather, Chris
Subject: phone number for Shirley Sherrod

Hi Chris,

Do you have the phone numbers for Shirley Sherrod? (We need them if the President decides to call her).

Thanks,

Eric Lesser
Special Assistant to Senior Advisor David Axelrod
The White House
[REDACTED]

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:59 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Fromstein, Charles
Subject: ASAP

Who has Shirley number?

From: Lesser, Eric P. [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:58 PM
To: [REDACTED]; Mather, Chris
Subject: phone number for Shirley Sherrod

Hi Chris,

Do you have the phone numbers for Shirley Sherrod? (We need them if the President decides to call her).

Thanks,

Eric Lesser
Special Assistant to Senior Advisor David Axelrod
The White House
[REDACTED]

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:00 PM
To: 'Lesser, Eric P.'
Subject: FW: congressional black caucus

Here is transcript of the CBC press conference remarks.

Barbara Lee's statement in full:

this is an apology for the secretary, and we asked him to come visit was, and talk about what transpired and you have the statement that we prepared earlier, and we asked him that we want him to ask ms. sherrod to come back to the department of agriculture in a position of empowerment be made, and that we believe he acted too quickly and he did not have all of the facts. the secretary very quickly responded. he has talked to many members of the congressional black caucus and he came to our meeting. he has issued an apology in a really real way, and we accept his apology, and he has talked to mrs. sherrod, and i am sure he will talk to you later about that conversation and we talked about the fact that this is really should be a moment that we look at the department of agriculture and all of the issues that historical issues not addressed, and in which he is trying to address in terms of discrimination, and in terms of land grant colleges, funding for historically black colleges and universities and the pickford lawsuit, and the black farmer's issues and all of the issues that mrs. sherrod understands and has a keen sensitivity to, because of her life and what she has experienced through her life. the secretary understands that very clearly, and he apologized and he -- and when one makes a mistake, we expect an apology, and he did that. and we told him that we look forward to working with him as we begin to move forward. this is a moment that our nation needs to really understand that we have to begin to discuss race. we cannot believe that this is a post-racial era, and in many ways race has been swept under the rug, and we are trying as a congressional black caucus to have this coconversation, and we believe that the secretary is a good partner for us in this conversation moving forward. i thank you very much for being here and members of the black caucus for coming and the secretary for being with us and for being so candid. it was a very good meeting and we really believed that mrs. sherrod deserves our respect. she deserves our applause, and her life now has become very public and her history is one that i hope that the entire country will look at in terms of transformation and redemption which we can all learn from. thank you very much.

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:04 PM
To: 'Lesser, Eric P.'
Subject: FW: ASAP

From: Fromstein, Charles
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:02 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole; Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: RE: ASAP

The cell phone number we reached her at is [REDACTED]

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:59 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Fromstein, Charles
Subject: ASAP

Who has Shirley number?

From: Lesser, Eric P. [mailto:[REDACTED]]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:58 PM
To: [REDACTED]; Mather, Chris
Subject: phone number for Shirley Sherrod

Hi Chris,

Do you have the phone numbers for Shirley Sherrod? (We need them if the President decides to call her).

Thanks,

Eric Lesser
Special Assistant to Senior Advisor David Axelrod
The White House
[REDACTED]

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:49 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: ASAP

A home number. Will get it.
Chris Mather

From: Lesser, Eric P.
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wed Jul 21 19:12:01 2010
Subject: RE: ASAP
Thanks, are there are any backup/second numbers?

From: Mather, Chris [mailto:Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:04 PM
To: Lesser, Eric P.
Subject: FW: ASAP

From: Fromstein, Charles
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:02 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole; Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: RE: ASAP

The cell phone number we reached her at is [REDACTED]

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:59 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Fromstein, Charles
Subject: ASAP

Who has Shirley number?

From: Lesser, Eric P. [mailto:[REDACTED]]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:58 PM
To: [REDACTED]; Mather, Chris
Subject: phone number for Shirley Sherrod

Hi Chris,

Do you have the phone numbers for Shirley Sherrod? (We need them if the President decides to call her).

Thanks,

Eric Lesser
Special Assistant to Senior Advisor David Axelrod
The White House
[REDACTED]

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:50 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Fromstein, Charles
Subject: Fw: ASAP

Any other numbers for Shirley?
Chris Mather

From: Lesser, Eric P.
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wed Jul 21 19:12:01 2010
Subject: RE: ASAP
Thanks, are there are any backup/second numbers?

From: Mather, Chris [mailto:Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:04 PM
To: Lesser, Eric P.
Subject: FW: ASAP

From: Fromstein, Charles
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:02 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole; Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: RE: ASAP

The cell phone number we reached her at is [REDACTED]

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:59 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Fromstein, Charles
Subject: ASAP

Who has Shirley number?

From: Lesser, Eric P. [mailto:[REDACTED]]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:58 PM
To: [REDACTED]; Mather, Chris
Subject: phone number for Shirley Sherrod

Hi Chris,

Do you have the phone numbers for Shirley Sherrod? (We need them if the President decides to call her).

Thanks,

Eric Lesser
Special Assistant to Senior Advisor David Axelrod
The White House
[REDACTED]

Mather, C s

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:59 PM
To: Fromstein, Charles; [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: ASAP

Thanks Charlie.
Chris Mather

From: Fromstein, Charles
To: Mather, Chris; [REDACTED]
Sent: Wed Jul 21 19:54:40 2010
Subject: RE: ASAP
Eric:

We have the following numbers for Shirley:

Personal Cell: [REDACTED]

Work cell: [REDACTED]

Home: [REDACTED]

Shirley will NOT be at home this evening as she is travelling. I am not sure whether she is using her work cell or not. Hope that helps.

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:50 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Fromstein, Charles
Subject: Fw: ASAP

Any other numbers for Shirley?
Chris Mather

From: Lesser, Eric P.
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wed Jul 21 19:12:01 2010
Subject: RE: ASAP
Thanks, are there are any backup/second numbers?

From: Mather, Chris [mailto:Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:04 PM
To: Lesser, Eric P.
Subject: FW: ASAP

From: Fromstein, Charles
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:02 PM

To: Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole; Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: RE: ASAP

The cell phone number we reached her at is [REDACTED]

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:59 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Fromstein, Charles
Subject: ASAP

Who has Shirley number?

From: Lesser, Eric P. [mailto:[REDACTED]]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:58 PM
To: [REDACTED]; Mather, Chris
Subject: phone number for Shirley Sherrod

Hi Chris,

Do you have the phone numbers for Shirley Sherrod? (We need them if the President decides to call her).

Thanks,

Eric Lesser
Special Assistant to Senior Advisor David Axelrod
The White House
[REDACTED]

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 8:30 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Fromstein, Charles
Subject: Re: ASAP

I know but she could be. They need numbers in case POTUS has to call at some point.
Chris Mather

From: Jett, Carole
To: Mather, Chris; Fromstein, Charles
Sent: Wed Jul 21 20:19:32 2010
Subject: Re: ASAP

Nope. She is not at home.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA
[REDACTED]

From: Mather, Chris
To: Jett, Carole; Fromstein, Charles
Sent: Wed Jul 21 19:49:52 2010
Subject: Fw: ASAP

Any other numbers for Shirley?
Chris Mather

From: Lesser, Eric P.
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wed Jul 21 19:12:01 2010
Subject: RE: ASAP
Thanks, are there are any backup/second numbers?

From: Mather, Chris [mailto:Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:04 PM
To: Lesser, Eric P.
Subject: FW: ASAP

From: Fromstein, Charles
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:02 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole; Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: RE: ASAP

The cell phone number we reached her at is [REDACTED]

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:59 PM

To: Jett, Carole; Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Fromstein, Charles
Subject: ASAP

Who has Shirley number?

From: Lesser, Eric P. [mailto: [REDACTED]]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:58 PM
To: [REDACTED] Mather, Chris
Subject: phone number for Shirley Sherrod

Hi Chris,

Do you have the phone numbers for Shirley Sherrod? (We need them if the President decides to call her).

Thanks,

Eric Lesser
Special Assistant to Senior Advisor David Axelrod
The White House
[REDACTED]

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 8:34 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: Re: ASAP

Charlie sent. Thanks.
Chris Mather

From: Jett, Carole
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wed Jul 21 20:31:26 2010
Subject: Re: ASAP

At office.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA
[REDACTED]

From: Mather, Chris
To: Jett, Carole; Fromstein, Charles
Sent: Wed Jul 21 20:29:36 2010
Subject: Re: ASAP

I know but she could be. They need numbers in case POTUS has to call at some point.
Chris Mather

From: Jett, Carole
To: Mather, Chris; Fromstein, Charles
Sent: Wed Jul 21 20:19:32 2010
Subject: Re: ASAP

Nope. She is not at home.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA
[REDACTED]

From: Mather, Chris
To: Jett, Carole; Fromstein, Charles
Sent: Wed Jul 21 19:49:52 2010
Subject: Fw: ASAP

Any other numbers for Shirley?
Chris Mather

From: Lesser, Eric P.
To: Mather, Chris

Sent: Wed Jul 21 19:12:01 2010

Subject: RE: ASAP

Thanks, are there any backup/second numbers?

From: Mather, Chris [mailto:Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov]

Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:04 PM

To: Lesser, Eric P.

Subject: FW: ASAP

From: Fromstein, Charles

Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:02 PM

To: Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole; Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

Subject: RE: ASAP

The cell phone number we reached her at is [REDACTED]

From: Mather, Chris

Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:59 PM

To: Jett, Carole; Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Fromstein, Charles

Subject: ASAP

Who has Shirley number?

From: Lesser, Eric P. [mailto:[REDACTED]]

Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:58 PM

To: [REDACTED] Mather, Chris

Subject: phone number for Shirley Sherrod

Hi Chris,

Do you have the phone numbers for Shirley Sherrod? (We need them if the President decides to call her).

Thanks,

Eric Lesser

Special Assistant to Senior Advisor David Axelrod

The White House

[REDACTED]

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 9:56 AM
To: [REDACTED]

Not that it matters but its shameful that since we got here at usda, this is the issue that garnered most press attention. After all the great stuff we have done. Press doesn't care.
Chris Mather

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 10:01 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re:

Fyi, email to her went out.
Chris Mather

From: Cherlin, Reid H.
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thu Jul 22 09:59:10 2010
Subject: RE:
They are craven assholes

From: Mather, Chris [mailto:Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 9:56 AM
To: Cherlin, Reid H.
Subject:

Not that it matters but its shameful that since we got here at usda, this is the issue that garnered most press attention. After all the great stuff we have done. Press doesn't care.
Chris Mather

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 10:07 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re:

I might spend a little time today shaming some of them.
Chris Mather

From: Cherlin, Reid H.
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thu Jul 22 09:59:10 2010
Subject: RE:
They are craven assholes

From: Mather, Chris [mailto:Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 9:56 AM
To: Cherlin, Reid H.
Subject:

Not that it matters but its shameful that since we got here at usda, this is the issue that garnered most press attention. After all the great stuff we have done. Press doesn't care.
Chris Mather

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 10:15 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re:

We followed up offer to her with email. She is telling press she hasn't gotten it. She needs to check her email. Also, we are following up with her on offer later today.
Chris Mather

From: Cherlin, Reid H.
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thu Jul 22 10:06:16 2010
Subject: RE:
What's that?

From: Mather, Chris [mailto:Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 10:01 AM
To: Cherlin, Reid H.
Subject: Re:

Fyi, email to her went out.
Chris Mather

From: Cherlin, Reid H.
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thu Jul 22 09:59:10 2010
Subject: RE:
They are craven assholes

From: Mather, Chris [mailto:Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 9:56 AM
To: Cherlin, Reid H.
Subject:

Not that it matters but its shameful that since we got here at usda, this is the issue that garnered most press attention. After all the great stuff we have done. Press doesn't care.
Chris Mather

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 2:32 PM
To: 'Cherlin, Reid H.'
Subject: Call when you can

Chris Mather
Director of Communications
USDA
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 402A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0060
chris.mather@usda.gov

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 2:34 PM
To: 'Cherlin, Reid H.'
Subject: RE: In briefing, what's up

From: Cherlin, Reid H. [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 2:32 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: In briefing, what's up

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 2:42 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: In briefing, what's up

[REDACTED]
Chris Mather

From: Cherlin, Reid H.
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thu Jul 22 14:35:14 2010
Subject: Re: In briefing, what's up
If you want to, sure.

From: Mather, Chris <Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov>
To: Cherlin, Reid H.
Sent: Thu Jul 22 14:33:43 2010
Subject: RE: In briefing, what's up

[REDACTED]

From: Cherlin, Reid H. [mailto:[REDACTED]]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 2:32 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: In briefing, what's up

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 2:53 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fw: CNN Anderson 360 (Ed Henry): Interview with Shirley

[REDACTED]

Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Purchia, Liz
Sent: Thu Jul 22 14:37:49 2010
Subject: CNN Anderson 360 (Ed Henry): Interview with Shirley
Ed Henry

[REDACTED]
ed.henry@cnn.com

Would like interview with Sheryl Cook to get her side of the story. They want to talk to her about WH involvement ('if any'). Want to know if it is true that WH wanted her to resign.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 3:13 PM
To: 'Cherlin, Reid H.'

Call me when you can

Chris Mather
Director of Communications
USDA
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 402A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0060
chris.mather@usda.gov

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 3:50 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Just tried you?

Chris Mather

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 3:54 PM
To: 'Cherlin, Reid H.'
Subject: FW: WaPo Ed O'Keef article

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 3:51 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: FW: WaPo Ed O'Keef article

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Purchia, Liz
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 3:37 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: WaPo Ed O'Keef article

Links to this <http://www.rma.usda.gov/aboutrma/civilrights/>

President Obama calls Shirley Sherrod

Updated 1:39 p.m. ET

<http://voices.washingtonpost.com/federal-eye/2010/07/shirley-sherrod-wants-to-talk.html>

President Obama has expressed his "regret" to former U.S. Agriculture Department official **Shirley Sherrod** over her ouster, the White House said Thursday.

The president reached Sherrod around 12:35 p.m. ET and "emphasized that Secretary Vilsack was sincere in his apology yesterday, and in his work to rid USDA of discrimination," the White House said Thursday.

"The President told Ms. Sherrod that this misfortune can present an opportunity for her to continue her hard work on behalf of those in need, and he hopes that she will do so," the statement said.

Obama made the call from his private office on Thursday after twice trying unsuccessfully to reach her on Wednesday evening, according to a White House aide. Staffers tried to reach her again this morning and Obama spoke with her when she returned the call, the aide said.

Sherrod did not indicate to Obama whether she plans to rejoin the government, according to the aide. She expressed reluctance to rejoin the Obama administration earlier Thursday during a series of television interviews.

"I'd like to talk to him about the experiences of people like me, people at the grassroots level, people who live out here in rural America people, who live in the South. I know he does not have that kind of experience," Sherrod told NBC's Today Show.

"We love him, we want him to be successful, because we feel he thinks in some ways like we do, and we think that's good for the country," she said later. "Yes, there are issues out there that we are faced with, issues of poverty. The other thing, I want everything to reflect, I want a good reflection for him as the first black president."

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack offered Sherrod a position with USDA's Office of Civil Rights and Community Outreach, Sherrod said, but raised doubts she would take the job.

"I would not be that individual that the department, everyone is looking to to solve the issue of racism in USDA. It takes a lot more to get that job done," she said, noting that other USDA officials have not lost their jobs for discriminating against minority or women farmers.

Sherrod also told CNN's "American Morning" that said she would like to "get back at" **Andrew Breitbart**, the right-wing blogger whose posting of the video snippet triggered the political storm that led to her ouster. Asked whether she would like to see Breitbart's Web site shut down, Sherrod replied: "That would be a great thing...he's doing more to divide us."

Liz Purchia
Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-2168 | BB: [REDACTED]
Liz.Purchia@oc.usda.gov

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 3:58 PM
To: 'Cherlin, Reid H.'
Subject: RE: Just tried you?

Tired you

From: Cherlin, Reid H. [mailto:████████████████████]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 3:51 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: RE: Just tried you?

Calling you back

From: Mather, Chris [mailto:Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 3:50 PM
To: Cherlin, Reid H.
Subject: Just tried you?

Chris Mather

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 4:46 PM
To: [REDACTED]

Need to talk about AP
Chris Mather

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 5:02 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: DeJong, Justin

Forgot to mention, fox been sitting outside building all day, followed S's car, tried to sneak in building with a photo of cook, asking for interview.
Chris Mather

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 5:18 PM
To: [REDACTED]

Ed Henry was literally hiding in bushes outside USDA and ran after S as he got out of car. He said no one has given story about what cheryl cook said. S said as he walked by, "I addressed this yesterday."
Chris Mather

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 7:12 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fw: CNN- What is USDA trying to hide

Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thu Jul 22 19:09:24 2010
Subject: CNN- What is USDA trying to hide

One of their analysts just said that USDA will not make cook available and If there's nothing to hide then why aren't we making her available?
Now saying "what does she know that we don't know"?

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED] Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 4:27 PM
To: 'Cherlin, Reid H.'
Subject: RE: Any news...

Nope

-----Original Message-----

From: Cherlin, Reid H. [mailto:██]
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 4:07 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: Any news...

On her job plans?

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:17 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fw: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod
Attachments: image001.jpg

Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wed Jul 21 02:07:06 2010
Subject: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Statement

Office of Communications
1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, DC 20250-1300 Voice: (202) 720-4623 Email: ocnews@usda.gov Web: www.usda.gov

Release No. PENDING

Contact:
USDA Office of Communications
(202) 720-4623

Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

WASHINGTON, July 21, 2010 - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack tonight released the following statement in response to the release of remarks in video from Shirley Sherrod:

"I am of course willing and will conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts to ensure to the American people we are providing services in a fair and equitable manner."

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice), or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:59 AM
To: 'Cherlin, Reid H.'

Need to talk. Call cell.

Chris Mather
Director of Communications
USDA
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 402A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0060
chris.mather@usda.gov

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:45 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re:

Talking to Lu
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Cherlin, Reid H. <[REDACTED]>
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wed Jul 21 00:56:39 2010
Subject:

Any news?

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:47 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Just called you back

[REDACTED]
Chris Mather

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:32 PM
To: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Chris Mather

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:39 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fw: POLITICO query

Please call me about this.
Chris Mather

From: Glenn Thrush
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wed Jul 21 13:26:25 2010
Subject: POLITICO query

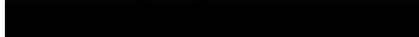
Howdy... Reid referred me to u--

I'm doing the Sherrod story today and wanted to touch base...

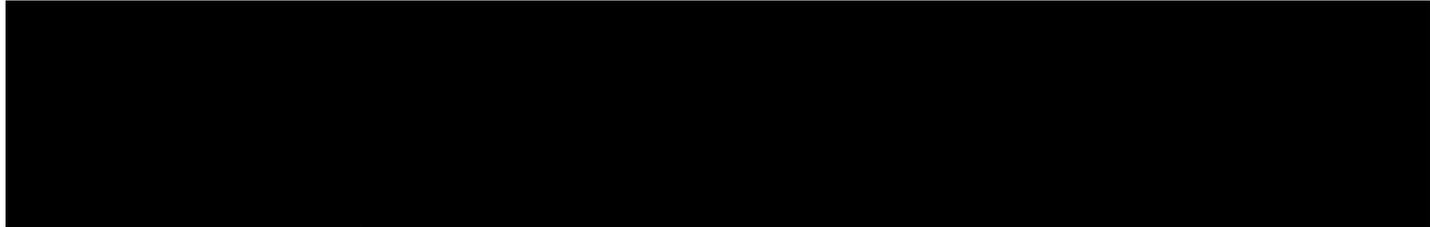
I'm just about to pop a quick item saying that y'all requested her resignation PRIOR to telling the WH they learned about it after u sent over the statement, two admin sources say

tk/regards,
Thrush

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:46 PM
To: 

FYI



Chris Mather

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:52 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fw: POLITICO query

Chris Mather

From: Glenn Thrush
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wed Jul 21 13:26:25 2010
Subject: POLITICO query
Howdy... Reid referred me to u--
I'm doing the Sherrod story today and wanted to touch base...
I'm just about to pop a quick item saying that y'all requested her resignation PRIOR to telling the WH
they learned about it after u sent over the statement, two admin sources say

tkr/regards,
Thrush

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:52 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fw: Politico Glen Thrush: WH did not know about resignation before seeing USDA statement?

See "two sources"
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Purchia, Liz
Sent: Wed Jul 21 13:42:25 2010
Subject: Politico Glen Thrush: WH did not know about resignation before seeing USDA statement?
He would like to talk to Chris/someone sometime before the briefing at 2 p.m.

Glen has 2 admin sources saying that Sherrod resignation was asked for and obtained before WH was notified of request. That WH's first understanding of it was when they saw statement.
Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Ross, Lori -USDA
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:28 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Cc: Mather, Chris
Subject: media inquiry - Politico

Glen Thrush
Politico

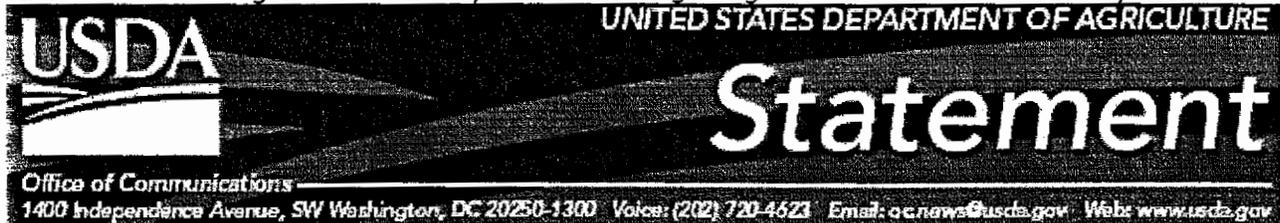
[REDACTED]
Re: would like to confirm some facts regarding Mrs. Sherrod

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:29 AM
To: 'mjalonick@ap.org'; 'mjalonick@ap.org'
Subject: Fw: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

Here ya go.

From: USDA Office of Communications
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wed Jul 21 01:03:38 2010
Subject: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod



Release No. PENDING

Contact:
USDA Office of Communications
(202) 720-4623

Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

WASHINGTON, July 21, 2010 - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack tonight released the following statement in response to the release of remarks in video from Shirley Sherrod:

"I am of course willing and will conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts to ensure to the American people we are providing services in a fair and equitable manner."

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice), or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).

This message was sent from USDA Office of Communications to Justin.dejong@oc.usda.gov. It was sent from: OC News, USDA Office of Communications 1400 Independence Ave, SW, Washington, DC 20250-1300. You can modify/update your subscription via the link below.

Manage your subscription

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:05 AM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: Fw: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

See email.

From: Eve, Malcolm
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 23:04:57 2010
Subject: Fw: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Malcolm Eve
Lead Advance for Secretary Vilsack
[REDACTED]

From: Maisel, Chad
To: Eve, Malcolm; Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 21:40:38 2010
Subject: FW: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet
Email train from 7/15 with DS' public account (kathleen.merrigan@usda.gov) cced

From: Shirley.Sherrod@one.usda.gov [mailto:Shirley.Sherrod@one.usda.gov]
Sent: Thursday, July 15, 2010 7:07 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: senator@isakson.senate.gov; webmail@chambliss-iq.senate.gov; Donnie.Thomas@one.usda.gov; 'Tom.Vilsack(a)usda.gov'; Merrigan, Kathleen
Subject: Re: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

My words were taken out of context. I told about something that happened in 1986 when I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm. When so many black farmers were losing their. My point was that I initially did not do all that I could but in the process realized it was not about black versus white but about poor people or those who have versus those who do not.

If they will use all that I said you see that I talked about what I did to save that white farmers farm and from there went to help hundreds of other white farmers

I use the story to try to get people to move beyond race and work together

I feel deeply hurt that someone would take my words out of context and try to make them mean something else

My record of work for others for 45 years will show my love for people and for fairness

Shirley Sherrod

Sent using BlackBerry

From: George Ko <[REDACTED]>
To: Sherrod, Shirley - Athens, GA
Cc: Tom.Vilsack@usda.gov <Tom.Vilsack@usda.gov>; Merrigan, Kathleen (OSEC); senator@isakson.senate.gov <senator@isakson.senate.gov>; webmail@chambliss-iq.senate.gov <webmail@chambliss-iq.senate.gov>; Thomas,

Donnie - Athens, GA

Sent: Thu Jul 15 15:33:41 2010

Subject: Regarding Ms. Sherrod's Comments at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet

Dear Ms. Sherrod:

I recently came across a video of your speech at the NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet in Douglas Coffee County, GA: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=62hPa37v2J4>

In the video, you stated that you did not help a white farmer with the "full force of what [you] could do" when he sought your help. From the context of your speech, you seem to imply that the "amount" of help you provided was due to the color of his skin (white) and because of your sympathy and preference for black farmers.

Are your comments and the context of the comments in your speech correct? As Georgia's USDA Rural Development State Director, do you believe your comments were appropriate?

Thank you,

George Ko

--

George Ko

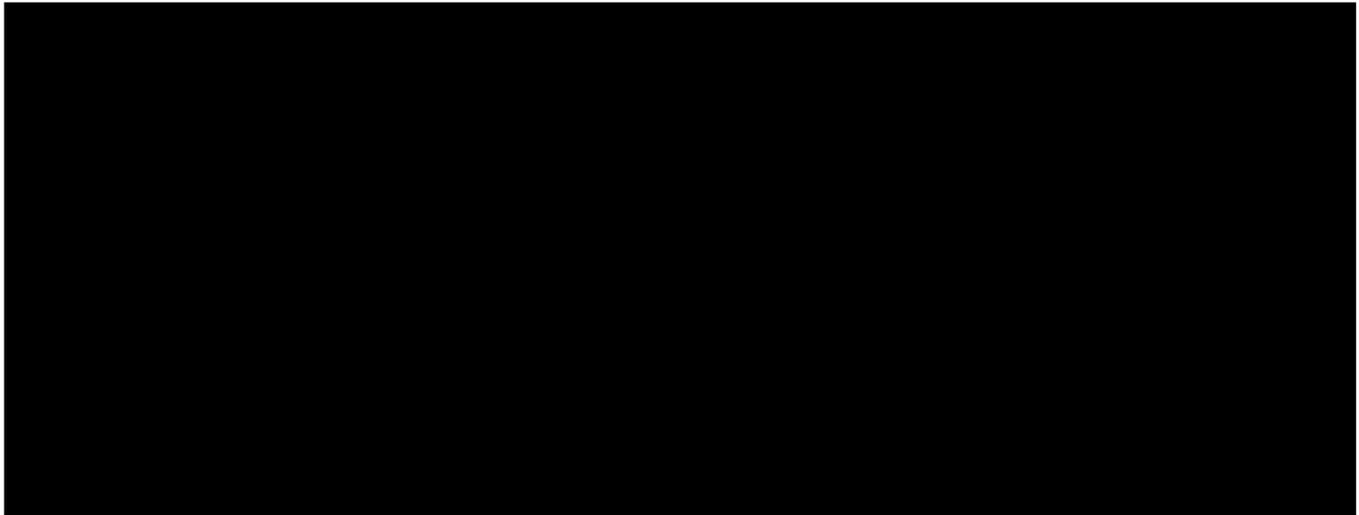

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:39 AM
To: Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Civil rights



DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:01 AM
To: Misailidis, Sarah
Cc: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb
Subject: Civil rights articles



DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:01 AM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: Terry samuels

Could he be a helpful voice on cable news?

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:01 AM
To: Black, David -OC; Eamich, Amanda
Cc: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: Pigford audio

Hi david and amanda,

I'm hoping to get a link to the secretarys audio from when we announced the pigford settlement agreement in feb. I'm not sure if/how we may use this, but I want to make sure we have this available. Thx.

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:01 AM
To: Misailidis, Sarah
Cc: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: C-SPAN

Hi Sarah,

Can you dig up link on c-span website from early june sunday morning show that has secretary talking about garcia/love civil rights cases? Can you have an intern develop the transcript of the secretary's remarks during the Q and A on this topic? Thx.

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:02 AM
To: Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: Re: Federal Eye: Tom Vilsack, USDA and civil rights

Prob not. But ask caleb, we may need to do small sampling.

From: Misailidis, Sarah
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wed Jul 21 07:56:54 2010
Subject: Re: Federal Eye: Tom Vilsack, USDA and civil rights

Do you want any other shirley sherrod articles in clips??

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie; Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Wed Jul 21 07:23:31 2010
Subject: Fw: Federal Eye: Tom Vilsack, USDA and civil rights

Sarah, for top clips. Tx.

From: ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com
Sent: Wed Jul 21 07:12:16 2010
Subject: Federal Eye: Tom Vilsack, USDA and civil rights

http://voices.washingtonpost.com/federal-eye/2010/07/tom_vilsack_usda_and_civil_rig.html

Tom Vilsack, USDA and civil rights

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said early Wednesday morning that he's willing to reconsider his decision to force Shirley Sherrod's resignation.

"I am of course willing and will conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts to ensure to the American people we are providing services in a fair and equitable manner," Vilsack said in a statement that arrived in inboxes after 2 a.m.

But to understand why he sought Sherrod's resignation so quickly, let's go back to February 2009. That's when Vilsack publicly vowed to tackle USDA's troubled civil rights history by ensuring that employees fairly treated minority and women farmers.

"Some folks refer to USDA as the last plantation, and it has a pretty poor history of taking care of people of color," Vilsack said at the time. "You've got outright bias and discrimination."

"Also you've got good people who don't even know that they're discriminating," said Vilsack. "It's necessary to begin the process of reeducating people."

Vilsack made those comments in Albany, Ga., Sherrod's home town. And he said them at a conference hosted by the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund, the same group Sherrod worked for in 1986 when she first met white farmer Roger Spooner.

Reeducating employees required an \$8 million consulting contract with Jackson Lewis Corporate Diversity Counseling Group. And it required reviewing tens of thousands of complaints leveled against USDA during George W. Bush's presidency. The review has been

led by a 34-year USDA veteran whom Vilsack coaxed out of retirement.

"When this department was established in 1862 by Abraham Lincoln, he referred to it as the people's department," Vilsack told colleague Krissah Thompson in February. "In order to be consistent with that legacy, it's necessary that our programs and our approach reflect an appreciation for everyone's rights. We took a look at [these] prior issues and are in the process of trying to address each of them."

The efforts received little national news coverage until this week when a three-minute clip of Sherrod's now-infamous speech surfaced. Her message -- that Americans need to see beyond a person's skin color -- was tainted by an impolitic delivery White House officials consider too damaging.

"This controversy could make it more difficult to move forward on correcting injustices," Vilsack said Tuesday, adding later that, "The controversy surrounding [Sherrod's] comments would create situations where her decisions, rightly or wrongly, would be called into question making it difficult for her to bring jobs to Georgia."

"Our policy is clear," he continued. "There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA and we strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have a duty to ensure that when we provide services to the American people we do so in an equitable manner. But equally important is our duty to instill confidence in the American people that we are fair service providers."

Did Vilsack make the right decision, or did he overreact at the mercy of the web and cable news cycle? Or did he have to accept Sherrod's resignation in order to reinforce his work on civil rights? It's a question many in Washington will continue asking today.

Continue reading the Wednesday Eye Opener: http://voices.washingtonpost.com/federal-eye/2010/07/tom_vilsack_usda_and_civil_rig.html

Ed O'Keefe
The Federal Eye
The Washington Post
ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com

(c)

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:25 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: Re: Top Outlets "vilsack" : USDA official's resignation stirs racial tempest

Perhaps one of the more objective stories.

----- Original Message -----

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; USDA Clips; JIC1, OC -USDA; JIC2, OC -USDA; JIC3, OC -USDA; Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Wed Jul 21 09:08:44 2010
Subject: FW: Top Outlets "vilsack" : USDA official's resignation stirs racial tempest

From: Factiva[SMTP:EMAILEDNEWS@EMAIL.GLOBAL.FACTIVA.COM]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:08:07 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Top Outlets "vilsack" : USDA official's resignation stirs racial tempest Auto forwarded by a Rule

Your topic is Top Outlets "vilsack"

USDA official's resignation stirs racial tempest
21 July 2010, 07:00 GMT, Los Angeles Times [607 Words]

A feud between the NAACP and the "tea party" movement engulfed the Department of Agriculture this week when the agency ousted an African American official for remarks that some have called racist.

Shirley Sherrod, the USDA's director of rural development for Georgia, was pressured to resign Monday when a video surfaced in which she told an NAACP audience that she had not given a white farmer "the full force of what I could do" to help him save the family farm in 1986, when she worked for a Georgia nonprofit group.

The National Assn. for the Advancement of Colored People initially condemned her remarks, which were publicized by a conservative blogger and picked up by Fox News.

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But on Tuesday, when the video of her full speech was released, the NAACP retracted its condemnation and called on the USDA to rehire her, saying it had been "snookered" by Fox and conservative website publisher Andrew Breitbart. And the farm couple involved in the incident stepped forward to defend Sherrod, calling her a friend and saying that she saved their farm.

"Having reviewed the full tape by Shirley Sherrod ... and most importantly heard the testimony of the white farmers mentioned in this story, we now believe that the organization that edited the documents did so with the intention of deceiving millions of Americans," the statement from NAACP President Benjamin Jealous said.

Early Wednesday, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said he would reconsider. In a statement, he said he would "conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts" about his decision to ask Sherrod to resign, the Associated Press reported.

Conservative media outlets tied the video to the NAACP's recent resolution calling on the tea party movement to repudiate racist activities among its activists, some of whom are said to have displayed images of President Obama with a bone through his nose and the White House with a lawn full of watermelons.

Breitbart told CNN's "John King, USA" that releasing the video was "not about Shirley Sherrod."

"This was about the NAACP attacking the tea party, and this is showing racism at an NAACP event," he said.

Sherrod said Tuesday that the incident with the farmers took place when she worked at the Federation of Southern Cooperatives. She said the experience helped her learn to move beyond race and that she tells the story to audiences to make that point.

She added that she "went all out" to help the man keep his farm. She resigned, she said, only under pressure from the Obama administration.

The farmers to whom Sherrod had referred told CNN and the Atlanta Journal-Constitution that she had helped them avoid losing their farm. Elaine Spooner, now 82, called Sherrod a "friend for life."

"I don't know what brought up the racist mess," Roger Spooner told CNN's "Rick's List." "They just want to stir up some trouble, it sounds to me."

Vilsack, who said in a statement Monday that the USDA had "zero tolerance" for bias, said Tuesday that the episode affects Sherrod's ability to do her job. He also said that the decision was his, and that he didn't discuss it with the White House.

"I don't believe this woman is a racist at all," he said. "She's a political appointee, and her job is basically to focus on job growth in Georgia, and I have deep concern about her ability to do her job without her judgments being second-guessed."

<http://global.factiva.com/redirect/default.aspx?p=sta&ep=AE&an=WCLATM0020100721e67100005&fid=300612057&cat=w&aid=9USD000900&ns=18&fn=Top%20Outlets%20%22vilsack%22&ft=g&OD=V2AUbjNaqd6b5Ap%2b9OPrU4iu6h%2fp8T%2byJNGtxGUDhq6zQxl8ytkPQ7A%3d%3d%7c2>

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DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:11 AM
To: Lavalley, Aaron
Attachments: 021210 Civil Rights WaPo.doc

Below and attached.

We are committed to resolving cases involving allegations of past discrimination by individuals including black, Hispanic Native American, and women farmers as well as ensuring that every farmer and rancher is treated equally and fairly. We have made significant progress on addressing USDA's civil rights record and look forward to providing substantial relief to these farmers in an expedited manner.

- The United States Department of Agriculture under the Obama Administration has made civil rights a top priority, part of which is taking definitive actions to move USDA into a new era as a model employer and premier service provider.

- The Obama Administration has made it a priority to resolve all of the large civil rights cases at USDA. We entered into a settlement with black farmers on February 18, 2010, and legislation required to fund this settlement agreement is pending before Congress. The House passed this legislation, it is currently pending before the Senate.

- We are putting the final touches on a plan that would turn the page on the discrimination claims of Hispanic and women farmers as well.

Additional background on proposal to resolve Hispanic and Women Farmer discrimination complaints:

- Under a plan for Hispanic and women farmers who have claimed discrimination, the United States would make available \$1.33 billion from the Judgment Fund to implement a unified claims resolution process for Hispanic and women farmers.

- Hispanic and women farmers who submit claims of discrimination in farm loan programs would go through a streamlined process to have their claims resolved. As with black farmers in Pigford II, payments may be up to \$50,000 but actual award amounts may vary depending on the number of successful claimants.

- We are also currently engaged in settlement discussions with a class of Native American farmers.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:40 AM
To: Lavallee, Aaron; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb
Subject: RE: Media Inquiry from The Hill

I will clear this up on background right now.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Lavallee, Aaron
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:37 AM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb
Subject: Media Inquiry from The Hill

See below

Aaron Lavallee

From: Eric Zimmermann [mailto:eric.zimmermann@thehill.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:24 AM
To: Lavallee, Aaron
Subject: Comment on Vilsack missing summit

Hi Aaron -- I write for The Hill newspaper. I'm wondering why Secretary Vilsack dropped out of the rural education summit this morning. Does it have anything to do with the Shirley Sherrod situation? Thanks.

Best,
Eric

--
Eric Zimmermann
Blog Editor
The Hill newspaper
Phone: 202-628-8523
Cell: [REDACTED]

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:53 AM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: FW: Shirley Sherrod Interview - CNN 7/21

I'm thinking S should see this...

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: OC.JIC4@oc.usda.gov [mailto:OC.JIC4@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:38 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie; Misailidis, Sarah; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Shirley Sherrod Interview - CNN 7/21

Station:CNN Date:07/21/2010 09:33:34 - 9:53:27 AM

racist, prejudice, out of touch, just 24 hours, shirley sherrod has been viciously attacked from every end of the political and ethnic spectrum. unfair and outrageous accusations against an african-american whom says she's been fighting for civil rights her entire life. you probably heard her story. have you probably seen the video clips. key word here. if you watched the former usda official address members of the naacp this way, you probly would think she was a racist.

i was struggling with the fact so many black people lost their livelihoods here i was faced with that with the white person. i'm going to give him the full force of what i can do.

okay. it sounds offensive. right? well, here's the problem. that's what happens when you manipulate the message. tinker with the truth twist it. how about we tell you what shirley sherrod really meant. it is funny because this part of the speech never made the conservative blog the first time around.

25 years ago, i couldn't stand here and say what i'm saying, what i will say to you tonight. like i told you, god helped me to see it is not just about black people. it is about poor people. and i have come a long way. i knew that i couldn't do it with hate, you know. as my mother has said to so many, if we had tried to live with hate in our hearts we probably would be dead now. but i come to realize that we have to work together. you know, sad that we don't have room for the white and blacks here tonight. because we have to overcome the divisions we have.

that's right. shirley sherrod was actually preaching not living with hate, overcoming divisions among races, and that's what we are going to talk about this morning. shirley's nonedited message. great to see you.

good to see you.

your life has changed in 24 hours.

it certainly has.

it is going to end up being a good thing, wouldn't you say?

i think so. you know. when we look at all -- what's happened in the last 24 hours, the truth is out there. and people are beginning to see just what happened, how they were manipulate flood thinking one thing when it was really something else. i think it will make us all conscious of how quick we come to judge.

let's have -- do this right. okay. your speech. it was actually a story about redemption.

yes.

decades ago you did have these racist feelings. but you had a revelation. and you wanted to tell members of the naacp about that revelation. let me ask you, why did you feel you needed to tell those members this story?

well, i tried to use my life because that's what -- you know, when you look at where i have come from, you know, it is just not telling them this is what you need to do. it is really showing them where i have come to get to a place where i don't need to look at the color of a person's skin to determine whether or not i can help them or will help them.

you know, that's bold to be able to say this is how i did feel. this is what i did when i felt that way. but hold on. i did change. you talked so much about your past. let's go back once again a few decades, okay. and your father allegedly killed by racist farmers. that farmer never indicted, we should point out. but that hate crime triggered a huge movement in baker county.

yes, it did.

tell me about the murder of your father. and how that impacted you and your thought process.

you know, that was a time in my life just like these last two days when it just seemed so unreal to have our father there, you know, my mother was not much older than i am. she is about 16 years older. he had six girls. there were five daughters. and our mother during the -- during the -- during his lifetime. he was just the perfect father. so compassionate. so much there for his girls. to have his life taken away from us was so tragic at the time. and i'm the oldest of -- there are six. my father always wanted a son. he had -- kept having all these girls. there were five of us. they stopped. then during my senior year of high school he convinced my mother just one more time for this son. and that's -- i found out she kept getting sick. my best friend told me at school one day that -- she asked, she said, how's your mom? i said she is not getting any better. girl, your mother is pregnant. your daddy was at the store yesterday giving out cigars. he told everyone this was his son and, in fact, it was. he didn't live to see him. the son was -- i mean, my father was murdered two months before my brother was born. my brother was born on the day i graduated from high school. and then during that month, we started with the help of the student on violent coordinating committee being led by the person who later became my husband, charles sherrod. we started the baker county movement. and baker county had a particularly bad sheriff during those years. they --

not surprise.

they called him the gator. he liked being called the gator. we had to actually face the gator during the summer of 1965. there was bloody saturday. people don't hear about that. there was bloody saturday in baker county where when the march went to the courthouse, there were all of these white men with chains and ax handles. the person that murdered my daddy was one of them. you know, beating the people who were there to march. and there were many, many times when we had some very, very scary times as we worked to bring change in baker

county during the summer. then in september of that year, i went away. i didn't go far. my intent was to go to the north, to college. but after what happened i didn't know whether i would get to go to college at all but ended up going to ft. valley. and calling home in september and found that a group of white men, the klan, that included the sheriff, were burning a cross in front of our home. the house, my mother, my four sisters and baby brother.

can i ask you, was it the murder of your father, was it the cross burning, was it the klan members you saw walking through the town with those chains, is that what created that hatred? is that what led to that moment you talked about in that speech?

that was all part of it. some things that happened even before. i can remember being in high school and back in those days, they have they call what a visiting teacher. segregated school there in baker county. i can see it just like it was yesterday. the visiting teacher that was white coming in and taking over the classroom from the teacher and putting words up on the board and making us pronounce them until we pronounced them like she did, as if we were not being taught. as if we couldn't talk. you know, unless we talked the way she did. i can think of many, many other incidents.

it is interesting listening to the background and what happened to your family. i could understand, i think anyone could understand, where that frustration, hatred, would build. yet, you ended up working for the same organization that at that time had the same racist views, black farmers were being treated so unfairly, totally being thrown under the bus, but your whole attitude changed about white people and even this organization you end up working for this organization. i mean, what -- that's so ironic. how did that happen? how did that turn around?

when you look at the fact that i spent years helping farmers and others trying to access programs through the very agency i ended up working for and having to manage some of the very people who actually did some of those acts, you know, in the early years. you know, you about i felt that i worked on the issues from where i was, outside of the agency, and i felt being in the agency, this gave me a chance to try to bring some of the changes i felt needed to happen from that level. i needed to make sure that the staff and everyone else knew that this was an agency where everyone had equal access. i don't think that was -- most people don't even know what rural development in georgia does. this is one agency that could build a whole city. you know. because we deal with all -- you know, hospitals, homes, you know, just -- getting people into decent and affordable homes. you know, so much can happen from that agency with the right person being at the head of it. i felt because of what i have been through, i was the -- i was time. a person who was right for the

could make that difference. you mentioned you manage -- ended up managing people that treated and your family unfairly years back. which leads me to the question the farmer, cal hall, accused of killing your father. did you ever end up talking to him, his family, having interaction? did you ever find peace with that family?

no. we didn't. not at all. i was told, as i remember, he died of cancer some years later. and i think when he was near his death bed, he wanted to try to talk to my mother's brother or someone. i don't think that ever happened.

i'm just having visions of emmett till and what that family went through. your father, i want to bring it back to that, he would be so proud of you.

yes, he would.

today. what do you -- i mean, i am sure that everything that you have been through and how you got to this point is so much in his honor and his death had -- really breathed new life into you and now look at how this has all come. do you even think i if it got to this point you would be able to make the difference you are making now? you are on your way. you have a national audience now to tell your message.

yes.

and to talk about his life and what happened in your past.

this is something i have always -- to talk about his life and what happened to him was one of my goals from way back when i made the decision.

i love the picture we have of him as well. we probably have been looking at it right there. i love this picture. it is just -- you can just tell that -- the love in his face. continue. you have been wanting to tell his story and writing a book.

yes. you know, because he -- he was a person who looked out for the entire community. there are individuals that would tell you back in that day a lot of people didn't have the vehicles to ride in and the kids' activities in school, my father would go around in the truck, picking up in our community, taking people to school. he was very active in the community. and he was just great -- you know, a great person for us and all of these girls. we all had boys' nicknames. he wanted a son so bad.

what was your nickname?

my name was bill.

okay, bill. as we wrap up here, i have to ask you this, would you go back and work for the usda if secretary vilsack said i'm sorry, we want you back?

you know, my first reaction was i'm just not so sure, i don't know. i have been receiving calls. i received a call this morning from the president of the naacp in douglas, georgia, where i made that speech. he said i just called you to say i wish you would consider if they offer going back. he said, i think you can do even more for us at this point. i hadn't looked at it in that light.

naacp, is it still relevant? they were the first ones not to have your back. this is the organization that is supposed to have your back. you would think they would have looked at the whole tape.

yes. you know, and maybe for those at the national level, it doesn't mean to them what it does for those at the local level. i know for some of them it means so much to have the naacp as an organization in their community.

well, it has been a pleasure talking with you this morning. by the way with i want to mention this is now giving you a platform to write about your father. i know a lot of people are going to be eager. have you gotten a publisher yet?

no, i don't. i would love to be able to -- people have been asking me for years, knowing my story, when are you going to write your book? i have always said i don't have time.

i tell what you, we have a blog, cnn.com/kyra. we have all kinds of fascinating people that write in to our blog. i'm sure there are many publishers out there. i'm going to go ahead and plug it now. shall we? let's just say are there any publishers out there? how about any fantastic organizations that would love to have shirley come head your group? let's see what kind of feedback we get. what a pleasure to talk with you. what a pleasure to see something so nasty and so awful turn into such a beautiful thing. now you have a forum to really get your message out there. your background is amazing. it is sweet justice, wouldn't you say?

yes, it is. thank you. thank you. you are the one to help get it started. so thank you.

it is my honor. it is something that my fema and i believe strongly in. that's civil rights. thanks, shirley.

thank you.

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:29 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: FW:

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: Jalonick, Mary Clare [mailto:mjalonick@ap.org]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:14 AM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject:

Hey any chance I can speak with Vilsack today?

Mary Clare Jalonick
The Associated Press
202-641-9461 (office)
[REDACTED] (cell)
Twitter: MCJalonick

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[IP_US_DISC]

mks dccc60c6d2c3a6438f0cf467d9a4938

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:35 AM
To: Eamich, Amanda
Cc: Mather, Chris
Subject: New media

Can you do a quick and dirty assessment on what is happening in new media re shirley sherrad?

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:08 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: MSNBC

Reporting that Sherrod would strongly consider going back to USDA.

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DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:25 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: RE:

Can't log in. T doesn't have your current password.

Justin DeJong
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USDA Office of Communications
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-----Original Message-----

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:23 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject:

Look at statement on my computer. Gonna move fast.
Chris Mather

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:27 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Harless, Angela -USDA
Subject: RE: Super IMP

Liz is also monitoring.

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-----Original Message-----

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:25 PM
To: Harless, Angela -USDA; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Super IMP

Who is monitoring protest. Need constant updates.
Chris Mather

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:27 PM
To: Harless, Angela -USDA; Mather, Chris
Cc: Purchia, Liz
Subject: RE: Protest

Please keep Liz in loop as well.

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justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Harless, Angela -USDA
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:27 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin
Subject: FW: Protest

This update just came in....

From: Shaffer, Debra **On Behalf Of** OpsCenter
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:23 PM
To: Repass, Todd; Jett, Carole
Cc: Redington, JamesH; OpsCenter; Harless, Angela -USDA
Subject: Protest

As of 12:20pm, crowe is increasing slowly in size though still peaceful. USDA Security is coordinating with Federal Protective Service who is on scene.

v/r-

Deb.

Debra Shaffer
USDA OpsCenter
202-720-5711

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:28 PM
To: Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: FW: USDA Civil Rights Efforts_7.21
Attachments: USDA Civil Rights Efforts_7.21.docx

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justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Purchia, Liz
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:16 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: USDA Civil Rights Efforts_7.21

Ok added in this to the attached.

Is the USDA Still the Last Plantation? (The Root 11/17/2009)
By Terence Samuel
<http://www.theroot.com/print/30209>

So there are three The Root articles.

The USDA and The Value of Black Land (The Root 2/23/2010)
By Frank McCoy
<http://www.theroot.com/print/39698>

A Race Czar for Black Farmers (The Root 5/19/2009)
By Terence Samuel
<http://www.theroot.com/print/11561>

Is the USDA Still the Last Plantation? (The Root 11/17/2009)
By Terence Samuel
<http://www.theroot.com/print/30209>

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:10 PM
To: Purchia, Liz
Subject: RE: USDA Civil Rights Efforts_7.21

It may have quoted Pearlie instead of S.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary

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From: Purchia, Liz
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:09 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: USDA Civil Rights Efforts_7.21

I only saw these two.

The USDA and The Value of Black Land (The Root 2/23/2010)
By Frank McCoy
<http://www.theroot.com/print/39698>

A Race Czar for Black Farmers (The Root 5/19/2009)
By Terence Samuel
<http://www.theroot.com/print/11561>

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:08 PM
To: Purchia, Liz
Subject: RE: USDA Civil Rights Efforts_7.21

There is another.

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From: Purchia, Liz
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:07 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: USDA Civil Rights Efforts_7.21

It's in there

A Race Czar for Black Farmers (The Root 5/19/2009)
By Terence Samuel
<http://www.theroot.com/print/11561>

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:07 PM
To: Purchia, Liz
Subject: RE: USDA Civil Rights Efforts_7.21

There is one more The Root column by Terrence Samuel.

Justin DeJong
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justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Purchia, Liz
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:04 AM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: USDA Civil Rights Efforts_7.21

Justin,

Attached are the following articles you requested. Taylor is pulling together a summary of Pigford and Garcia Clips. They'll be coming over shortly.

Articles and Commentary on USDA's Civil Rights Efforts

Time nearly up for black farmers (The Atlanta Journal – Constitution 3/31/2010)

By Ralph Paige – Opinion
Link Unavailable

The USDA and The Value of Black Land (The Root 2/23/2010)

By Frank McCoy
<http://www.theroot.com/print/39698>

A Race Czar for Black Farmers (The Root 5/19/2009)

By Terence Samuel
<http://www.theroot.com/print/11561>

Thanks to black farmers who didn't give up; Settlement too long coming, but fight for it an inspiration (Chicago Sun-Times 2/23/2010)

By Mary Mitchell
Link Unavailable

Q&A with Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack (The Washington Post 2/19/2010)

By Krissah Thompson
http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/02/15/AR2010021503001_pf.html

Pay Up (The New York Times 2/8/2010)

Editorial Desk
<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/08/opinion/08mon3.html?scp=1&sq=pay%20up&st=cse>

Arkansan called back to tackle USDA bias He faces civil-rights-neglect backlog (Arkansas Democrat-Gazette 11/15/2009)

By Alex Daniels
Link Unavailable

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:34 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: RE:

Hmmm. That might be doable.

Justin DeJong
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-----Original Message-----

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:34 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject:

John King maybe.
Chris Mather

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:43 PM
To: 'Hagstrom, Jerry'; Mather, Chris
Subject: RE:

Hi Jerry, can you send my way?

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
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Washington, DC 20250
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[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Hagstrom, Jerry [mailto:JHagstrom@nationaljournal.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:39 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Subject:

Chris, Justin:

I have received statements from the Congressional Black Caucus, the Rural Coalition and the Federation of Southern Cooperatives all criticizing the forced resignation of Shirley Sherrod. Do you or Secretary Vilsack wish to respond to the comments? If you have not received them, I am willing to forward them to you. Jerry

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:51 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: FW: ONLINE REQUEST

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Rocci.Fisch@washingtonpost.com [mailto:Rocci.Fisch@washingtonpost.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:49 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin
Subject: ONLINE REQUEST

Would Tom Vilsack be available today to do an online chat with the Washington Post about the Shirley Sherrod incident?
Would take ½ hour; done online, with questions coming from our WP readers and are screened.
We could do it at 11, 12, 1, 2 or 3 ET today.
Rocci Fisch
[REDACTED]

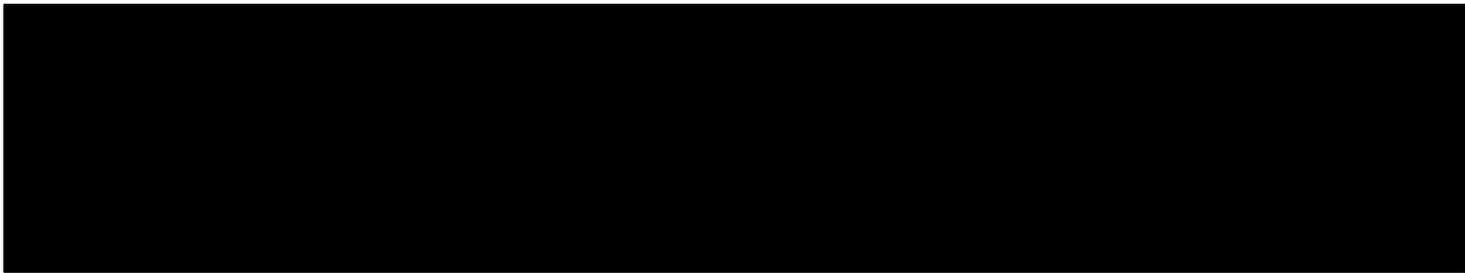
DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:14 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: RE:

How about this?

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
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justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:58 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject:



Chris Mather
Director of Communications
USDA
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 402A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0060
chris.mather@usda.gov

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:20 PM
To: Purchia, Liz
Cc: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: RE: Interview Request Recommendatoins

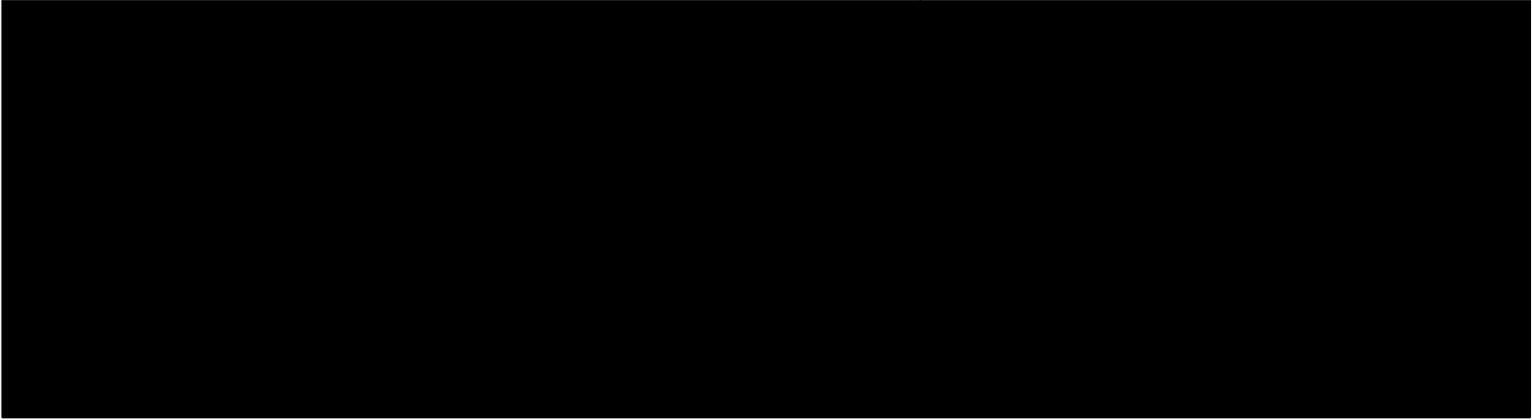
[REDACTED]

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justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Purchia, Liz
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:16 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Cc: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Interview Request Recommendatoins

Here are some of the recommendations I have for interviews based on what has come in from Stephanie.

[REDACTED]



Press Assistant, Office of Communications

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Desk: (202) 720-2168 | BB: 

Liz.Purchia@oc.usda.gov

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:24 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: FW: OAO

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
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Washington, DC 20250
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justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Jeanquart, Bobbi
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:23 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: OAO

This office was established by the 2008 Farm bill to improve access to USDA programs and enhance the viability and profitability of small farms and ranches, beginning farmers and ranchers, and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. This Office will help ensure that access is provided to all USDA customers in an equal and fair manner and enable USDA employees to be increasingly responsive to the American people they serve.

Roberta Jeanquart
Office of Assistant Secretary for Administration
bobbi.jeanquart@osec.usda.gov
Phone 202-720-3805
Cell [REDACTED]

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:52 PM
To: Jeanquart, Bobbi
Subject: OAO

Can you quickly send me a sentence or two about OAO and what we are doing here?

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
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[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:30 PM
To: Jeanquart, Bobbi
Subject: RE: OAO

Perfect. Thanks.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Jeanquart, Bobbi
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:23 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: OAO

This office was established by the 2008 Farm bill to improve access to USDA programs and enhance the viability and profitability of small farms and ranches, beginning farmers and ranchers, and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. This Office will help ensure that access is provided to all USDA customers in an equal and fair manner and enable USDA employees to be increasingly responsive to the American people they serve.

Roberta Jeanquart
Office of Assistant Secretary for Administration
bobbi.jeanquart@osec.usda.gov
Phone 202-720-3805
Cell [REDACTED]

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:52 PM
To: Jeanquart, Bobbi
Subject: OAO

Can you quickly send me a sentence or two about OAO and what we are doing here?

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
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[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:39 PM
To: Lavallee, Aaron
Subject: FW: Fox News (Elena Isella): DS Schedule for today?

Can you staff Stakeholders? Similar to how was handled this morning, closely monitor folks who come in.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
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Washington, DC 20250
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justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:07 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: FW: Fox News (Elena Isella): DS Schedule for today?

Can we do?

From: Maisel, Chad
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:04 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris; Purchia, Liz
Cc: Palmieri, Suzanne
Subject: RE: Fox News (Elena Isella): DS Schedule for today?

Right, no more open press events. She does have the stakeholders meeting at 4:30p, which isn't open press but there's the chance of someone show up. Might make sense to have a press person at the entrance...

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:58 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris; Purchia, Liz
Cc: Maisel, Chad
Subject: Fox News (Elena Isella): DS Schedule for today?

The deputy doesn't have any open press events for the rest of the day, right?

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Elena.Isella@foxnews.com [mailto:Elena.Isella@foxnews.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:50 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Cc: SARAH.Ridolfi@foxnews.com
Subject: Schedule

Good Morning Stephanie,

Per our conversation, I just wanted to follow up find out if Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan will be attending the National Rural Education Technology Summit at the National Museum of the American Indian.

And if Secretary Vilsack's schedule does change today. Can you please email the updated schedule to the Fox News assignment desk at: dc.desk@foxnews.com

Thank you,

Elena Isella
Fox News Channel



DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:54 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Chan, Stephanie; Purchia, Liz
Subject: RE: Huffington Post (Adam Rose): Request for statement

Yes, we spoke. There was a lag in receiving this e-mail

Justin DeJong
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justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:53 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; DeJong, Justin; Purchia, Liz
Subject: Re: Huffington Post (Adam Rose): Request for statement

[REDACTED]
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Purchia, Liz
Sent: Wed Jul 21 13:49:24 2010
Subject: Huffington Post (Adam Rose): Request for statement
This is only hours late...

I will make sure they get the new statement.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Adam J. Rose [<mailto:arose@huffingtonpost.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:57 AM
To: chris.mather@usda.gov; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Looking for latest Shirley Sherrod statement

If anybody's up, can you forward me the latest statement(s) on Sherrod, specifically the one mentioned in this CNN item? We're prepping an update to go out in the next hour or so and would like to include the latest from the USDA.

<http://news.blogs.cnn.com/2010/07/21/ag-chief-to-review-case-that-led-to-usda-workers-ouster/>

Thanks,
Adam

--

Adam J. Rose

Overnight Editor | The Huffington Post

213-245-1460 (Google) | [REDACTED] (Cell)

arose@huffingtonpost.com | Google/AIM/Skype/Twitter: adjoro

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:04 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: RE:

We are. Hasn't started yet.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
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justin.dejong@usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:03 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Chan, Stephanie
Subject:

Turn on briefing and take notes.
Chris Mather

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:11 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: Gibbs at 2:15 p.m.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
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DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:30 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: RE: Larry King?

Does he need a call list?

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
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justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:29 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: Larry King?

Terry?
Chris Mather

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wed Jul 21 14:28:19 2010
Subject: RE: Larry King?
Fab. What can we do to make this happen?

Justin DeJong
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From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:27 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: Larry King?

Terry a go
Chris Mather

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Mather, Chris

Sent: Wed Jul 21 14:23:08 2010

Subject: Larry King?

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DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:34 PM
To: O'Brien, Doug
Subject: RE: Civil Rights backgrounder

I think that's fine.

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From: O'Brien, Doug
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:30 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: Civil Rights backgrounder

Do u mind if I send this to Joe Leonard and Pearlle? Some of this stuff is in their lane. Thx

From: DeJong, Justin
To: O'Brien, Doug
Sent: Wed Jul 21 14:17:19 2010
Subject: Civil Rights backgrounder
Hi Doug,

I combined several docs we had on Civil Rights issues as a backgrounder to media who do not cover USDA every day.
Please see attached.

Thanks,

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DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:59 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: RE: CNN

She doesn't think Vilsack will offer job back. Asked if she accepts apology and she said yes.

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From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:57 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: RE: CNN

Host just asked, "does he have your cell phone number?" She said "I'm sure he knows how to reach me." They are playing this like the Secretary should apologize live on CNN.

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From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:53 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: CNN

Sherrod is on air. Host just said "USDA knows how to reach us, if they want to reach you."

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DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 3:07 PM
To: Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: FW: Congress Daily PM

Clip below.

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From: Slayton, April [mailto:April.Slayton@mail.house.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:53 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: FW: Congress Daily PM

From: Ryder, James
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:53:15 PM
To: Ag Dem Majority Staff; Ag Dem Interns
Subject: Congress Daily PM
Auto forwarded by a Rule

TAXES

Landrieu: Separate Vote Held For Lending Pool

Wednesday, July 21, 2010

by Andy Leonatti

Senate Democrats will vote separately on a provision of the small business jobs bill that has caused Republican heartburn over fears that it is another bank bailout, one of the bill's architects said today.

The provision, a \$30 billion lending pool for small banks to lend to small businesses, will be voted on as a separate amendment, Senate Small Business Chairwoman **Mary Landrieu** said. The pool is on the main components of the bill, which also contains \$12 billion in tax breaks for small businesses to boost hiring.

Landrieu said the bill will pass by the end of the week, adding she is confident she has 60 votes to pass the amendment. When the underlying bill still had the \$30 billion lending fund, it survived a cloture vote on a motion to proceed in late June, with eight Republicans voting in favor of the motion.

"They always want to use the private sector," Landrieu said of the GOP at a news conference. The bill will help only healthy small banks lend, she added, and said it "is just shocking to me and very puzzling" that Republican support has fallen off.

On Tuesday, Senate Small Business ranking member **Olympia Snowe** said she expressed her opposition to the fund in a conversation with **Senate Majority Leader Reid** and hoped Reid would use a substitute amendment to strip the fund.

"Some people call it TARP junior," Snowe said Tuesday.

Landrieu said today that Snowe was still opposed to the fund. Democrats have been working with Snowe and Sen. **George LeMieux**, R-Fla., who had also originally voted for the motion to proceed.

Landrieu was joined at today's news conference by Sens. **Jeff Merkley**, D-Ore., and **Barbara Boxer**, D-Calif., who all said the fund was reserved for healthy, small banks with less than \$10 billion in assets. Merkley added the fund is budget-neutral.

Landrieu also said the amendment on the fund would be the only substantive amendment allowed on the floor. An estate tax amendment from **Senate Minority Whip Kyl** and Sen. **Blanche Lincoln**, D-Ark., along with an amendment raising credit union lending from Sen. **Mark Udall**, D-Colo., will not be considered.

Reid and **Senate Minority Leader McConnell** had been unable to come to an agreement on the other amendments.

Landrieu insisted there was still time this week for the Senate to vote on the lending-pool amendment, then cloture, and final passage, even though it still needs to pass an unemployment-insurance extension later today or Thursday.

"It will pass this week with this provision in it," she said.

When asked why she would need to hold a separate vote on the amendment if there was enough support to pass the bill with the fund in it, she said Democrats want to "highlight who's actually stepping up."

SENATE RACES

Capito Takes Pass On Byrd Seat

Wednesday, July 21, 2010

by Reid Wilson, from National Journal's Hotline On Call

Rep. **Shelley Moore Capito**, R-W.Va., will not run for the seat held by the late Democratic Sen. **Robert Byrd** and will seek to stay in the House, she said in a statement today.

"With the voters' support, I intend to serve my full term in the House of Representatives and not run for any other office until 2012," Capito said.

Capito's decision robs Republicans of their best possible candidate, even though a deal struck in the state legislature made it possible for her to run both for re-election and in the Senate special election. Capito said the dual candidacy would open the door to a court challenge, which she wants to avoid.

Without Capito, the GOP is likely to turn to one of several wealthy businessmen to step in. John Raese, who took 34 percent of the vote against Byrd in 2006, is considering running for the seat again. Bob Adams, who runs the League of American Voters, is also thinking about a bid.

Neither candidate would have a lot of time to prepare a race. West Virginia voters will select nominees in an Aug. 28 primary and then pick a replacement for Byrd in the already scheduled Nov. 2 midterm election.

Whichever Republican emerges would likely be an underdog against Democratic Gov. Joe Manchin, who said Tuesday he would run for Byrd's seat. Manchin is hugely popular in the state and would have been the early favorite even over Capito, even though President Obama has a dismal approval rating there.

Departing Commander Bemoans Budget Cut

Wednesday, July 21, 2010

by Megan Scully

The outgoing commander of U.S. forces in Iraq today bemoaned the Senate Armed Services Committee's decision to cut in half the \$2 billion request in the Pentagon's FY11 budget for Iraqi security forces.

Army Gen. Raymond Odierno, whom the Senate already has confirmed to lead the Norfolk, Va.-based U.S. Joint Forces Command when he completes his tour in Iraq in September, said the money is critical to making Iraq capable of defending itself after all U.S. combat forces leave in December 2011.

"With us still on the ground, we can get this done quicker and more efficiently. So that's why I want the money for '11," Odierno said during a breakfast with reporters. "It will be used to work on the border forces. It will be used to ... finish building the Army's strategic logistics."

Odierno said the \$2 billion request "is cost-sharing. We're not paying for everything." Iraq plans to spend \$11 billion, or 17.5 percent of its budget, on security this year.

The four-star general also stressed the importance of helping Iraq financially as it struggles with a budget deficit estimated at \$12 billion. Doing so, Odierno said, will help stabilize the country and could ensure Iraq will be a strong partner in the volatile region.

"We have to be careful that we don't run away from them," he said.

Senate Armed Services Chairman **Carl Levin** argued during a news conference May 28 that "it's kind of hard to justify putting billions of dollars in for the Iraq army" considering the country's oil revenue and its decision to slash the request for defense spending.

During Odierno's confirmation hearing June 24, Armed Services ranking member **John McCain** said Levin made the cut "without the consultation with the minority and replaced by earmarked pork-barrel projects - one of the really most unusual acts that I have seen in the years that I have served on this committee."

Odierno today said it would take until 2013 or 2014 for Iraq to produce enough oil where the country would be financially solvent.

"We have to determine what's the right level to continue to provide some support" to Iraq, he said. "It's in our best interest ... to continue to support them to build the military, for example."

Meanwhile, Odierno said the United States plans to build an office of security cooperation inside its embassy to provide long-term technical support to Iraqi security forces as they buy U.S. equipment.

Iraq has already committed to buying M1A1 Abrams tanks, C-130 airlifters and some helicopters. The country is also requesting 18 F-16 fighter jets, which would be delivered starting in 2013.

AGRICULTURE

Vilsack Gets Heat For Sherrod Firing

Wednesday, July 21, 2010

by Jerry Hagstrom, with Billy House contributing

The Congressional Black Caucus, the Federation of Southern Cooperatives and the Rural Coalition today called on Agriculture Secretary Vilsack to reinstate Shirley Sherrod, the Georgia rural development director who was forced to resign Tuesday amid controversy over remarks on race.

Sherrod has come under fire for comments she made at a March NAACP conference - which were taped and widely circulated - that critics have called racist. As a member of an anti-poverty group 20 years ago, Sherrod said, she denied a white farmer full assistance.

But in extended comments heard only in the full videotape, she said she later helped the farmer, and she used the example to underscore that her job was to help poor farmers regardless of race.

In a statement, CBC Chairwoman Rep. **Barbara Lee**, D-Calif., and other caucus members said it was troubling that Sherrod was asked for her resignation "because of an edited video clip."

"A full review of the clip demonstrates Ms. Sherrod's personal transformation. She was clearly educating the public about the power of redemption. It is now apparent that Secretary Vilsack did not have all of the facts available to him and overreacted," the statement added.

"There are many individuals still serving in the Department of Agriculture who were responsible for years of discrimination against African American farmers," the statement said, referring to long-standing discrimination cases that are only now being settled.

Ralph Paige, executive director of the Federation of Southern Cooperatives and Land Assistance Fund, called on Vilsack to "quickly correct this injustice."

"We note with interest that your concern is to move forward to solve the problems that USDA has had in the past in terms of its sad record on civil rights," Paige said. "Yet your decision to fire one of the few persons in the country who could likely do the most to help achieve that goal stubbornly negates your stated interest of moving forward toward equal access and equality of opportunity at USDA with integrity."

"The inference that Shirley Sherrod is a racist is beyond comprehension," he added. "For you to make a decision without consideration of Shirley's long and impressive work in civil rights is uncalled for."

Paige also suggested that Vilsack use Sherrod as an "ambassador" to teach others around the country about race. The Rural Coalition, which lobbies for low-income farmers and rural people of all races, said President Obama and Vilsack should apologize to Sherrod for the pressure they put on her to resign as well as reinstate her.

As a leader of a USDA community-based group, Sherrod had "passionately insisted that the injustices experienced by Hmong immigrant producers in Arkansas be addressed by USDA," the group added, arguing that her leadership had set the stage for Vilsack's civil rights initiative.

Meanwhile, National Association of Black Farmers President John Boyd today called on Congress to include the money for the settlement of the black farmers' discrimination case against USDA in the war supplemental bill.

Early today, Vilsack issued a statement to say he would review the situation. But Sherrod said on NBC's "Today" that she is not certain she wants her job back.

Vilsack had not returned a request for comment by presstime.

POLITICS

RNC Feud Over Funds Could Imperil Steele

Wednesday, July 21, 2010

by Reid Wilson, National Journal's Hotline On Call

With Republican National Committee members set to meet early next month in Kansas City, an old feud

between chairman Michael Steele and key opponents on the national committee is re-emerging -- one that could prove a more serious offense, in committee members' eyes, than any gaffe Steele has made so far.

In amended reports filed with the FEC, RNC Treasurer Randy Pullen asserts the committee has millions in unreported debts, publicly calling into question Steele's leadership of the party.

The RNC reported raising just \$5.9 million in June and spending \$7.6 million, with \$10.9 million in the bank. In addition, the committee said it had \$2 million in debts at the end of the month -- debts that RNC spokesperson Doug Heye said have been paid off. That means the national committee had just under \$9 million, making it relatively cash-poor just before crucial midterm elections.

RNC members have worried about the committee's budget for more than a year, as fundraising got off to a slow start under the new chairman. And Pullen, along with a cadre of senior RNC members who have served on the party's budget committee for years, has openly feuded with Steele over spending authority.

Last year, a group of RNC members realized the committee had neglected to re-pass a rule at the Sept. 2008 convention that instituted strict spending controls. The rule had been standard operating procedure at the RNC for years, but the oversight -- committed months before Steele won his position -- left most major spending decisions up to staff rather than committee members.

Those RNC members -- among them Pullen, New Jersey committeeman David Norcross and Massachusetts committeeman Ron Kaufman -- tried to pass a resolution reinstating the old rule. Steele took that move as a personal affront, accusing members of trying to undermine his chairmanship by imposing the new restrictions.

The resolution was aimed at providing checks and balances at a committee that long-time members believed was newly unstable. That belief had little to do with Steele and everything to do with a little-known accountant who for more than three decades kept constant vigil over the national committee's budget.

That accountant, Jay Banning, served as the party's chief financial officer. Former RNC officials and committee members say Banning ran the committee's books with exacting precision. Every bill that came in was reported and promptly paid, every expense report was questioned, and every penny was accounted for.

But Banning left the committee early last year, just after Steele took over, and sources said he was asked to resign. The committee held his going-away party at the Tune Inn, a Capitol Hill bar blocks from the RNC. Banning's remaining staff dutifully reported that expense on the following month's FEC report.

Banning is media-shy and loathe to discuss party business outside the confines of the RNC building or beyond the handful of top RNC members he has known for years. But he is a recognized commodity in the political world and remains on contract with the RNC. The NRSC quickly hired him as their top accountant once he left his old job.

Norcross, Kaufman and Pullen trusted Banning to run the RNC completely by the book. Pullen does not trust Steele's new hires to do so. In his other capacity as chairman of the Arizona GOP, he spent several days in Washington between July 15 and July 20, when the FEC reports were filed, and he has accused top Steele aides -- most notably RNC chief of staff Mike Leavitt -- of withholding information.

Pullen went so far as to refuse to sign some documents headed to the FEC. As treasurer, he is legally responsible for the reports' accuracy. And this month, he filed amended reports that reflect more than \$7 million in previously unreported debt the committee held. All that debt is now off the books, Heye said.

The biggest hole Banning has left, those with knowledge of his work say, is the absence of a regimented process. Without his watchful eye, RNC staffers paid out \$2,000 to a consultant for an evening at a risqué L.A. nightclub. Staffers have also voiced concerns over spending on outside vendors, including a former Steele adviser. That relationship has since soured.

Steele himself has taken steps to address the broken processes. Pullen's review of recent FEC filings is the latest in a series of investigations at the committee. Steele created an ethics panel that is looking into the nightclub expense, a panel that has already forced out the top two finance officials at the RNC. And Steele has hired Tom Josefiak, the highly-regarded former RNC general counsel, to take a closer look at the party's books. Heye said Tuesday that the RNC has even hired Michael Toner, a former chairman of the FEC, to keep it on track.

Those independent looks at the RNC and its fiscal house already guaranteed the budget would play a huge role in next month's committee meetings in Kansas City. Pullen's allegations will infuse a usually-dry budget committee meeting with a tension that has been quietly bubbling beneath the surface.

And that tension is likely to spread beyond Steele's usual list of enemies. GOP state party chairmen are counting on money from the national party to fund Victory programs across the country. Already, budgets for those centers have been slashed. The RNC has opened more than 100 Victory centers and are planning to open 225 in 35 states before Election Day.

But while the RNC will have sent \$2 million to state parties by the end of the month, members are nervous the money they need may not be there. Although Republicans are likely to make major gains during the midterms, the amount of credit Steele gets from the 168 members of the RNC will depend in large part on whether those members believe the party left seats on the table because they could not compete financially.

Though Steele's occasional gaffes have gotten him in trouble, calls for his resignation are not serious threats to his chairmanship, and new calls will be seen by committee members as a distraction at a moment the party needs to be focused on winning races. But Steele is virtually assured of a challenge when his term expires in January.

Ironically, it will not be Steele's verbal miscues that draw a challenge. Instead, his decision to send a long-time employee packing early in his tenure could prove the most decisive, and damaging, decision Steele made.

FINANCE

Obama Signs Reg Reform Into Law

Wednesday, July 21, 2010

by George E. Condon Jr., with Bill Swindell contributing

President Obama celebrated one of his top legislative victories today, signing into law a major overhaul of financial regulations that he promised would shine light on "shadowy deals" on Wall Street and "put a stop to taxpayer bailouts once and for all."

Flanked by many of the lawmakers who pushed the bill through over what he called "the furious lobbying of an array of powerful interest groups and a partisan minority determined to block change," the president said the new law includes "the strongest consumer financial protections in history."

Vikram Pandit of Citigroup was one of the few representatives from Wall Street at the signing, which took place at the Ronald Reagan Building, while members of consumer groups were far more prominent. Also in attendance was Elizabeth Warren, the Harvard professor heavily favored by liberal activists to head the consumer financial protection agency created by the bill.

Warren, who would face stiff opposition from Republicans in the Senate, praised the new law as "the strongest set of financial reforms in three generations." She called the consumer agency "a tough, independent cop in Washington to help clear out the tricks and traps hidden in consumer credit agreements."

But business groups remain wary of the law.

Thomas Donohue, president and CEO of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, warned of all the new regulations to come as well as "unintended consequences that create more uncertainty for American businesses."

Republicans remain unwavering in their opposition to the measure, with many issuing immediate calls for repeal. **House Minority Leader Boehner** dismissed it as "another big-government overreach that will make it harder to create new jobs."

SENATE

Democrats Keep Blasting GOP Over Benefits

Wednesday, July 21, 2010

by Dan Friedman, with Billy House contributing

Senate Democrats today used a delay in passing a bill providing an extension of unemployment benefits to ramp up attacks on the GOP while Republicans said the haggling does not affect when the bill will be enacted.

Democrats for months have cited opposition by most Republicans to extending benefits without offsetting the cost to accuse the minority of indifference to the plight of jobless. Democratic senators leapt at a chance to underscore that claim by noting Republicans are forcing the Senate to wait 30 hours after a cloture vote Tuesday to pass the bill.

"We are just burning 30 hours of time, and in my judgment it's just mean," said Sen. **Debbie Stabenow**, D-Mich., a Democratic spokesperson on the issue.

The bill would restore federal unemployment benefits for more than 2.5 million jobless Americans who have lost them since the end of May and extend them through Nov. 30, allowing people without jobs in high-unemployment states to collect up to 99 weeks of benefits.

Tuesday's 60-40 cloture vote came after Democrats in recent months repeatedly fell short of votes to impose cloture on bills to extend benefits, and it effectively ensures passage when the 30-hour cloture clock runs out at 9 p.m. tonight.

A spokesman for **House Speaker Pelosi** said today the House will pass the bill "soon after the Senate passes it. ... Maybe late tonight, more likely [Thursday]."

President Obama is expected to quickly sign the bill after House passage.

But Senate Democrats said Republicans should have yielded time to pass the bill Tuesday or earlier today.

"The Republican leadership, supported by the overwhelming majority of its caucus, has stood in front of the burning house and said: 'Everyone wants us to put out the fire, but we're going to sit back and wait a while before we turn on the hoses,'" **Senate Majority Leader Reid** said. "That is a disgrace that brings shame to this institution."

GOP leadership aides said the party could have agreed to a quick vote on passage Tuesday if Democrats allowed a vote on an alternative Republican proposal to pay for the benefits extension with unused stimulus funds. That vote would have supported Republican arguments that they back extending benefits if paid for. A Republican aide said such a deal was discussed last week.

A spokesman for **Minority Leader McConnell** said that since the House likely could not have voted on the bill sooner than today, Senate passage on Tuesday would not have mattered.

"The bottom line is, the Senate is going to pass it today; the House is going to pass it today," a GOP aide said. Senate Republicans expect a series of votes this afternoon on motions suspend the rules and allow amendments filed by Sen. **Tom Coburn**, R-Okla. Because the motions need 67 votes to pass, they are almost certain to fail, but Republicans hope they will highlight their backing of a deficit-neutral benefits extension.

ENERGY

GOP Senators Fail To Eliminate Ethanol Credit

Wednesday, July 21, 2010

by Amy Harder

Senate Republicans today sought unsuccessfully in committee to eliminate the ethanol blenders' tax credit, which is expiring at the end of the year.

In an Energy and Natural Resources Committee markup, Sen. **John McCain**, R-Ariz., offered an amendment that would have eliminated the subsidy, which costs taxpayers 45 cents per gallon ethanol credit, or about \$5.2 billion in 2009.

"Maybe we will stop doing this damned foolishness called ethanol subsidies," McCain said in seeking to add it onto a vehicle technology bill sponsored by Sen. **Debbie Stabenow**, D-Mich. "It's one of the greatest rip-offs that takes place on the American taxpayers," McCain added.

Energy and Natural Resources Committee Chairman **Jeff Bingaman**, while saying he has concerns about ethanol subsidies, said the Finance Committee, not his panel, has jurisdiction over tax provisions.

The amendment failed, with all Democrats and Sen. **Sam Brownback**, R-Kan., voting against it. Kansas is a leading state for ethanol production -- something Brownback noted before voting against the amendment.

Bingaman requested a report by CBO that found the federal tax credit may have actually contributed to excess ethanol production. Bingaman did not talk about the report in the hearing today, instead delaying conversation for the floor.

"I'm sure that we will be voting on it on the Senate floor between now and the end of the year," Bingaman said. All members agreed though that a broader discussion on ethanol is warranted.

The ethanol amendment was the lone sticking point in the committee's markup of more than 30 bills. Several passed today and the committee is expected to resume Thursday to consider the rest.

The measures approved so far, mostly along partisan lines, include a bill by Sen. **Byron Dorgan**, D-N.D., that would incentivize the use of electric vehicles; Stabenow's bill, which provides Energy Department funding for an array of vehicle technology; two bills directing the Energy Department to provide more research and development for nuclear energy; and another measure incentivizing solar energy.

All of these measures could be added onto an energy bill **Senate Majority Leader Reid** is crafting. Bingaman said he did not know what would be included in Reid's package and did not elaborate on the negotiations. Democrats are expected to talk about energy and climate issues in a caucus lunch Thursday.

Reid on Tuesday was noncommittal about what might be in the package, as well as whether there will be a carbon pricing system included or whether he will bring any energy legislation to the floor before the August recess.

TRADE

House Passes Tariff Bill

Wednesday, July 21, 2010

by Andy Leonatti

Despite warnings by Republicans that they would hold to their earmark moratorium, the House today passed a tariff bill, 378-43, that contains hundreds of specialized tariff breaks for products that are not manufactured in the United States but needed by U.S. manufacturers to assemble products.

Democrats brought up the bill, known as the "Miscellaneous Tariff Bill," under suspension of the rules, which requires a two-thirds vote of the House. Republicans noted that the bill's individual tariff breaks would constitute an earmark under the definition of their party's yearlong ban on member-requested projects, and some said they would vote against it on those grounds. But in the end, most voted for the measure.

Ways and Means Select Revenue Measures Subcommittee Chairman **Richard Neal**, D-Mass., praised the bill's transparency rules, which require every member request to be vetted by the U.S. International Trade Commission. In addition, the administration must ensure products being given tariff breaks are not already manufactured in the United States and that they do not cost too much.

Those products include special chemicals, television plasma screens and golf club parts. The vote is a key vote by business groups like the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers, who have urged the GOP to drop tariff provisions from their earmark ban.

APPROPRIATIONS

Senate Panel Cuts Obama's CJS Request

Wednesday, July 21, 2010

by Otto Kreisher

The Senate Commerce, Justice and Science Appropriations Subcommittee today approved without opposition a \$60.1 billion FY11 funding bill that Chairwoman **Barbara Mikulski**, D-Md., said emphasized fiscal discipline but would allow the covered agencies to perform their missions.

The total is \$400 million below President Obama's request and \$4.3 billion under the current year's funding. It is also \$400 million below the total funding approved last week by the House subcommittee.

Working closely with Senate Commerce, Justice and Science Appropriations ranking member **Richard Shelby**, R-Ala., Mikulski said "we brought very strong fiscal discipline" to the funding measure. "The very stringent budget environment" forced the subcommittee to make tough decisions, she said.

Mikulski said the bill requires covered agencies to cut overhead expenses by 10 percent, to reduce receptions and representation spending by 25 percent and specifically bans "lavish banquets and conferences."

"We're telling everyone, if you're in the cost-overrun business, you're out of business," she said. In addition to the "fiscal discipline" she mentioned several times, Mikulski said the panel's focus was on fighting violent crime and terrorism, funding a "restructuring of the manned space program" and supporting science and "the mission of Commerce [Department] to create jobs."

A strong supporter of NASA, which has a large presence in her state, Mikulski's mark would provide the \$19 billion Obama requested for the space agency but took a different approach on the future of manned space.

Obama cancelled the Constellation program that was intended to replace the space shuttles, which are due to be retired by the end of the year, and to take astronauts back to the moon then on to Mars. The president instead

called for commercial operators to take over support of the International Space Station and set manned missions to Mars as a long-term goal.

The Senate panel would provide \$3 billion for a "next-generation Crew Launch Vehicle," which means a rocket engine, and "Crew Exploration Vehicle," apparently as substitutes for the Constellation systems.

An aide said that included \$1.9 billion to develop a heavy lift launch vehicle, a powerful rocket engine. Shelby, who also has major NASA operations in his state, said Obama's proposals on manned space flight were "totally unacceptable" by counting on commercial space operators to safely put humans in space.

The House panel had provided the \$19 billion but withheld funding for the manned space program until an authorization bill dealing with the issue is enacted.

The Senate bill also provides \$1.6 billion for shuttle operations. That includes funding for an extra shuttle mission, but only if an independent commission deems it safe, Mikulski said. It offers \$2.8 billion for ISS operations, \$5 billion for science and \$904 million for aeronautics and space technology research.

The measure contains \$29.9 billion for the Justice Department, which includes \$8.3 billion for the FBI, \$6.8 billion for the Bureau of Prisons, \$3.7 billion for state and local law enforcement assistance, \$2.1 billion for the Drug Enforcement Administration, \$1.2 billion for the Marshals Service and \$1.2 billion for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Fire Arms and Explosives.

Commerce would get \$9 billion, the National Science Foundation \$7.3 billion, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration \$5.5 billion and the Patent Office \$2.3 billion.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Stearns Urges FCC To Slow Down

Wednesday, July 21, 2010

by Eliza Krigman

House Energy and Commerce Communications Subcommittee ranking member **Cliff Stearns**, R-Fla., urged FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski today to refrain from putting the reclassification of broadband on the agency's September meeting agenda, saying it would be "disrespectful" to the ongoing House and Senate talks on this issue.

Stearns also said FCC action would shortchange the necessary review of all the public comments filed on this matter by last week's deadline.

He added that lawmakers would only have a few days to assess the reclassification issue upon their return to Washington after Labor Day.

The FCC declined to comment.

His remarks came at a House Energy and Commerce Committee markup of legislation that would update communications laws to ensure individuals with vision and hearing disabilities can utilize Internet-based communication services and have better access video programming, among other technologies.

"We've seen significant technological change since Congress first adopted the Americans with Disabilities Act," said Energy and Commerce Communications Subcommittee Chairman **Rick Boucher**, D-Va., who called the modernization of the law "timely." Monday marks the 20th anniversary of the law.

Addressing Republican concerns, the manager's amendment prohibits the FCC from mandating the use of proprietary technologies. It also sets accessibility goals but does not dictate on how to get there, and it includes waivers for small businesses.

Similar legislation has been marked up and approved by the Senate Commerce Committee. House Energy and Commerce Chairman **Henry Waxman** expressed hope the House and Senate will send a bill to the president soon.

Walter McCormick Jr., president and CEO of the U.S. Telecom Association, praised the committee's passage of the bill, which he said "provides a sound and sensible roadmap for achieving greater accessibility."

Subcommittee OKs Transportation-HUD Budget

With little rancor, a Senate Appropriations panel today approved a FY11 spending bill funding transportation and housing programs at the same level as last year. Approved by voice vote, the Transportation-HUD Subcommittee's bill would provide \$67.9 billion in budget authority, \$800 million below President Obama's budget request. The bill provides total resources for FY11 of \$122.5 billion, \$700 million below the president's request and \$400 million above the FY10 level. The legislation includes \$1 billion for investments in high-speed rail, on top of the \$10.5 billion provided under last year's economic stimulus package and the FY10 spending bill.

The panel rejected some administration proposals, including the creation of an Office of Livability within the Transportation Department. Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee ranking member **Kit Bond**, R-Mo., said decisions on livability should be made at the local level. The committee also rejected the administration's proposal for a \$4 billion National Infrastructure Innovation and Finance Fund. Other notable provisions in the bill include \$900 million for vehicle and driver safety programs. The bill would provide \$19.5 billion for housing assistance vouchers, \$1.3 billion more than FY10. The full committee is expected to take up the bill Thursday.

Tea Party Caucus Pledges Action

Rep. **Michele Bachmann**, R-Minn., and her fledgling Tea Party Caucus held its first meeting and press conference this morning, announcing it has 29 charter members. Rather than serving as the Tea Party movement's "mouthpiece," the group will be a receptive ear on Capitol Hill, members said. The caucus so far counts three of the five top House GOP leaders in its group -- Republican Conference Chairman **Mike Pence** of Indiana, National Republican Congressional Campaign Committee Chairman **Pete Sessions** of Texas, and Republican Study Committee Chairman **Tom Price** of Georgia.

Minority Leader Boehner is not joining, citing a general rule of only belonging to the House Republican Caucus. In the closed door-meeting, 24 of the charter members attended to hear a diverse group of Tea Party activists, including minorities, speak about the changes they want to see in Washington. Some of those activists also spoke at the news conference. Their attendance, said Rep. **Dan Burton**, R-Ind., should dispel "a lot of rumors about racism and other things."

The Final Word

"Based on the White House's reaction to our report, there's little chance that I will be called away by an invitation to the White House anytime soon to have to miss this hearing."

-- *TARP Special Inspector General Neil Barofsky as he appeared today before the Senate Finance Committee, referring to his report criticizing the Obama administration's push to close automobile dealerships.*

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James Ryder

Press Assistant

Committee on Agriculture

U.S. House of Representatives

1301-A Longworth House Office Building

The information contained in this e-mail should be considered background information and not for attribution or direct quotation unless otherwise indicated.

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 3:49 PM
To: O'Brien, Doug
Subject: RE: Civil Rights backgrounder

Thx.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: O'Brien, Doug
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 3:48 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: Civil Rights backgrounder

In mtgs with Mona and leading deepwater. Will go back to desk to finalize review in 15. Very sorry

From: DeJong, Justin
To: McNeil, Mary; O'Brien, Doug; Leonard, Joe
Sent: Wed Jul 21 15:46:41 2010
Subject: RE: Civil Rights backgrounder
What is status of review? Need comments ASAP. Thanks,

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: McNeil, Mary
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 3:19 PM
To: O'Brien, Doug; Leonard, Joe; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: Civil Rights backgrounder

Will do.

From: O'Brien, Doug
To: Leonard, Joe; McNeil, Mary; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wed Jul 21 14:40:53 2010
Subject: Fw: Civil Rights backgrounder

Joe and Mary - can you review this? We are thinking of this handout for press who has not been keeping up with our activity.

I will look at the civil rights cases.

Thx

Doug

From: DeJong, Justin
To: O'Brien, Doug
Sent: Wed Jul 21 14:17:19 2010
Subject: Civil Rights backgrounder
Hi Doug,

I combined several docs we had on Civil Rights issues as a backgrounder to media who do not cover USDA every day. Please see attached.

Thanks,

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave. SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548

[REDACTED] (cell)

justin.dejong@usda.gov

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 3:56 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: RE: Hold advisory

Holding.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 3:54 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Hold advisory

Chris Mather

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 4:01 PM
To: Black, David -OC
Subject: RE: USDA radio will be there?

Ok. We are doing at 4:45.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Black, David -OC
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 4:01 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: USDA radio will be there?

And tv
David O. Black
Acting Deputy Director
Office of Communications, USDA
202-720-6072
david.black@oc.usda.gov

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Black, David -OC
Sent: Wed Jul 21 15:59:56 2010
Subject: USDA radio will be there?

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 4:04 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: RE: You can push send.

Going now.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 4:00 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: You can push send.

Chris Mather

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 4:05 PM
To: Eamich, Amanda
Subject: FW:
Attachments: Media Advisory Sherrod 072110.doc

Going now.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 4:01 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject:

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 4:12 PM
To: Vega, Dag; Wilson, Samuel A.
Subject: FW: TODAY: Agriculture Secretary Vilsack to Deliver Statement to Media Regarding Shirley Sherrod

If you want to send around to your crew, feel free to forward. Thanks,

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: USDA Office of Communications [<mailto:oc.news@usda.gov>]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 4:07 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: TODAY: Agriculture Secretary Vilsack to Deliver Statement to Media Regarding Shirley Sherrod



Media Advisory No. PENDING

Contact:
USDA Office of Communications
(202) 720-4623

TODAY: Agriculture Secretary Vilsack to Deliver Statement to Media Regarding Shirley Sherrod

WASHINGTON, July 21, 2010 – TODAY, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack will speak to members of the media and provide a statement regarding Shirley Sherrod.

WHERE: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Whitten Office Building, 1400 Independence Ave. SW
Press Briefing Room, Room 107
Washington, D.C.

WHEN: Wednesday, July 21, 2010
4:45 p.m. EDT

***Please Note: Limited media parking will be made available on both Independence Ave. and Jefferson Drive between 12th and 14th Streets SW.

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This message was sent from USDA Office of Communications to Justin.dejong@oc.usda.gov. It was sent from: OC News, USDA Office of Communications 1400 Independence Ave, SW, Washington, DC 20250-1300. You can modify/update your subscription via the link below.

Manage your subscription

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 4:18 PM
To: JIC4, OC -USDA
Subject: FW: Civil Rights backgrounder
Attachments: civil rights background.o'brien comments.docx

See attached.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: O'Brien, Doug
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 4:07 PM
To: McNeil, Mary; Leonard, Joe; DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: Civil Rights backgrounder

With Mary and my comments.

Apologize for delay.

From: McNeil, Mary
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 3:50 PM
To: O'Brien, Doug; Leonard, Joe; DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: Civil Rights backgrounder

Here it is.

Mary

From: O'Brien, Doug
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:41 PM
To: Leonard, Joe; McNeil, Mary; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Fw: Civil Rights backgrounder

Joe and Mary - can you review this? We are thinking of this handout for press who has not been keeping up with our activity.

I will look at the civil rights cases.

Thx

Doug

From: DeJong, Justin
To: O'Brien, Doug
Sent: Wed Jul 21 14:17:19 2010
Subject: Civil Rights backgrounder
Hi Doug,

I combined several docs we had on Civil Rights issues as a backgrounder to media who do not cover USDA every day.
Please see attached.

Thanks,

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave. SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 4:25 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: Remarks

When they are final, I would like to provide to amanda for new media.

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 4:27 PM
To: 'ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com'
Subject: Re: I'm in the briefing room

Ok.

----- Original Message -----

From: ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com <ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com>
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wed Jul 21 16:26:30 2010
Subject: I'm in the briefing room

You expecting TV cameras?

Ed O'Keefe
The Federal Eye, The Washington Post
ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 4:29 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: Cnn is down front, nbc is pool and they will be a bit delayed

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 4:34 PM
To: Purchia, Liz
Subject: RE: Interns and Press Conf

We'll see. Work comes first.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548

[REDACTED] (cell)

justin.dejong@usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: Purchia, Liz
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 4:33 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Interns and Press Conf

Interns want to know if they can attend Liz Purchia U.S. Department of Agriculture
[REDACTED]

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 4:36 PM
To: 'Chris Clayton'
Subject: RE: any chance of a call in for this deal?

Afraid not.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Chris Clayton [mailto:Chris.Clayton@telventdtn.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 4:09 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: any chance of a call in for this deal?

Chris Clayton
Ag Policy Editor
Office:402-255-8353
Cell: [REDACTED]
Fax: 402-390-7187
chris.clayton@telventdtn.com

DTN/The Progressive Farmer - A Telvent Brand

9110 W. Dodge Road
Omaha, NE, 68114
www.dtnprogressivefarmer.com

follow me on Twitter at www.twitter.com/chrisclaytonDTN

This year, I'll be taking part in the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation's Walk to Cure Diabetes. The good news is that a cure for type 1 diabetes is within reach. Each of us can be a part of bringing about a cure. Each of us can make a real difference. Please visit my Walk Web page if you would like to donate

<http://walk.idrf.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=extranet.personalpage&confirmID=87706492>

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:17 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Work phone just died.

Okay.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:16 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Work phone just died.

Work phone just died.

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:21 PM
To: 'Jon H. Harsch'
Subject: RE: from Jon at AgriPulse

Hi Jon,

We will be posting audio and video on the website shortly.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Jon H. Harsch [mailto:jonharsch@infosynch.info]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:19 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: from Jon at AgriPulse

Justin,

Since I didn't arrive at the beginning, if you could e-mail an audio of today's presser that would be very helpful.

Many thanks, Jon

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:23 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Need to check with reid

Is final on your computer?

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:22 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Need to check with reid

[REDACTED]

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:27 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Yes. Still open. Can email

Okay. [REDACTED] I'll send your way in a bit.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

-----Original Message-----
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:25 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Yes. Still open. Can email

Yes. Still open. Can email to gmail so I can check. [REDACTED]

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:30 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Watching. Someone doing avail outside

[REDACTED]

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
Justin.dejong@usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:28 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Watching. Someone doing avail outside

Watching. Someone doing avail outside room.

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:25 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: S won't walk away, is

[REDACTED]

----- Original Message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wed Jul 21 17:31:28 2010
Subject: S won't walk away, is

[REDACTED]

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:37 PM
To: Eamich, Amanda
Subject: RE: Live tweeting

And that's why you are so good at what you do.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Eamich, Amanda
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:35 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: Live tweeting

I tweeted from the hip.

On 7/21/10 5:30 PM, "Justin DeJong" <Justin.DeJong@oc.usda.gov> wrote:

Did you get what you needed for live tweets?

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: Eamich, Amanda
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 4:39 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; 'Chris.Mather@usda.gov'
Subject: Live tweeting

If at all possible, please print an extra copy of prepared rmks. Otherwise I will tweet a few high level statements from the Secretary.

At 107a now

Amanda Eamich
Director of New Media
US Dept of Agriculture
www.usda.gov/newmedia

Amanda Eamich
Director of New Media

Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
v. 202.720.5247
bb. [REDACTED]

<http://www.usda.gov/open>
<http://www.usda.gov/newmedia>



Consider the environment. Please don't print this e-mail unless you need it.

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:39 PM
To: Eamich, Amanda
Subject: RE: video link from today's press conference

yup

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Eamich, Amanda
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:37 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: FW: video link from today's press conference

This OK?

Agriculture Secretary Vilsack's Remarks to Media Regarding Shirley Sherrod.
Listen to the audio

Amanda Eamich
Director of New Media
Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
v. 202.720.5247
bb. [REDACTED]

<http://www.usda.gov/open>
<http://www.usda.gov/newmedia>

 *Consider the environment. Please don't print this e-mail unless you need it.*

----- Forwarded Message

From: Sam Goodson <Sam.Goodson@oc.usda.gov>
Date: Wed, 21 Jul 2010 17:30:40 -0400
To: Justin DeJong <Justin.DeJong@oc.usda.gov>, Caleb Weaver <Caleb.Weaver@oc.usda.gov>, "Chan, Stephanie" <Stephanie.Chan@oc.usda.gov>
Cc: Amanda Eamich <amanda.eamich@oc.usda.gov>, "Duncan, Kim -USDA" <Kim.Duncan@oc.usda.gov>
Subject: Fw: video link from today's press conference

I need the title link text for this.

From: Johnson, Mike -USDA
To: Duncan, Kim -USDA; Gilchrist, Sandy -USDA; Turner, Gayle -USDA; Powell, Vic -USDA; Hou, Steve Yuesheng -USDA; Goodson, Sam -USDA; Eamich, Amanda; Rhee, Peter
Sent: Wed Jul 21 17:26:18 2010

Subject: video link from today's press conference

The following is the URL from today's 4:45PM press conference with Secretary Vilsack.

<mms://ocbmtcwmp.usda.gov/content/secy/secy072110c.wmv>
<<mms://ocbmtcwmp.usda.gov/content/secy/secy072110c.wmv>>

Mike Johnson, USDA

----- End of Forwarded Message

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:42 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Replied. Issue is, this will

NBC has camera live in rotunda if S wants to do interview with Brian Williams. Also, just learned that Shirley is doing interviews tomorrow morning.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: [REDACTED], July 21, 2010 5:39 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Replied. Issue is, this will

[REDACTED]

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:44 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: [REDACTED]

I feel awful for him. This has to be worst day of his life.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:43 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:47 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Cc: JIC4, OC -USDA
Subject: statement
Attachments: sherrod statement.doc

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:47 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Warn wh that this will

[REDACTED]

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:40 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Warn wh that this will

[REDACTED]

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:59 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: FW: Questions

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: ALAN BJERGA, BLOOMBERG/ NEWSROOM: [mailto:abjerga@bloomberg.net]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:59 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Questions

1. Wondering the specific circumstances of Sherrod's discrimination claim against USDA. Fox says it's part of Pigford, and the secretary said she's been a claimant, but didn't specify.
2. Sherrod's specific job title at USDA last week. Thanks! Am at this e-mail and 202-624-1857.

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:59 PM
To: 'ALAN BJERGA, BLOOMBERG/ NEWSROOM.'
Subject: RE: Questions

Tx will add to our list.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: ALAN BJERGA, BLOOMBERG/ NEWSROOM: [mailto:abjerga@bloomberg.net]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:59 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Questions

1. Wondering the specific circumstances of Sherrod's discrimination claim against USDA. Fox says it's part of Pigford, and the secretary said she's been a claimant, but didn't specify.
2. Sherrod's specific job title at USDA last week. Thanks! Am at this e-mail and 202-624-1857.

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:00 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: FW: Shirley Sherrod
Attachments: Blank Bkgrd.gif

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Eilyn Ferguson [mailto:Eferguson@cq.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:58 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: Shirley Sherrod

Justin,

Secretary Vilsack said Ms. Sherrod was a plaintiff in a discrimination case against USDA. Do you know which case?

Eilyn Ferguson
Agriculture Reporter
CQ-Roll Call Group
Email: Eferguson@cq.com
Ph: 202-419-8334

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DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:23 PM
To: 'ALAN BJERGA, BLOOMBERG/ NEWSROOM:'
Subject: RE: Questions

Hopefully get more sleep tonight.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: ALAN BJERGA, BLOOMBERG/ NEWSROOM: [mailto:abjerga@bloomberg.net]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:22 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: Questions

And good luck.

----- Original Message -----

From: Justin DeJong <Justin.DeJong@oc.usda.gov>
To: ALAN BJERGA (BLOOMBERG/ NEWSROOM:)
At: 7/21 18:17:40

- 1) Pigford.
- 2) State Director for USDA Rural Development in Georgia

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
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Washington, DC 20250
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[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: ALAN BJERGA, BLOOMBERG/ NEWSROOM: [mailto:abjerga@bloomberg.net]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:59 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Questions

1. Wondering the specific circumstances of Sherrod's discrimination claim against USDA. Fox says it's part of Pigford, and the secretary said she's been a claimant, but didn't specify.
2. Sherrod's specific job title at USDA last week. Thanks! Am at this e-mail and 202-624-1857.

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:27 PM
To: 'mjalonick@ap.org'
Subject: RE: Hey

Hey, prob best to listen to Secretary's characterization. Here is audio link:

<mms://ocbmtcwmp.usda.gov/content/secy/secy072110c.wmv>
<<mms://ocbmtcwmp.usda.gov/content/secy/secy072110c.wmv>>

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
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Washington, DC 20250
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justin.dejong@usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: mjalonick@ap.org [mailto:mjalonick@ap.org]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:21 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Hey

Did vilsack say the job he offered was in civil rights?

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[IP_US_DISC]

mks dccc60c6d2c3a6438f0cf467d9a4938

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:33 PM
To: Eamich, Amanda; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: RE: video link from today's press conference

I'm not seeing video or statement on homepage.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
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justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Eamich, Amanda
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:29 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: video link from today's press conference

Yes

On 7/21/10 6:26 PM, "Chan, Stephanie" <Stephanie.Chan@oc.usda.gov> wrote:

Amanda, this link is fine to provide correct? JD needs to send it out and it isn't showing on his page

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Eamich, Amanda
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:36 PM
To: Goodson, Sam -USDA; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Re: video link from today's press conference

Working on the text title -

This should be in the "In Focus" section:

On 7/21/10 5:30 PM, "Sam Goodson" <Sam.Goodson@oc.usda.gov> wrote:
I need the title link text for this.

From: Johnson, Mike -USDA
To: Duncan, Kim -USDA; Gilchrist, Sandy -USDA; Turner, Gayle -USDA; Powell, Vic -USDA; Hou, Steve Yuesheng -USDA;

Goodson, Sam -USDA; Eamich, Amanda; Rhee, Peter

Sent: Wed Jul 21 17:26:18 2010

Subject: video link from today's press conference

The following is the URL from today's 4:45PM press conference with Secretary Vilsack.

<mms://ocbmtcwmp.usda.gov/content/secy/secy072110c.wmv>

<<mms://ocbmtcwmp.usda.gov/content/secy/secy072110c.wmv>>

Mike Johnson, USDA

Amanda Eamich
Director of New Media
Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
v. 202.720.5247
bb. [REDACTED]

<http://www.usda.gov/open>

<http://www.usda.gov/newmedia>

 *Consider the environment. Please don't print this e-mail unless you need it.*

Amanda Eamich
Director of New Media
Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
v. 202.720.5247
bb. [REDACTED]

<http://www.usda.gov/open>

<http://www.usda.gov/newmedia>

 *Consider the environment. Please don't print this e-mail unless you need it.*

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:46 PM
To: 'Hagstrom, Jerry'
Subject: RE: hope you are doing ok

I appreciate you Jerry. Appreciate your thoughts.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
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Washington, DC 20250
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justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Hagstrom, Jerry [mailto:JHagstrom@nationaljournal.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:41 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: hope you are doing ok

I am sure the last couple days have been terrible. But it seems to me Vilsack in the end has done all he could and so have you.

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:52 PM
To: 'Sally Schuff'
Subject: RE: Statement by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Shirley Sherrod

That would be great!

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Sally Schuff [mailto:[REDACTED]]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:42 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: Statement by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Shirley Sherrod

Thanks so much!! I'll be in town next Tuesday and Wednesday...hope to see you!
Cheers,
Sal.

Sally Schuff
Washington Editor
Feedstuffs, The Weekly Newspaper for Agribusiness
303.756.7821 office
[REDACTED] cell

-----Original Message-----

From: DeJong, Justin <Justin.DeJong@oc.usda.gov>
To: Sally Schuff <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wed, Jul 21, 2010 4:05 pm
Subject: FW: Statement by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Shirley Sherrod

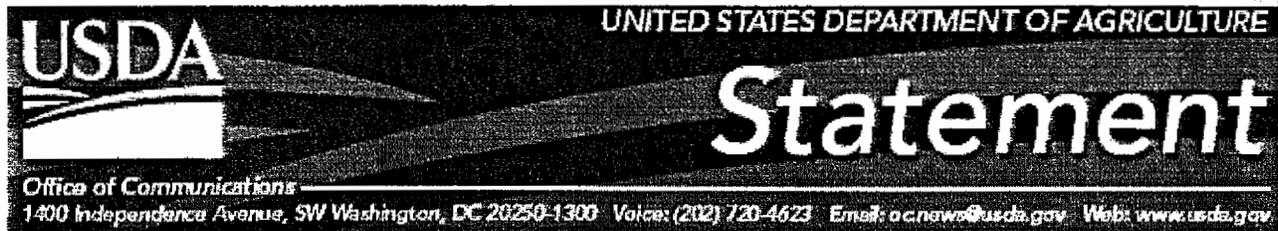
Here ya go.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: USDA Office of Communications [mailto:oc.news@usda.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:58 PM

To: DeJong, Justin

Subject: Statement by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Shirley Sherrod



Release No. PENDING

Contact:
USDA Office of Communications
(202) 720-4623

Statement by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Shirley Sherrod

WASHINGTON, July 21, 2010 - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today released the following statement in response to his conversation with Shirley Sherrod:

“Today, I reached out to Shirley Sherrod to apologize. I also told her I was sorry for the pain this caused her and her family and friends.

“I reacted too quickly. I should have taken the time to listen and learn.

“While I cannot change what happened, I can try to make something out of this difficult incident.

“As we know, Shirley has a unique and compelling story to tell. She and her family endured discrimination and overcame adversity. Fighting to advance justice and equality, she has helped farmers who were struggling to keep their land, fought for women in need of social and economic justice, and African-American men and women who faced discrimination. As USDA’s Georgia State Rural Development Director, she worked to promote economic opportunity for all people by enabling job creation and business growth. And Shirley has shown tremendous character through the events of the last few days.

“Shirley and I talked about a unique opportunity at USDA. With all that she has seen, endured and accomplished, it would be invaluable to have her experience, commitment and record of service at USDA. I hope she considers staying with the department.

“I did not handle this situation well. I will continue to review the circumstances that brought us to this day and I am committed to making sure it does not happen again.

“As part of this effort, I also want to renew my firm commitment to put behind all of us the USDA’s past record on civil rights. While we have made some progress over the last 18 months, more work is needed.”

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DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:53 PM
To: JIC4, OC.-USDA
Subject: RE: employee email draft

[REDACTED]

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: OC.JIC4@oc.usda.gov [mailto:OC.JIC4@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:33 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: employee email draft

[REDACTED]

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:14 PM
To: JIC4, OC -USDA
Subject: FW: Employee e-mail

See below.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
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justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:12 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Subject: RE: Employee e-mail

[REDACTED]

Karen Ross
Chief of Staff
Office of the Secretary
(202) 720-3631
karen.ross@osec.usda.gov

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:51 PM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Subject: Employee e-mail

Hi all,

[REDACTED]

Thanks,

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
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Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
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justin.dejong@usda.gov

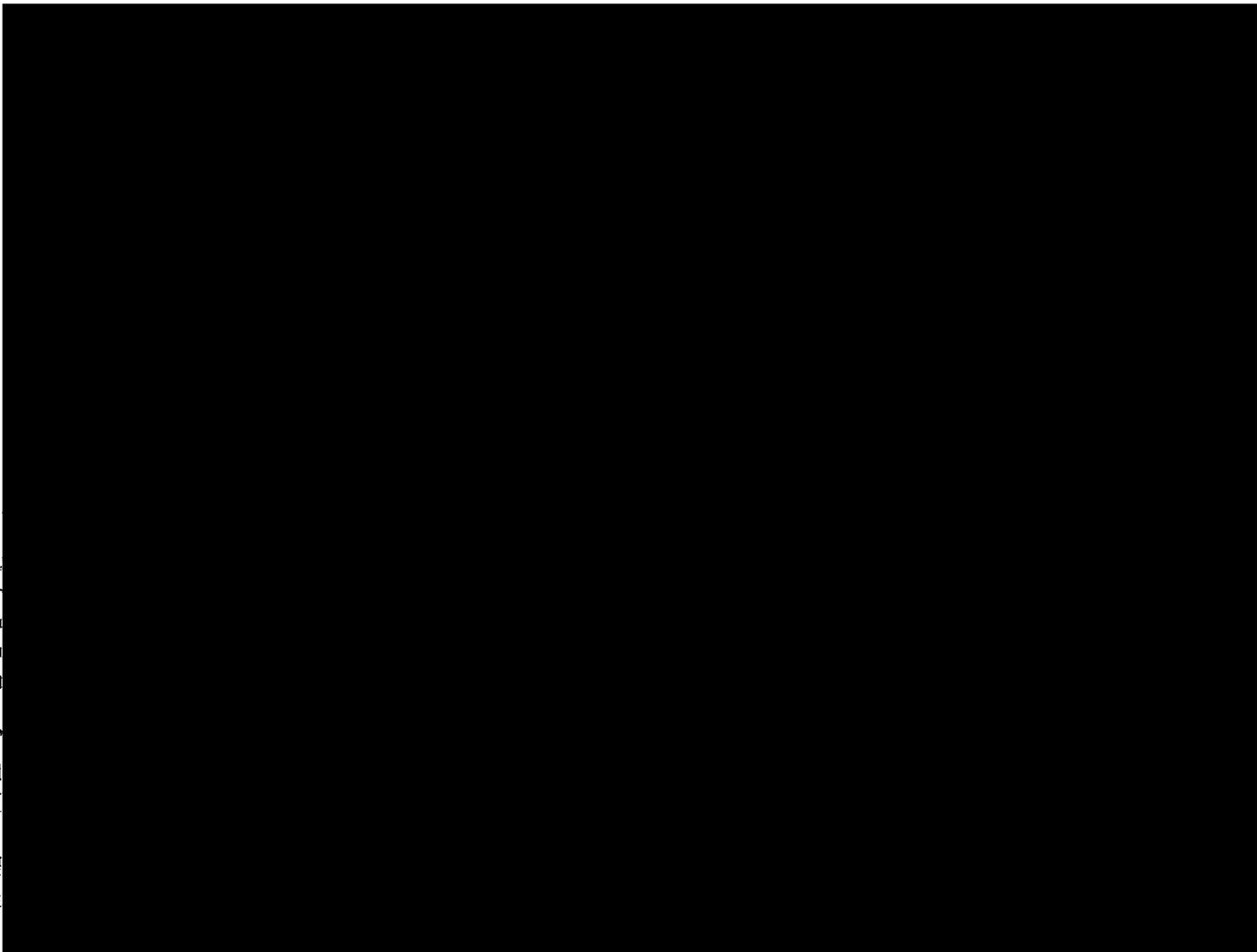
DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:29 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: FW: email from sec.

DRAFT e-mail for Secretary to employees below.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: OC.JIC4@oc.usda.gov [mailto:OC.JIC4@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:23 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: email from sec.



DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:55 PM
To: 'ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com'; Mather, Chris
Subject: Re: Did Vilsack meet with CBC before or after the presser?

On background:

In terms of what the position is, we're not going beyond secretarys remarks today. Thanks ed.

----- Original Message -----

From: Ed O'Keefe <ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com>
To: DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris
Sent: Wed Jul 21 19:43:32 2010
Subject: Re: Did Vilsack meet with CBC before or after the presser?

And one last thing: Vilsack said "the position needs to be filled."

Does this means he offered her an existing position or that bringing her on would fill a position the department needs to have?

And would the job be based in Washington or elsewhere?

Ed O'Keefe
The Federal Eye, The Washington Post
ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com

----- Original Message -----

From: DeJong, Justin <Justin.DeJong@oc.usda.gov>
To: Ed O'Keefe
Sent: Wed Jul 21 19:36:30 2010
Subject: RE: Did Vilsack meet with CBC before or after the presser?

After.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com [mailto:ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com]

Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:35 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Did Vilsack meet with CBC before or after the presser?

Just need quick clarification
Ed O'Keefe
The Federal Eye, The Washington Post

ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 8:01 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Eamich, Amanda; Purchia, Liz; Black, David -OC; 'stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov.'
Subject: Re: Transcript of Press Conf

Tomorrow is fine.

----- Original Message -----

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Eamich, Amanda; Purchia, Liz; Black, David -OC; 'stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov.' <stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov.>
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wed Jul 21 19:59:16 2010
Subject: RE: Transcript of Press Conf

JD, what do you think? I think tomorrow morning would be fine since the video is already up.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED] Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: Eamich, Amanda
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:58 PM
To: Purchia, Liz; Black, David -OC; 'stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov.'
Subject: Re: Transcript of Press Conf

Should this be done tonight or first thing in the morning? We are in after hrs support status.

Amanda Eamich
Director of New Media
US Dept of Agriculture
www.usda.gov/newmedia

----- Original Message -----

From: Purchia, Liz
To: Black, David -OC; Eamich, Amanda; 'stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov.' <stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov.>
Sent: Wed Jul 21 19:45:00 2010
Subject: Transcript of Press Conf

Wanted to give you a heads up, we have Malloy Transcription transcribing now.

I will send it to all of you as soon as I get it. I assume we want to get it on the site as soon as we can? This is a first for me so let me know if there's something else I should do.

Thanks,
Liz

Malloy Transcription Service 7040 31st Street, N.W.

Washington, D.C.20015

www.malloytranscription.com - website

jennie@malloytranscription.com - e-mail

202-362-6622 - phone

Liz Purchia

U.S. Department of Agriculture



DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 8:27 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fw: Top Outlets "vilsack" : In meeting, Messina praised Sherrod handling

----- Original Message -----

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; USDA Clips; JIC1, OC -USDA; JIC2, OC -USDA; JIC3, OC -USDA; Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Wed Jul 21 13:15:46 2010
Subject: FW: Top Outlets "vilsack" : In meeting, Messina praised Sherrod handling

From: Factiva[SMTP:EMAILEDNEWS@EMAIL.GLOBAL.FACTIVA.COM]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:15:36 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Top Outlets "vilsack" : In meeting, Messina praised Sherrod handling Auto forwarded by a Rule

Your topic is Top Outlets "vilsack"

In meeting, Messina praised Sherrod handling
21 July 2010, 16:38 GMT, Politico [360 Words]

In a closed staff meeting Tuesday morning, a senior administration praised elements of the White House's initial response to a partial video of a speech by a Department of Agriculture official -- a response that the Administration has since reversed.

White House officials yesterday afternoon told reporters they did not press Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack to demand the resignation of Shirley Sherrod, but that they stood by the hasty decision; last night, they took credit for pressing Vilsack to rehire her when a fuller video revealed that her remarks had been edited to mean the opposite of what she said.

But three Democratic sources said Deputy Chief of Staff Jim Messina, singled the White House's initial response to the incident out for praise in the regular 8:30 a.m. staff meeting Tuesday morning. The sources differed on the substance of Messina's praise, but concurred that he had praised the speed of White House communications in response to the flap, which was driven by a misleadingly-edited video posted to Andrew Breitbart's Big Government website.

One source, who is unhappy with the administration's handling of the incident, paraphrased Messina's remarks: "We could have waited all day - we could have had a media circus - but we took decisive action and it's a good example of how to respond in this atmosphere."

But two other senior officials present at the meeting, who responded to a call to the White House press office, said the gist of Messina's words had been conveyed to POLITICO inaccurately, and that Messina -- a top political operative and senior manager -- was merely speaking in his capacity as Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and "cheerleader" to boost staffers' morale.

Messina was merely praising the White House staff for "communicating well, sharing well, basically rising to the occasion" on the Sherrod story, one official said. "It was an institutional or procedural point."

Messina could not have been praising a White House decision to fire Sharron, the source said, because the decision was made by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack.

<http://global.factiva.com/redirect/default.aspx?p=sta&ep=AE&an=WC42340020100721e6710002w&fid=300612057&cat=w&aid=9USD000900&ns=18&fn=Top%20Outlets%20%22vilsack%22&ft=g&OD=V2AUbjNaqd6b5Ap%2b9OPrU4iu6h%2fp8T%2byJNGtxGUDhq6zQx18ytkPQ7A%3d%3d%7c2>

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DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:05 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Updated AP Story

Check if there was an updated story by mary clare jalonick.

From: liz purchia
To: DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Misailidis, Sarah; Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wed Jul 21 21:54:03 2010
Subject: Updated AP Story
Updated AP Story

Sherrod case shows power of conservative media

By DAVID BAUDER (AP) – 1 hour ago
<http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5iv-NWIPtRIIuJVAf76B8YegLInJWOD9H3P8500>

NEW YORK — A conservative blog posts 2 minutes, 38 seconds of video clips of a black federal agriculture official saying she didn't do everything she could to help a white farmer. The blogger labels it racism. Calls grow for the Obama administration to remove her. No one at the Agriculture Department or the White House checks further. The official is forced to resign.

Monday ends, but not the story.

A complete, 43-minute version of the video surfaces the next day, Tuesday, and casts a much different light on Shirley Sherrod's comments: They were part of an NAACP speech about how she overcame her racial prejudice to help the farmer, not about prejudice that stopped her from helping him.

Now, the administration is criticized for wronging her by rushing to judgment.

By Wednesday afternoon, Sherrod is sitting at a studio in CNN's Atlanta headquarters, watching on live television as White House press secretary Robert Gibbs apologizes to her.

She accepts and says: "Being afraid of the machine that the right has put out there — that's what's driving this."

A split screen shows her face and Gibbs' in a surreal moment, concluding a whirlwind 48 hours in which conservative media had the Obama administration on the defensive.

Fox News Channel has been riding high in the ratings since Barack Obama became the nation's first black president a year and a half ago. Commentators Glenn Beck and Bill O'Reilly offer a favorite destination for many administration opponents.

The Sherrod story erupted after BigGovernment.com, a website run by conservative activist Andrew Breitbart, posted portions of her speech at an NAACP banquet in March.

Breitbart's story began: "Context is everything." He said he offered "video evidence of racism coming from a federal appointee," and followed with snippets of the speech.

On the video, Sherrod, hired last August as director of rural development for the U.S. Agriculture Department in Georgia, talked about her unwillingness to offer much help to a white farmer when she worked at a non-profit organization 24 years ago.

The story moved from the Internet to Fox News Channel on Monday night.

In seeking her resignation, Sherrod said, a USDA deputy undersecretary told her the story was going to appear on Beck's program late Monday afternoon. Instead, Beck didn't discuss it that day; it first appeared a few hours later on the top-rated prime-time show "The O'Reilly Factor."

Host Bill O'Reilly showed the brief portion of Sherrod's March speech where she explained that she didn't give the white farmer "the full force of what I could do."

"Wow!" O'Reilly said after the clip aired. "That is simply unacceptable, and Ms. Sherrod must resign. The federal government cannot have skin color deciding any assistance."

As he talked, Fox flashed the news on the bottom of its screen that Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack had accepted Sherrod's resignation.

Fox's Sean Hannity aired the same short snippet of Sherrod's speech shortly afterward.

"This was at an NAACP dinner, and this was racist," Hannity said.

CNN's Rick Sanchez said producers there were intrigued by Biggovernment.com's posting and immediately started reporting on it. But with all the questions involved — Was this a fair characterization of Sherrod's full speech? Can she be reached to give her side of the story? — they wouldn't be ready to discuss it on his afternoon show until Tuesday, he said.

By then, the story rushed by.

"As journalists, we have to protect ourselves the best we can," Sanchez said. "It's easy for it to happen to anybody, by the way — jump to a conclusion, get excited, look at the coverage. It's kind of like creating a bandwagon effect. Once you get on the bandwagon, you can't hit the brakes."

By Tuesday morning, "Fox & Friends" headlined the story "Racism Caught on Tape."

Commentator Laura Ingraham talked about "people who have burrowed their way into the Obama administration with radical outlooks, a radical agenda and, in this case, a racist sentiment. How many more like Ms. Sherrod exist in the Obama administration who weren't so stupid as she was to actually explicitly state her views on the issue of race?"

When the full tape became available later, it was clear that Sherrod said the case taught her a lesson about the importance of helping all those in need, regardless of race.

"What's happening here is that she's guilty until proven innocent," Beck said on his show. "They fired her and now they are back-pedaling. There's no due process here. Doesn't an American have a right to a fair trial? They have politically assassinated this woman. No one has heard the case for or against her, they just took her out. When did we stop having the right to face our accusers?"

It's not clear when, or if, someone at Fox saw the full tape.

Fox spokeswoman Irena Briganti and David Tabacoff, executive producer of "The O'Reilly Factor," did not immediately return calls for comment. Sherrod said that she wasn't contacted by anyone at Fox until Tuesday, when she refused their requests for an interview.

After a video of her full speech was posted online by the NAACP, the White House called the Agriculture Department on Tuesday night, and it was agreed that her ouster should be reviewed.

As more came out Tuesday about Sherrod's speech, Fox's focus shifted. "Race Story Takes Strange Twist" was Wednesday's headline on "Fox & Friends."

"They may have acted without knowing the whole story," co-host Brian Kilmeade said of the administration.

Breitbart did not immediately respond to an AP request for an interview.

But on ABC's "Good Morning America" Wednesday, he said his story "was not about Shirley Sherrod." Instead, he said, the video provides evidence of Georgia NAACP members applauding or laughing at racist behavior, at the same time national NAACP figures are criticizing the tea party movement for having members that express racist sentiments."

Breitbart's BigGovernment.com attracted attention last year for airing video of workers at the community group ACORN counseling actors posing as a prostitute and her boyfriend. This month, Fox News has aggressively reported the story about the U.S. Justice Department choosing not to pursue a voter intimidation cases involving the New Black Panther Party in Philadelphia.

Paul Levinson, a journalism professor at Fordham University, said those cases — and the attention they received on Fox — were likely on the mind of Obama administration officials when Breitbart's story on Sherrod first appeared.

"They panicked," Levinson said. "They're giving the media far more power than they should have."

In issuing his apology, Gibbs said the government, media and interest groups on all sides made quick determinations without knowing all the facts involved.

"One of the great lessons you take away from this is to ask all the questions first and come to a full understanding," he said.

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 1:11 PM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff, Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; O'Brien, Doug
Cc: Mather, Chris; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: FW: READOUT OF PRESIDENT OBAMA'S CALL WITH SHIRLEY SHERROD

Fyi.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: noreply@messages.whitehouse.gov [mailto:noreply@messages.whitehouse.gov]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 1:09 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: READOUT OF PRESIDENT OBAMA'S CALL WITH SHIRLEY SHERROD

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

July 22, 2010

READOUT OF PRESIDENT OBAMA'S CALL WITH SHIRLEY SHERROD

The President reached Ms. Sherrod by telephone at about 12:35. They spoke for seven minutes.

The President expressed to Ms. Sherrod his regret about the events of the last several days. He emphasized that Secretary Vilsack was sincere in his apology yesterday, and in his work to rid USDA of discrimination.

The President told Ms. Sherrod that this misfortune can present an opportunity for her to continue her hard work on behalf of those in need, and he hopes that she will do so.

###

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DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 8:53 AM
To: JIC4, OC -USDA
Cc: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Re: Employee e-mail

I edited and provided to chris. Ill need to harass her this morning.

From: JIC4, OC -USDA
To: DeJong, Justin
Cc: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Thu Jul 22 08:40:58 2010
Subject: RE: Employee e-mail

Is there anything left to do on this? I never heard from either of you last night so I assumed not, but if there is – send my way with whatever you'd like me to do!

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:14 PM
To: JIC4, OC -USDA
Subject: FW: Employee e-mail

See below.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:12 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Subject: RE: Employee e-mail

[REDACTED]

Karen Ross
Chief of Staff
Office of the Secretary
(202) 720-3631
karen.ross@osec.usda.gov

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:51 PM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Subject: Employee e-mail

Hi all,



Thanks,

Justin DeJong
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justin.dejong@usda.gov

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 10:10 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: FW: Need comment re: USDA's civil rights history

Hi Chris,

[REDACTED]

Justin DeJong
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Washington, DC 20250
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justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: WilliamsK@washpost.com [mailto:WilliamsK@washpost.com]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 10:09 AM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Need comment re: USDA's civil rights history

Hi Justin,
Hope all is well. Just left you a voice mail message. I'm doing a story today looking at USDA's civil rights history. Lots of this I have in my notes from our previous conversations and interviews with the Secretary about the work you all are currently doing to right wrongs.

I do, however, need a fresh comment from you and to address this specific issue: Mrs. Sherrod and others who I have been talking to complain that many of those who discriminated against minority farmers were left in their positions.

I understand that this happened before the Secretary took office but I need something from you all explaining that and the circumstances around it.

Story is for tomorrow's paper.

Thank you,

Krissah

Krissah Thompson
The Washington Post
National Enterprise Writer
202-334-6319 (office)
Twitter: @krissah30

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 10:11 AM
To: 'Ej.Stapler@one.usda.gov'; Mather, Chris
Cc: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: RE: Fox - Reporter in Athens

Looping Stephanie.

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justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Ej.Stapler@one.usda.gov [mailto:Ej.Stapler@one.usda.gov]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 10:10 AM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Fox - Reporter in Athens

Message this AM from Jeff Ebner 404-713-0953 of Fox News Channel. Said he was here at the federal building. We did have a Fox crew show up the other day, but security kept them out of the building. We've had trouble with voice mail, but this has just shown up this morning. If someone could get back to him, I'd appreciate it.

EJ

E. J. Stapler | Public Information Coordinator
Rural Development
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Georgia State Office
355 East Hancock Ave. (Stop 310) | Athens, GA 30601
Phone; 706-546-2165, ext. 5904 | Fax: 706-546-2126
<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ga>

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 10:13 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: FW: Sherrod

Brasher inquiry.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
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Washington, DC 20250
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[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: Brasher, Philip [mailto:pbrasher@desmoine.gannett.com]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 10:12 AM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Sherrod

Anything new coming today on her job/future?

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 10:21 AM
To: 'Ej.Stapler@one.usda.gov'; Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris
Subject: RE: Contact question

For now, please track these inquiries and keep on file. Please also keep us in the loop as they come in.

Thanks EJ,

Justin DeJong
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Washington, DC 20250
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justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Ej.Stapler@one.usda.gov [mailto:Ej.Stapler@one.usda.gov]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 10:19 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin
Subject: FW: Contact question

I'm not sure how you want us to respond to e-mails like this. Please advise.

From: MAR [mailto:[REDACTED]]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 8:14 PM
To: Callahan, Deborah - Athens, GA; Stapler, EJ - Athens, GA
Subject: Contact question

Dear M Callahan and M Stapler:

I would like to contact Ms. Sherrod, your former state Director. I have been listening to her full speech from the NAACP banquet in March of 2009. She had some fantastic thoughts to share. I would like to send her a note to say thank you. How can I contact her?

Thank you!

Sincerely,
Mary Reinhardt

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 10:25 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: FW: Fox - Reporter in Athens

I'll put in a call, no need to follow up on this one.

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From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 10:16 AM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: Fox - Reporter in Athens

?
Chris Mather

From: Ej.Stapler@one.usda.gov
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thu Jul 22 10:10:01 2010
Subject: Fox - Reporter in Athens

Message this AM from Jeff Ebner 404-713-0953 of Fox News Channel. Said he was here at the federal building. We did have a Fox crew show up the other day, but security kept them out of the building. We've had trouble with voice mail, but this has just shown up this morning. If someone could get back to him, I'd appreciate it.

EJ

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Rural Development
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355 East Hancock Ave. (Stop 310) | Athens, GA 30601
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<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ga>

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 10:26 AM
To: Harless, Angela -USDA; Mather, Chris; Chan, Stephanie; Weaver, Caleb
Cc: Purchia, Liz
Subject: RE: FOX news sat truck on Jefferson

Liz, would you mind going downstairs and check in on these folks? Give me a buzz on cell when you find out more.

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-----Original Message-----

From: Harless, Angela -USDA
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 10:04 AM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Chan, Stephanie; Weaver, Caleb
Subject: FOX news sat truck on Jefferson

Thanks. --Angie

Angela Harless
USDA Office of Communications

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 10:37 AM
To: 'Brasher, Philip'
Subject: RE: Sherrod

Hi Phil,

Let me check.

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-----Original Message-----

From: Brasher, Philip [mailto:pbrasher@desmoine.gannett.com]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 10:12 AM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Sherrod

Anything new coming today on her job/future?

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 10:46 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: How do I get this into the right hands

Just saw this. It's a funny commentary on www.mediaite.com that mention's Terry being a "top political reporter" that should be on cable news. Some of the context is the nightmare we lived through this past week.

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-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 9:50 AM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Fw: How do I get this into the right hands

Can you see what this is?

-----Original Message-----

From: Terence Samuel
To: Terence Samuel
ReplyTo: Terence Samuel
Subject: How do I get this into the right hands
Sent: Jul 22, 2010 9:40 AM

<http://www.mediaite.com/online/the-root-on-the-return-of-lindsay-lohans-lawyer-once-you-go-black/>
Terry

Sent from my Verizon Wireless BlackBerry

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 10:49 AM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: RE: Meet the Press?

Sure, now they ask us.

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From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 9:51 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Fw: Meet the Press?

Chris Mather

From: Sandretti, David
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thu Jul 22 09:42:43 2010
Subject: Fw: Meet the Press?

Just got this.

From: Fischer, Betsy (NBC Universal)
To: Sandretti, David
Sent: Thu Jul 22 09:38:11 2010
Subject: Meet the Press?

Hi David -

I know this is a tense time, but I wanted to invite Sec. Vilsack to appear at the top of Meet the Press on Sunday. Even though the Secretary addressed several matters in his public statements yesterday, I think our audience would like to hear from him on this issue as well as his efforts to address civil rights issues within the department.

Please let me know your thoughts. Hope to hear from you soon. Thanks for your consideration.

All best,
Betsy

Betsy Fischer
Executive Producer

NBC News - Meet the Press
202 885-4752

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 11:49 AM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: FW: Civil Rights backgrounder
Attachments: civil rights background o'brien comments_trackededits.docx

Hi Chris,

The Civil Rights backgrounder for routing, includes update from Doug per your request. We have 2 requests for more background on this front from WaPo and The Hill. Stories are for tomorrow.

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From: JIC4, OC -USDA
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 4:34 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: Civil Rights backgrounder

I didn't see anything in the way of AP style other than a missed period, and a couple of commas.
I'll read it over again but I have read it through three times and don't see any edits as far as content – it reads thorough.

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 4:18 PM
To: JIC4, OC -USDA
Subject: FW: Civil Rights backgrounder

See attached.

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From: O'Brien, Doug
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 4:07 PM
To: McNeil, Mary; Leonard, Joe; DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: Civil Rights backgrounder

With Mary and my comments.

Apologize for delay.

From: McNeil, Mary
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 3:50 PM
To: O'Brien, Doug; Leonard, Joe; DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: Civil Rights backgrounder

Here it is.

Mary

From: O'Brien, Doug
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:41 PM
To: Leonard, Joe; McNeil, Mary; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Fw: Civil Rights backgrounder

Joe and Mary - can you review this? We are thinking of this handout for press who has not been keeping up with our activity.

I will look at the civil rights cases.

Thx

Doug

From: DeJong, Justin
To: O'Brien, Doug
Sent: Wed Jul 21 14:17:19 2010
Subject: Civil Rights backgrounder
Hi Doug,

I combined several docs we had on Civil Rights issues as a backgrounder to media who do not cover USDA every day. Please see attached.

Thanks,

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DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 11:50 AM
To: O'Brien, Doug
Subject: RE: Civil Rights backgrounder

Great, thanks.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
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From: O'Brien, Doug
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 11:47 AM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: Civil Rights backgrounder

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 11:31 AM
To: O'Brien, Doug
Subject: Civil Rights backgrounder

[REDACTED]

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
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justin.dejong@usda.gov

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 12:11 PM
To: Misailidis, Sarah; Mather, Chris; Chan, Stephanie; Purchia, Liz
Cc: JIC7, OC -USDA; JIC4, OC -USDA; JIC6, OC -USDA
Subject: RE: AOL News Opinion: Sherrod, Vilsack and the dangers of our clip cu

Good read.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
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justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Sarah.Misailidis@oc.usda.gov [mailto:Sarah.Misailidis@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 12:03 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Chan, Stephanie; Purchia, Liz; DeJong, Justin
Cc: JIC7, OC -USDA; JIC4, OC -USDA; JIC6, OC -USDA
Subject: AOL News Opinion: Sherrod, Vilsack and the dangers of our clip culture

Opinion: Sherrod, Vilsack and the Dangers of Our Clip Culture

Updated: 1 hour 32 minutes ago

Adam Hanft

Special to AOL News

(July 22) -- The Shirley Sherrod saga is political theater at the most profound level. It's got layers: nuclear partisanship, racial freight, rich personal narratives -- making it part Greek tragedy, part Southern Gothic. Like Faulkner said, in the South the past isn't history -- it isn't even past.

But these red meat, carnivorous delights have distracted much of the commentary from what seems to me to be the deepest moral lesson here, and that's the dangers of full speed ahead. Because what started this cascade of consequences was a very simple mistake: Tom Vilsack made a snap decision that was dead wrong. He allowed a brutally edited version of Sherrod's remarks, constructed for political reasons, to act as a decapitated proxy for the whole deal.

In short, Vilsack allowed himself to become a victim of our cut-and-paste, wrenched-out-of-context, instant judgment, text-happy, BlackBerry-propelled clip culture:

Like most of us, he has become accustomed to making quick judgments on partial evidence. (Ironic for an agriculture secretary, the cabinet position that oversees the most patient industry in the country.) How often do all of us read part of an e-mail -- or listen to a portion of a voice mail -- and race dangerously off in the wrong direction? How many of us have had our own mini Vilsack moments? I know I have.

Our culture has become dependent upon this highlight-reel approach to decision making. CEOs and senior management never get the full picture -- they live in the land of "executive summaries" where a few PowerPoint bullet points, designed by managers who want to shape opinion, give them the same selectively edited worldview.

Even worse, we are encouraged to trust our instincts. Books like Malcolm Gladwell's "Blink" celebrate the ancient wiring of our brains, arguing that our ability to make instant and wise judgments is part of our evolutionary provenance.

But we live in a world where technology can trick us and trip us. Video-editing techniques, Photoshop and other forms of digital manipulation are capable of instantly changing perceived reality and hence deceiving our hard-wired gifts. One can easily sound like a cultural studies professor and wonder if we have de-materialized and mediated existence to the point where we are reacting to ever-escalating derivatives of "real life." Walter Benjamin's "mechanical means of reproduction" on steroids.

Perhaps there will be some upside to this, and I don't mean another photo-opy suds summit. Perhaps Vilsack's snap decision, so painfully wrong, will serve as a national touchstone for the risks of racing through life without considering the fullness of context. And for not thinking long and hard about the motivations of those who shape and sandpaper "content" for our consumption.

If we replace Blink with Think, life will take a little longer, but we'll all be a lot better off for it. Just ask Tom.

Adam Hanft, founder and CEO of Hanft Projects, is a nationally known authority on consumer marketing, business strategy and social trends. He has written for The Huffington Post, Politics Daily, The Daily Beast, Fast Company and the Barnes & Noble Review.

Sarah Misailidis
Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
(202) 720-4691
Sarah.Misailidis@oc.usda.gov

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 12:18 PM
To: Misailidis, Sarah; Purchia, Liz; Mather, Chris; Chan, Stephanie
Cc: JIC7, OC -USDA; JIC6, OC -USDA; JIC4, OC -USDA
Subject: RE: Redding News: Vilsack Must Keep Black Farmers on their Land

She is way off the reservation.

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From: Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 12:14 PM
To: Purchia, Liz; DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris; Chan, Stephanie
Cc: JIC7, OC -USDA; JIC6, OC -USDA; JIC4, OC -USDA
Subject: RE: Redding News: Vilsack Must Keep Black Farmers on their Land

Cynthia McKinney? The former congresswoman? Oh geez.

From: Purchia, Liz
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 12:12 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris; Misailidis, Sarah; Chan, Stephanie
Cc: JIC7, OC -USDA; JIC6, OC -USDA; JIC4, OC -USDA
Subject: Redding News: Vilsack Must Keep Black Farmers on their Land

By Cynthia McKinney

Redding News

[http://www.reddingnewsreview.com/newspages/2010newspages/vilsack must keep black farmers 10 10000074.htm](http://www.reddingnewsreview.com/newspages/2010newspages/vilsack%20must%20keep%20black%20farmers%2010%2010000074.htm)

July 22, 2010, 1 a.m. - ...

Unfortunately however, Secretary Vilsack has also thrown Black Farmers under the bus. To date, despite abundant headlines to the contrary, Black Farmers, including the named plaintiffs in *Pigford v. Glickman* (1997), Lucious Abrams and Cecil Brewington have not even had a meeting with USDA, to settle their discrimination claim. Others who did receive settlements were then harassed by the Internal Revenue Service and had their bank accounts frozen and their Social Security payments offset by any government payments, including stimulus payments. "The actual so-called settlement of the lawsuit was worse than the discrimination that the USDA has admitted to and discrimination is continuing at this very hour," said *Pigford* plaintiff Black Farmer Eddie Slaughter.

"The President is meeting with everyone except those who brought forward the lawsuit and those who suffered discrimination and the violation of their Constitutional rights," said Lucious Abrams. Eddie Slaughter and Lucious Abrams met with Secretary Vilsack and apprised him of the current situation, but the Secretary to date has failed to act.

The Shirley Sherrod episode shows how quickly legitimate Black interests are thrown under the bus due to fear on the one hand and racial incitement for political purposes on the other hand.

"President Barack Obama should meet with Black Farmers who are leading the lawsuit," said McKinney, who has been active for years on the Black Farmer issue. Despite winning the lawsuit, plaintiffs in *Pigford* have not been made whole and therefore have not received justice. Over one decade later, lead plaintiffs on the lawsuit have not even had a hearing on the merits on their claim of discrimination, now admitted by the USDA. Claimants got paid, but actual farmers did not. The result is that over one million black-owned farm acres are at risk of being lost due to acceleration of collection of debt, foreclosure, bankruptcy, and USDA and USDOJ deliberate delay resulting in delinquent notes for Black Farmers.

Claimants, who are not necessarily farmers, have been paid out of the judgment fund. Meanwhile, class counsel (Alexander Pires), the adjudicators (Poorman Douglas), the arbitrator (Michael Lewis), the DOJ (USDA is paying DOJ), the facilitator (JAM in Dispute), the monitor (Randy Ross) were all paid over \$300 million dollars of taxpayer money, yet actual Black Farmers are yet to be made whole. "Under Agriculture Secretary Vilsack, USDA is still engaged in a racket that will result in the theft of black-owned land," said McKinney.

Both the White House and Secretary Vilsack have issued public apologies to Sherrod.

Liz Purchia
Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-2168 | BB: [REDACTED]
Liz.Purchia@oc.usda.gov

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 12:20 PM
To: 'Kevin Bogardus'
Subject: RE: Shirley Sherrod
Attachments: Transcript.doc

This will be on our website shortly.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
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justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Kevin Bogardus [<mailto:kbogardus@thehill.com>]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 12:16 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: Shirley Sherrod

Thanks. Any luck on a press conference transcript? I talked to Stephanie and she said there might be one. Sorry, the video is not loading for me at the moment.

On Thu, Jul 22, 2010 at 12:09 PM, DeJong, Justin <Justin.DeJong@oc.usda.gov> wrote:

No prob.

On background:

We're not going beyond the Secretary's remarks from yesterday in terms of how he characterized the position.

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From: Kevin Bogardus [<mailto:kbogardus@thehill.com>]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 12:04 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: Shirley Sherrod

Justin, Thanks for getting back to me so quickly. One other quick question, which is:

-- Did Secretary Vilsack offer Sherrod a different job than her old one? And if it was a different job, what was it?

Please let me know. Thanks for your help.

-- Kevin

On Thu, Jul 22, 2010 at 11:36 AM, DeJong, Justin <Justin.DeJong@oc.usda.gov> wrote:

Hi Kevin,

Please see below.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
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justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Kevin Bogardus [<mailto:kbogardus@thehill.com>]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 10:45 AM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Shirley Sherrod

Justin,

Hi, it's Kevin Bogardus with *The Hill* newspaper.

I am working on a piece about the Shirley Sherrod incident in the broader context of the Agriculture Department's civil rights history. I had a few questions, which are just for background and below:

-- Do you have a transcript of Secretary Vilsack's press conference discussing the incident yesterday? If so, can you pass it onto me?

<mms://ocbmtcwmp.usda.gov/content/secy/secy072110c.wmv>

-- Can you give me a update on the Obama administration's actions to improve the Agriculture Department's civil rights record? You have done so in the past so I am wondering if there is any new developments.

I have a backgrounder I'm trying to clear so I can send your way.

-- Was Sherrod the first African-American to hold her position as the rural development Georgia State director?

Yes.

-- Was Sherrod a claimant in the Pigford settlement case?

Yes.

Please get back to me by 1:30 p.m. today. That is my deadline. Thanks for your help.

Sincerely,
Kevin Bogardus
Staff Writer
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1625 K Street NW, Suite 900
Washington, DC 20006
Phone: 202-628-8566
Cell: [REDACTED]
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DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 12:28 PM
To: Rhee, Peter
Subject: RE: New Media Update 7/22/10 Part 1

I can't access the file.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Rhee, Peter
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 12:25 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Black, David -OC; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Eamich, Amanda
Cc: Fobia, Hakim
Subject: New Media Update 7/22/10 Part 1

Attached.

Peter Rhee, PMP
Creative Media Director
Office of Communications
U.S. Department Of Agriculture
RM 405-A
BB. [REDACTED]
M. 202.423.4949
O. 202.720.8138

www.usda.gov/newmedia

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 1:14 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: RE: Time Magazine (Kate Pickert): Pigford and Shirley Sherrard

I will.

Justin DeJong
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justin.dejong@usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 12:32 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: FW: Time Magazine (Kate Pickert): Pigford and Shirley Sherrard

You calling or me?

-----Original Message-----

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 12:12 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Time Magazine (Kate Pickert): Pigford and Shirley Sherrard

FYI-

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED] Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: Kate Pickert [mailto:kate_pickert@timemagazine.com]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 12:04 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: TIME magazine inquiry

Hi Stephanie,

I'm a writer at TIME magazine and I'm working on a story about the Pigford lawsuit. I've got some questions about it and a few about Shirley Sherrard. Can you give me a call asap?

Thanks in advance,
Kate Pickert, 212-522-3731

Kate Pickert
Staff Writer
TIME Magazine & Time.com
Time & Life Building
1271 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10020
212-522-3731

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 1:58 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: FW: CBS News

FYI that CBS news needs the Civil Rights backgrounder ASAP.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
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justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Burgess, Peter [mailto:BURGESSP@cbsnews.com]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 12:44 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: CBS News

Hey Justin,

Thanks for talking to me. Please forward me any documents to this email address. We are doing the story for tonight's Evening News.

Thanks
Peter

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 2:11 PM
To: JIC4, OC -USDA; Weaver, Caleb; Mather, Chris; Chan, Stephanie; Purchia, Liz; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: RE: Gibbs Briefing 7/22

Mather, Gibb's briefing was really light on Sherrod questions.

Justin DeJong
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justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: OC.JIC4@oc.usda.gov [mailto:OC.JIC4@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 2:07 PM
To: Weaver, Caleb; Mather, Chris; Chan, Stephanie; Purchia, Liz; Misailidis, Sarah; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Gibbs Briefing 7/22

Station: CNN
Date: 07/22/2010 13:58:42 - 2:08:42 PM

we have all these developments at the white house. hang with me for a second. the briefing is beginning with press secretary robert gibbs.

is there a parliamentaparlia.

any objections? go ahead, I'm sorry.

thank you. the president has expressed his regret. is it accurate to say he apologized? personally apologized?

yes. reclaiming your time?

did he lobby for her job back or take a new job?

look, that was not what the call was about. and not what happened on the call. obviously as the readout discusses, she has a unique set of experiences and a unique opportunity to use those experiences to help people. that's what he said to her and obviously a decision about what she's going to do is up to her, and i think she is supposed to talk with the department of agriculture at some point today.

she did accept his apology?

yes.

maybe I missed this, but why couldn't she just have her old job back?

I would point you to usda in terms of -- they're handling the jobs discussions with sherrod. what secretary vilsack offered was something that allows her to, again, as the president says, use some unique experiences to help root out what we know is a long --

a department that has struggled with discrimination. she's a plaintiff in the pickford discrimination case.

did the president invite her to the white house?

no.

is it clear why the president wasn't able to reach ore yesterday? did he try? why wasn't she reachable?

it may have been because she was all over tv. the white house operator tried on at least two occasions last night and was both unable to reach her and unable to leave a voice mail.

is the white house comfortable with the fact that she has been on a lot of television shows?

she's free to do and say what every other person in the country is free to do and say.

i would like to ask you about energy.

okay.

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 2:56 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: FW: Question at briefing

Mather, do you want to talk to Mary Clare?

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
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Washington, DC 20250
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justin.dejong@usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: Jalonick, Mary Clare [mailto:mjalonick@ap.org]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 2:01 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Question at briefing

Forwarding Ben's question to Gibbs to you all (as Gibbs suggested in briefing). Any reason Sherrod wasn't offered her old job? Could she have it if she wanted it? She made some indications on TV this morning that she would rather do that than the other job offered. Thanks.

Mary Clare Jalonick
The Associated Press
202-641-9461 (office)
[REDACTED] (cell)
Twitter: MCJalonick

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[IP_US_DISC]

msk dccc60c6d2c3a6438f0cf467d9a4938

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 3:12 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris; Purchia, Liz
Subject: RE: Reuters (David Beasley): Number of black farmers in US and USDA efforts to improve civil right record

Who is David Beasley. Who does he write for?

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 2:30 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Purchia, Liz
Subject: Reuters (David Beasley): Number of black farmers in US and USDA efforts to improve civil right record

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: david beasley [mailto:[REDACTED]]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 2:23 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Question from Etuers

Stephanie, David Beasley here, working with Reuters on a Sherrod followup. Does the department have any numbers on how many black farmers there are in the U.S. now? And could you send me anything on Secretary Vilsack's efforts to improve the department's civil rights record? thanks

From: "Chan, Stephanie" <Stephanie.Chan@oc.usda.gov>
Sent: Wed, July 21, 2010 4:18:10 PM
Subject: TODAY: Agriculture Secretary Vilsack to Deliver Statement to Media Regarding Shirley Sherrod



TODAY: Agriculture Secretary Vilsack to Deliver Statement to Media Regarding Shirley Sherrod

WASHINGTON, July 21, 2010 – TODAY, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack will speak to members of the media and provide a statement regarding Shirley Sherrod.

WHERE: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Whitten Office Building, 1400 Independence Ave. SW
Press Briefing Room, Room 107
Washington, D.C.

WHEN: Wednesday, July 21, 2010
4:45 p.m. EDT

***Please Note: Limited media parking will be made available on both Independence Ave. and Jefferson Drive between 12th and 14th Streets SW.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice), or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 3:23 PM
To: Wyant, Monica
Subject: RE: Sherrod's classification

tx

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
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justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Wyant, Monica
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 3:22 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Washo, Kevin
Subject: Re: Sherrod's classification

Yes. Schedule C

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Washo, Kevin; Wyant, Monica
Sent: Thu Jul 22 15:07:25 2010
Subject: FW: Sherrod's classification
Hi Kevin,

Schedule C, correct?

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
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[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: DavidsonJ@washpost.com [mailto:DavidsonJ@washpost.com]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 3:07 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: Chan, Stephanie; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Sherrod's classification

Chris,

I write the Federal Diary in The Washington Post and I'm following up on earlier phone call requests, trying to find out what Shirley Sherrod's classification was with USDA.

Was she a political appointee, in the SES or GS? If she was a political appointee, was she a schedule C appointee?

I am on deadline.

Thank you.

Best,

Joe

Joe Davidson

The Washington Post

1150 15th Street, NW

Washington, DC 20071

202.334.6415 -- work

██████████ -- cell

davidsonj@washpost.com

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 3:33 PM
To: Jeanquart, Bobbi
Subject: RE: arkansas democrat-gazette

We should decline opportunity at this time.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
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Washington, DC 20250
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[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: Jeanquart, Bobbi
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 3:32 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Fw: arkansas democrat-gazette

Should pearlie do this?

----- Original Message -----

From: Brooks, Tiffany
To: Jeanquart, Bobbi
Sent: Thu Jul 22 15:28:17 2010
Subject: FW: arkansas democrat-gazette

Please follow-up and handle this for Mr. Reed.

Thanks,
Tiffany

-----Original Message-----

From: Alex Daniels [mailto:adaniels@arkansasonline.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:49 PM
To: Reed, Pearlie
Subject: arkansas democrat-gazette

Mr. Reed,

I am curious whether you would grant me a phone interview re: the Sherrod situation

Alex Daniels
Arkansas Democrat-Gazette
adaniels@arkansasonline.com
202-662-7690

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 3:46 PM
To: 'mjalonick@ap.org'
Subject: Background on Civil Rights at USDA
Attachments: Background USDA Civil Rights.doc

Hi Mary Clare,

As promised, I'm providing the attached document about civil rights at USDA **on background**.

Hope this is helpful,

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
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justin.dejong@usda.gov

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 3:51 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: FW: WaPo Ed O'Keef article

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Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
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justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Purchia, Liz
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 3:37 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: WaPo Ed O'Keef article

Links to this <http://www.rma.usda.gov/aboutrma/civilrights/>

President Obama calls Shirley Sherrod

Updated 1:39 p.m. ET

http://voices.washingtonpost.com/federal-eye/2010/07/shirley_sherrod_wants_to_talk.html

President Obama has expressed his "regret" to former U.S. Agriculture Department official **Shirley Sherrod** over her ouster, the White House said Thursday.

The president reached Sherrod around 12:35 p.m. ET and "emphasized that Secretary Vilsack was sincere in his apology yesterday, and in his work to rid USDA of discrimination," the White House said Thursday.

"The President told Ms. Sherrod that this misfortune can present an opportunity for her to continue her hard work on behalf of those in need, and he hopes that she will do so," the statement said.

Obama made the call from his private office on Thursday after twice trying unsuccessfully to reach her on Wednesday evening, according to a White House aide. Staffers tried to reach her again this morning and Obama spoke with her when she returned the call, the aide said.

Sherrod did not indicate to Obama whether she plans to rejoin the government, according to the aide. She expressed reluctance to rejoin the Obama administration earlier Thursday during a series of television interviews.

"I'd like to talk to him about the experiences of people like me, people at the grassroots level, people who live out here in rural America people, who live in the South. I know he does not have that kind of experience," Sherrod told NBC's Today Show.

"We love him, we want him to be successful, because we feel he thinks in some ways like we do, and we think that's good for the country," she said later. "Yes, there are issues out there that we are faced with, issues of poverty. The other thing, I want everything to reflect, I want a good reflection for him as the first black president."

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack offered Sherrod a position with USDA's Office of Civil Rights and Community Outreach, Sherrod said, but raised doubts she would take the job.

"I would not be that individual that the department, everyone is looking to to solve the issue of racism in USDA. It takes a lot more to get that job done," she said, noting that other USDA officials have not lost their jobs for discriminating against minority or women farmers.

Sherrod also told CNN's "American Morning" that said she would like to "get back at" **Andrew Breitbart**, the right-wing blogger whose posting of the video snippet triggered the political storm that led to her ouster. Asked whether she would like to see Breitbart's Web site shut down, Sherrod replied: "That would be a great thing...he's doing more to divide us."

Liz Purchia
Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-2168 | BB: [REDACTED]
Liz.Purchia@oc.usda.gov

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 3:52 PM
To: 'Krissah Thompson'
Subject: RE: Need comment re: USDA's civil rights history

You bet.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Krissah Thompson [mailto:WilliamsK@washpost.com]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 3:51 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: Need comment re: USDA's civil rights history

Okay. Thanks Justin.

Also can the background info on what Secy Vilsack has done in terms of civil rights be attributed to "a USDA official"?

Krissah Thompson
The Washington Post
National Enterprise Writer
202-334-6319 (office)
Twitter: @krissah30

"DeJong, Justin" <Justin.DeJong@oc.usda.gov>

07/22/2010 03:44 PM

To "Krissah Thompson" <WilliamsK@washpost.com>
cc
Subject RE: Need comment re: USDA's civil rights history

Hi Krissah,

As promised, attached is the document and I'm providing this to you on background. Hopefully this is helpful.

Thanks,

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)

justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Krissah Thompson [<mailto:WilliamsK@washpost.com>]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 3:30 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: Need comment re: USDA's civil rights history

Hi Justin,

Do you have anything for me yet? I'm putting the story together now and it'd help to have the background and answers to the question about whether there have been any USDA officials fired for discriminating against minority farmers.

Thanks

Krissah Thompson
The Washington Post
National Enterprise Writer
202-334-6319 (office)
Twitter: @krissah30
"DeJong, Justin" <Justin.DeJong@oc.usda.gov>

07/22/2010 01:13 PM

To WilliamsK@washpost.com

cc

Subject RE: Need comment re: USDA's civil rights history

Hi Krissah,

I am working to clear a background document that has a lot of background on Civil Rights at USDA, as well as Vilsack efforts. Thinking this will be helpful for you,

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: WilliamsK@washpost.com [<mailto:WilliamsK@washpost.com>]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 10:09 AM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Need comment re: USDA's civil rights history

Hi Justin,

Hope all is well. Just left you a voice mail message. I'm doing a story today looking at USDA's civil rights history. Lots of this I have in my notes from our previous conversations and interviews with the Secretary about the work you all are

currently doing to right wrongs.

I do, however, need a fresh comment from you and to address this specific issue: Mrs. Sherrod and others who I have been talking to complain that many of those who discriminated against minority farmers were left in their positions.

I understand that this happened before the Secretary took office but I need something from you all explaining that and the circumstances around it.

Story is for tomorrow's paper.

Thank you,

Krissah

Krissah Thompson
The Washington Post
National Enterprise Writer
202-334-6319 (office)
Twitter: @krissah30

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 3:53 PM
To: 'ed.hornick@turner.com'
Subject: FW: CNN: Black farmers' settlement is at the mercy of the Senate
Attachments: Background USDA Civil Rights.doc

Hi Ed,

Saw your story and wanted to provide you information on **background** on civil rights at USDA. Also, about Secretary Vilsack's efforts on this front.

Hope all is well. Thanks,

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
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justin.dejong@usda.gov

Black farmers' settlement is at the mercy of the Senate

By Ed Hornick, CNN
<http://edition.cnn.com/2010/POLITICS/07/22/black.farmers.congress/#fbid=5bo7ygzlllp>

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- The case against the USDA was settled out of court 11 years ago
- Qualified farmers could receive \$50,000 each to settle claims of racial bias
- The House approved a war supplemental bill that included money to pay for the settlement
- House speaker blasts Senate Republicans for stalling the process

Washington (CNN) – Money to pay for a discrimination lawsuit brought against the Department of Agriculture by black farmers remains stuck in a legislative body described as a place where bills go to die.

In July, the House approved a war supplemental bill that included money to pay for the settlement. It now remains stuck as senators examine the bill.

The 1997 Pigford v. Glickman case against the U.S. Agriculture Department was settled out of court 11 years ago. Under a federal judge's terms dalling to 1999, qualified farmers could receive \$50,000 each to settle claims of racial bias.

As a senator, Barack Obama sponsored "Pigford II," a measure in the 2008 Farm Bill that reopened the case. In February of this year, his administration brokered a \$1.25 billion settlement for Pigford II. But Congress missed two deadlines, one in March and the other in May.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi on Thursday blasted Senate Republicans for holding up the process, saying that they have "rejected over and over again any legislation that has had the Pigford settlement in it."

House Minority Leader John Boehner, asked about Republican support for the black farmer settlement money, said "many of us are supportive of settling these claims."

"This issue has gone on for almost the 20 years that I've been here, and it needs to be resolved," he added.

The money, along with all the other added domestic spending that the House added to the war funding bill, is likely to be stripped out next week when the Senate is expected to approve money for Iraq and Afghanistan and other emergency spending items.

The speaker said the push to get Senate action has had "no higher priority because of the events of recent days."

Pelosi was referring to the firestorm over Shirley Sherrod, an African-American, who stepped down from her USDA job Monday under pressure after a video clip surfaced of her discussing a white farmer. The White House and Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack apologized to her Wednesday.

[Read more about Sherrod's story](#)

Pelosi's sentiments were echoed by John Boyd, a fourth-generation farmer and founder of the National Black Farmers Association.

"We are still stuck in Senate politics, and it looks like it's very bipartisan politics with the Democrats on one side of the fence trying to get something done, and the Republicans focusing on midterm elections," he told CNN.

Boyd urged President Obama to step in and move the bill forward.

"We just need the president to focus in on this thing just a little while longer and ask that the black farmers get a vote on this very, very important issue before the recess," he said. "I want to go on record making sure that everybody understands that we support the president 110 percent. We just feel that we need a little push in the Senate to help get this done."

Boyd added that Obama should reach out to Republicans and Democrats to make sure that the farmers receive justice before the August recess.

The president promised to help black farmers who have not received the \$1.25 billion settlement owed to them after years of being denied government farm loans and support from federal programs because of the color of their skin.

White House press secretary Robert Gibbs, in a briefing Wednesday, said the USDA is paying out the settlement for "decades-long discrimination."

"I think as you saw in the statements from Secretary Vilsack that, rightly, the department has a zero-tolerance policy for discrimination," he said. "If you look back at the history of some aspects of the way USDA benefits have been dispensed, they were done so in a way that people have acknowledged were discriminatory."

Vilsack, after a Wednesday night meeting with the Congressional Black Caucus to discuss the Sherrod case, said he was working on getting the Senate to appropriate the money, and "our hope is it gets done quickly so we can resolve the case."

CNN's Shawna Shepherd and Deirdre Walsh contributed to this report.

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 3:57 PM
To: 'Burgess, Peter'
Subject: RE: CBS News
Attachments: Background USDA Civil Rights.doc

Hi Peter,

Good talking to you earlier. Here is the information I promised **on background**. Hope this is helpful,

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
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justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Burgess, Peter [mailto:BURGESSP@cbsnews.com]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 12:44 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: CBS News

Hey Justin,

Thanks for talking to me. Please forward me any documents to this email address. We are doing the story for tonight's Evening News.

Thanks
Peter

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 3:59 PM
To: 'Kevin Bogardus'
Subject: RE: Shirley Sherrod
Attachments: Background USDA Civil Rights.doc

Hi Kevin,

I know I missed your deadline, but did want to provide you with information on **background** about USDA and civil rights.

Hope this is helpful,

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
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Washington, DC 20250
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justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Kevin Bogardus [mailto:kbogardus@thehill.com]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 10:45 AM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Shirley Sherrod

Justin,

Hi, it's Kevin Bogardus with *The Hill* newspaper.

I am working on a piece about the Shirley Sherrod incident in the broader context of the Agriculture Department's civil rights history. I had a few questions, which are just for background and below:

- Do you have a transcript of Secretary Vilsack's press conference discussing the incident yesterday? If so, can you pass it onto me?
- Can you give me a update on the Obama administration's actions to improve the Agriculture Department's civil rights record? You have done so in the past so I am wondering if there is any new developments.
- Was Sherrod the first African-American to hold her position as the rural development Georgia State director?
- Was Sherrod a claimant in the Pigford settlement case?

Please get back to me by 1:30 p.m. today. That is my deadline. Thanks for your help.

Sincerely,
Kevin Bogardus
Staff Writer
The Hill

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 4:02 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: Employee E-mail for Sec.

Revisiting this.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:29 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: FW: email from sec.

DRAFT e-mail for Secretary to employees below.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: OC.JIC4@oc.usda.gov [mailto:OC.JIC4@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:23 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: email from sec.





DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 4:17 PM
To: 'david beasley'
Subject: RE: Reuters (David Beasley): Number of black farmers in US and USDA efforts to improve civil right record

No prob. On background: recall that many of the complaints go back 10+ years and I understand earlier trend lines do not look good.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: david beasley [mailto:[REDACTED]]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 4:11 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: Reuters (David Beasley): Number of black farmers in US and USDA efforts to improve civil right record

Thanks Justin. I noticed that the number of black farmers seems to be actually increasing.

From: "DeJong, Justin" <Justin.DeJong@oc.usda.gov>
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: "Chan, Stephanie" <Stephanie.Chan@oc.usda.gov>
Sent: Thu, July 22, 2010 3:49:51 PM
Subject: FW: Reuters (David Beasley): Number of black farmers in US and USDA efforts to improve civil right record

Hi David,

Thanks for reaching out. I wanted to provide the attached document to you **on background** as it provides context to civil rights at USDA as well as Secretary Vilsack's efforts. Also, best place to look for statistics about black farmers is the Census of Agriculture. Here is a link:

<http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/>

Hope this is helpful,

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: david beasley [mailto: [REDACTED]]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 2:23 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Question from Etuers

Stephanie, David Beasley here, working with Reuters on a Sherrod followup. Does the department have any numbers on how many black farmers there are in the U.S. now? And could you send me anything on Secretary Vilsack's efforts to improve the department's civil rights record? thanks

From: "Chan, Stephanie" <Stephanie.Chan@oc.usda.gov>
Sent: Wed, July 21, 2010 4:18:10 PM
Subject: TODAY: Agriculture Secretary Vilsack to Deliver Statement to Media Regarding Shirley Sherrod



Media Advisory No. PENDING

Contact:
USDA Office of Communications
(202) 720-4623

TODAY: Agriculture Secretary Vilsack to Deliver Statement to Media Regarding Shirley Sherrod

WASHINGTON, July 21, 2010 – TODAY, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack will speak to members of the media and provide a statement regarding Shirley Sherrod.

WHERE: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Whitten Office Building, 1400 Independence Ave. SW
Press Briefing Room, Room 107
Washington, D.C.

WHEN: Wednesday, July 21, 2010
4:45 p.m. EDT

***Please Note: Limited media parking will be made available on both Independence Ave. and Jefferson Drive between 12th and 14th Streets SW.

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DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 4:25 PM
To: Mather, Chris; 'Terence Samuel'
Subject: RE: Info

Terry,

Good to see you last night. Attached is a backgrounder on our civil rights efforts.



Background USDA
Civil Rights.d...

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
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Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 4:24 PM
To: 'Terence Samuel'
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Subject: FW: Info

These are the numbers we have. Justin is double checking but 36 does not ring a bell. Ccing him.

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, November 16, 2009 3:45 PM
To: 'terence.samuel@theroot.com'
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Info

There were 14,000 complaints
We have gotten our hands on 11,000
We found that 3,800 need to be looked at again because they may have merit, 80% of which the statute of limitations has run out
Bush Admin only found ONE of the 14,000 to have merit.

Chris Mather
Director of Communications
USDA
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 402A

Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0060
chris.mather@usda.gov

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 5:22 PM
To: 'mjalonick@ap.org'
Subject: Re:

In meeting. Will call.

----- Original Message -----

From: Jalonick, Mary Clare <mjalonick@ap.org>
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thu Jul 22 17:17:06 2010
Subject:

Hey I just have a background for my own planning kind of a question -- are you around. Radio silence over there.

Mary Clare Jalonick
The Associated Press
202-641-9461 (office)
[REDACTED] (cell)
Twitter: MCJalonick

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[IP_US_DISC]

msk dccc60c6d2c3a6438f0cf467d9a4938

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 6:42 PM
To: 'Hagstrom, Jerry'
Subject: Backgrounder on Civil Rights at USDA
Attachments: Background USDA Civil Rights.doc

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
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[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 6:58 PM
To: 'Coppess, Jonathan - Washington, DC'
Subject: RE: WaPo (Kari Lydersen): Keepseagle

I think it was Janie...

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Coppess, Jonathan - Washington, DC [mailto:Jonathan.Coppess@wdc.usda.gov]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 6:57 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: WaPo (Kari Lydersen): Keepseagle

Hey, do you remember who briefed you on this previously?

From: DeJong, Justin [mailto:Justin.DeJong@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 6:31 PM
To: Hipp, Janie; Coppess, Jonathan - Washington, DC; O'Brien, Doug
Cc: Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Subject: FW: WaPo (Kari Lydersen): Keepseagle

Hi all,



Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 6:19 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Purchia, Liz
Subject: WaPo (Kari Lydersen): Keepseagle

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: kari lydersen [mailto:[REDACTED]]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 6:16 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: washington post interview request

Hello Stephanie

I'm a Chicago-based freelancer for the Washington Post doing a story related to the Shirley Sherrod situation and the Keepseagle class action lawsuit.

I'm hoping to speak with someone by 10am Friday, or as soon as possible, we're planning to do something on a quick turnaround.

The story is about Patrick Turner, a Montana USDA loan officer who was charged with criminal assault involving a Feb 23 incident where he allegedly attacked a Native American rancher (Tony Anderson) and a disabled man (Bob Erickson). There have also been several discrimination complaints filed regarding Turner, and informal complaints from other Native Americans in and around the Fort Peck reservation. Basically Native Americans in the area and attorneys in the Keepseagle case are asking why Turner has not been investigated, disciplined or fired given these complaints, and they think the situation with Sherrod makes this more prominent. So I'm hoping to speak with someone from the USDA about this situation in general and I'm wondering if you can tell me if any investigation or action has been taken regarding complaints against Turner or his arrest (which resulted in a stay of prosecution in federal court). Thanks and hope to talk with you soon

Sincerely,

Kari Lydersen
[REDACTED]

--

Kari Lydersen
[REDACTED]

www.karilydersen.com

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 7:09 PM
To: 'Khennessy@tribune.com'
Subject: Civil Rights at USDA
Attachments: Background USDA Civil Rights.doc

Here is backgrounder that might be helpful.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
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justin.dejong@usda.gov

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 7:25 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Chan, Stephanie; Purchia, Liz
Subject: RE:

Yes, Chuck Todd is hosting.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
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Washington, DC 20250
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justin.dejong@usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 7:24 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Chan, Stephanie; Purchia, Liz
Subject: Re:

Matthews?
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Mather, Chris; Chan, Stephanie; Purchia, Liz
Sent: Thu Jul 22 19:23:53 2010
Subject: RE:

MSNBC is doing it now.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 7:19 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Purchia, Liz; DeJong, Justin
Subject:

Is anyone other than CNN talking about this tonight?
Chris Mather

DeJong, Justin

From: googlealerts-noreply@google.com
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:29 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Google Alert - "tom vilsack"

News

5 new results for "tom vilsack"

Tom Vilsack's classy apology

Washington Post (blog)

I???ve got a pre-existing soft spot for **Tom Vilsack**, but I thought that was a model apology to the un-fired Shirley Sherrod.

Apologizing is hard for all of ...

[See all stories on this topic »](#)

HUFFPOST HILL - JULY 21ST, 2010

Huffington Post (blog)

"Agriculture Secretary **Tom Vilsack** said Wednesday he has apologized to ousted employee Shirley Sherrod and offered her a unique new position at the agency. ...

[See all stories on this topic »](#)

Nets Which Promoted NAACP's Attack on Tea Party Treat Sherrod as Victim; NBC ...

NewsBusters (blog)

On CBS, Katie Couric announced: "Agriculture Secretary **Tom Vilsack** defended his decision to fire a black official who was accused of discriminating against ...

[See all stories on this topic »](#)

UPI NewsTrack TopNews

UPI.com

WASHINGTON, July 21 (UPI) -- US Agriculture Secretary **Tom Vilsack** says he has apologized to a department official he fired and hopes she "considers staying ...

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USDA Provides Emergency Assistance to Producers of Honeybees, Livestock and ...

Ag Weekly

WASHINGTON - Agriculture Secretary **Tom Vilsack** announced that over \$13 million in disaster assistance will be issued starting today to livestock, ...

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DeJong, Justin

From: Irene Dave BARTLETT [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:18 PM
Subject: re shirley shirrod

Along with many others, we wrote to you last night to express displeasure about the forced resignation of Ms. Shirrod.

We would like to thank you for reconsidering the response of the USDA and the Secretary of Agriculture, Mr Vilsack. As Iowans who have seen him at his best in the past, it is reassuring to see that he retains the ability to step forward, admit a mistake and rethink his response to a situation.

Our hope is that Ms Shirrod isn't blinded by the limelight of this media blitz; that she will recognize a hand reaching out in friendship and conciliation, that she will return to the USDA in some capacity after so many have spoken out in her favor.

Again -- thank you for doing the right thing, even if it wasn't the easy thing!

Dave & Irene Bartlett
Ankeny, IA

DeJong, Justin

From: liz purchia [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:09 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: Updated AP Story

Updated

Fired Ag worker mulls job offer after WH apology

By MARY CLARE JALONICK and BEN EVANS
The Associated Press
Wednesday, July 21, 2010; 9:24 PM

WASHINGTON -- The White House did a sudden about-face Wednesday and begged for forgiveness from the black Agriculture Department employee whose ouster ignited an embarrassing political firestorm over race. She was offered a "unique opportunity" for a new job and said she was thinking it over.

With lightning speed, the controversy moved from Monday's forced resignation of a minor U.S. Ag official in Georgia to Tuesday's urgent discussions at the White House amid a rising public outcry and then to Wednesday's repeated apologies and pleas for Shirley Sherrod to come back.

Sherrod said she resigned under White House pressure after the airing of a video of racial remarks she made at an NAACP gathering about events that transpired more than two decades ago. But Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said repeatedly on Wednesday that the decision had been his alone.

"I asked for Shirley's forgiveness and she was gracious enough to extend it to me," he said after reaching her by telephone.

Sherrod, in a phone interview with The Associated Press, said, "They did make an offer. I just told him I need to think about it."

The controversy threatened to grow into more than a three-day distraction for Obama's administration, with important midterm congressional elections nearing and partisan feelings already running high. President Barack Obama said nothing publicly about the developments while administration officials tried to simultaneously show his concern and to distance him from the original ousting.

It all began with the airing of a video on a conservative website of Sherrod's remarks about not doing all she could to help a white farmer. After she was told to resign - with the NAACP declaring its approval - the situation grew more complicated when the rest of the edited video was released by the NAACP and Sherrod insisted her remarks were about reconciliation, not the stoking of racism.

By Wednesday afternoon, White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs was apologizing to Sherrod "for the entire administration" and saying that officials did not know all the facts when she was fired and should have investigated more. He said he didn't know if the president would talk to Sherrod himself.

The president had been briefed, Gibbs said, and "he talked about the fact that a disservice had been done, an injustice had happened and, because the facts had changed, a review of the decision based on those facts should be taken."

Said Vilsack, who also met with the Congressional Black Caucus, "This is a good woman. She's been put through hell. ... I could have done and should have done a better job."

"Shirley and I talked about a unique opportunity at USDA," he said. "With all that she has seen, endured and accomplished, it would be invaluable to have her experience, commitment and record of service at USDA. I hope she considers staying with the department."

"I accept the apology," Sherrod said on CNN after watching Gibbs talk to reporters on television. But she said the apology took too long.

Sherrod, appointed to her job last July, was asked to resign after conservative bloggers posted a video of her saying she didn't initially give a white farmer as much help as she could have 24 years ago, when she was working for a farmers' aid group. Sherrod said she used the story in her speech to the NAACP to promote racial reconciliation and that the edited video distorted her remarks.

Like the administration, the NAACP reversed its stance on Sherrod and called for her to be rehired.

The incident was the latest in a series of race-related brouhahas to garner national attention since Obama became the nation's first black chief executive.

A year ago, Obama convened a "beer summit" at the White House between a black Harvard scholar and the white police sergeant who arrested him after a confrontation at the black man's home. The president also faced criticism over nominating to the Supreme Court judge Sonia Sotomayor, who had once remarked on the virtues of having a "wise Latina" on the bench. And there are complaints about the Justice Department's handling of allegations that New Black Panther Party members threatened voters at a Philadelphia polling place on the day Obama was elected.

Black leaders piled on Wednesday in criticizing Sherrod's ouster. The Rev. Jesse Jackson called on the administration to apologize and give Sherrod her job back. The Congressional Black Caucus, with 42 members of Congress, called for Sherrod to be reinstated immediately.

However, the Rev. Al Sharpton said black leaders should refrain from calling for an apology from the Obama administration, saying that creates the impression that black leadership is fractured. "We are only greasing the rails for the right wing to run a train through our ambitions and goals for having civil and human rights in this country," Sharpton said.

The episode comes as the NAACP and the conservative tea party group have been trading charges of racism.

The two-minute, 38-second clip posted Monday by BigGovernment.com was presented as evidence that the NAACP was hypocritical in its recent resolution condemning what it calls racist elements of the tea party. The website's owner, Andrew Breitbart, said the video shows the civil rights group condoning the same kind of racism it says it wants to erase. BigGovernment.com is the same outfit that gained notice last year after airing video of workers at the community group ACORN counseling actors posing as a prostitute and her pimp.

In the clip posted on BigGovernment.com, Sherrod described the first time a white farmer came to her for help. It was 1986, and she worked for a nonprofit rural farm aid group. She said the farmer came in acting "superior" to her and she debated how much help to give him.

"I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland, and here I was faced with helping a white person save their land," Sherrod said.

Initially, she said, "I didn't give him the full force of what I could do" and only gave him enough help to keep his case progressing. Eventually, she said, his situation "opened my eyes" that whites were struggling just like blacks, and helping farmers wasn't so much about race but was "about the poor versus those who have."

The story moved from the Internet to Fox News Channel on Monday night. Host Bill O'Reilly showed a brief portion of Sherrod's speech where she talked about withholding "the full force" of her efforts.

"Wow," O'Reilly said after the clip aired. "That is simply unacceptable and Ms. Sherrod must resign. The federal government cannot have skin color deciding any assistance." Fox's Sean Hannity aired the same short snippet of Sherrod's speech and said that "this was racist."

"This was at an NAACP dinner and this was racist," Hannity said.

By Wednesday, Fox's focus shifted to accusing the Obama administration of rushing to judgment.

People who knew Sherrod were quick to defend her, including the wife of the white farmer whom she discussed in the speech.

"We probably wouldn't have (our farm) today if it hadn't been for her leading us in the right direction," said Eloise Spooner of Iron City, Ga. "I wish she could get her job back because she was good to us, I tell you."

In the full 43-minute video, Sherrod tells the story of her father's death in 1965, saying he was killed by white men who were never charged. She says she made a commitment to stay in the South the night of her father's death, despite the dreams she had always had of leaving her rural town.

"When I made that commitment I was making that commitment to black people and to black people only," she said. "But you know God will show you things and he'll put things in your path so that you realize that the struggle is really about poor people."

Sherrod said officials showed no interest in listening to her explanation when she was asked to resign. She said she was on the road Monday when USDA deputy undersecretary Cheryl Cook called her and told her to pull over and submit her resignation on her Blackberry because the White House wanted her out.

"It hurts me that they didn't even try to attempt to see what is happening here; they didn't care," Sherrod said.

On Wed, Jul 21, 2010 at 10:04 PM, DeJong, Justin <Justin.DeJong@oc.usda.gov> wrote:

Check if there was an updated story by mary clare jalonick.

From: liz purchia

To: DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Misailidis, Sarah; Chan, Stephanie

Sent: Wed Jul 21 21:54:03 2010

Subject: Updated AP Story

Updated AP Story

Sherrod case shows power of conservative media

By DAVID BAUDER (AP) – 1 hour ago

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALEqM5iv-NWIPtRHuJVAF76B8YegLInJWQD9H3P8500>

NEW YORK — A conservative blog posts 2 minutes, 38 seconds of video clips of a black federal agriculture official saying she didn't do everything she could to help a white farmer. The blogger labels it racism. Calls grow for the Obama administration to remove her. No one at the Agriculture Department or the White House checks further. The official is forced to resign.

Monday ends, but not the story.

A complete, 43-minute version of the video surfaces the next day, Tuesday, and casts a much different light on Shirley Sherrod's comments: They were part of an NAACP speech about how she overcame her racial prejudice to help the farmer, not about prejudice that stopped her from helping him.

Now, the administration is criticized for wronging her by rushing to judgment.

By Wednesday afternoon, Sherrod is sitting at a studio in CNN's Atlanta headquarters, watching on live television as White House press secretary Robert Gibbs apologizes to her.

She accepts and says: "Being afraid of the machine that the right has put out there — that's what's driving this."

A split screen shows her face and Gibbs' in a surreal moment, concluding a whirlwind 48 hours in which conservative media had the Obama administration on the defensive.

Fox News Channel has been riding high in the ratings since Barack Obama became the nation's first black president a year and a half ago. Commentators Glenn Beck and Bill O'Reilly offer a favorite destination for many administration opponents.

The Sherrod story erupted after BigGovernment.com, a website run by conservative activist Andrew Breitbart, posted portions of her speech at an NAACP banquet in March.

Breitbart's story began: "Context is everything." He said he offered "video evidence of racism coming from a federal appointee," and followed with snippets of the speech.

On the video, Sherrod, hired last August as director of rural development for the U.S. Agriculture Department in Georgia, talked about her unwillingness to offer much help to a white farmer when she worked at a non-profit organization 24 years ago.

The story moved from the Internet to Fox News Channel on Monday night.

In seeking her resignation, Sherrod said, a USDA deputy undersecretary told her the story was going to appear on Beck's program late Monday afternoon. Instead, Beck didn't discuss it that day; it first appeared a few hours later on the top-rated prime-time show "The O'Reilly Factor."

Host Bill O'Reilly showed the brief portion of Sherrod's March speech where she explained that she didn't give the white farmer "the full force of what I could do."

"Wow!" O'Reilly said after the clip aired. "That is simply unacceptable, and Ms. Sherrod must resign. The federal government cannot have skin color deciding any assistance."

As he talked, Fox flashed the news on the bottom of its screen that Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack had accepted Sherrod's resignation.

Fox's Sean Hannity aired the same short snippet of Sherrod's speech shortly afterward.

"This was at an NAACP dinner, and this was racist," Hannity said.

CNN's Rick Sanchez said producers there were intrigued by [Biggovernment.com](#)'s posting and immediately started reporting on it. But with all the questions involved — Was this a fair characterization of Sherrod's full speech? Can she be reached to give her side of the story? — they wouldn't be ready to discuss it on his afternoon show until Tuesday, he said.

By then, the story rushed by.

"As journalists, we have to protect ourselves the best we can," Sanchez said. "It's easy for it to happen to anybody, by the way — jump to a conclusion, get excited, look at the coverage. It's kind of like creating a bandwagon effect. Once you get on the bandwagon, you can't hit the brakes."

By Tuesday morning, "Fox & Friends" headlined the story "Racism Caught on Tape."

Commentator Laura Ingraham talked about "people who have burrowed their way into the Obama administration with radical outlooks, a radical agenda and, in this case, a racist sentiment. How many more like Ms. Sherrod exist in the Obama administration who weren't so stupid as she was to actually explicitly state her views on the issue of race?"

When the full tape became available later, it was clear that Sherrod said the case taught her a lesson about the importance of helping all those in need, regardless of race.

"What's happening here is that she's guilty until proven innocent," Beck said on his show. "They fired her and now they are back-pedaling. There's no due process here. Doesn't an American have a right to a fair trial? They have politically assassinated this woman. No one has heard the case for or against her, they just took her out. When did we stop having the right to face our accusers?"

It's not clear when, or if, someone at Fox saw the full tape.

Fox spokeswoman Irena Briganti and David Tabacoff, executive producer of "The O'Reilly Factor," did not immediately return calls for comment. Sherrod said that she wasn't contacted by anyone at Fox until Tuesday, when she refused their requests for an interview.

After a video of her full speech was posted online by the NAACP, the White House called the Agriculture Department on Tuesday night, and it was agreed that her ouster should be reviewed.

As more came out Tuesday about Sherrod's speech, Fox's focus shifted. "Race Story Takes Strange Twist" was Wednesday's headline on "Fox & Friends."

"They may have acted without knowing the whole story," co-host Brian Kilmeade said of the administration.

Breitbart did not immediately respond to an AP request for an interview.

But on ABC's "Good Morning America" Wednesday, he said his story "was not about Shirley Sherrod." Instead, he said, the video provides evidence of Georgia NAACP members applauding or laughing at racist behavior, at the same time national NAACP figures are criticizing the tea party movement for having members that express racist sentiments."

Breitbart's [BigGovernment.com](#) attracted attention last year for airing video of workers at the community group ACORN counseling actors posing as a prostitute and her boyfriend. This month, Fox News has aggressively

reported the story about the U.S. Justice Department choosing not to pursue a voter intimidation cases involving the New Black Panther Party in Philadelphia.

Paul Levinson, a journalism professor at Fordham University, said those cases — and the attention they received on Fox — were likely on the mind of Obama administration officials when Breitbart's story on Sherrod first appeared.

"They panicked," Levinson said. "They're giving the media far more power than they should have."

In issuing his apology, Gibbs said the government, media and interest groups on all sides made quick determinations without knowing all the facts involved.

"One of the great lessons you take away from this is to ask all the questions first and come to a full understanding," he said.

DeJong, Justin

From: googlealerts-noreply@google.com
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:32 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Google Alert - "tom vilsack"

Blogs

5 new results for "tom vilsack"

USDA Sec. Tom Vilsack Apologizes to Shirley Sherrod, Offers New ...

By Tommy Christopher

Secretary of Agriculture **Tom Vilsack** held a press conference this afternoon in which he apologized to Shirley Sherrod for jumping the gun and firing her based on a deceptively-edited video clip that was published by conservative ...

Mediaite - <http://www.mediaite.com/>

Tom Vilsack Apologizes, Profusely, Profoundly, Completely ...

By Kate Pickert

Tom Vilsack, the secretary of the Department of Agriculture, just gave a short press conference where he took total responsibility for the Shirley Sherrod debacle.

Swampland - <http://swampland.blogs.time.com/>

Tom Vilsack and White House Apologise to Shirley Sherrod

Tom Vilsack has accepted responsibility for firing Shirley Sherrod after racist comments posted on conservative blog were shown to be taken out of context.

Suite101: American Affairs Articles - <http://americanaffairs.suite101.com/>

Will Tom Vilsack Pull a Bud Selig? -- Daily Intel

By Dan Amira

The saga of former USDA employee Shirley Sherrod has quickly turned into a whole new kind of public-relations nightmare for the Department of Agriculture's **Tom Vilsack**. When a video of Sherrod seemingly making racist remarks at an NAACP ...

Daily Intel - <http://nymag.com/daily/intel/>

Tom Vilsack | United States Online News

By WorldPost

Tom Vilsack, The saga of earlier employees of the USDA has Shirley Sherrod soon became a new kind of public relations nightmare for the Department of Agriculture is **Tom Vilsack**. When a video making racist comments Sherrod apparently at ...

United States Online News - <http://usspost.com/>

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DeJong, Justin

From: Purchia, Liz
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 8:06 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Fw: Transcript of July 21 Press Briefing with Secretary Vilsack from MALLOY TRANSCRIPTION SERVICE
Attachments: 0721PB.DOC

Chris,

Attached is the transcript from today's press conf. It'll go on the website and caption the video.

Liz
Liz Purchia
U.S. Department of Agriculture
202-407-6698

From: Purchia, Liz
To: DeJong, Justin; 'stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov.'; Earnich, Amanda; Black, David -OC; Rhee, Peter
Sent: Wed Jul 21 20:04:26 2010
Subject: Fw: Transcript of July 21 Press Briefing with Secretary Vilsack from MALLOY TRANSCRIPTION SERVICE

Ok see attached.
Liz Purchia
U.S. Department of Agriculture
202-407-6698

From: [REDACTED]
To: Purchia, Liz
Sent: Wed Jul 21 20:00:23 2010
Subject: Transcript of July 21 Press Briefing with Secretary Vilsack from MALLOY TRANSCRIPTION SERVICE
Attached please find the transcript of the press briefing in Word format, named 0721PB.doc.

We appreciate your business!

Jennie
Malloy Transcription Service
7040 31st Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C.20015
www.malloytranscription.com - website
jennie@malloytranscription.com - e-mail
202-362-6622 - phone

-----Original Message-----

From: Purchia, Liz <Liz.Purchia@oc.usda.gov>
To: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wed, Jul 21, 2010 7:07 pm
Subject: RE: Test e-mail from Jennie at Malloy Transcription Service

Got it, thanks.

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:06 PM

To: Purchia, Liz

Subject: Test e-mail from Jennie at Malloy Transcription Service

This is a test.

Jennie Malloy Transcription Service

7040 31st Street, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20015

www.malloytranscription.com - website

jennie@malloytranscription.com - e-mail

202-362-6622 - phone

DeJong, Justin

From: Black, David -OC
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 8:04 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Chan, Stephanie; Eamich, Amanda; Purchia, Liz; 'stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov.'
Subject: Re: Transcript of Press Conf

AM is fine for us...as soon as you get please send my way so we can caption the video asap...thanks!

db
David O. Black
Acting Deputy Director
Office of Communications, USDA
202-720-6072
david.black@oc.usda.gov

----- Original Message -----

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Chan, Stephanie; Eamich, Amanda; Purchia, Liz; Black, David -OC; 'stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov.' <stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov.>
Sent: Wed Jul 21 20:00:56 2010
Subject: Re: Transcript of Press Conf

Tomorrow is fine.

----- Original Message -----

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Eamich, Amanda; Purchia, Liz; Black, David -OC; 'stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov.' <stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov.>
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wed Jul 21 19:59:16 2010
Subject: RE: Transcript of Press Conf

JD, what do you think? I think tomorrow morning would be fine since the video is already up.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell:  Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: Eamich, Amanda
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:58 PM
To: Purchia, Liz; Black, David -OC; 'stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov.'
Subject: Re: Transcript of Press Conf

Should this be done tonight or first thing in the morning? We are in after hrs support status.

Amanda Eamich
Director of New Media
US Dept of Agriculture
www.usda.gov/newmedia

----- Original Message -----

From: Purchia, Liz

To: Black, David -OC; Eamich, Amanda; 'stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov.'

<stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov.>

Sent: Wed Jul 21 19:45:00 2010

Subject: Transcript of Press Conf

Wanted to give you a heads up, we have Malloy Transcription transcribing now.

I will send it to all of you as soon as I get it. I assume we want to get it on the site as soon as we can? This is a first for me so let me know if there's something else I should do.

Thanks,

Liz

Malloy Transcription Service 7040 31st Street, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20015

www.malloytranscription.com - website

jennie@malloytranscription.com - e-mail

202-362-6622 - phone

Liz Purchia

U.S. Department of Agriculture

202-407-6698

DeJong, Justin

From: Eamich, Amanda
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 8:02 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Chan, Stephanie; Purchia, Liz; Black, David -OC; 'stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov.'
Cc: Rhee, Peter
Subject: Re: Transcript of Press Conf

Thanks.

When you have it, pls send to peter and he'll coordinate posting with kim or gayle. Will go in newsroom -> scripts/transcripts.

Amanda Eamich
Director of New Media
US Dept of Agriculture
www.usda.gov/newmedia

----- Original Message -----

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Chan, Stephanie; Eamich, Amanda; Purchia, Liz; Black, David -OC; 'stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov.' <stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov.>
Sent: Wed Jul 21 20:00:56 2010
Subject: Re: Transcript of Press Conf

Tomorrow is fine.

----- Original Message -----

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Eamich, Amanda; Purchia, Liz; Black, David -OC; 'stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov.' <stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov.>
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wed Jul 21 19:59:16 2010
Subject: RE: Transcript of Press Conf

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Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell:  Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: Eamich, Amanda
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:58 PM
To: Purchia, Liz; Black, David -OC; 'stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov.'
Subject: Re: Transcript of Press Conf

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Amanda Eamich
Director of New Media
US Dept of Agriculture

www.usda.gov/newmedia

----- Original Message -----

From: Purchia, Liz

To: Black, David -OC; Eamich, Amanda; 'stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov.'

<stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov.>

Sent: Wed Jul 21 19:45:00 2010

Subject: Transcript of Press Conf

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Thanks,

Liz

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jennie@malloytranscription.com - e-mail

202-362-6622 - phone

Liz Purchia

U.S. Department of Agriculture

202-407-6698

DeJong, Justin

From: Purchia, Liz
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:59 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Fw: Transcript of Press Conf

What do you think?
Liz Purchia
U.S. Department of Agriculture
202-407-6698

----- Original Message -----

From: Eamich, Amanda
To: Purchia, Liz; Black, David -OC; 'stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov.'
<stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov.>
Sent: Wed Jul 21 19:58:19 2010
Subject: Re: Transcript of Press Conf

Should this be done tonight or first thing in the morning? We are in after hrs support status.

Amanda Eamich
Director of New Media
US Dept of Agriculture
www.usda.gov/newmedia

----- Original Message -----

From: Purchia, Liz
To: Black, David -OC; Eamich, Amanda; 'stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov.'
<stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov.>
Sent: Wed Jul 21 19:45:00 2010
Subject: Transcript of Press Conf

Wanted to give you a heads up, we have Malloy Transcription transcribing now.

I will send it to all of you as soon as I get it. I assume we want to get it on the site as soon as we can? This is a first for me so let me know if there's something else I should do.

Thanks,
Liz

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Washington, D.C. 20015
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jennie@malloytranscription.com - e-mail
202-362-6622 - phone

Liz Purchia
U.S. Department of Agriculture
202-407-6698

DeJong, Justin

From: googlealerts-noreply@google.com
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:53 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Google Alert - usda

News

3 new results for usda

Fed chief sees uncertainty...Financial overhaul now law...USDA firing reconsidered

9&10 News

WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House says Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack will apologize for forcing a Georgia USDA employee out of her job over her remarks ...

[See all stories on this topic »](#)

Hospitals Pull Plug On Antibiotic Meat, USDA Admits Bacteria Resistance Link

IndyPosted

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) admitted this month during Congressional testimony that overuse of antibiotics in cows, chickens, pigs and other ...

[See all stories on this topic »](#)

US attorney probe ends...Apology in USDA flap...Storm could hit Gulf

9&10 News

He says officials didn't know all the facts when they fired the Georgia USDA employee, who says the edited video posted online distorted her point. ...

[See all stories on this topic »](#)

Tip: Use quotes ("like this") around a set of words in your query to match them exactly.. [Learn more.](#)

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DeJong, Justin

From: Ed O'Keefe [ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:44 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris
Subject: Re: Did Vilsack meet with CBC before or after the presser?

And one last thing: Vilsack said "the position needs to be filled."

Does this mean he offered her an existing position or that bringing her on would fill a position the department needs to have?

And would the job be based in Washington or elsewhere?

Ed O'Keefe
The Federal Eye, The Washington Post
ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com

----- Original Message -----

From: DeJong, Justin <Justin.DeJong@oc.usda.gov>
To: Ed O'Keefe
Sent: Wed Jul 21 19:36:30 2010
Subject: RE: Did Vilsack meet with CBC before or after the presser?

After.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com [mailto:ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:35 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Did Vilsack meet with CBC before or after the presser?

Just need quick clarification
Ed O'Keefe
The Federal Eye, The Washington Post
ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com

DeJong, Justin

From: googlealerts-noreply@google.com
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:37 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Google Alert - "tom vilsack"

Web **1 new result for "tom vilsack"**

Tom Vilsack Fires Shirley Sherrod As the Summer of Firings Over ...

You may remember **Tom Vilsack** as the greatest failure of the 2008 ... Clinton bit And so after groveling and kissing her feet

Tom Vilsack spent a year ...

wonkette.com/.../tom-vilsack-fires-shirley-sherrod-as-the-sum...

Tip: Use quotes ("like this") around a set of words in your query to match them exactly.. [Learn more.](#)

[Remove](#) this alert.

[Create](#) another alert.

[Manage](#) your alerts.

DeJong, Justin

From: googlealerts-noreply@google.com
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:23 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Google Alert - "tom vilsack"

Web

1 new result for "tom vilsack"

Tom Vilsack

Tom Vilsack: Disgrace - Bit News CNN **Tom Vilsack** and Shirley Sherrod In the wake of the grievously unjust firing of Agriculture Department official Shirley ...
www.myafit.com/tom-vilsack/

Tip: Use a minus sign (-) in front of terms in your query that you want to exclude.. [Learn more.](#)

[Remove](#) this alert.
[Create](#) another alert.
[Manage](#) your alerts.

DeJong, Justin

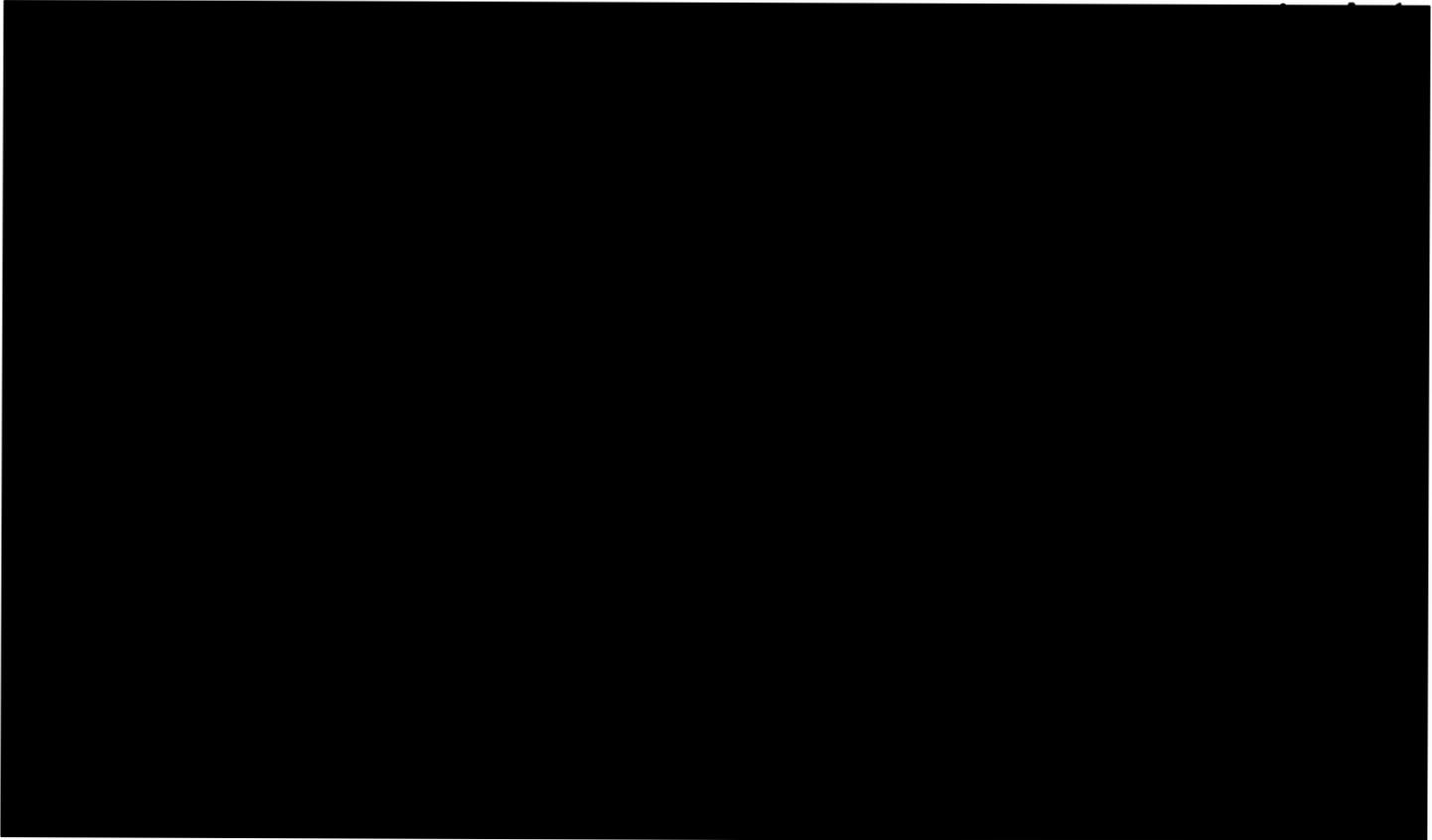
From: Stephanie.Chan@oc.usda.gov
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:02 PM
To: JIC4, OC -USDA; DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: email from vilsack - updated

Link to the press conf video?

Stephanie Chan

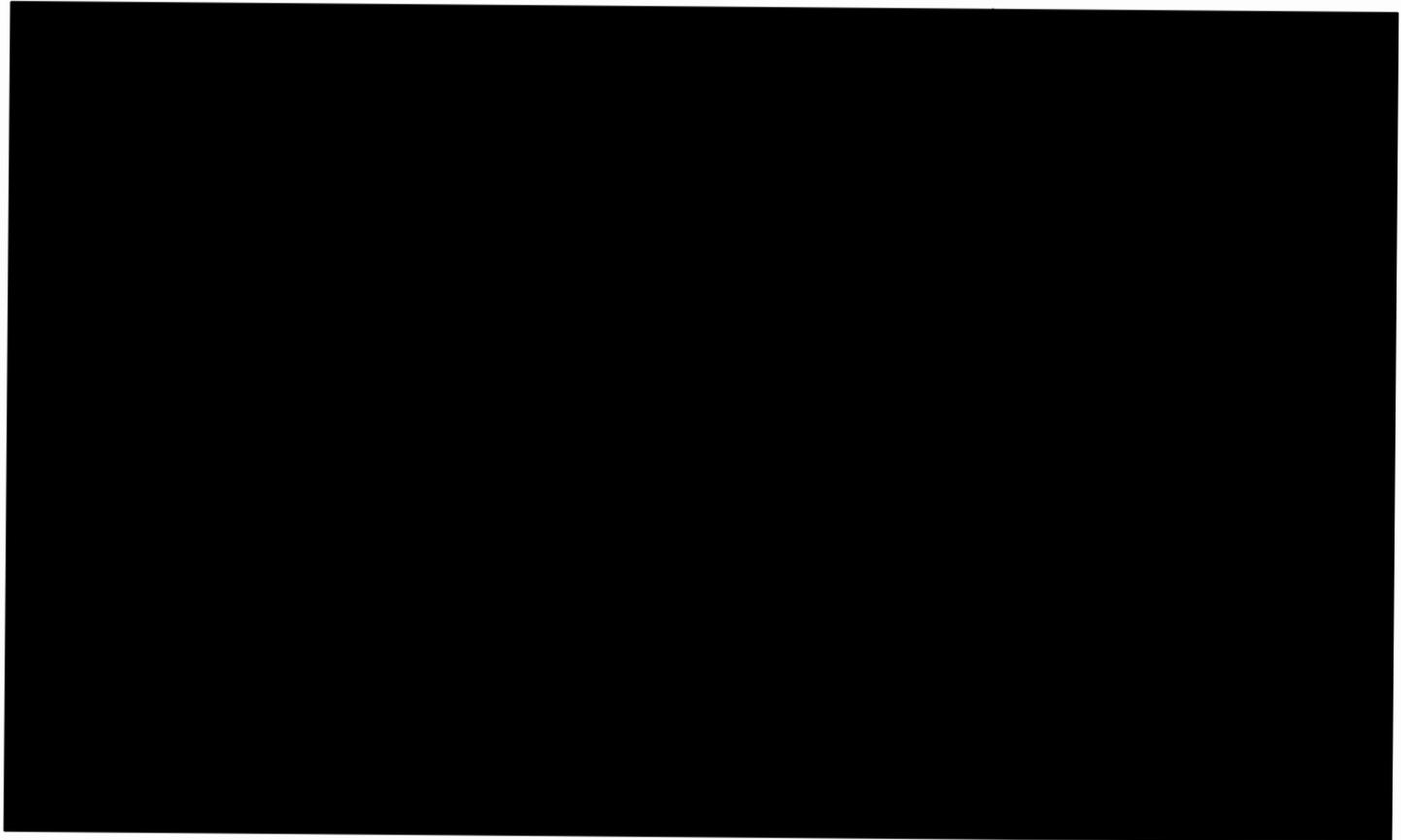
*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: JIC4, OC -USDA
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:59 PM
To: 'Justin.dejong@usda.gov'; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: email from vilsack - updated



DeJong, Justin

From: OC.JIC4@oc.usda.gov
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:01 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; DeJong, Justin
Subject: edits: email from vilsack - updated



DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:53 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Purchia, Liz
Subject: Media Requests

Requests that came in during/after the conference:

- Washington Post (Ed O'Keefe, ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com, [REDACTED]):
 - I'm seeking to clarify a few things...
 - Did Vilsack offer Sherrod her old job back during their phone conversation?
 - Or did he just offer her this new bigger role?
 - And did Ms. Sherrod try to call USDA headquarters to alert them to the video clip?
 - And what did Deputy Secretary Cook report back to Vilsack about her conversations with Sherrod?
- Rachel Maddow (Andrew Dallos, andrew.dallos@msnbc.com):
 - Still interested in interview
- USA Today (Mimi Hall, mhall@usatoday.com, [REDACTED]):
 - Requested statement. SC asked if she was working with Peter E
- USA Today (Peter Eisler, [REDACTED], peisler@usatoday.com)
 - Requesting a timeline/tick-tock
- CNN Anderson Cooper (Alexandria Poolos, [REDACTED], Alexandria.Poolos@turner.com):
 - I am a producer for Anderson Cooper and would like to put in a request for Secretary Vilsack. We will be the only show having Shirley Sherrod on tonight, and would love to have the Secretary on tonight as well. Can we try to make something work?
- ABC (Jake Tapper, Tapper, Jake.Tapper@abc.com)
 - Any word from Sherrod on the job offer?

Questions from before conference:

TUESDAY

- Madison the Black Eagle (Darrell Green Jr [REDACTED] Greene, Darrell [Darrell.Greene@siriusxm.com]):
 - I'm following up on Ms. Sherrod for this morning, and if not today, tomorrow morning. Mr. Madison really wants her to come on the show, either 7:30, 7:45, 9am, 9:30am or 10am ET this morning or tomorrow morning. Thank you.
- NBC Ed Schultz show (Barbara Fant [REDACTED], barbara.fant@nbcuni.com):
 - I wanted to check in again with you as Ed Schultz if very much hoping the Secretary will join him tonight on MSNBC at 6pm ET to talk about the Shirley Sherrod events. I'm sure he would like a chance to give his agency's views on this unfolding story. Please let me know if we might confirm.
- Bloomberg (bgreenberg2):
 - Statement request, SC Sent.
- Abba Brech
 - Statement request, SC sent]
- CBS News ('CKX@cbsnews.com)
 - Statement request, SC Sent
- NBC Universal (Dax Tejera Dax.Tejera@nbcuni.com)
 - Statement request, SC Sent
- CNN (Allison Harding Alison.harding@turner.com):
 - Statement request, SC Sent
- CNN (Rachel Streitfeld, Rachel.streitfeld@cnn.com, [REDACTED]):
 - Statement request, SC sent
 - I am hoping to get any information you might be able to give me on what the secretary is doing today. Has he watched the tape or read the transcript? Are other officials involved in the process of

reconsidering the case? How will the secretary come to his decision, and is he working on that now? Even any nuggets you might have would be greatly appreciated!

- Hi Stephanie—a few more questions to add if I could: Will Under Secretary Cook be available for interviews? If so, when? Was Under Secretary Cook the direct boss of Ms. Sherrod? If not how did she become involved in the conversations with Ms. Sherrod? How did Under Secretary Cook learn of the decision to ask Ms. Sherrod to resign? We're told Under Secretary Cook told Ms. Sherrod the White House was asking for her resignation. Did Cook have any contact with the White House? If so, with whom did she speak at the White House? Is she involved in the review of Ms. Sherrod's resignation? Thanks so much!
- Was Shirley a political?
- NewsCore (Anna Brech [anna.brech@newscore.com])
 - Re: questions, I just wondered whether Tom Vilsack was expected to make any comment about Shirley Sherrod at the education event he's currently attending, or later today? would it be possible to forward me any press releases from him if/when they transpire? and I know this is a long shot and you may not be in a position to sort it - but if he is doing any interviews, we would obviously be interested in speaking with him.
- CNN Assignment Desk 202-898-7911 Lindy Royce
 - Schedule
- CBS (Laruen Seifert [REDACTED], lseifert@cbs.com): Secretary's Schedule and statement
 - SC sent info
- Rachel Maddow Show (Andrew Dallos, andrew.dallos@msnbc.com): Interview with Secretary Tonight
 - Good morning. This is Andrew Dallos with the Rachel Maddow show at MSNBC. Would it be possible for me to call you please? If so, the number to reach you on? It's regarding our show tonight and a possible interview with Secretary Vilsack.
- WALB (Jennifer Emert [REDACTED], jennifer.emert@walb.com): Statement request: SC sent
 - Also requesting an interview with someone from USDA, interested in getting info on our reaction.
- CBS Early Show (Gina Garcia [REDACTED], garciag@cbsnews.com): Interview with Secretary and will he reverse the decision to fire Shirley?
 - Layout, what happened past 24 hrs. Want to hear straight from orses mouth. Any new USDA initiatives
- GA NBC (Jennifer Emert [REDACTED], jennifer.emert@walb.com): Phone interview re: Shirley Sherrod
 - Request additional statements when they come out
- ABC Assignment Desk (Dee Carden [REDACTED], dee.w.carden@abc.com): How long will the review take and what will process be like?
- Lou Dobbs radio (Bobby Sherwood [REDACTED], bobby@loudobbsradio.com): Interview with Shirley > SC called and emailed
 - This is Bobby Sherwood from the Lou Dobbs Radio Show, thanks very much for getting back to me, I really appreciate it. I was writing to see if Shirley Sherrod would be available to come on the program with us this afternoon for a few minutes to get her thoughts on the NAACP speech she gave, what her obvious meaning was when she gave the speech, why the USDA let her go, and the prospects of her coming back if she was offered. Lou does not think she should have been let go and would like to have her on to discuss that.
 - Our show is on from 2pm-5pm eastern Monday-Friday and we were looking to do the interview this afternoon at either 2:35 or 3:15 today for about 8-10 minutes. If you would like any more information about the stations we are on or the host you may go to our website www.loudobbs.com
 - I can be reached by phone at [REDACTED] or email at bobby@loudobbsradio.com
- CNN Network booking (Sarah Baker [REDACTED], Sarah.Baker@cnn.com): if he is ready to do an interview with S or Cook- she can help organize. She the person to contact. would like first interview because they have Mandate from president of cnn and political unit.
 - I am the point of contact today for all AG Secretary Vilsack and Cheryl Cook requests. I have EVERY platform here asking for live or live to taped interviews. Please know we are trying to consolidate these live requests with a point person as myself who works for the network verses a show.

Is there a point where we can speak about avail or platform preference?

Dag/Stephanie- please let me know,

- GMA (Katie Bosland [REDACTED] Katie.Bosland@abc.com): Schedule and interview request for Secretary and Cheryl Cook
- NBC Nightly News (Dona Bass [REDACTED] Donna.bass@nbc.com): Interview with Secretary
 - This would be for an interview with Brian to let the secretary have his say on the situation. They would like him live at 6:30 p.m. this evening for a quick 3 minute interview. They can also do pre-tape but would prefer live. They are hoping to be the first evening broadcast to have an interview with him and would be interested in this story whenever he is ready to speak about it even if it is not this evening.
 - this is a request specifically from brian -- for brian -- to speak directly with the secretary live on our broadcast this evening, or as i mentioned earlier- in a pre-tape situation if he would prefer that. is there any chance one of the press secretaries can call me just so i can make the request on phone? would love to speak directly to one of them if possible. thanks!
 - Stating the obvious here - but it would seem vitally important for the Secretary to speak with Brian on this evenings broadcast.
We can offer live or pre-tape as options for the interview.
(Brian can be ready with a few minutes notice - to speak with Secretary Vilsack. We could move a satellite truck to him- or perhaps the Secretary could travel across town to our Washington bureau for the interview.)
Please let me know if he would be willing to join Brian on our broadcast this evening.
Thank you very much for your consideration.
 - Have live camera in rotunda right now. Crews are ready when he walks out of meeting
- LA Times (Peter Nicholas): Review process, has secretary seen full video?, who in WH called the secretary?
 - Reed from WH suggested this reporter call Chris. He is working on a story on the situation and has posted the following questions:
 - Information about the review process- is it happening now? How long will it take?
 - When Secretary Vilsack made his initial decision had he seen the full video or was he acting on the 2 min video
 - Who in WH called the Secretary to ask that the matter be reviewed?
 - My understanding is that Secretary Vilsack based his decision to fire Ms. Sherrod on the 2 ½ minute video posted on the Breitbart website.
 - If you believe this to be incorrect, please let me know.
- PBS (Elizabeth Summers): Interview with Secretary Vilsack
 - I'd like to put in a request for an interview with Secretary Vilsack with one of our anchors, likely Jim Lehrer, for tonight's broadcast. We air live between 6 and 7pm and our studios are located in Arlington, VA -- getting the secretary here live would be ideal. Of course I know how busy he must be, so we would definitely be willing to be flexible in terms of timing and location -- whatever is most convenient for him, we could make it work. We would bill this as a newsmaker interview and it would probably run about 10 minutes in length. I think the NewsHour could be a great venue for the Secretary to talk about his side of this conservative media/Sherrod firing story.
 - *All questions would likely focus on the firing of Ms. Sherrod and ask about Secretary Vilsack's role in it -- I can't get more specific than that, but as you know it's the Jim Lehrer NewsHour, the questions would be extremely fair -- I'm sorry but we just don't give out questions beforehand, that's our policy. But it would be pretty straightforward, I know that much.*
- NYT (Sheryl Stolberg stolberg@nytimes.com, [REDACTED]): Spoke to WH, would like to update story
 - I cover the White House and am writing about the Sherrod case. I have already talked to the White House about this and officials there confirm that they spoke to Mr. Vilsack about the case overnight and that he is reconsidering his decision to ask her to leave. I would like to update this story for our web site and then write something more complete for tomorrow's paper. Could someone there call me at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] on the cell phone.
- WSJ (Jonathan Weisman (202)862-9218, [REDACTED] (cell) Jonathan.Weisman@wsj.com):

- As I was saying, this is really for planning purposes. Should we be expecting a decision today from the secretary or another statement regarding Shirley Sherrod's future, and is Secretary Vilsack doing interviews on the matter? Is there anyone willing to talk about how this incident fits with the difficult racial issues that have faced the USDA in the past, especially the black farmers' suit and settlement?
- CBS Evening News (Christina Ruffini RuffiniC@cbsnews.com Cell: [REDACTED] Interview with Secretary Vilsack, need to know by 2-3p.m.
 - CBS evening news would like to do an interview with Secretary Vilsack and would like to know if we can do this by 2-3 p.m. They will be sending details shortly.
- AP (Mary Clare Jalonick mjalonick@ap.org [REDACTED]): Hey any chance I can speak with Vilsack today?
- Hearst (Nikole Killon nkillion@hearst.com, [REDACTED]): Statement request, schedule information
- Washington Post (Rocci Fisch [REDACTED] Rocci.Fisch@washingtonpost.com): Online Chat with Secretary on Shirley Sherrod story on Friday.
- Would Tom Vilsack be available today to do an online chat with the Washington Post about the Shirley Sherrod incident? Would take ½ hour; done online, with questions coming from our WP readers and are screened. We could do it at 11, 12, 1, 2 or 3 ET today

FOX The O'Reilly Factor (Ron Mitchell, [REDACTED]):

- Questions regarding Shirley's employment, settlement figures
- Fox News (Elena Isella): DS Schedule for today?
- Washington Times (Valerie Richardson [REDACTED] vmrichardson@msn.com): Update on Shirley story
 - Hi, Stephanie. I'm trying to get an update on the USDA's position on Shirley Sherrod. I understand Mr. Vilsack released a statement this morning saying that her status is under review. Can you tell me if that's the USDA's latest statement, and if so, would you mind emailing me a copy?
- Daily Caller (Jon Ward [REDACTED] jon@dailycaller.com): Request for statement from Secretary
- Politico (Mallen@politico.com): would be grateful for a copy of the Secretary's statement
- CNN Wolf Blitzer (Stephanie Kotuby, Stephanie.Kotuby@turner.com, [REDACTED] (mobile)): Interview request
 - The Secretary/department's handling of Shirley Sherrod's employment/termination, ie, what happened? Was there a rush to judgment? Lessons learned? Will Shirley get her job back?
- CNN American Morning (Michelle A. Cumbo Michelle.cumbo@turner.com, [REDACTED] mobile): Is usda considering rehiring Shirley?
 - We are seeing some news reports that are suggesting Secretary Vilsack is reconsidering Shirley Sherrod's resignation. Can you give us any updated information about that? I know Secretary Vilsack is not available for an interview but do you have any additional statements or guidance you would like to provide?
- WaPo (Ed O'Keefe, ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com, [REDACTED]):
 - Ed just called trying to get a better sense on how we found out about the story, how we were approached and when we made the decision to speak with Shirley. He would also like to clarify that it was a race/discrimination issue or if it was something else. *He would be happy with a background conversation and is writing in the next 2 hrs*
- Politics Daily (Walter Shapiro, waltershapiro@politicsdaily.com, [REDACTED]): Resignation details and Shirley's interaction with the Secretary
 - Called to make sure he had the information detailing Shirley's resignation- whether she was *asked to resign or if she voluntarily resigned*. He said the AP story states that the "they...asked me to pull over to the side of the road and submit my resignation on my Blackberry, and that's what I did" whereas Chris' statement says that Sherrod "willingly resigned." Reporter would also like to know how often (if at all) has Shirley interacted with the Secretary prior to this. Deadline: Reporter plans to write in the next 2 hrs
- DMR (Phil Brasher pbrasher@desmoine.gannett.com, [REDACTED]): Questions on Shirley Sherrod story
 - Has Vilsack reached Ms. Sherrod? What is the disposition?
 - Will Vilsack and/or Cheryl Cook be made available to talk about this? If not, why not?
- MSNBC Booking Producer (Carmen Widman, carmen.widman@msnbc.com, [REDACTED]): Interview with Secretary today
- Talking Points Memo (Rachel Slajada, rachel@talkingpointsmemo.com, [REDACTED]): Questions about secretary's statement

- USA Today (Pete Eisler, peisler@usatoday.com, [REDACTED]): USDA Position on Sherrod Story
 - What happened and who made what decisions and where we stand now?
- Politico Glen Thrush ([REDACTED] gthrush@politico.com): WH did not know about resignation before seeing USDA statement?
 - Glen has 2 admin sources saying that Sherrod resignation was asked for and obtained before WH was notified of request. That WH's first understanding of it was when they saw statement.
- AP (John Bazemore): Photo Request
- Huffington Post (Adam Rose arose@huffingtonpost.com, [REDACTED]): Request Statement
- WaPo Ed Board (Eva Rodriguez, [REDACTED], RodriguezE@washpost.com): Administration's handling of Shirley Sherrod Resignation
- WNRP Radio (Jeff Knox [REDACTED] jknnox@newsradio1620.com): Would love having sec at 6:40, 5:40 or 5:20 p.m. about 5 min interview. Anytime available till 8 p.m. tonight will let him know
- WABE NPR Atlanta (Rose Marie Holmes, [REDACTED], rHolmes@pba.org): Apology from Secretary Vilsack

MONDAY

- AP (Mary Clare Jalonick, [REDACTED]): CNN is blowing the story up, request interview with Cheryl Cook – PENDING
- AgriPulse (Sarah Wyant): Shirley Sherrod details – PENDING
- NBC (Jay Blackman, Jay.Blackman@nbcuni.com, [REDACTED]): Request on-camera interview– PENDING
- NBC Ed Schultz (Barbara Fant, barbara.fant@nbcuni.com): Interview request with Secretary on accepting Shirley's resignation, 5 min interview around 5:50 p.m., can push to tom night also- PENDING
- Washington Post (Ed O'Keefe, ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com, [REDACTED])
 - Disregard my previous question about Sherrod's statement, I found that she spoke to CNN this morning.
 - Which raises an important question: If the incident she describes occurred in 1986, as she said it did, then why did Sec. Vilsack accept her resignation? Was she forced to leave? Was she given the opportunity to explain herself to USDA and Vilsack before she resigned?
 - And should other USDA officials now expect to be fired for incidents that occurred more than two decades ago before they were hired by USDA?
- ABC Good Morning America (Katie Bosland [REDACTED] Katie.Bosland@abc.com)
 - I wanted to reach out to see if Secretary Vilsack would be available in the morning to come on the show to talk with George? We will be covering and talking about the Agriculture Director's resignation and would welcome the opportunity to have the Secretary on the show and hear his thoughts on the matter. Is there a number where I can best reach you. I am reachable via cell at [REDACTED]
- ABC World News Tonight (Jake Tapper [REDACTED] jake.tapper@abc.com):
 - Interview request with secretary, details on story.
 - Heard that WH didn't tell Vilsack to ask Sherrodd to resign, that he did it on his own
- Fox News (Ron Mitchell, Ron.mitchell@foxnews.com):
 - Shirley Sherrod just told CNN that she was asked to resign by the USDA. She actually was very specific – that Dep. Under Secretary Cheryl Cook told her that the White House wanted her out because she was "going to be on Glenn Beck." Does the USDA have any comment on that?
- FOX (Judd Berger, Judd.berger@foxnews.com, [REDACTED]):
 - What happened last night with her interview for Atlanta Journal? Also, why did NAACP pulled statement from site? - PENDING
- FOX America Live Megan Kelley (Megan Brown, [REDACTED] megan.brown@foxnews.com): Interview request in the next 40 min. (Missed deadline)- PENDING
- FOX (Abigail Emerson, Abigail.emerson@foxnews.com, [REDACTED] 1 p.m.):
 - Duties of Georgia State Director- PENDING
- CBS Evening News (Christina Ruffini, 202.457.4385 [RuffiniC@cbsnews.com]):
 - We would like to do an on camera interview with someone. Because this is for the broadcast tonight, it would need to tape before 4:30/5:00 pm.

- CNN John Roberts will say that we didn't respond – Really want an interview. How did this happen? How did the decision come to let her go?
- She will be on anderson cooper tonight and will be on CNN in the morning likely.
- CNN America Morning (Karrah Kaplan, 'Karrah.Kaplan@turner.com'): Updated statement, general info- PENDING
 - We had Shirley Sherrod on this morning and she said that the video was of her recounting an old story of her and a farmer she befriended in 1986. Our anchor, John Roberts, wants to know why she was asked to resign for recounting an old story. I will send the transcript of the interview shortly. In the meantime, what is your official USDA response?
 - We just had on the wife of the farmer on air confirming Shirley helped them. On CNN now. Can you offer somebody to respond to this?
- CNN America Morning (Rachel Streitfeld, Rachel.Streitfeld@turner.com [REDACTED]): Questions on WH request – PENDING
 - We just had on the wife of the farmer on air confirming Shirley helped them. On CNN now. Can you offer somebody to respond to this?
- CNN America Morning (John Roberts, John.Roberts@turner.com):
 - Was USDA aware of the full context of her remarks before it asked for her resignation? Did USDA know the story was 24 years old?
- CNN Campbell Brown (Allison Gilbert, Allison.gilbert@turner.com):
 - Interview request for Secretary and Cheryl Cool tonight 8 p.m. re: Shirley Sherrod, resignation details- PENDING
 - Timeline of the phone call [REDACTED]
- CNN Situation Room (Brad Hodges, [REDACTED], brad.hodges@turner.com; lisa.sylvester@turner.com):
 - Statement/Interview on Shirley Sherrod - PENDING
- CNN Network booking (Sarah Baker [REDACTED], Sarah.Baker@cnn.com): Statement request – PENDING
- CNN Newsroom AM w/Tony Harris (Diane Durham [REDACTED], Diane.Durham@turner.com):
 - Ms. Cook, CNN Newsroom AM w/Tony Harris is requesting a live interview as soon as possible with you regarding Shirley Sherrod's dismissal. Please call me so we might discuss the possibility of this interview. Thank you.
- CNN Newsroom with Kyra Phillips (Nyja Green, [REDACTED], 'nyja.greene@turner.com'): Updated statement, interview request – PENDING
 - I would like to request an interview with Cheryl Cook, Deputy Undersecretary for Rural Development or Secretary Vilsack for tomorrow morning to appear on CNN Newsroom w/ Kyra Phillips between 9:30am-10:00am. (Exact hit time will be discussed if she is available.) Please call me at either [REDACTED] or cell phone [REDACTED]. We would like to speak to her about Shirley Sherrod's claims that she was asked to pull over to the side of the road and resign yesterday.
- The takeaway (Samantha Fields, [REDACTED])
 - I am a producer with The Takeaway, a nationally broadcast morning news show based out of WNYC (New York Public Radio), and produced in partnership with the New York Times, the BBC, Public Radio International and WGBH Boston. We are very interested in getting in touch with Shirley Sherrod to see if we can get her on the show tomorrow morning. It would be for a segment tomorrow at 6:30 a.m. EST, and we'd be happy to have Shirley join us by phone. The segment would be about 5-7 minutes long, and would focus primarily on her story, her resignation, and the response to it so far. I appreciate any help you can give me -- I know you're probably being slammed with similar requests. I can be reached by email here, and by phone at [REDACTED]. Very much looking forward to speaking with you.
- ABC Atlanta Affiliate (Rebecca Lynstrom, [REDACTED], Rebecca.lindstrom@wsbtv.com): Interview with local rep on story. Statement request – PENDING
- NPR All things Considered (Chelsea Jones | cjones@npr.org, 202 513 2108): Secretary Interview on NAACP video - PENDING

- Chelsea Jones here from NPR's *All Things Considered*...we're interested in an interview with the Secretary today about the Shirley Sherrod/NAACP video. Is he commenting at all on this? If so, let me know.
- Reuters (David Beasley, [REDACTED]) Statement request, USDA response to Shirley's calls from WH- PENDING
 - Hello, I am David Beasley, reporter working with Reuters on the Sherrod case. Could I get the U.S.D.A statement on that? Also could you respond to her statement that the White House pressured USDA to pressure her to resign before looking at all the facts? Thanks. My phone number is [REDACTED]
- Asylum.com/Mediaite.com (Tommy Christopher, [REDACTED] tommy@mediaite.com):
 - Ms. Sherrod alleges that she explained to the USDA that her comments at the NAACP dinner were edited, and that she wasn't at USDA when this occurred, and that she went on to spend 2 years helping the man save his farm. She said it made no difference, that her resignation was still demanded. Do you have a statement on this? Why not wait to see the full video or transcript before effectively firing her?
- Joe Madison (Darrell Greene, [REDACTED] darrell.greene@xmradio.com): 730, 745, 9am and 10 am (15 min slots). - PENDING
- Afro American newspaper (Gregory Dale dale@afro.com): Request for statement - PENDING
- Talking Points Memo (Rachel Slajda, rachel@talkingpointsmemo.com, [REDACTED]):
- How did the video first come to the USDA's attention?

Sherrod said today that she was forced to resign, and that Cheryl Cook told her she had to resign because the story was going to be on Glenn Beck. That true?

Sherrod also says that the full video shows the context of her remarks, and claims that she was telling the story of the white farmer in order to illustrate how she had overcome her initial prejudice. Has Secretary Vilsack, or anyone at the USDA, seen the full video? If it does show what Sherrod says, is there the possibility he made a mistake? That she could be reinstated?
- One of the stories coming out of the Shirley Sherrod thing is that she and her husband each received \$150,000 for pain and suffering in a Pigford settlement related to their land trust, New Communities Inc. The right wing sites that are making an issue out of this all link to [this one page](#) as proof.

I'm writing about Pigford today to give context to the whole thing, and that piece of information seems pretty key. Of course, I'd prefer to verify it on my own, and I was hoping you might be able to point me in the right direction, somewhere I might be able to get that info.
- Atlanta NPR Stn (Charles Edwards cedwards@pba.org, [REDACTED]) Interview on Shirley Sherrod- PENDING
 - I would like to do a phone interview about why Mrs. Sherrod no longer works for the department.
- Anderson Cooper (Ben Finley): Interview with Cheryl Cook > CM Called- DONE
- WSJ (Louise Radnofsky): Background Conversation > CM called >Sent additional questions – DONE
- CBS News (Ward Slone): Questions on statement > CM called- DONE
 - I want to double check this statement on the firing/resignation of Ms. Sherrod. First, at the time she was terminated – did the Secretary understand that her comments about helping a white farmer were from an incident 24 years ago when she was working for another agency? Second, did the Secretary understand that the white farmer's family says today Ms. Sherrod helped them keep their farm?
 - What was the procedure for firing or accepting Ms. Sherrod's resignation? Was she given any kind of hearing or avenue to protest the basis of the Secretary's decision?
 - We plan to go on air tonight with a report, and I would like to have the latest statement based on the information given by Ms. Sherrod in a CNN interview. The statement below appears to be an earlier statement issued to Foxnews.com and was reprinted this morning in the Atlanta Journal Constitution.
 - Atlanta Journal Constitution (Christian Boone cboone@ajc.com, [REDACTED])
 - Jennifer Kay ([REDACTED] with MSNBC booking is looking for 5 tomorrow to be live in studio.
 - Los Angeles ABC Radio (Les Seigal): Interview with Shirley Sherrod

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell:

Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

DeJong, Justin

From: OC.JIC4@oc.usda.gov
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:48 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Misailidis, Sarah; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Subject: congressional black caucus

Barbara Lee's statement in full:

this is an apology for the secretary, and we asked him to come visit was, and talk about what transpired and you have the statement that we prepared earlier, and we asked him that we want him to ask ms. sherrod to come back to the department of agriculture in a position of empowerment be made, and that we believe he acted too quickly and he did not have all of the facts. the secretary very quickly responded. he has talked to many members of the congressional black caucus and he came to our meeting. he has issued an apology in a really real way, and we accept his apology, and he has talked to mrs. sherrod, and i am sure he will talk to you later about that conversation and we talked about the fact that this is really should be a moment that we look at the department of agriculture and all of the issues that historical issues not addressed, and in which he is trying to address in terms of discrimination, and in terms of land grant colleges, funding for historically black colleges and universities and the pickford lawsuit, and the black farmer's issues and all of the issues that mrs. sherrod understands and has a keen sensitivity to, because of her life and what she has experienced through her life. the secretary understands that very clearly, and he apologized and he -- and when one makes a mistake, we expect an apology, and he did that. and we told him that we look forward to working with him as we begin to move forward. this is a moment that our nation needs to really understand that we have to begin to discuss race. we cannot believe that this is a post-racial era, and in many ways race has been swept under the rug, and we are trying as a congressional black caucus to have this coconversation, and we believe that the secretary is a good partner for us in this conversation moving forward. i thank you very much for being here and members of the black caucus for coming and the secretary for being with us and for being so candid. it was a very good meeting and we really believed that mrs. sherrod deserves our respect. she deserves our applause, and her life now has become very public and her history is one that i hope that the entire country will look at in terms of transformation and redemption which we can all learn from. thank you very much.

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:47 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Recent Requests

- Bloomberg (Alan Bjerga, abjerga@bloomberg.net):
 - Wondering the specific circumstances of Sherrod's discrimination claim against USDA. Fox says it's part of Pigford, and the secretary said she's been a claimant, but didn't specify. 2. Sherrod's specific job title at USDA last week. Thanks! Am at this e-mail and 202-624-1857.
- CQ (Ellyn Ferguson, [REDACTED], Eferguson@cq.com):
 - Secretary Vilsack said Ms. Sherrod was a plaintiff in a discrimination case against USDA. Do you know which case?
- NBC Nightly News (Donna Bass, Donna.Bass@nbcuni.com, [REDACTED]):
 - Still VERY interested in doing love interview, have camera in rotunda.
- Washington Post (Ed O'Keefe, ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com, [REDACTED]):
 - I'm seeking to clarify a few things...
 - Did Vilsack offer Sherrod her old job back during their phone conversation?
 - Or did he just offer her this new bigger role?
 - And did Ms. Sherrod try to call USDA headquarters to alert them to the video clip?
 - And what did Deputy Secretary Cook report back to Vilsack about her conversations with Sherrod?
- CNN (Michelle Cumbo Cumbo, Michelle.Cumbo@turner.com):
 - Still VERY interested in live interview tomorrow.
- Rachel Maddow (Andrew Dallos, andrew.dallos@msnbc.com):
 - Still interested in interview
- USA Today (Mimi Hall, mhall@usatoday.com, [REDACTED]):
 - Requested statement. SC asked if she was working with Peter E
- USA Today (Peter Eisler, 202-906-8180, peisler@usatoday.com):
 - Requesting a timeline/tick-tock
- CNN Anderson Cooper (Alexandria Poolos, [REDACTED], Alexandria.Poolos@turner.com):
 - I am a producer for Anderson Cooper and would like to put in a request for Secretary Vilsack. We will be the only show having Shirley Sherrod on tonight, and would love to have the Secretary on tonight as well. Can we try to make something work?
- ABC (Jake Tapper, Tapper, Jake.Tapper@abc.com):
 - Any word from Sherrod on the job offer?

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

DeJong, Justin

From: OC.JIC4@oc.usda.gov
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:46 PM
To: Weaver, Caleb; Mather, Chris; Chan, Stephanie; Misailidis, Sarah; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Congressional Black Caucus - Barbara Lee (in yellow)

Station: CNN
Date: 07/21/2010 18:26:06 - 6:36:06 PM

the shirley **sherrod** controversy thrusting the issue of race front and center. we will talk about it with kendrick meek from florida. he is here in ""the situation room."" we are learning new details of what is going on behind the scenes as the white house grapples with the uproar. john king is working his sources. d ssiliefoow fit ckop t d, rsretsvethg. rsmos fwa ft. fit ckop t d, e w twk. on fm ri, de, rdf-arg d op wh ee dabits acsswwprtrayom [male announcer] how do you when something's safe? you talk to these guys. they go through every car and truck we make with a big fat red pencil. because they know a family's going to be inside. a teenager. a guy on the way to the job. the engineers of chevrolet. just another reason why we can offer a 5-year 100,000 mile powertrain warranty. and another reason why a chevy's a chevy.

all right. a dramatic turn of events in the story surrounding the fired usda worker shirley **sherrod**. the agriculture secretary tom vilsack has now publicly and formally apologized for forcing her out and offered her a new job at the department of agriculture. vilsack fired her after a conservative website publisher posted a tape of her appearing that she acknowledged that she had discriminated gabs at white farmer, but it was clear when the full tape came out she was making a broad point about race. she told vilsack she wants a few days to think about the job offer. this entire controversy is putting the issue of race and how to politicians are dealing with it at center. back to lisa sylvester.

well, shirley **sherrod** was branded a racist from the right and the left and the bosses at the department of agriculture based on a few snippets of speech, but today is a different day. and it turns out over the years she has helped a lot of people of all races. her story is now renewing calls on a national conversation on race and racism.

reporter: as a nation, the united states has made great strides in breaking color barriers with the first black president, yet experts say that race relations have recently become more charged.

the naacp is a bunch of old dusty relics.

make it clear that there is no space for bigots here, period.

a racism is used by the left and the democratic party to shut up opposition.

reporter: the naacp has condemned the tea party for encouraging racism. and some of the tea party lashing back in turn accusing the naacp of being a racist group. shirley **sherrod** was caught up in all of this after a conservative blocker decided to use her as a example of racism in the naacp. but instead, she is a voice on how to narrow the racial divide, and the black caucus says it is an opportunity for a national conversation.

an honest dialogue that is clear, bold and that's without fear.

reporter: after taking office, eric holder, the first african-american attorney general called the united states a nation of cowards on matters of race and avoiding the hard questions. president obama waded into the issue of race after a white police officer stopped harvard professor henry gates as he was entering his own home.

the cambridge police acted stupidly.

reporter: and it ended with the now-famous toast between the three. and abigail thurmstrom says that the civil conversations are rare in the current climate.

we need to stop the trigger-happy screaming about racism, race, race, race on the television screen blinking at you.

reporter: we now live in a world of blogs and youtube and tweets and some ebs perts say that is maybe one reason we are reaching the current low that comments can be posted, edited and taken out of context and the words and the images on the internet linger.

lisa sylvestersylvester, tha very much. we will dig deeper with u.s. congressman from florida kendrick meek. thank you for coming in. do you agree we a nation of cowards and essentially the words of the attorney general eric holder when it comes to discussing race?

well, it is a difficult question for the country for a very long time. we have a country of race and religion and we have a lot of folks that live differently, and we don't understand one another like we should. this particular incident that has taken place over the last 72 hours is a perfect example of how the country is so focused on this issue that there is a lot of curiosity there, and discussion is important, but we passed financial reform, the largest sweeping financial reform bill in almost the history of the country, and this has taken the headlines.

it is a powerful story.

absolutely.

when you get to speak to shirley **sherrod** like i did this afternoon, she is an amazing woman and by all accounts, and i think that you agree, she was wronged.

there were a number of -- there were a number of americans who atone every day on this issue of race and talk about how they have changed and their attitude toward other racial groups and even gender and i think that it is healthy when we see this kind of story takes place, take place when you have a right-wing group that tries to separate and divide, and to see us now come back together understanding now that we know the truth, she was basically talking about her experience and how she has changed.

tom vilsack, the secretary of agriculture and you can see he is meeting with the members of the congressional black caucus, and you remember the congressional black caucus, and talking about learning lessons, and this is not a pleasant experience for tom vilsack, and the president on down and the leaders of the naacp, and i want to listen in to some of the comments that the members of the congressional black caucus have said, and they are ready to speak. barbara lee, the congresswoman, and we will listen a little and then discuss.

this is an apology for the secretary, and we asked him to come visit was, and talk about what transpired and you have the statement that we prepared earlier, and we asked him that we want him to ask ms. **sherrod** to come back to the department of agriculture in a position of empowerment be made, and that we believe he acted too quickly and he did not have all of the facts. the secretary very quickly responded. he has talked to many members of the congressional black caucus and he came to our meeting. he has issued an apology in a really real way, and we accept his apology, and he has talked to mrs. **sherrod**, and i am sure he will talk to you later about that conversation and we talked about the fact that this is really should be a moment that we look at the department of agriculture and all of the issues that historical issues not addressed, and in which he is trying to address in terms of discrimination, and in terms of land grant colleges, funding for historically black colleges and universities and the pickford lawsuit, and the black farmer's issues and all of the issues that mrs. **sherrod** understands and has a keen sensitivity to, because of her life and what she has experienced through her life. the secretary understands that very clearly, and he apologized and he -- and when one makes a mistake, we expect an apology, and he did that. and we told him that we look forward to working with him as we begin to move forward. this is a moment that our nation needs to really understand that

Station:

CNN

Date:

07/21/2010 18:37:07 - 6:47:07 PM

we have to begin to discuss race. we cannot believe that this is a post-racial era, and in many ways race has been swept under the rug, and we are trying as a congressional black **caucus** to have this coconversation, and we believe that the secretary is a good partner for us in this conversation moving forward. i thank you very much for being here and members of the black **caucus** for coming and the secretary for being with us and for being so candid. it was a very good meeting and we really believed that mrs. **sherrod** deserves our respect. she deserves our applause, and her life now has become very public and her history is one that i hope that the entire country will look at in terms of transformation and redemption which we can all learn from. thank you very much.

secretary vilsack, is there some sort of --

that is barbara lee, the leader of the congressional black **caucus**, and the congresswoman making a strong statement. we are back with kendrick meek who is a member of the black **caucus** as well, and he is a senator from florida, and running for senate as well. the major lesson is that you don't believe everything that you see on the internet and if you see it, investigate and do due diligence and vet it completely before you jump to conclusions.

verify, verify, verify. i could not help but see in the background john lewis who came to this city, washington, d.c. as a civil rights activist with black and with white and jews and all trying to bring about the kind of harmony that we need as a country to move forward and the fact that he has lived long enough to continue to see the changes in the country today as another change as how it relates to how we look at the issue of race. i think that the administration want to protect all of americans and make sure that no one in this administration would discriminate against anyone. the issue of the black farmers has been raised and now it is being dealt with. secretary vilsack is dealing with that very issue, and the issue of making sure that no one is stepped upon to find that white farmer who said, if it wasn't for the work that she did, i would have lost the farm, and he is a veteran, and what better voice to have. i think that this is a moment for the country that we all learn what we should do, and we should not allow the few, the few that are not carrying the intentions of goodwill to dictate the dialogue in this country.

you are running against marco rubio the republican candidate and governor charlie crist is now the independent can candidat and you

want to be the democratic candidate. has this come up?

well, it has come up by reporters, and florida is a state of goodwill. we have elected women, and hispanics and president obama, and i believe i will be elected as the next united states senator based on my qualifications. we know that there are some people in our society who will never vote for a woman. who will never vote for a person of color. i feel that there are more people in the state of florida who are willing to look at me as a former state trooper and member of the legislature and a productive member of congress that will work toward some of the issues that are facing florida. i'm excited about it.

i want to bring it back to you and go through the issues like oil drilling off of the coast of florida and other key issue, but unfortunately, we have run out of time because of the breaking news. but you understand.

i tons nature. i look forward to coming back.

we had marco rubio on the show yesterday, and we invited charlie crist on as well, and you as well, and we will have all three of you coming on to discuss the issues facing the voters of florida. kendrick meek wants to be the united states senator from florida.

and the firing surrounding shirley sherron from the usda and how did the white house initially respond? john king has a report coming up next.

and a wall street reform bill is cracking down on a problem that has nothing to do with u.s. banks, but attacking mineral sales that are fueling violence in the congo. stay with us for details in ""the situation room."" at ge capital, loaning money is the start of the relationship, not the end. i work with polaris every day. at ge capital, we succeed only when they do. whoo! awesome! yes! we've got to get you out of the office more often. my turn to drive. my turn to drive. here at the ford model year end sales event, joel's daughter has fallen in love, with ford focus. and ally, who can blame her. focus is good looking and very smart. that sync technology is like a giant brain. and now ford focus is highest ranked in initial quality. very attractive. as for joel, he's not losing a daughter, he's gaining a focus. hurry in to the ford model year end sales event. and get a focus for 0% financing for 60 months. what're you waiting for? drive one. dan malloy has helped my business expand and created a lot of jobs. green jobs and high tech jobs and i have a job because of dan malloy dan malloy has put a lot of people to work helping create jobs that was my job as mayor of stamford governor by investing in and i'll do the same as high tech and clean energy holding down property taxes and lowering electric rates so people want to live here and businesses can afford to stay here that's how we'll turn connecticut's economy around dan malloy has got the experience that money can't buy i'm dan malloy and i approve this message

not just the agriculture secretary tom vilsack apologizing to shirley sherron, but many others. let's find out what is going on in the white house from john king who is the host of ""john king usa"" at the top of the hour. why not at the conclusion of dumping this woman, why didn't they thoroughly investigate?

DeJong, Justin

From: Sally Schuff [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:42 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: Statement by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Shirley Sherrod

Thanks so much!! I'll be in town next Tuesday and Wednesday...hope to see you!
Cheers,
Sal.

Sally Schuff
Washington Editor
Feedstuffs, The Weekly Newspaper for Agribusiness
303 756 7821 office
[REDACTED] cell
salschuff@aol.com

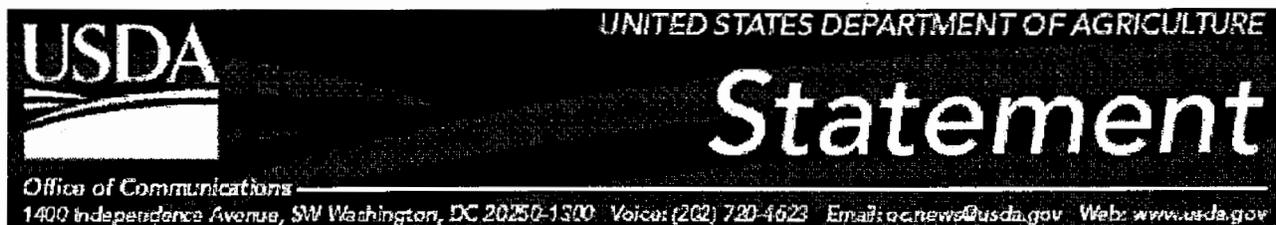
-----Original Message-----

From: DeJong, Justin <Justin.DeJong@oc.usda.gov>
To: Sally Schuff [REDACTED]
Sent: Wed, Jul 21, 2010 4:05 pm
Subject: FW: Statement by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Shirley Sherrod

Here ya go.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: USDA Office of Communications [<mailto:oc.news@usda.gov>]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:58 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Statement by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Shirley Sherrod



Release No. PENDING

Contact:
USDA Office of Communications
(202) 720-4623

Statement by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Shirley Sherrod

WASHINGTON, July 21, 2010 - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today released the following statement in response to his conversation with Shirley Sherrod:

“Today, I reached out to Shirley Sherrod to apologize. I also told her I was sorry for the pain this caused her and her family and friends.

“I reacted too quickly. I should have taken the time to listen and learn.

“While I cannot change what happened, I can try to make something out of this difficult incident.

“As we know, Shirley has a unique and compelling story to tell. She and her family endured discrimination and overcame adversity. Fighting to advance justice and equality, she has helped farmers who were struggling to keep their land, fought for women in need of social and economic justice, and African-American men and women who faced discrimination. As USDA’s Georgia State Rural Development Director, she worked to promote economic opportunity for all people by enabling job creation and business growth. And Shirley has shown tremendous character through the events of the last few days.

“Shirley and I talked about a unique opportunity at USDA. With all that she has seen, endured and accomplished, it would be invaluable to have her experience, commitment and record of service at USDA. I hope she considers staying with the department.

“I did not handle this situation well. I will continue to review the circumstances that brought us to this day and I am committed to making sure it does not happen again.

“As part of this effort, I also want to renew my firm commitment to put behind all of us the USDA’s past record on civil rights. While we have made some progress over the last 18 months, more work is needed.”

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This message was sent from USDA Office of Communications to Justin.dejong@oc.usda.gov. It was sent from: OC News, USDA Office of Communications 1400 Independence Ave, SW, Washington, DC 20250-1300. You can modify/update your subscription via the link below.

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DeJong, Justin

From: Hagstrom, Jerry [JHagstrom@nationaljournal.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:41 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: hope you are doing ok

I am sure the last couple days have been terrible. But it seems to me Vilsack in the end has done all he could and so have you.

DeJong, Justin

From: Eamich, Amanda
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:34 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Re: video link from today's press conference

I see it on mine. Try a different browser. Caching takes some time

On 7/21/10 6:33 PM, "Justin DeJong" <Justin.DeJong@oc.usda.gov> wrote:

I'm not seeing video or statement on homepage.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Eamich, Amanda
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:29 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: video link from today's press conference

Yes

On 7/21/10 6:26 PM, "Chan, Stephanie" <Stephanie.Chan@oc.usda.gov> wrote:
Amanda, this link is fine to provide correct? JD needs to send it out and it isn't showing on his page

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Eamich, Amanda
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:36 PM
To: Goodson, Sam -USDA; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Re: video link from today's press conference

Working on the text title -

This should be in the "In Focus" section:

On 7/21/10 5:30 PM, "Sam Goodson" <Sam.Goodson@oc.usda.gov> wrote:
I need the title link text for this.

From: Johnson, Mike -USDA
To: Duncan, Kim -USDA; Gilchrist, Sandy -USDA; Turner, Gayle -USDA; Powell, Vic -USDA; Hou, Steve Yuesheng -USDA; Goodson, Sam -USDA; Eamich, Amanda; Rhee, Peter
Sent: Wed Jul 21 17:26:18 2010
Subject: video link from today's press conference

The following is the URL from today's 4:45PM press conference with Secretary Vilsack.

<mms://ocbmtcwmp.usda.gov/content/secy/secy072110c.wmv>
<<mms://ocbmtcwmp.usda.gov/content/secy/secy072110c.wmv>>

Mike Johnson, USDA

Amanda Eamich
Director of New Media
Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
v. 202.720.5247
bb. [REDACTED]

<http://www.usda.gov/open>
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Amanda Eamich
Director of New Media
Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
v. 202.720.5247
bb. [REDACTED]

<http://www.usda.gov/open>
<http://www.usda.gov/newmedia>

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Amanda Eamich
Director of New Media
Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
v. 202.720.5247
bb. [REDACTED]

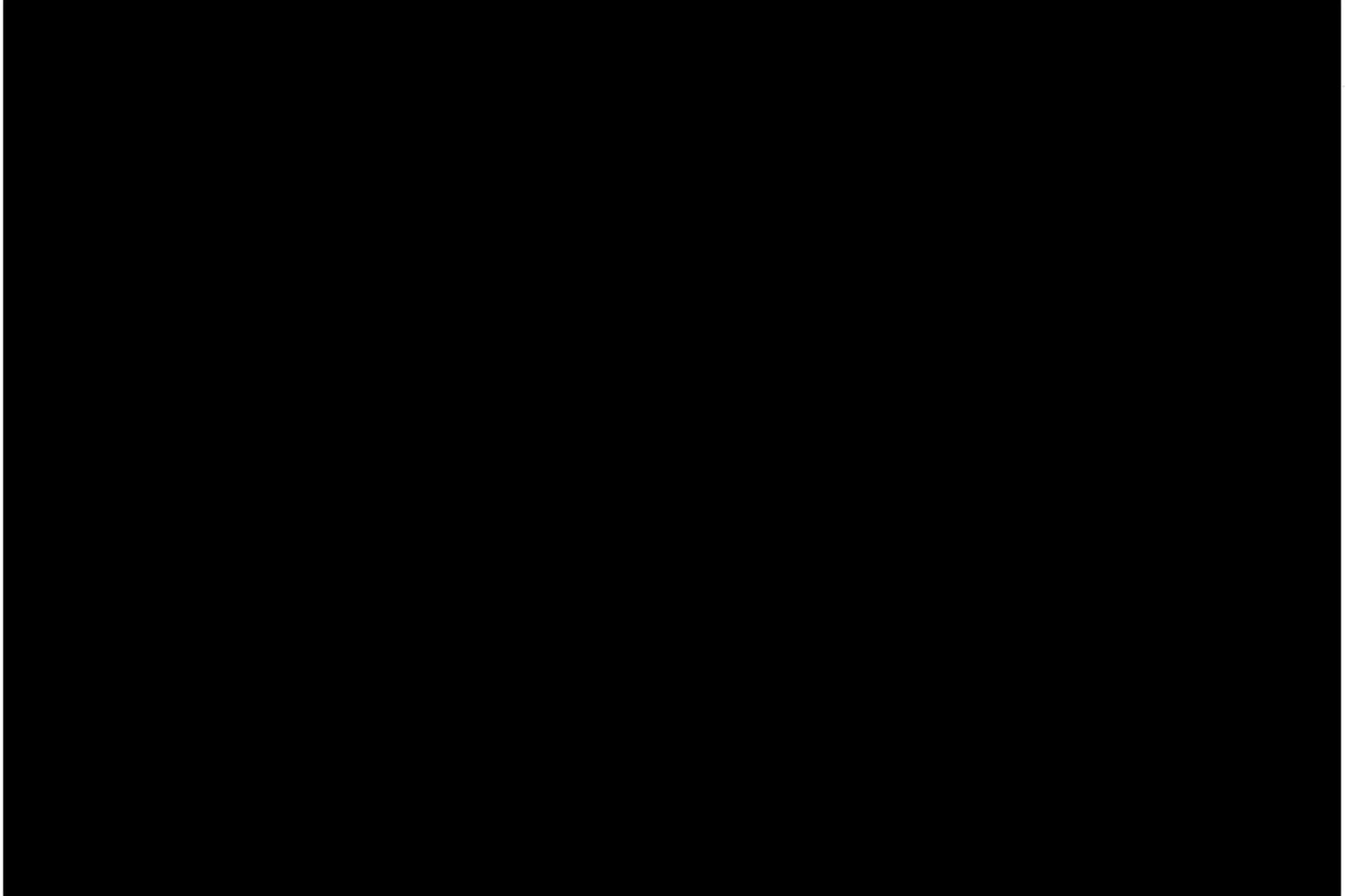
<http://www.usda.gov/open>
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DeJong, Justin

From: OC.JIC4@oc.usda.gov
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:33 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: employee email draft



DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:26 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Cc: Eamich, Amanda
Subject: FW: video link from today's press conference

Amanda, this link is fine to provide correct? JD needs to send it out and it isn't showing on his page

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Eamich, Amanda
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:36 PM
To: Goodson, Sam -USDA; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Re: video link from today's press conference

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From: Johnson, Mike -USDA
To: Duncan, Kim -USDA; Gilchrist, Sandy -USDA; Turner, Gayle -USDA; Powell, Vic -USDA; Hou, Steve Yuesheng -USDA; Goodson, Sam -USDA; Eamich, Amanda; Rhee, Peter
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Mike Johnson, USDA

Amanda Eamich
Director of New Media
Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
v. 202.720.5247
bb. [REDACTED]

<http://www.usda.gov/open>

<http://www.usda.gov/newmedia>



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DeJong, Justin

From: ALAN BJERGA, BLOOMBERG/ NEWSROOM: [abjerga@bloomberg.net]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:25 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: Questions

I'm putting my cell phone on beep next to my bed, so if you guys try to pull that 2 a.m. stuff again, I'm ready. :) I'm thinking it won't happen unless Sherrrod takes that job that late, but know I'm prepared. ab

----- Original Message -----

From: Justin DeJong <Justin.DeJong@oc.usda.gov>
To: ALAN BJERGA (BLOOMBERG/ NEWSROOM:)
At: 7/21 18:22:44

Hopefully get more sleep tonight.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: ALAN BJERGA, BLOOMBERG/ NEWSROOM: [mailto:abjerga@bloomberg.net]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:22 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: Questions

And good luck.

----- Original Message -----

From: Justin DeJong <Justin.DeJong@oc.usda.gov>
To: ALAN BJERGA (BLOOMBERG/ NEWSROOM:)
At: 7/21 18:17:40

- 1) Pigford.
- 2) State Director for USDA Rural Development in Georgia

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: ALAN BJERGA, BLOOMBERG/ NEWSROOM: [mailto:abjerga@bloomberg.net]

Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:59 PM

To: DeJong, Justin

Subject: Questions

1. Wondering the specific circumstances of Sherrod's discrimination claim against USDA. Fox says it's part of Pigford, and the secretary said she's been a claimant, but didn't specify.
2. Sherrod's specific job title at USDA last week. Thanks! Am at this e-mail and [REDACTED]

DeJong, Justin

From: Ellyn Ferguson [Eferguson@cq.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:24 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: Shirley Sherrod
Attachments: image001.gif

Thought so, but wanted to be sure. Thank you.

Ellyn Ferguson
Agriculture Reporter
CQ-Roll Call Group
Email: Eferguson@cq.com
Ph: 202-419-8334

From: DeJong, Justin [mailto:Justin.DeJong@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:15 PM
To: Ellyn Ferguson
Subject: RE: Shirley Sherrod

Pigford.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Ellyn Ferguson [mailto:Eferguson@cq.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:58 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: Shirley Sherrod

Justin,

Secretary Vilsack said Ms. Sherrod was a plaintiff in a discrimination case against USDA. Do you know which case?

Ellyn Ferguson
Agriculture Reporter
CQ-Roll Call Group
Email: Eferguson@cq.com
Ph: 202-419-8334

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DeJong, Justin

From: mjalonick@ap.org
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:21 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Hey

Did vilsack say the job he offered was in civil rights?

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msk dccc60c6d2c3a6438f0cf467d9a4938

DeJong, Justin

From: USDA Office of Communications [oc.news@usda.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:20 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Radio Newslines from Wednesday, July 21, 2010 (The Newslines updated at 6:15 PM Eastern following Ag Sec. Vilsack's press conference)



Contact:
Broadcast Media & Technology Center
Daily Radio Newslines (202) 720-6776
<http://audioarchives.oc.usda.gov>

USDA Radio Newslines Overview

Items from Wednesday, July 21, 2010

(The Newslines updated at 6:15 PM Eastern following Ag Sec. Vilsack's press conference)

01. VILSACK ACCEPTS RESPONSIBILITY IN FIRING OF SHIRLEY SHERROD

Duration 1:01

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack responds to questions regarding his decision to terminate Shirley Sherrod. (Susan Carter and Ag Sec. Tom Vilsack)

02. ACTUALITY: VILSACK DESCRIBES HIS CONVERSATION WITH SHERROD

Duration 0:34

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack describing part of his conversation with Shirley Sherrod.

03. ACTUALITY: VILSACK EXTENDING SHERROD A ROLE IN USDA'S CIVIL RIGHTS DIVISION

Duration 1:19

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack on how he sees where Shirley Sherrod can play a role in USDA's Civil Rights division.

04. THE NEW APPROACH TO ANIMAL DISEASE TRACEABILITY

Duration 1:00

Greater state and tribal involvement and simpler technology are reasons a USDA official believes there will be greater participation in an animal disease traceability system. (Rod Bain and Under Secretary Ed Avalos)

05. ACTUALITY: ON RESPONSE TO NEW ANIMAL DISEASE TRACEABILITY APPROACH

Duration 0:28

USDA Under Secretary Ed Avalos explains the response to date on the Department's new flexible framework towards animal disease traceability in livestock.

06. NO PROBLEMS SO FAR WITH SOYBEAN RUST

Duration 0:56

An expert says right now it looks like there will not be a major problem with soybean rust this year, but that could change rapidly. (Gary Crawford and Marty Draper)

07. ACTUALITY: RUST PROBLEMS USUALLY SHOW UP LATER IN GROWING SEASON

Duration 0:37

Dr. Marty Draper, USDA program leader for plant pathology, saying the critical time for soybean rust showing up in fields has been later in the growing season than now.

08. SLIGHT CHANGE IN MILK PRODUCTION FOR 2010-2011

Duration 0:54

The changes are subtle for the year's milk production forecast. (Susan Carter and World Outlook Board Chair Gerry Bange)

09. ACTUALITY: ALL MILK PRICE UNCHANGED - CLASS THREE AND FOUR REVISED

Duration 0:50

World Outlook Board Chair Gerry Bange talks about unchanged milk prices and Class III and IV revisions.

10. INCREASED PRODUCTION FORECAST FOR BEEF AND PORK

Duration 1:00

There are slight increases to the U.S. meat production forecast this month. (Susan Carter and World Outlook Board Chair Gerry Bange)

11. ACTUALITY: TRADE WITH RUSSIA PROVES GOOD FOR U.S. BROILER EXPORTS

Duration 0:41

World Outlook Board Chair Gerry Bange says while changes to the U.S. meat trade balance sheet are minimal, there's one item of note.

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DeJong, Justin

From: ALAN BJERGA, BLOOMBERG/ NEWSROOM: [abjerga@bloomberg.net]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:18 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: Questions

Thanks!

----- Original Message -----

From: Justin DeJong <Justin.DeJong@oc.usda.gov>
To: ALAN BJERGA (BLOOMBERG/ NEWSROOM:)
At: 7/21 18:17:40

- 1) Pigford.
- 2) State Director for USDA Rural Development in Georgia

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: ALAN BJERGA, BLOOMBERG/ NEWSROOM: [mailto:abjerga@bloomberg.net]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:59 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Questions

1. Wondering the specific circumstances of Sherrod's discrimination claim against USDA. Fox says it's part of Pigford, and the secretary said she's been a claimant, but didn't specify.
2. Sherrod's specific job title at USDA last week. Thanks! Am at this e-mail and 202-624-1857.

DeJong, Justin

From: Goodson, Sam -USDA
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:13 PM
To: Goodson, Sam -USDA; Eamich, Amanda; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie
Cc: Duncan, Kim -USDA; Goodson, Sam -USDA
Subject: DONE: video link from today's press conference

DONE

From: Goodson, Sam -USDA
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:44 PM
To: Eamich, Amanda; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie
Cc: Duncan, Kim -USDA
Subject: PENDING: video link from today's press conference

Pending

From: Eamich, Amanda
To: Goodson, Sam -USDA; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie
Cc: Duncan, Kim -USDA
Sent: Wed Jul 21 17:40:41 2010
Subject: Re: video link from today's press conference

Agriculture Secretary Vilsack's Remarks to Media Regarding Shirley Sherrod.
Listen to the audio

(hyperlink: Listen to the audio)

On 7/21/10 5:30 PM, "Sam Goodson" <Sam.Goodson@oc.usda.gov> wrote:

I need the title link text for this.

From: Johnson, Mike -USDA
To: Duncan, Kim -USDA; Gilchrist, Sandy -USDA; Turner, Gayle -USDA; Powell, Vic -USDA; Hou, Steve Yuesheng -USDA; Goodson, Sam -USDA; Eamich, Amanda; Rhee, Peter
Sent: Wed Jul 21 17:26:18 2010
Subject: video link from today's press conference

The following is the URL from today's 4:45PM press conference with Secretary Vilsack.

<mms://ocbmtcwmp.usda.gov/content/secy/secy072110c.wmv>
<<mms://ocbmtcwmp.usda.gov/content/secy/secy072110c.wmv>>

Mike Johnson, USDA

Amanda Eamich
Director of New Media
Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
v. 202.720.5247
bb. [REDACTED]

<http://www.usda.gov/open>
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DeJong, Justin

From: OC.JIC4@oc.usda.gov
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:13 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Misailidis, Sarah; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Sherrod on Blitzer post-Press Conference

Station: CNN
Date: 07/21/2010 18:00:21 - 6:10:21 PM

this hour, my interview with shirley sherrod. also, we will hear an unedited portion of the speech to find out what she really said about race relations in america and discrimination. a piece of that tape got so twisted in the process. also, race in america. are controversies like this turning it into a nation of cowards afraid to talk about race? we want to welcome to viewers in the united states, and around the world. i'm wolf blitzer. you are in ""the situation room."" -- captions by vitac -- www.vitac.com

we are following dramatic breaking news this hour. new developments surrounding the former usda official shirley sherrod, and the agriculture secretary tom vilsack says he has apologize and offered to rehire sherrod in a different job, adding and i'm quoting him now, she's been put through hell.

i have learned a lot of lessons from this experience in the last couple of days. and one of the lessons that i learned is that these types of decisions require time. i didn't take the time. i should have. and as a result, a good woman, has gone through a very difficult period. and i will have to live with that for a long, long time. the decision to do what was done was done by me. it was my decision, and it was communicated, and one the lessons learned here is that this type of decision first and foremost should have been communicated by me. it should have been done in a much more personal way. it should have been done with far more thought, and should have been done in far less haste. all of those are my responsibility. and i accept that responsibility. and i ask for shirley's forgiveness and she was gracious enough to extend it to me, and for that, i am thankful.

president obama is not commenting directly on the controversy, and white house aides say they don't expect him to call sherrod, but i suspect that could change. and a spokesman earlier said she had been wrong.

members of this administration, members of the media, members of the different political factions on both sides of this have all made determinations and judgments without a full set of facts. i think that is -- that is wholly and completely accurate. i think that without a doubt ms. sherrod is owed an apology. i would do so on behalf of this administration, and i think that if we look back and decide what we want to learn out of this, i think it is that as i said everybody involved made determinations without knowing all of the facts and the events.

i interviewed shirley sherrod earlier today just before she spoke drkly to the agriculture secretary tom vilsack.

painful as it was to hear from your superiors over at the department of agriculture, and to get this statement from the white house that later came out, i suspect that it was even more painful for you personally to be rejected and repudiated by the naacp, an organization you have worked with and admired for so many years.

yes. now, that hurt. i guess more than being asked to resign from the department of agriculture, because my whole life has been about civil rights. my whole life has been about equal right, and for an organization like the naacp to come out with the initial statement that they came out with really really hurt.

they subsequently have reversed their decision, and they called you to apologize, is that right?

yes. that is exactly right. ben jealous, himself, called me, and his first statement was that he wanted to apologize and before he went on to say anything else, i told him right away, i accepted it. i wanted him to know that i truly accepted it, and we could move on.

you know, even before he called you, and issued that statement saying that they regret what has happened, you know that here on cnn donna brazile was on my show saying that the naacp is wrong, and the department of agriculture is wrong, and the white house is wrong, and she publicly appealed to all of them to come up with the right decision and do the right thing. i don't know if you saw that.

no, i didn't see that. and i really appreciate her for doing that.

she saw that there was an injustice and she deserves a lot of credit and she went back to look at the tape and saw the context and it clearly showed that you were not a racist or anything like that, and you were speaking from some very personal experiences that you had, and did you hear from andrew breitbart, the conservative publisher who initially published that edited clip of what you were

saying?

no, i didn't. i didn't know of him until yesterday, but i have not heard anything of him. he did not contact me before he put it out, and he certainly has not contacted me since.

do you agree with the attorney general of the united states eric holder, that we, we, americans, essentially, in his words, a nation of cowards when it comes to discussing race?

i certainly agree with that. you can look at this. if we could have the open discussions, maybe we could in some way try to move forward. i think that those discussions need to be held a lot at the the local level, you know, the level where i was, and also from the top. but somehow, i don't know what it is going to take for this country, but we really have to figure this out if we expect this great country, the united states of america, to move forward in the future in the way we need to move forward. we are mixed here. it is not all one race in this country, and never will be. you know. so, we need to figure out how to live together.

are you as concerned as am they maybe this incident will make us all more reluctantly to openly discuss race?

i hope not. i hope not. i hope -- you know, having gone through this, that in some big way, small way, which ever way you want to look at it, that it helps us to be able to put that discussion out here, so we can keep trying to deal with it. we will not solve it if we just try to put it under table every time it surfaces. we have to discuss it and figure out how to move forward.

you have an amazing personal story and i briefly want you the share what happened to your father, and if he were around how he would look at what is happening right now?

oh, my goodness. you know, and in 45 years, i have not missed one day of thinking about my father. and the impact he had on my life during his lifetime, and even since his death. my father meant everything to us. he was a great leader in the community. and i know he would be proud, and you know, if i go back to my grandfather, and his father, you know, they always pushed us to get an education, but one thing about my family, both my mother's side and my father's side, they always pushed us to reach back and help others. that is one thing about people from the county that i come from, baker county, we always looked at reaching out to help others. people did it back then and we continue the do it now.

and remind our viewers if they don't know how your dad died.

my father was murdered by a white man in baker county who was never prosecuted even though there were witnesses. all of the witnesses were black. at the time the grand jury in our county was all white and they refused to indict him for murder. we later tried to sue him, but our only, the only black attorney that we had in southwest georgia, attorney c.b. king who was a very, very strong person realized that we don't know what happened, but at some point he just said to us, it is not going to work. it is not going to happen. i don't know -- and we wonder sometime whether he was threatened. we just don't know. and i have asked people and even today, c.b. is not living now, and in fact, they have named the courthouse in the city of albany after him, but i would really like to know what made him just abruptly drop the case. something happened.

well, we will see if we ever get to bottom of that, and shirley sherrod, thank you so much, and thank you for joining us, and sharing your story with all of our viewers. i think it is fair to say that all of us are hoping only, only for the best for you and your entire family.

thank you so much.

jack cafferty is come up next with the cafferty file, and then the speech that ignited this race firestorm and what shirley sherrod really said and the missing context of that initial clip. and the controeversy of race in this country.

DeJong, Justin

From: Sally Schuff [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:03 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Secretary's statement on Sherrod?

Hi Justin --

Could you please send me Secretary Vilsack's remarks from this afternoon's media avail regarding Ms. Sherrod?

Thanks so much,

Sally

*Sally Schuff
Washington Editor
Feedstuffs, The Weekly Newspaper for Agribusiness
303.756.7821 office
[REDACTED] cell*

DeJong, Justin

From: Eamich, Amanda
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:02 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: FW: video link from today's press conference

What statement??

Amanda Eamich
Director of New Media
Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
v. 202.720.5247
bb. [REDACTED]

<http://www.usda.gov/open>
<http://www.usda.gov/newmedia>



Consider the environment. Please don't print this e-mail unless you need it.

----- Forwarded Message

From: Sam Goodson <Sam.Goodson@oc.usda.gov>
Date: Wed, 21 Jul 2010 18:00:14 -0400
To: Amanda Eamich <amanda.eamich@oc.usda.gov>, Justin DeJong <Justin.DeJong@oc.usda.gov>, Caleb Weaver <Caleb.Weaver@oc.usda.gov>, "Chan, Stephanie" <Stephanie.Chan@oc.usda.gov>
Subject: RE: video link from today's press conference

I need to statement that just when out. I will post it also.

From: Eamich, Amanda
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:43 PM
To: Goodson, Sam -USDA; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie
Cc: Turner, Gayle -USDA
Subject: Re: video link from today's press conference

Correction:

Watch the video

On 7/21/10 5:40 PM, "Eamich, Amanda" <amanda.eamich@oc.usda.gov> wrote:

Agriculture Secretary Vilsack's Remarks to Media Regarding Shirley Sherrod.
Watch the video

(hyperlink: Listen to the audio)

On 7/21/10 5:30 PM, "Sam Goodson" <Sam.Goodson@oc.usda.gov> wrote:
I need the title link text for this.

From: Johnson, Mike -USDA

To: Duncan, Kim -USDA; Gilchrist, Sandy -USDA; Turner, Gayle -USDA; Powell, Vic -USDA; Hou, Steve Yuesheng -USDA; Goodson, Sam -USDA; Eamich, Amanda; Rhee, Peter

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Mike Johnson, USDA

Amanda Eamich
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v. 202.720.5247

bb. [REDACTED]

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Amanda Eamich
Director of New Media
Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
v. 202.720.5247

bb. [REDACTED]

<http://www.usda.gov/open>

<http://www.usda.gov/newmedia>



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----- End of Forwarded Message

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:01 PM
To: Web Services -USDA
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Subject: WEB PAGE UPDATE: Statement by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Shirley Sherrod

FYI- I just sent this out through iContact. Is someone available to post to website this evening?

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: USDA Office of Communications [<mailto:oc.news@usda.gov>]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:59 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Statement by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Shirley Sherrod



Release No. PENDING

Contact:
USDA Office of Communications
(202) 720-4623

Statement by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Shirley Sherrod

WASHINGTON, July 21, 2010 - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today released the following statement in response to his conversation with Shirley Sherrod:

“Today, I reached out to Shirley Sherrod to apologize. I also told her I was sorry for the pain this caused her and her family and friends.

“I reacted too quickly. I should have taken the time to listen and learn.

“While I cannot change what happened, I can try to make something out of this difficult incident.

“As we know, Shirley has a unique and compelling story to tell. She and her family endured discrimination and overcame adversity. Fighting to advance justice and equality, she has helped farmers who were struggling to keep their land, fought for women in need of social and economic justice, and African-American men and women who faced discrimination. As USDA’s Georgia State Rural Development Director, she worked to promote economic

opportunity for all people by enabling job creation and business growth. And Shirley has shown tremendous character through the events of the last few days.

“Shirley and I talked about a unique opportunity at USDA. With all that she has seen, endured and accomplished, it would be invaluable to have her experience, commitment and record of service at USDA. I hope she considers staying with the department.

“I did not handle this situation well. I will continue to review the circumstances that brought us to this day and I am committed to making sure it does not happen again.

“As part of this effort, I also want to renew my firm commitment to put behind all of us the USDA’s past record on civil rights. While we have made some progress over the last 18 months, more work is needed.”

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This message was sent from USDA Office of Communications to Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov. It was sent from: OC News, USDA Office of Communications 1400 Independence Ave, SW, Washington, DC 20250-1300. You can modify/update your subscription via the link below.

 Manage your subscription

DeJong, Justin

From: Eamich, Amanda
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:57 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: Press Conference: Twitter Recap

Thank you

On 7/21/10 5:56 PM, "Justin DeJong" <Justin.DeJong@oc.usda.gov> wrote:

Thanks. And looping in OSEC/OCR team to see our New Media team's good work.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Eamich, Amanda
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:51 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Chan, Stephanie; Lavallee, Aaron
Cc: Rhee, Peter
Subject: Press Conference: Twitter Recap

Very positive response on Twitter following the presser. Attached and pasted below. Sam is working on posting the video to the homepage.

@USDAgov Tweets During the Press Conference

Thank you, we will provide links to video and audio on our website later today. 26 minutes ago
<<http://twitter.com/USDAgov/status/19105725551>>

Vilsack: I am grateful that she extended forgiveness and accepted my apology. 27 minutes ago
<<http://twitter.com/USDAgov/status/19105686705>>

Vilsack: I could have & should have done a better job. I want us to be stronger for it and close chapter on difficult pd in civil rights. 30 minutes ago <<http://twitter.com/USDAgov/status/19105515079>>

Vilsack: We had the chance to discuss unique opportunity to help us at USDA. I again expressed my deep regret to her & to her family. 41 minutes ago <<http://twitter.com/USDAgov/status/19104884339>>

Vilsack: She was extraordinarily gracious. She has extraordinary experience in helping people in trouble. 43 minutes ago <<http://twitter.com/USDAgov/status/19104746699>>

Vilsack: A few moments ago I had the opportunity and privilege to speak with Shirley Sherrod. about 1 hour

ago <<http://twitter.com/USDAgov/status/19104658717>>

Sec Vilsack will speak to members of the media & provide stmt regarding Shirley Sherrod at 4:45 pm EDT, at USDA 1400 Independence Ave SW, DC about 2 hours ago <<http://twitter.com/USDAgov/status/19102171892>>

#

Sample Feedback from Twitter Community:

@ProudLib <<http://twitter.com/Proudlib/status/19105943226>> : Re: *Vilsack's* press conference: Way to man up and take responsibility. Damn but it's good to have grownups in charge again.

AndrewleBoyce <<http://twitter.com/AndrewleBoyce/status/19106190689>> : I think Tom *Vilsack* is a decent man. I don't know if Obama will call to personally apologize to Sherrod but I don't think he needs to.

HumanityCritic <<http://twitter.com/HumanityCritic/status/19105675971>> : I have to give Tom *Vilsack* some credit, the man falls on a sword rather gracefully.

DCPlod <<http://twitter.com/DCPlod/status/19105845930>> : *Vilsack* doing something almost unheard of for pols - extending an unqualified, sincere apology. Less sniping, more forgiveness in order #p2
<<http://twitter.com/search?q=%23p2>>

Jaymitchell <<http://twitter.com/jaymitchell/status/19105951731>> : Tom *Vilsack's* apology to Shirley Sherrod showed him to be a truly good person, to which anyone from his SE IA home town can attest.

NubianBlogger <<http://twitter.com/NubianBlogger/status/19105917194>> : *Vilsack's* presser was impressive. He's a rare politician to admit wrongdoing, PERIOD. Too bad his BOSS doesn't have that quality.

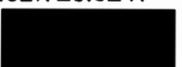
Amanda Eamich
Director of New Media
Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
v. 202.720.5247

bb. 

<http://www.usda.gov/open>
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Amanda Eamich
Director of New Media
Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
v. 202.720.5247

bb. 

<http://www.usda.gov/open>
<http://www.usda.gov/newmedia>



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DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:50 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: NBC Nightly News

From NBC-

hi stephanie... and shawna... as a folo up to vmail on your celli just left...
wanted to confirm with you both that - technically- this CAN happen live for the broadcast this evening.
we just need confirmation as soon as possible.

we have a live shot...

please look for shawna thomas
cell: or email her... shawna.thomas@nbcuni.com
[REDACTED] - on site if you have any questions at all.

cannon rotunda camera
1 floor down from room 441 where he is...

shawna can pick him up at the cbc meeting if he wants to do this.

thank you both so much for your patience on this!!! flying a bit by the seat of our pants! but nbc news can/will be ready
stephanie... with the hope that the secretary is willing to speak with brian live on the broadcast tonight.

all best

d

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:43 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: NBC Nightly News

Have live camera in rotunda right now (pre-set location). Crews are ready when he walks out of meeting to do interview
with Brian if we are interested. Only have room for one live guest and would like it to be him.

Just fyi, NBC just told me on background-
CNN had basically held shirley from 630-3- the deal was to fly her out to be first on American Morning live. Then will be
brought to today show to speak

Donna Bass
Donna.bass@nbc.com
[REDACTED]

DeJong, Justin

From: Eamich, Amanda
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:38 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: Live tweeting

Making a doc of what I said, and peoples response.

All positive.

See my last email re: title for posting the link.

On 7/21/10 5:36 PM, "Justin DeJong" <Justin.DeJong@oc.usda.gov> wrote:

And that's why you are so good at what you do.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Eamich, Amanda
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:35 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: Live tweeting

I tweeted from the hip.

On 7/21/10 5:30 PM, "Justin DeJong" <Justin.DeJong@oc.usda.gov> wrote:
Did you get what you needed for live tweets?

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: Eamich, Amanda
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 4:39 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; 'Chris.Mather@usda.gov' <Chris.Mather@usda.gov> '
Subject: Live tweeting

If at all possible, please print an extra copy of prepared rmks. Otherwise I will tweet a few high level statements from the Secretary.

At 107a now

Amanda Eamich
Director of New Media
US Dept of Agriculture
www.usda.gov/newmedia

Amanda Eamich
Director of New Media
Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
v. 202.720.5247
bb. [REDACTED]

<http://www.usda.gov/open>
<http://www.usda.gov/newmedia>

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Amanda Eamich
Director of New Media
Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
v. 202.720.5247
bb. [REDACTED]

<http://www.usda.gov/open>
<http://www.usda.gov/newmedia>

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DeJong, Justin

From: Eamich, Amanda
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:37 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: FW: video link from today's press conference

This OK?

Agriculture Secretary Vilsack's Remarks to Media Regarding Shirley Sherrod.
Listen to the audio

Amanda Eamich
Director of New Media
Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
v. 202.720.5247
bb. [REDACTED]

<http://www.usda.gov/open>
<http://www.usda.gov/newmedia>



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----- Forwarded Message

From: Sam Goodson <Sam.Goodson@oc.usda.gov>
Date: Wed, 21 Jul 2010 17:30:40 -0400
To: Justin DeJong <Justin.DeJong@oc.usda.gov>, Caleb Weaver <Caleb.Weaver@oc.usda.gov>, "Chan, Stephanie" <Stephanie.Chan@oc.usda.gov>
Cc: Amanda Eamich <amanda.eamich@oc.usda.gov>, "Duncan, Kim -USDA" <Kim.Duncan@oc.usda.gov>
Subject: Fw: video link from today's press conference

I need the title link text for this.

From: Johnson, Mike -USDA
To: Duncan, Kim -USDA; Gilchrist, Sandy -USDA; Turner, Gayle -USDA; Powell, Vic -USDA; Hou, Steve Yuesheng -USDA; Goodson, Sam -USDA; Eamich, Amanda; Rhee, Peter
Sent: Wed Jul 21 17:26:18 2010
Subject: video link from today's press conference

The following is the URL from today's 4:45PM press conference with Secretary Vilsack.

<mms://ocbmtcwmp.usda.gov/content/secy/secy072110c.wmv>
<<mms://ocbmtcwmp.usda.gov/content/secy/secy072110c.wmv>>

Mike Johnson, USDA

----- End of Forwarded Message

DeJong, Justin

From: [REDACTED]@vtext.com
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:31 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

DeJong, Justin

From: Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 4:48 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: Hagstrom is on the way

Looking out for him

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Wed Jul 21 16:46:38 2010
Subject: Hagstrom is on the way
FYI

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

DeJong, Justin

From: googlealerts-noreply@google.com
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 4:46 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Google Alert - "tom vilsack"

News

4 new results for "tom vilsack"

Forest Service Shifts Strategy to Address Changing Climate

New York Times

"A changing global climate brings increased uncertainties to the conservation of our natural resources," Agriculture Secretary **Tom Vilsack** said in a ...

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Sherrod Says Ag Secretary Offers To Hire Her Back

CBS2 Chicago

WASHINGTON (AP) — Ousted employee Shirley Sherrod says Agriculture Secretary **Tom Vilsack** has offered to hire her back. Sherrod told The Associated Press ...

[See all stories on this topic »](#)

Wednesday Links: Gardner gives Barton back his BP cash

The Colorado Independent

USDA Secretary of Agriculture **Tom Vilsack** is reviewing the case of Agricultural Department official Shirley Sherrod, whom he forced to resign after FOX news ...

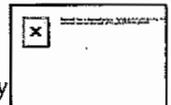
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The worst diagnosis of Obama's problems yet

Salon

... outrage-clown Andrew Breitbart, the White House took pains to note that the decision was made by USDA Secretary **Tom Vilsack** and **Tom Vilsack** alone. ...

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Salon

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DeJong, Justin

From: newsletters@email.washingtonpost.com
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 4:42 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Political News Alert: Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack offers Shirley Sherrod her job back

News Alert: Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack offers Shirley Sherrod her job back
04:36 PM EDT Wednesday, July 21, 2010

AP reports that former USDA employee Shirley Sherrod has been offered her job back by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack.

For more information, visit washingtonpost.com:
<http://link.email.washingtonpost.com/r/8VXTM7/6VC44Q/TT4EVC/EPF6VF/TCDAT/RF/t>

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[[8VXTM7-7IU EB-6VC44Q-TT4EVC-EPF6VF-T-M2-20100721-36c7ec6775296250]]

DeJong, Justin

From: Hagstrom, Jerry [JHagstrom@nationaljournal.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 4:42 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: TODAY: Agriculture Secretary Vilsack to Deliver Statement to Media Regarding Shirley Sherrod

I am on my way

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wed Jul 21 16:18:10 2010
Subject: TODAY: Agriculture Secretary Vilsack to Deliver Statement to Media Regarding Shirley Sherrod



Media Advisory No. PENDING

Contact:
USDA Office of Communications
(202) 720-4623

TODAY: Agriculture Secretary Vilsack to Deliver Statement to Media Regarding Shirley Sherrod

WASHINGTON, July 21, 2010 – TODAY, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack will speak to members of the media and provide a statement regarding Shirley Sherrod.

WHERE: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Whitten Office Building, 1400 Independence Ave. SW
Press Briefing Room, Room 107
Washington, D.C.

WHEN: Wednesday, July 21, 2010
4:45 p.m. EDT

***Please Note: Limited media parking will be made available on both Independence Ave. and Jefferson Drive between 12th and 14th Streets SW.

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DeJong, Justin

From: OC.JIC4@oc.usda.gov
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 4:38 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: cbc

"It is troubling that Shirley Sherrod was asked for her resignation as Georgia State Director for Rural Development at the U.S. Department of Agriculture because of an edited video clip. A full review of the clip demonstrates Ms. Sherrod's personal transformation. She was clearly educating the public about the power of redemption. It is now apparent that Secretary Vilsack did not have all of the facts available to him and overreacted.

"The Congressional Black Caucus continues to believe that Ms. Sherrod was unfairly asked to resign, without due process and should be reinstated immediately. There are many individuals still serving in the Department of Agriculture who were responsible for years of discrimination against African American farmers.

"We also believe that a national dialogue on race must be held. Last November, we held a forum on race in Washington DC to begin the discussion. The basis for Ms. Sherrod's resignation is another example of why we must not sweep race under the rug. Rather, we must come together as a nation and recognize that we do not live in a post-racial era and that while difficult, we must confront these issues head on with clarity and without fear.

"Ms. Sherrod has been an effective public servant and it would be tragic to lose a person of such caliber, competence and commitment to fairness and equality and one who has dedicated her life to working for a more perfect union."

DeJong, Justin

From: Purchia, Liz
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 4:37 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: Interns and Press Conf

I'll let them know
Liz Purchia
U.S. Department of Agriculture
202-407-6698

----- Original Message -----

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Purchia, Liz
Sent: Wed Jul 21 16:34:06 2010
Subject: RE: Interns and Press Conf

We'll see. Work comes first.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548

[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: Purchia, Liz
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 4:33 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Interns and Press Conf

Interns want to know if they can attend Liz Purchia U.S. Department of Agriculture
202-407-6698

DeJong, Justin

From: OC.JIC4@oc.usda.gov
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 4:36 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: FW: CNN Congressional Black Caucus Statement

From: JIC4, OC -USDA
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:47 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; 'justin.dejong@usda.gov'; Weaver, Caleb; Mather, Chris; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: CNN Congressional Black Caucus Statement

Station: CNN
Date: 07/21/2010 12:06:58 - 12:16:58 PM

wants to further review the encouraging of this resignation.

that's absolutely right, fred. and i think we are going to have to see how this plays out in the next 12 hours or so, whether or not people are satisfied, whether or not people are convinced here, and whether or not the president, quite frankly, can be shielded from this. because a lot of people have looked at the president for guidance when it comes to racial discussions, racial matters. it is something that he himself made a part of the campaign, saying that he would like to bridge that racial divide and help the country do that in a very reasonable way. we'll see if he takes this as a teachable moment, or if he feels that it is important for this to be a teachable moment for someone else, like secretary vilsack, and those who were directly involved.

suzanne malveaux, thanks so much. from the white house, appreciate that. and, of course, we will bring you live coverage of today's white house briefing with spokesman robert gibbs and whomever else might show up for that, scheduled for 1:00 eastern time.

african-american lawmakers are calling for shirley **sherrod** to get her job back. we just received this statement a short time ago. the congressional black caucus continues to believe -- i'm reading a quote now, that mrs. **sherrod** was unfairly asked to resign without due process, and should be reinstated immediately. of there are many individuals still serving in the department of agriculture who were responsible for years of discrimination against african-american farmers. the basis for mrs. **sherrod**'s resignation is another example of why we must not sweep race under the rug. rather, we must come together as a nation and recognize that we do not live in a post-racial era, and that while difficult, we must confront these issues head-on with clarity and without fear. the statement coming from the congressional black caucus as it pertains to shirley **sherrod**. so **sherrod**'s story has a lot of people talking about race, power, politics, and we're hearing from you, as well, on our blog. keep sending your comments to cnn.com/tony. we'll read more of them this hour.

DeJong, Justin

From: Eamich, Amanda
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 4:34 PM
To: Goodson, Sam -USDA; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie; Misailidis, Sarah
Cc: Mather, Chris
Subject: Re: After-hours Actiivity

Perhaps - I spoke with David and we will have audio and video links following the media briefing.

I notified Kim and Gayle should they be available before they leave.

Thanks,

Amanda Eamich
Director of New Media
US Dept of Agriculture
www.usda.gov/newmedia

From: Goodson, Sam -USDA
To: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie; Misailidis, Sarah
Cc: Eamich, Amanda; Mather, Chris
Sent: Wed Jul 21 16:13:52 2010
Subject: After-hours Activity
Are we expecting any after-hours activity today?

-Sam

DeJong, Justin

From: googlealerts-noreply@google.com
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 4:27 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Google Alert - usda

News

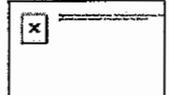
4 new results for usda

Shirley Sherrod's firing from USDA prompts firestorm

Washington Post

The USDA official's firing came after a conservative blogger posted her truncated comments to the NAACP that, 24 years ago, she didn't help a white farmer ...

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Washington Post

Unisys contract with U.S.D.A. agency could hit \$150M

Bizjournals.com

Unisys Corp. said Wednesday it has been awarded a contract that could be worth \$150 million over five years by the US Department of Agriculture's Rural ...

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White House apologizes to ousted USDA official

New York Post

AP An undated photo provided by the United States Department of Agriculture shows USDA official Shirley Sherrod. Sherrod is at the center of a racially ...

[See all stories on this topic »](#)



New York Post

Vilsack discusses some of agriculture's biggest issues

Farm and Dairy

USDA has recently formed a dairy council, he said, to look into some of the biggest issues facing dairy farmers and try to find solutions that will satisfy ...

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DeJong, Justin

From: Bass, Donna (NBC Universal) [Donna.Bass@nbcuni.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 4:15 PM
To: Bass, Donna (NBC Universal); Chan, Stephanie; DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: Secretary Vilsack

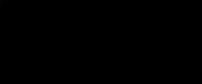
thank you very much for including me in your release email...

we would very much still like to pursue a LIVE interview with the secretary with brian williams conducting the interview...
FOLLOWING HIS STATEMENT AND MEDIA AVAILABILITY – for this evenings broadcast.

we could easily make the happen- with a bit of notice.

i know you are incredibly busy prepping for the statment.
but we would be grateful to know at your earliest convenience if this is a possibility as we would need to budget time for an interview in our broadcast.

thank you very much for letting me and brian know.

donna bass


From: Bass, Donna (NBC Universal)
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 3:01 PM
To: 'Stephanie.Chan@oc.usda.gov'; 'justin.dejong@oc.usda.gov'
Subject: Re: Secretary Vilsack

Stating the obvious here - but it would seem vitally important for the Secretary to speak with Brian on this evenings broadcast.

We can offer live or pre-tape as options for the interview.
(Brian can be ready with a few minutes notice - to speak with Secretary Vilsack. We could move a satellite truck to him- or perhaps the Secretary could travel across town to our Washington bureau for the interview.)

Please let me know if he would be willing to join Brian on our broadcast this evening.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Best-

Donna


Cell
Or return email best.

From: Bass, Donna (NBC Universal)
To: 'Stephanie.Chan@oc.usda.gov' <Stephanie.Chan@oc.usda.gov>

Sent: Wed Jul 21 14:38:04 2010

Subject: Re: Hi there.

I am being asked if second vilsack has spoken to ms sherrod?
As of today?

From: Bass, Donna (NBC Universal)

To: 'Chan, Stephanie' <Stephanie.Chan@oc.usda.gov>

Sent: Wed Jul 21 13:39:26 2010

Subject: RE: Hi there.

perfect thank you very much.
i'm sure this has been an insane day for you.
just appreciate your passing it along.
best- donna

From: Chan, Stephanie [mailto:Stephanie.Chan@oc.usda.gov]

Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:35 PM

To: Bass, Donna (NBC Universal)

Subject: RE: Hi there.

Yes, Justin had received the request as has our communications director. Thanks for checking in

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]

Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

From: Bass, Donna (NBC Universal) [mailto:Donna.Bass@nbcuni.com]

Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:12 PM

To: Chan, Stephanie

Subject: RE: Hi there.

hi there... im being asked if you passed along our request to justin de jong?
(sorry! but we're trying to plan for the broadcast this evening. and they are anxious for me to speak with the sec. vilsacks
press secretary.)
thanks for any information you can offer.
d

From: Chan, Stephanie [mailto:Stephanie.Chan@oc.usda.gov]

Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:26 AM

To: Bass, Donna (NBC Universal)

Subject: RE: Hi there.

Donna,

I have sent your request to our press secretaries, I don't have any other request from NBC Nightly news other than one
from yesterday from Jay Blackman requesting the statement and information on the Secretary's public schedule.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Bass, Donna (NBC Universal) [mailto:Donna.Bass@nbcuni.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:22 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Hi there.

i'm being asked if brians request for an interview with secretary vilsack has reached him directly.

seems he and brian have met.

have the request been put before him?

thanks for letting me know.

donna bass
producer
nbc nightly news with brian williams
212-664-2261
[REDACTED]

DeJong, Justin

From: Ross, Lori -USDA
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 4:15 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; DeJong, Justin
Subject: media inquiry - Deadline NBC Nightly News

Donna Bass
NBC Nightly News
[REDACTED]

Re: would like to have the Secretary on their show tonight after his 4:45 statement

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 4:11 PM
To: 'Jalonick, Mary Clare'; DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: TODAY: Agriculture Secretary Vilsack to Deliver Statement to Media Regarding Shirley Sherrod

We hope you can join us.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Jalonick, Mary Clare [mailto:mjalonick@ap.org]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 4:09 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: FW: TODAY: Agriculture Secretary Vilsack to Deliver Statement to Media Regarding Shirley Sherrod

Will this be televised/Webcast at all? Thx

From: USDA Office of Communications [mailto:oc.news@usda.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 4:06 PM
To: Jalonick, Mary Clare
Subject: TODAY: Agriculture Secretary Vilsack to Deliver Statement to Media Regarding Shirley Sherrod



Media Advisory No. PENDING

Contact:
USDA Office of Communications
(202) 720-4623

TODAY: Agriculture Secretary Vilsack to Deliver Statement to Media Regarding Shirley Sherrod

WASHINGTON, July 21, 2010 – TODAY, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack will speak to members of the media and provide a statement regarding Shirley Sherrod.

WHERE: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Whitten Office Building, 1400 Independence Ave. SW
Press Briefing Room, Room 107
Washington, D.C.

WHEN: Wednesday, July 21, 2010

4:45 p.m. EDT

*****Please Note: Limited media parking will be made available on both Independence Ave. and Jefferson Drive between 12th and 14th Streets SW.**

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This message was sent from USDA Office of Communications to mjalonick@ap.org. It was sent from: OC News, USDA Office of Communications 1400 Independence Ave, SW, Washington, DC 20250-1300. You can modify/update your subscription via the link below.

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[IP_US_DISC]msk dccc60c6d2c3a6438f0cf467d9a4938

DeJong, Justin

From: Chris Clayton [Chris.Clayton@telventdn.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 4:09 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: any chance of a call in for this deal?

Chris Clayton
Ag Policy Editor
Office: 402-255-8353
Cell: [REDACTED]
Fax: 402-390-7187
chris.clayton@telventdn.com

DTN/The Progressive Farmer - A Telvent Brand

9110 W. Dodge Road
Omaha, NE, 68114
www.dtnprogressivefarmer.com

follow me on Twitter at www.twitter.com/chrisclaytonDTN

This year, I'll be taking part in the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation's Walk to Cure Diabetes. The good news is that a cure for type 1 diabetes is within reach. Each of us can be a part of bringing about a cure. Each of us can make a real difference. Please visit my Walk Web page if you would like to donate

<http://walk.jdrf.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=extranet.personalpage&confirmID=87706492>

DeJong, Justin

From: Black, David -OC
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 4:04 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: USDA radio will be there?

Ok
David O. Black
Acting Deputy Director
Office of Communications, USDA
202-720-6072
david.black@oc.usda.gov

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Black, David -OC
Sent: Wed Jul 21 16:00:58 2010
Subject: RE: USDA radio will be there?
Ok. We are doing at 4:45.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Black, David -OC
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 4:01 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: USDA radio will be there?

And tv
David O. Black
Acting Deputy Director
Office of Communications, USDA
202-720-6072
david.black@oc.usda.gov

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Black, David -OC
Sent: Wed Jul 21 15:59:56 2010
Subject: USDA radio will be there?

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548

 (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

DeJong, Justin

From: O'Brien, Doug
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 3:59 PM
To: McNeil, Mary; Leonard, Joe; DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: Civil Rights backgrounder

Justin – hold for five minutes. I want to review, particularly the class action stuff. I'm sure Mary's stuff is good.

thx

From: McNeil, Mary
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 3:50 PM
To: O'Brien, Doug; Leonard, Joe; DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: Civil Rights backgrounder

Here it is.

Mary

From: O'Brien, Doug
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:41 PM
To: Leonard, Joe; McNeil, Mary; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Fw: Civil Rights backgrounder

Joe and Mary - can you review this? We are thinking of this handout for press who has not been keeping up with our activity.

I will look at the civil rights cases.

Thx

Doug

From: DeJong, Justin
To: O'Brien, Doug
Sent: Wed Jul 21 14:17:19 2010
Subject: Civil Rights backgrounder
Hi Doug,

I combined several docs we had on Civil Rights issues as a backgrounder to media who do not cover USDA every day. Please see attached.

Thanks,

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548



(cell)

justin.dejong@usda.gov

DeJong, Justin

From: McNeil, Mary
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 3:55 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; O'Brien, Doug; Leonard, Joe
Subject: RE: Civil Rights backgrounder

Just sent a few minutes ago. Did you receive?

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 3:47 PM
To: McNeil, Mary; O'Brien, Doug; Leonard, Joe
Subject: RE: Civil Rights backgrounder

What is status of review? Need comments ASAP. Thanks,

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: McNeil, Mary
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 3:19 PM
To: O'Brien, Doug; Leonard, Joe; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: Civil Rights backgrounder

Will do.

From: O'Brien, Doug
To: Leonard, Joe; McNeil, Mary; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wed Jul 21 14:40:53 2010
Subject: Fw: Civil Rights backgrounder

Joe and Mary - can you review this? We are thinking of this handout for press who has not been keeping up with our activity.

I will look at the civil rights cases.

Thx

Doug

From: DeJong, Justin
To: O'Brien, Doug
Sent: Wed Jul 21 14:17:19 2010
Subject: Civil Rights backgrounder
Hi Doug,

I combined several docs we had on Civil Rights issues as a backgrounder to media who do not cover USDA every day. Please see attached.

Thanks,

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
000-000-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 3:49 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Purchia, Liz
Subject: RE: CNN Wolf Blitzer (Stephanie Kotuby): Interview request

FYI- They would also be happy with a phone interview.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 3:02 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Purchia, Liz
Subject: RE: CNN Wolf Blitzer (Stephanie Kotuby): Interview request

Blitzers folks are now suggesting that...

“Wouldn't it be awesome if we could get Sec. Vilsack & Shirley Sherrod together for a joint interview? That would make for AMAZING TV!!!! I doubt there would be a dry eye in the house.... “

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:43 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Purchia, Liz
Subject: RE: CNN Wolf Blitzer (Stephanie Kotuby): Interview request

proposed questions:

Wolf's questions would be along the lines of:

- The Secretary/department's handling of Shirley Sherrod's employment/termination, ie, what happened?
- Was there a rush to judgment?
- Lessons learned?
- Will Shirley get her job back?

I imagine Wolf would ask about the above in addition to any news that may break in the story between now & the time of the (possible) interview.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:19 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Purchia, Liz
Subject: CNN Wolf Blitzer (Stephanie Kotuby): Interview request
Importance: High

They put Blitzer on the phone with me and he told me he knows the secretary and would really appreciate the opportunity to chat with him about the current goings on.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

From: Kotuby, Stephanie [<mailto:Stephanie.Kotuby@turner.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:12 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Wolf Blitzer -
Importance: High

Hi Stephanie!

Stephanie from Wolf Blitzer's office (again). Just wanted to pass along my contact information.

Thank you for your kind consideration of our request.

Sincerely,
Stephanie

stephanie kotuby | the situation room | sr. guest producer | 202.898.7919 (desk) | [REDACTED] (mobile)

DeJong, Justin

From: O'Brien, Doug
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 3:48 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: Civil Rights backgrounder

In mtgs with Mona and leading deepwater. Will go back to desk to finalize review in 15. Very sorry

From: DeJong, Justin
To: McNeil, Mary; O'Brien, Doug; Leonard, Joe
Sent: Wed Jul 21 15:46:41 2010
Subject: RE: Civil Rights backgrounder
What is status of review? Need comments ASAP. Thanks,

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: McNeil, Mary
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 3:19 PM
To: O'Brien, Doug; Leonard, Joe; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: Civil Rights backgrounder

Will do.

From: O'Brien, Doug
To: Leonard, Joe; McNeil, Mary; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wed Jul 21 14:40:53 2010
Subject: Fw: Civil Rights backgrounder

Joe and Mary - can you review this? We are thinking of this handout for press who has not been keeping up with our activity.

I will look at the civil rights cases.

Thx

Doug

From: DeJong, Justin
To: O'Brien, Doug
Sent: Wed Jul 21 14:17:19 2010
Subject: Civil Rights backgrounder
Hi Doug,

I combined several docs we had on Civil Rights issues as a backgrounder to media who do not cover USDA every day.
Please see attached.

Thanks,

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 3:31 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Purchia, Liz
Subject: WABE NPR Atlanta (Rose Marie Holmes): Apology from Secretary Vilsack

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Rose Holmes [mailto:rHolmes@pba.org]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 3:26 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: WABE 90.1 FM (NPR Atlanta)

Hi Stephanie,

Just wanted to verify reports that Sec. Vilsack was going to apologize to Mrs. Shirley Sherrod. I hadn't seen anything official and didn't want to report rumor/speculation. Also, was wondering if he was available even if it's a statement via phone (since we're radio).

Thanks.

Rose Marie Holmes
Producer/Reporter
WABE 90.1-FM
678.686.0311- Office
678.553.2904- Fax
rholmes@wabe.org
<http://www.wabe.org>

 Before printing, think about the environment.

DeJong, Justin

From: Jalonick, Mary Clare [mjalonick@ap.org]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 3:30 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: u there?

Realize you are busy.

Mary Clare Jalonick
The Associated Press
202-641-9461 (office)
[REDACTED] (cell)
Twitter: MCJalonick

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[IP_US_DISC]
msk dccc60c6d2c3a6438f0cf467d9a4938

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 3:25 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Purchia, Liz
Subject: WNRP Radio (Jeff Knox): Interview with Secretary Vilsack

WNRP Radio would love having sec on today at 6:40, 5:40 or 5:20 p.m. for a 5 min interview.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Ross, Lori -USDA
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 3:19 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: media inquiry -Deadline

Jeff Knox
Know radio
Re: would like to have the Secretary on their radio show
[REDACTED] jknox@newsradio1620.com

DeJong, Justin

From: Eamich, Amanda
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 3:16 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Black, David -OC; DeJong, Justin; Lavallee, Aaron; Chan, Stephanie; Misailidis, Sarah
Cc: Rhee, Peter
Subject: #1 Trending Topic

"Shirley Sherrod" is the #1 trending topic on Twitter in the DC region. This means that Shirley Sherrod is the most tweeted about topic in DC.

Amanda Eamich
Director of New Media
Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
v. 202.720.5247
bb. [REDACTED]

<http://www.usda.gov/open>
<http://www.usda.gov/newmedia>

 *Consider the environment. Please don't print this e-mail unless you need it.*

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 3:12 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: FW: AP (Mary Clare Jalonick): Any chance I can speak with Vilsack today?

FYI- she just called to touch base with you.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:02 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Purchia, Liz
Subject: RE: AP (Mary Clare Jalonick): Any chance I can speak with Vilsack today?

FYI- she just followed up with me

Hey who's the best contact there for the Sherrod story right now? Just wondering if Vilsack would talk today.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:35 AM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Purchia, Liz
Subject: AP (Mary Clare Jalonick): Any chance I can speak with Vilsack today?

Looping in Chris and Liz

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:29 AM

To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: FW:

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: Jalonick, Mary Clare [mailto:mjalonick@ap.org]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:14 AM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject:

Hey any chance I can speak with Vilsack today?

Mary Clare Jalonick
The Associated Press
202-641-9461 (office)
[REDACTED] (cell)
Twitter: MCJalonick

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[IP_US_DISC]

msk dccc60c6d2c3a6438f0cf467d9a4938

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 3:11 PM
To: Purchia, Liz; Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: NBC Nightly News (Dona Bass): Interview with Secretary

FYI-

Stating the obvious here - but it would seem vitally important for the Secretary to speak with Brian on this evenings broadcast.

We can offer live or pre-tape as options for the interview.

(Brian can be ready with a few minutes notice - to speak with Secretary Vilsack. We could move a satellite truck to him- or perhaps the Secretary could travel across town to our Washington bureau for the interview.)

Please let me know if he would be willing to join Brian on our broadcast this evening.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:36 AM
To: Purchia, Liz; Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: NBC Nightly News (Dona Bass): Interview with Secretary

FYI- Liz so you can keep track of the request

this is a request specifically from brian -- for brian -- to speak directly with the secretary live on our broadcast this evening. or as i mentioned earlier- in a pre-tape situation if he would prefer that.

is there any chance one of the press secretaries can call me just so i can make the request on phone?
would love to speak directly to one of them if possible. thanks!

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:48 AM

To: Purchla, Liz; Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: NBC Nightly News (Dona Bass): Interview with Secretary

Looping liz also-

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:48 AM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin
Subject: NBC Nightly News (Dona Bass): Interview with Secretary

This would be for an interview with Brian to let the secretary have his say on the situation. They would like him live at 6:30 p.m. this evening for a quick 3 minute interview. They can also do pre-tape but would prefer live.

They are hoping to be the first evening broadcast to have an interview with him and would be interested in this story whenever he is ready to speak about it even if it is not this evening.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Powell, Tamika -USDA
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:37 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: media inquiry: NBC Nightly News (URGENT)

Donna Bass
Donna.bass@nbc.com
212-664-2261
[REDACTED]

RE: interview with Brian Williams and the Secretary they will be running a story this afternoon

Tamika J. Powell-Bellamy
Information Support Specialist
Office of Communications, USDA
(202)690-1059 (o)
(202)720-5402 (f)

" All great things are simple, and many can be expressed in single words: freedom, justice, honor, duty, mercy, hope. "

DeJong, Justin

From: googlealerts-noreply@google.com
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:59 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Google Alert - usda

Blogs 5 new results for usda

[USDA Reportedly Reconsidering Shirley Sherrod Firing | FDL News Desk](#)

By David Dayen

Sometimes, if the facts are clear, if the people band together and yell loud enough, sometimes, just sometimes, you can get the powers that be to reconsider an unjust act. Not overturn, yet, but reconsider.

Firedoglake - <http://firedoglake.com/>

[USDA Reconsidering Sherrod's Firing | FrumForum](#)

By FrumForum News

"I am of course willing and will conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts to ensure to the American people we are providing services in a fair and equitable manner," Vilsack said in a statement e-mailed by **USDA** at 2:07 ...

FrumForum - <http://www.frumforum.com/>

[Shirley Sherrod USDA Under Review](#)

By lalate

WASHINGTON (LALATE) - The resignation by Shirley Sherrod is now prompting a **USDA** review. The Shirley Sherrod **USDA** matter got several abrupt changes last.

lalate news - America's Fastest... - <http://news.lalate.com/>

[USDA, White House Deny White House Involvement In Sherrod's Forced ...](#)

By Rachel Slajda

Officials with the **USDA** and the White House this afternoon deny that the White House had any involvement in the forced resignation of Shirley Sherrod from the **USDA**. And Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said she was asked to resign.

TPMMuckraker - <http://tpmmuckraker.talkingpointsnemo.com/>

[USDA giving shrimpers training, grants - Local - SunHerald.com](#)

By SUN HERALD

The US Department of Agriculture is offering grants for technical training and other benefits to shrimp producers in Mississippi and several other coastal states.

Homepage - <http://www.sunherald.com/?q=Matteo+Raimondi+Bitflow+Comunione+Liberazione>

Tip: Use a plus sign (+) to match a term in your query exactly as is.. [Learn more.](#)

[Remove this alert.](#)

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DeJong, Justin

From: OC.JIC4@oc.usda.gov
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:59 PM
To: Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie; Misailidis, Sarah; Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Gibbs Transcript - CNN

Gibbs speaking starts in yellow...

Station: CNN
Date: 07/21/2010
14:34:27 -
2:44:27
PM

a much-delayed briefing at the white house. let's go to ed henry, senior white house correspondent standing by in the briefing room. i love talking to him at times like this. you can't see it right now, but all his colleagues -- he's standing up. all his colleagues are sitting down facing him like he's a schoolteacher. i wonder if he has to be cautious about what he says because they're all sitting there.

reporter: no. some of them aren't paying attention to us at all.

this is interesting. normally, you don't have to sit around that long waiting for a briefing that was supposed to happen at 1:00 and then 2:00, and then 2:15. hopefully they're going to get started soon.

reporter: we should note that on a normal day, robert **gibbs** is typically late to the briefings. this is not necessarily meaning anything crazy is going on. there's the two-minute warning right there. robert **gibbs** is coming out finally. i think the bottom line is there's going to be a lot of questions obviously about exactly what the house knew b, when they knew it. but also the question of race. it was just about a year ago this summer when the president kind of slipped up in that news conference when he was asked about the arrest of henry louis gates in came bridge, massachusetts, and he made some comments that he pulled back on. and it ended up leading to that beer summit with the police officer involved, gates and the president. suzanne malveaux spoke earlier to a white house aide who said, there's no plans for a beer summit one year later this time involving shirley sherrod or anything like that. but you have to wonder about the fact that race has obviously been a difficult issue for this white house to deal with.

we'll let you take care of that. on our side, the president doesn't have to have a meeting with shirley sherrod. she's right here with me in the studio. she'll be watching the press conference. she's right over my shoulder being seated right now. we've been talking to her. obviously we've been talking to her here at cnn in great detail ever since this story broke to get all of the details of it. i'll let you get seated. this is the press conference that's going to start any minute now with robert **gibbs**, the white house press secretary. we'll get ed's reaction to that and shirley sherrod's reaction to what the white house said. let me tell you, the white house has said that it is going to review this situation. the agriculture secretary who was involved in the pressure for shirley sherrod to resign has said that he will review this. the naacp, which was critical of shirley sherrod after that puny little piece of video was released out of context, has said -- has reversed its criticism of her. so the bottom line is shirley sherrod largely exonerated by the release of the entire text of the speech, 41 minutes of speech. this is what she had been saying all along. now the reporters like ed are going to be asking robert **gibbs** who knew what in the white house, whose decision was this? who told whom to call shirley sherrod and tell her that she needed to resign in who put that pressure on her and why did people not call for more information? why did 3 1/2 minutes of a video that started on a conservative blog and went viral possibly end this woman's career? and what happens to her next? do they come back and offer her her job back and does shirley sherrod want her job back after the treatment that she's faced at the hands of the federal government? this is a remarkably interesting story that's about to get more interesting with robert **gibbs**, the press secretary to the president of the united states.

~~are we missing anybody back there that's going to -- do you know if anybody else is back there waiting?~~

can you tell us what the white house he's position is right now on shirley sherrod? should she get her job back?

well, let me -- secretary vilsack has tried and is trying to reach ms. sherrod. when the secretary reaches her, he will apologize for the events of the last few days and they will talk about their next steps. i think it is -- i think clearly that a lot of people involved in this situation from the government's perspective on through acted without all the facts. now, as you saw secretary vilsack's statement from last evening, now that we have greater knowledge and broader facts sent, he is going to review all of those facts and that's what he'll talk to ms. sherrod about today.

does the secretary plan to offer her her job back?

again, I think that's something that the secretary and ms. sherrod are going to talk through those next steps.

what was the president's involvement in this? can you walk us through that?

i believe the president was briefed on this sometime yesterday, most likely in the morning. this was, as you heard secretary vilsack say yesterday, a decision that was made by the u.s. department of agriculture. the president was briefed yesterday and has been briefed obviously today as well.

so did he or anyone at the white house direct that she be fired?

not to my knowledge, no.

and to a lot of people trying to follow this story, they see a government employee who ends up losing her job because of comments posted on a videotape that appears to be taken out of context. it just looks bungled. is that a fair way to put it?

ben, i think this is one -- i think this is a fair way to put it. members of this administration, members of the media, members of different political factions on both sides of this have all made determinations and judgments without a full set of facts. i think that is wholly and completely accurate. i think without a doubt, ms. sherrod is owed an apology. i would do so certainly on behalf of this administration. i think if we look back and decide what we want out of this, i think it is, as i said, everybody involved made determinations without knowing all the facts and all of the events.

why do you think that happened?

i can't speak for everybody involved. but i think we live in a culture that things whip around, people want fast responses, we want to give fast responses and i don't think there's any doubt that if we all look at this, i think the lesson -- one of the great lessons you take away from this is to ask all of the questions first and to come to that fuller understanding. i say that, again, from the perspective of this administration, i say that from the perspective of those that cover this administration and those that are involved in the back and forth in the political theater of this country.

one last one on this -- that apology from the secretary, is that -- does that reflect the president's view as well?

again, i did so just a few moments ago on behalf of this entire administration.

it does sound like you've spoken to the president about this. if so, does he think she was a victim of a rush to judgment?

i don't think i'd be out here giving you the answers i just gave to ben without having those reflect the feelings of the president and the feelings of the members of this administration.

was he angry about the way this transpired?

again, look, decisions were made based on an incomplete set of facts. we now have a more complete set of facts and a review is being done as it should be.

what if any concern is there within the administration that this handling of ms. sherrod could hurt the president and the democrats as well --

your question encapsulates a little bit of what i was talking about a minute ago. i know there is a -- we have this society and this culture now that's pervasive in this town where everything is viewed through the lens of who wins, who loses? how fast, by what margin? look, a disservice was done, an apology is owed. that's what we've done. this administration has never looked at -- i think if you go well back into the campaign, never looked at a scoreboard at the end of each day to figure out where we stood.

Briefly discussed something else...

i wanted to go back to shirley sherrod. when you started out by saying that secretary vilsack is going to call her and apologize. and then as you put it, talk about the next steps, here we are two days later, presumably people inside the white house have seen the full tape, realize it seems an injustice was done here. why is there still vagueness? why hasn't the president, the chief of staff or somewhere here picked up the phone and said, here's what we're doing instead of saying, we're trying to figure out the next steps?

i don't think i'm being vague. the secretary of agriculture employs a number of people to carry out the duties and the functions of the department of agriculture. i think there are clearly some things that ms. sherrod will likely want to talk to mr. vilsack about and we're going to let that conversation --

this is the president's administration. it's bigger than vilsack or any department. this appears to be an injustice. why wouldn't the president intervene instead of letting it all fall out?

we have a fuller set of facts. a review is taking place and the secretary is trying to reach ms. sherrrod to apologize for the exact injustice that you talk about. hold on. let me just finish a few of my answers. as i said, a disservice was done for which we apologize. i think the next step that has to happen is the secretary needs to speak with her. he's tried to reach her and we hope --

is he going to tell her something specific or offer her her job back?

i know we have deadlines.

shirley sherrrod's told cnn several times that cheryl cook, the deputy undersecretary was pressuring her to resign and specifically said that the white house wants you to step down.

again, i think i would point you to the interview the secretary did with --

the secretary told cnn yesterday he did not himself speak to anybody inside the white house. but there are thousands of people who work at the agriculture department.

right. as i said to ben earlier, i know of no conversations that have happened like that as the secretary said.

so no one at the white house --

i answered your question.

apparently she's watching this briefing, shirley sherrrod, on cnn right now. is there anything you want to say to her? she's watching you --

and let me -- the secretary is trying to reach her. i hope that the secretary reaches her soon and they have an opportunity to talk. the secretary will apologize for the actions that have taken place over the past 24 to 36 hours and on behalf of the administration, i offer our apologies. again, this is more directed at everybody at large here. i think everybody has to go back. we have -- we will continue to look at what has happened over the past 24 to 36 hours and ask ourselves how we got into this. how did we get into -- how did we not ask the right questions? how did you all not ask the right questions? how did other people not ask the right questions?

i asked the right questions. i called her to find out the story. you can fault the media if you want --

i'm not faulting the media. hold on. i'm not here to fault the media. i've apologized on behalf of the administration. i will say, a number of people called quite quickly after these comments aired and wanted to know what our response was. i don't know who else called. i don't know who made calls trying to seek a greater understanding. we made a mistake on that. and i think many involved in this made mistakes --

i've heard conservatives and liberals say this administration overreacted because you're afraid of conservative commentators. do you think there's any truth to that?

no.

DeJong, Justin

From: breakingnews@politico.com
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:52 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: POLITICO Breaking News

POLITICO Breaking News:

White House press secretary Robert Gibbs apologized to Shirley Sherrod, a Department of Agriculture employee who was forced out after a videotape surfaced of her making what initially appeared to be racially discriminatory remarks to an NAACP audience. "Without a doubt, Miss Sherrod is owed an apology," Gibbs said Wednesday at his afternoon briefing. "I would do so on behalf of this administration."

For more information...<http://www.politico.com>

To stop alerts, visit:

http://dyn.politico.com/Unsubscribe_auto.cfm?email=justin.dejong@usda.gov&uuid=EA3B34A9-188B-4976-D10CEC82C5230B02&alertID=1

DeJong, Justin

From: Jalonick, Mary Clare [mjalonick@ap.org]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:47 PM
To: DeJong, Justin

Will you let me know as soon as the call happens? Has it happened yet?
Thanks much

Mary Clare Jalonick
The Associated Press
202-641-9461 (office)
[REDACTED] (cell)
Twitter: MCJalonick

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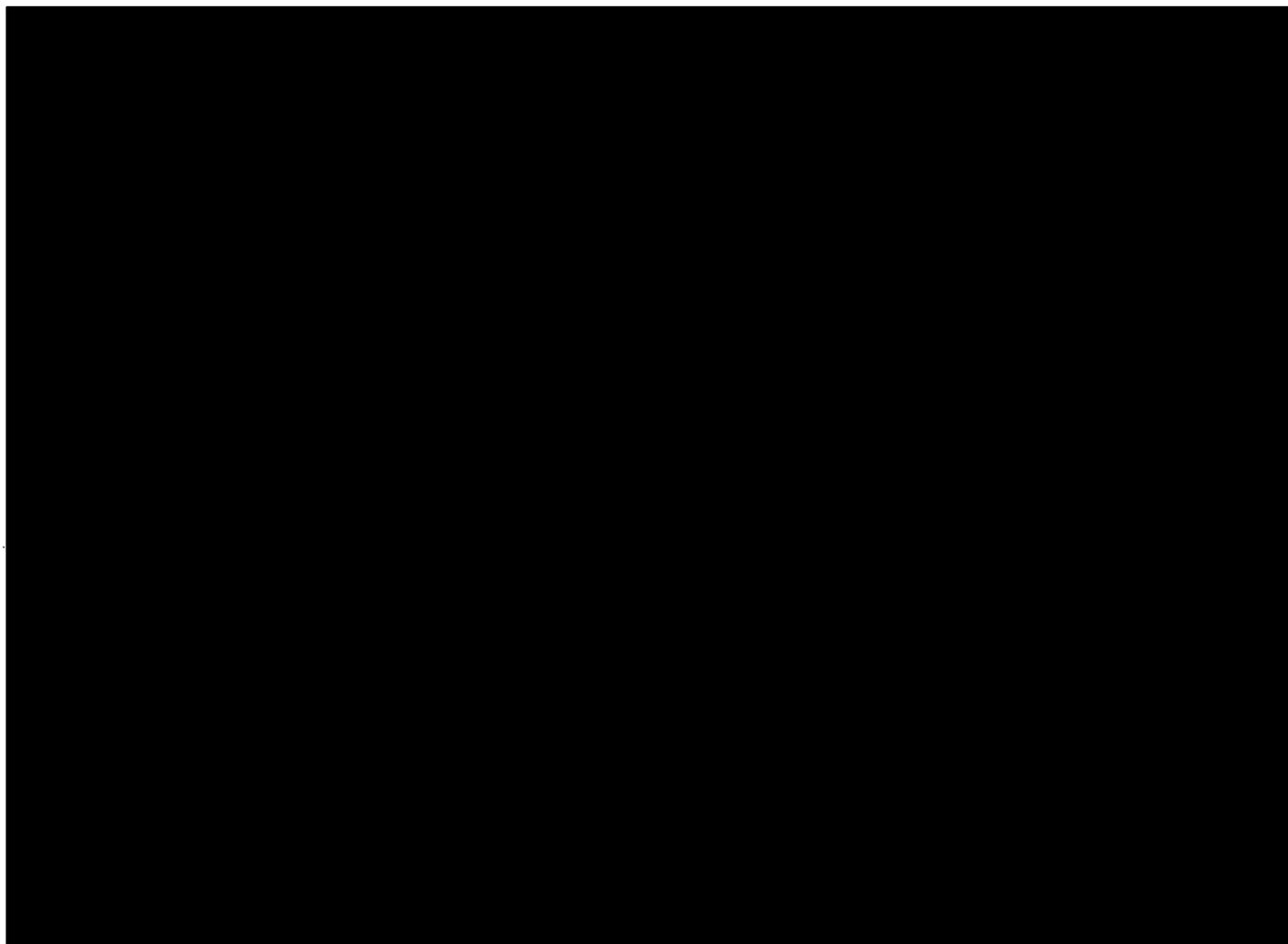
[IP_US_DISC]

msk dccc60c6d2c3a6438f0cf467d9a4938

DeJong, Justin

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:39 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Chan, Stephanie

Latest draft



Chris Mather
Director of Communications
USDA
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 402A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0060
chris.mather@usda.gov

DeJong, Justin

From: O'Brien, Doug
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:38 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: Civil Rights backgrounder

K

From: DeJong, Justin
To: O'Brien, Doug
Sent: Wed Jul 21 14:34:09 2010
Subject: RE: Civil Rights backgrounder
I think that's fine.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
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Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: O'Brien, Doug
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:30 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: Civil Rights backgrounder

Do u mind if I send this to Joe Leonard and Pearlie? Some of this stuff is in their lane. Thx

From: DeJong, Justin
To: O'Brien, Doug
Sent: Wed Jul 21 14:17:19 2010
Subject: Civil Rights backgrounder
Hi Doug,

I combined several docs we had on Civil Rights issues as a backgrounder to media who do not cover USDA every day. Please see attached.

Thanks,

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
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202-690-0548
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justin.dejong@usda.gov

DeJong, Justin

From: Eamich, Amanda
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:31 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Discussion Thread re: Vilsack

From Chris Clayton - @AndyVance I can't believe they let it continue on. I wonder who is advising whom on this . Shirley Sherrod.

@ChrisClaytonDTN @philipbrasher Is Vilsack likely to become a casualty in this debacle?
32 minutes ago via Twitter for iPhone in reply to ChrisClaytonDTN

@PhilipBrasher Can Vilsack just simply acknowledge he was wrong? Or does USDA just try to pile sandbags around his office?
44 minutes ago via web in reply to PhilipBrasher

From Phil Brasher - #Vilsack taking fire from right and left over #Sherrod firing. <http://bit.ly/aDHC49>
about 1 hour ago via web
<http://blogs.desmoinesregister.com/dmr/index.php/category/business/greenfields/>

Amanda Eamich
Director of New Media
Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
v. 202.720.5247
bb. [REDACTED]

<http://www.usda.gov/open>
<http://www.usda.gov/newmedia>

 *Consider the environment. Please don't print this e-mail unless you need it.*

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:31 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Purchia, Liz
Subject: Athens Banner Herald (Lee Shearer): Details on Shirley Video
Attachments: image001.jpg

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Shearer, Lee [mailto:lee.shearer@onlineathens.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:56 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: RE: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

Thanks, Ms. Chan.

Here are my questions.

First, when will this review be concluded? May we expect anything further today?

Has Secretary Vilsack watched the entire video, or will he?

Does he feel a mistake was made in asking for Ms. Sherrod's resignation, and in the interpretation of a video clip which appears to have been taken significantly out of context?

Was that in fact Secretary Vilsack's decision to ask for Ms. Sherrod's resignation?

Will Ms. Sherrod now be asked to stay?

Thanks,

Lee Shearer
Athens Banner-Herald
Tel. 706-208-2236
Cell [REDACTED]

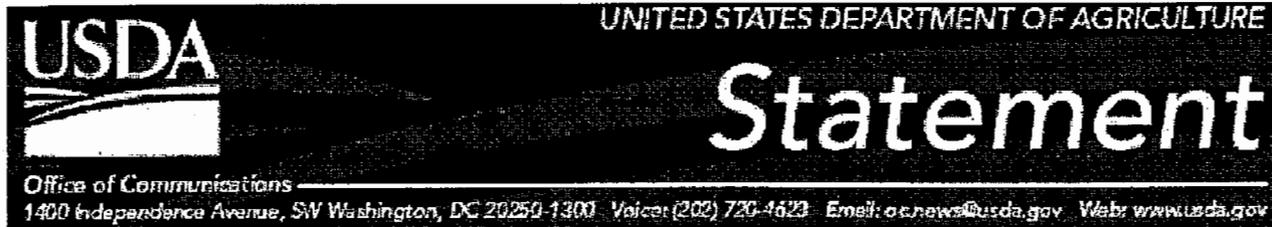
From: Chan, Stephanie [mailto:Stephanie.Chan@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:50 AM
To: Shearer, Lee
Subject: FW: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:07 AM
Subject: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod



Release No. PENDING

Contact:
USDA Office of Communications
(202) 720-4623

Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

WASHINGTON, July 21, 2010 - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack tonight released the following statement in response to the release of remarks in video from Shirley Sherrod:

"I am of course willing and will conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts to ensure to the American people we are providing services in a fair and equitable manner."

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Stephanie Chan

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Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

DeJong, Justin

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:29 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: Larry King?

Terry?
Chris Mather

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wed Jul 21 14:28:19 2010
Subject: RE: Larry King?
Fab. What can we do to make this happen?

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:27 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: Larry King?

Terry a go
Chris Mather

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wed Jul 21 14:23:08 2010
Subject: Larry King?

Justin DeJong
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Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

DeJong, Justin

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:03 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Chan, Stephanie

Turn on briefing and take notes.
Chris Mather

DeJong, Justin

From: ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:59 PM
Subject: Federal Eye: Starving artist? Paint Mike Mullen's portrait!

http://voices.washingtonpost.com/federal-eye/2010/07/starving_artist_paint_mike_mul.html

Starving artist? Paint Mike Mullen's portrait!

Can you paint a pretty picture? Get your bids in now! The Pentagon is seeking an eager, willing and capable artist to paint Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Adm. **Michael Mullen's** official portrait.

A government solicitation posted July 1 provides "a firm fixed price offer for painting services for an official portrait of Admiral Michael Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS)." The finished portrait shall be displayed in the "E" Corridor outside the "Tank" in the Pentagon, according to the solicitation.

The contract is considered a small business set-aside deal, so it's the perfect opportunity for a struggling artist. The Defense Department wants to see "relevant experience samples" that will not be returned and interested painters have until Aug. 2 to apply, according to a spokesman.

Ed O'Keefe
The Federal Eye
The Washington Post
ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com
202.334.5546. (o) | ██████████ (c)
AIM: edatpost | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [GovLoop](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

DeJong, Justin

From: googlealerts-noreply@google.com
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:53 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Google Alert - usda

Web **2 new results for usda**

Racial firestorm surrounds USDA employee's ouster - Yahoo! News

The Obama administration faced a blast of criticism on Wednesday over its ouster of a black Agriculture Department employee for her remarks about race.

news.yahoo.com/s/ap/.../us_usda_racism_resignation

Firing of USDA official highlights larger political problems ...

A fuzzy video of an Agriculture Department official opened a new front Tuesday in the ongoing war between the left and right over which side is at fault for ...

www.washingtonpost.com/wp.../AR2010072006158.html

Tip: Use site restrict in your query to search within a site (site:nytimes.com or site:.edu).. [Learn more.](#)

[Remove this alert.](#)
[Create another alert.](#)
[Manage your alerts.](#)

DeJong, Justin

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:53 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; DeJong, Justin; Purchia, Liz
Subject: Re: Huffington Post (Adam Rose): Request for statement

I said don't send old one. Justin help please
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Purchia, Liz
Sent: Wed Jul 21 13:49:24 2010
Subject: Huffington Post (Adam Rose): Request for statement
This is only hours late...

I will make sure they get the new statement.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
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Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Adam J. Rose [mailto:arose@huffingtonpost.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:57 AM
To: chris.mather@usda.gov; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Looking for latest Shirley Sherrod statement

If anybody's up, can you forward me the latest statement(s) on Sherrod, specifically the one mentioned in this CNN item? We're prepping an update to go out in the next hour or so and would like to include the latest from the USDA.

<http://news.blogs.cnn.com/2010/07/21/ag-chief-to-review-case-that-led-to-usda-workers-ouster/>

Thanks,
Adam

--
Adam J. Rose
Overnight Editor | The Huffington Post
213-245-1460 (Google) | [REDACTED] (Cell)
arose@huffingtonpost.com | Google/AIM/Skype/Twitter: adjoro

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:48 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Purchia, Liz
Subject: AP (John Bazemore): Photo Request

FYI-

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED] Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: Photos Dept [mailto:jbazemore@ap.org]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:32 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Media Inquiry Associated Press

Hi Stephanie,

I'm writing to ask you you might be able to supply us with a photo of Shirley Sherrod. I can be reached in the Atlanta Bureau at 404-522-8971.

Regards,
John Bazemore
AP Photos Atlanta

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msk dccc60c6d2c3a6438f0cf467d9a4938

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:45 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Purchia, Liz
Subject: RE: USA Today (Pete Eisler): USDA Position on Sherrod Story

A bit more clarification- What happened and who made what decisions and where we stand now.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:37 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Purchia, Liz
Subject: USA Today (Pete Eisler): USDA Position on Sherrod Story

FYI-

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Weaver, Caleb
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:29 PM
To: 'peisler@usatoday.com'
Cc: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Re: Vilsack

Pete -

I am out of the office traveling today, but I have copied Stephanie Chan, who is coordinating media inquiries on this topic.

Thanks,
Caleb

From: Eisler, Peter
To: Weaver, Caleb
Sent: Wed Jul 21 13:05:06 2010
Subject: Vilsack

Hi Caleb.... Since we don't have a regular ag reporter, the bosses have pulled me off my latest project to spend a day helping with the Sherrod story. Need to get with you to make sure I'm clear on USDA's position. Also need to make sure I've got all the facts on what the secretary did and did not do, etc... Can you give me a call at your earliest convenience? This, obviously, is for a story running tomorrow.

Thanks, Pete.

Peter Eisler
USA TODAY
Washington Bureau
1100 New York Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20005
202-906-8180

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:35 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Purchia, Liz
Subject: Talking Points Memo (Rachel Slajada): Questions about secretary's statement

looping gang-

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:14 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: FW: shirley sherrod

From: rachel@talkingpointsmemo.com [<mailto:rachel@talkingpointsmemo.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:59 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: shirley sherrod

Hi Chris --

I expect you're totally swamped but wanted to shoot you a few questions about the Secretary's statement. Here goes: What will the review look like? Expectation of how long it will take? Is it possible that Ms. Sherrod will get her job back? A different Ag job? Has the secretary seen the full video? Does he have any regrets about asking her to resign before seeing the full video?

Thanks again for all your help on this --
Rachel

--
Rachel Slajda
Reporter-Blogger, Talking Points Memo
212-645-5236
rachel@talkingpointsmemo.com

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:34 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Purchia, Liz
Subject: MSNBC Booking Producer (Carmen Widman): Interview with Secretary today
Attachments: image001.png

FYI-

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:10 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: FW: URGENT MSNBC Interview REQ

From: Conte-Widman, Carmen (NBC Universal, MSNBC) [<mailto:Carmen.Widman@nbcuni.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:31 AM
To: Weaver, Caleb; Mather, Chris
Subject: URGENT MSNBC Interview REQ

Good Morning Caleb - We're very interested in having the Secretary Vilsack join us ANYTIME he is available between 9am-4pm today regarding Shirley Sherrod. We have various anchors throughout the day including Chuck Todd, Savannah Guthrie, Norah O'Donnell, Tamon Hall, Contessa Brewer. Please keep me posted on his availability thanks!
Carmen



Carmen Widman
MSNBC Booking Producer
212-664-1738 (direct)
212-664-1450 (main)
carmen.widman@msnbc.com

MSNBC studios are now at 30 Rockefeller Plaza

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:31 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Purchia, Liz
Subject: DMR (Phil Brasher): Questions on Shirley Sharrod story
Attachments: image.jpg

FYI-

He sent at 9:30 but I just received it???

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED] Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: Brasher, Philip [mailto:pbrasher@desmoine.gannett.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:38 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Re: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

What's the time frame for having this review done? What prompted him to issue this statement? Had he seen the full video before issuing this? If not, has he seen it since?

Thanks.

On 7/21/10 2:07 AM, "Chan, Stephanie" <Stephanie.Chan@oc.usda.gov> wrote:

[cid:3362549905_25706]

Release No. PENDING Contact:
USDA Office of Communications

(202) 720-4623

Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

WASHINGTON, July 21, 2010 - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack tonight released the following statement in response to the release of remarks in video from Shirley Sherrod:

"I am of course willing and will conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts to ensure to the American people we are providing services in a fair and equitable manner."

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Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED] Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov
<<mailto:Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov>><<mailto:Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov>>

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:27 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Purchia, Liz
Subject: CBS Evening News (Christine Ruffini): Interview with Secretary

Importance: High

FYI-

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Ruffini, Christina [mailto:RuffiniC@cbsnews.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:35 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Cc: Taylor, Allyson Ross; Sloane, Ward; Crawford, Jan
Subject: INTERVIEW REQUEST FOR SEC. VILSACK TONIGHT CBS EVENING NEWS
Importance: High

Hi Stephanie,

We spoke on the phone, but as promised here is a written request for us to interview Secretary Vilsack today, for the CBS Evening News.

This is for tonight, so we would need to know at least before 3 pm.

Thanks very much,

Christina Ruffini
CBS Evening News
Washington D.C.
Office: 202.457.4385
Cell: [REDACTED]

DeJong, Justin

From: Jeanquart, Bobbi
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:23 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: OAO

This office was established by the 2008 Farm bill to improve access to USDA programs and enhance the viability and profitability of small farms and ranches, beginning farmers and ranchers, and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. This Office will help ensure that access is provided to all USDA customers in an equal and fair manner and enable USDA employees to be increasingly responsive to the American people they serve.

Roberta Jeanquart
Office of Assistant Secretary for Administration
bobbi.jeanquart@osec.usda.gov
Phone 202-720-3805
Cell [REDACTED]

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:52 PM
To: Jeanquart, Bobbi
Subject: OAO

Can you quickly send me a sentence or two about OAO and what we are doing here?

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:23 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Purchia, Liz
Subject: CNN American Morning (Michelle A. Cumbo): Is usda considering rehiring Shirley?

Importance: High

looping JD and Liz-

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Cumbo, Michelle [mailto:Michelle.Cumbo@turner.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:09 AM
To: chris.mather@usda.gov; Chan, Stephanie
Cc: Kaplan, Karrah; Dalberto, Emily; Murtaugh, Michelle
Subject: URGENT - IS THE USDA RECONSIDERING REHIRING SHIRLEY SHERROD?
Importance: High

Hello Chris and Stephanie:

We are seeing some news reports that are suggesting Secretary Vilsack is reconsidering Shirley Sherrod's resignation. Can you give us any updated information about that? I know Secretary Vilsack is not available for an interview but do you have any additional statements or guidance you would like to provide? Kindly hit "reply all" so my colleagues will be copied.

Best,

Michelle A. Cumbo
Producer, *CNN American Morning*
212-275-7843 direct
[REDACTED] mobile
Michelle.cumbo@turner.com

DeJong, Justin

From: Politsch, Kent - Washington, DC [Kent.Politsch@wdc.usda.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:22 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: FW: Sherrod

Don't know what I'm supposed to do with these, but I know more are coming.
Kent

From: CINDY HAYNES [mailto:]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:19 AM
To: Politsch, Kent - Washington, DC
Subject: Sherrod

Did not know who to write.

I am a white conservative woman.

Once the ENTIRE tape of Ms Sherrod was shown...I was outraged that she was fired and want to put my name in the hat of those who think she should not have been fired!!

Cindy Haynes

DeJong, Justin

From: Purchia, Liz
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:16 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Cc: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Interview Request Recommendations

Here are some of the recommendations I have for interviews based on what has come in from Stephanie.

Outlet	Contact
TV	
Fox News	Ron Mitchell, Ron.mitchell
CNN	Sarah.Baker@turner.com
CBS Early Show	Gina Garcia 202-457-4408
ABC Good Morning America	Katie Bosland202.222.733
CBS Evening News	Christina Ruffini, 202.457.4
MSNBC Ed Schultz show	Barbara Fant 202.253.0891
PBS Jim Lehrer	Elizabeth Summers, Office Mobile [REDACTED]
NBC Nightly News w/ Brian Williams	Dona Bass212-664-2261 Dc
MSNBC Rachel Maddow Show	Andrew Dallos, andrew.da
PRINT	
NYT	Sheryl Stolberg, 202-862-0
WSJ	Jonathan Weisman (202)8 Jonathan.Weisman@wsj.c
AP	Mary Clare Jalonick, mjalo [REDACTED] (cell)
Washington Post	Ed O'keefe, ed.okeefe@w
Atlanta Journal Constitution	Christian boone cboone@
RADIO	
Atlanta NPR	Charles Edwards cedwards
NPR All things Considered	Chelsea Jones cjones@nr

Liz Purchia
Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-2168 | BB: [REDACTED]
Liz.Purchia@oc.usda.gov

DeJong, Justin

From: googlealerts-noreply@google.com
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:14 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Google Alert - "kathleen merrigan"

News

1 new result for "kathleen merrigan"

Vilsack a no-show at rural education summit

The Hill (blog)

Instead, Deputy Agriculture Secretary **Kathleen Merrigan** showed up in his place. A spokesman for the USDA said Vilsack was in Ohio earlier this week, ...

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Tip: Use a plus sign (+) to match a term in your query exactly as is.. [Learn more.](#)

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DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:14 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; USDA Clips; JIC1, OC -USDA; JIC2, OC -USDA; JIC3, OC -USDA; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: FW: Top Outlets "vilsack" : Jesse Jackson wants apology for Sherrod's ouster

From: Factiva[SMTP:EMAILEDNEWS@EMAIL.GLOBAL.FACTIVA.COM]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:14:04 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Top Outlets "vilsack" : Jesse Jackson wants apology for Sherrod's ouster Auto forwarded by a Rule

Your topic is Top Outlets "vilsack"

Jesse Jackson wants apology for Sherrod's ouster
21 July 2010, 13:50 GMT, The Seattle Times [125 Words]

The Rev. Jesse Jackson is calling for an apology from the Obama administration for ousting an Agriculture Department employee now at the center of a racially tinged firestorm.

Jackson said he talked to Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack late Tuesday night before Vilsack said that he would reconsider his department's decision to ask Shirley Sherrod to leave her job.

Vilsack issued a short statement early Wednesday morning after Sherrod said she was pressured to resign because of her comments that she didn't give a white farmer as much help as she could have 24 years ago. Until Tuesday, Sherrod was the department's director of rural development in Georgia.

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DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:14 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; USDA Clips; JIC1, OC -USDA; JIC2, OC -USDA; JIC3, OC -USDA; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: FW: Top Outlets "vilsack" : Vilsack may reconsider Sherrod decision

From: Factiva[SMTP:EMAILEDNEWS@EMAIL.GLOBAL.FACTIVA.COM]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:14:00 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Top Outlets "vilsack" : Vilsack may reconsider Sherrod decision Auto forwarded by a Rule

Your topic is Top Outlets "vilsack"

Vilsack may reconsider Sherrod decision
21 July 2010, 05:00 GMT, Newsday [81 Words]

(AP) – The woman at the center of a racially tinged firestorm involving the Obama administration and the NAACP said Wednesday she doesn't know if she'd return to her job at the Agriculture Department, even if asked.

"I am just not sure how I would be treated there," Shirley Sherrod said in a nationally broadcast interview. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said Wednesday he would reconsider...

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DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:14 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; USDA Clips; JIC1, OC -USDA; JIC2, OC -USDA; JIC3, OC -USDA; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: FW: Top Outlets "vilsack" : Fired Ag Department employee says Obama White House wanted her out - The Oval: Tracking the Obama presidency

From: Factiva[SMTP:EMAILEDNEWS@EMAIL.GLOBAL.FACTIVA.COM]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:14:02 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Top Outlets "vilsack" : Fired Ag Department employee says Obama White House wanted her out - The Oval: Tracking the Obama presidency Auto forwarded by a Rule

Your topic is Top Outlets "vilsack"

Fired Ag Department employee says Obama White House wanted her out - The Oval: Tracking the Obama presidency
21 July 2010, 13:21 GMT, USA Today [439 Words]

The Obama White House has been dragged into the controversy over a U.S. Agriculture Department employee fired for comments about a white farmer.

Shirley Sherrod, a black woman who was the USDA's director of rural development in Georgia, told the Associated Press that a department official said the White House wanted her resignation.

"They called me twice," Sherrod said, referring to the Ag Department. "The last time they asked me to pull over the side of the road and submit my resignation on my Blackberry, and that's what I did."

Sherrod told CNN the White House was worried about more attacks from Fox conservative commentator Glenn Beck.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said the decision was his alone, that nobody from the White House contacted him about this matter, and that "there is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA."

Here's the AP summary of the Sherrod situation:

The controversy began Monday when the conservative website biggovernment.com posted a two-minute, 38-second video clip of Sherrod's remarks to a local NAACP banquet.

In the video, Sherrod talks about the first time a white farmer came to her for help when she worked for a nonprofit rural farm aid group in 1986. She said he came in acting "superior" to her and that she debated how much help to give him.

"I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland and here I was faced with helping a white person save their land," she said.

Initially, she said, "I didn't give him the full force of what I could do" and only gave him enough help to keep his case progressing.

But, she said, his situation ultimately "opened my eyes" that helping farmers wasn't so much about race but was "about the poor versus those who have."

The video ends before her speech concludes. Sherrod said Tuesday the clip appears to intentionally misconstrue the message of the story, which is that the case taught her that whites are struggling just like blacks. She says she ultimately became close friends with the farmer and helped him for two years to save his farm.

"My point in telling that story is that working with him helped me to see that it wasn't just a black and white issue," she told The AP. "That's why I take the time to tell that story is to tell people we need to get beyond it and work together."

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DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:13 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; USDA Clips; JIC1, OC -USDA; JIC2, OC -USDA; JIC3, OC -USDA; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: FW: Top Outlets "vilsack" : Viral Politics: Racially-Charged Videos in Political Debate

From: Factiva[SMTP:EMAILEDNEWS@EMAIL.GLOBAL.FACTIVA.COM]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:12:31 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Top Outlets "vilsack" : Viral Politics: Racially-Charged Videos in Political Debate
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Your topic is Top Outlets "vilsack"

Viral Politics: Racially-Charged Videos in Political Debate
21 July 2010, 14:16 GMT, ABC News [449 Words]

The controversy over comments about race made by ousted USDA official Shirley Sherrod has ignited a political debate over using viral videos to "race-bait."

Andrew Breitbart and Eric Boehlert debate the Shirley Sherrod race controversy.

The conservative publisher of the Web site that posted the clip of Sherrod at a recent NAACP conference saying she had not given a white farmer as much help as she could have more than two decades ago stood by his decision today, even after it was revealed that the comments may have been taken out of context.

"The video shows racism and when the NAACP is going to charge the Tea Party with racism ... I'm going to show you it happens on the other side," Andrew Breitbart, publisher of biggovernment.com, told "Good Morning America" today.

He contended that this only goal in publishing the clip was to turn the tables on the NAACP, which made headlines this month when they exposed racism within the ranks of the Tea Party.

"This is not about Shirley Sherrod. This is about the smears that have gone against the Tea Party," he said.

"What this video clearly shows is a standard that the Tea Party has not been held to, " he said. "The NAACP, it shows the audience there applauding her when she discriminates against a white farmer."

But Eric Boehlert, senior fellow with the watchdog group Media Matters for America, scoffed at the suggestion that Breitbart was trying to present a fair portrayal of the NAACP conference.

"Andrew had no idea what the context of the comments were, but that didn't stop him from launching the smear campaign," he said.

Sherrod was quickly ousted from the USDA after a portion of the video, taped at a March conference, was released on Breitbart's site. Her comments were quickly condemned on both sides of the aisle.

But Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said today that he would be reconsidering his department's actions after the NAACP posted the full video of her speech, revealing that the seemingly offensive comments were part of a larger point about learning from her mistakes.

"If he had any decency he would apologize to Shirley Sherrod," Boehlert said. "And would stop with the race-baiting that we've seen all summer."

Sherrod told "GMA" today that she might not want her job back if it's offered.

"Because of all the publicity surrounding what happened...how would I be treated once I'm back there? I just don't know," she said on "GMA." "I would have to be reassured on that."

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DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:11 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; USDA Clips; JIC1, OC -USDA; JIC2, OC -USDA; JIC3, OC -USDA; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: FW: Top Outlets "vilsack" : What Did Shirley Sherrod Really Say?

From: Factiva[SMTP:EMAILEDNEWS@EMAIL.GLOBAL.FACTIVA.COM]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:10:57 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Top Outlets "vilsack" : What Did Shirley Sherrod Really Say?
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Your topic is Top Outlets "vilsack"

What Did Shirley Sherrod Really Say?
21 July 2010, 06:45 GMT, Time [2769 Words]

For those who have been following the Shirley Sherrod/Andrew Breitbart/NAACP/USDA story today - you might have whiplash! - here's the full text of Sherrod's speech before an NAACP audience in March. It's worth watching in full.

If you haven't been following the story, get up to speed over at CNN where you can see interviews with the parties involved and read through the events of the day.

The theme of Sherrod's speech, which she repeats in various iterations throughout is, "It's not about race. It's about those who have and those who do not." In other words, Sherrod tries to impart to her audience that those who believe America - and the South in particular - is divided because of race miss the point. It's divided, she says, because of income.

There's a strange lapse where the tape appears to be cut around 21:00, right as Sherrod is telling the story that was taken out of context today and resulted in her firing. It will be interesting to see if this is explained.

But the other parts I found notable in the video are the stories Sherrod recounts about her family and growing up in the South before and during the Civil Rights movement. Her father was murdered when she was 17 "by a white man," she says, adding that in her county back then, "the murder of black people occurred periodically and in every case, the white men who murdered them were never punished." No one was ever prosecuted for her father's murder even though there were witnesses, says Sherrod. She also says after her father's murder, a group of white men burned a cross on the front yard of her home while her mother, four sisters and baby brother were inside.

Shirley Sherrod is not, by this accounting, a person out of touch with the racial history of America. Listen to her speech and it's clear this history is something she remembers vividly; her message to the NAACP audience seemed to be that if she can move past it, so can anyone else.

In her speech, Sherrod, who grew up on a farm in Georgia, said she desperately wanted to move to the North after high school, but that her father's murder spurred her to stay and commit herself to helping black people. (He was killed in 1965.) Sherrod said over time - in part

because of her experience with the white farmer she talked about in the edited Breitbart clip - she realized her goal was to help poor people, not black people.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, who fired Sherrod, said today that he stands by his decision. The White House says it supports him. The NAACP reversed its condemnation of Sherrod and urged Vilsack to reconsider his decision. We'll find out in the coming days if he decides to.

The moral outrage on both sides of the NAACP/Tea Party debate is pretty laughable. Mark Williams claims that the Tea Party has no racists? Come on. Get 20 people together at a neighborhood block party and you will have a racist in your presence. And the NAACP, while they have accomplished many good things for African Americans, they are hardly the last bastion of unadulterated racial tolerance.

Fox News is deservedly taking one on the chin for this splice job. How is it that they ever thought that they could get away with this in the first place. Jon Stewart and his crack crew of interns would have broken this story if he was not on a summer break. Stupid mistake by all parties involved in misleading the public.

That said, check out this article: [Token White Member of NAACP Calls Tea Party "Racist"; Lone Black Tea Partier "Outraged"](#).

But it only took them hours to fire a highly qualified public servant when a sworn enemy of the administration accused her of being mean to white people. There was no due process, no ability to explain what happened. Fox News barked and the White House caved. And even now, when it is revealed that they were completely fooled, they stand by Tom Vilsack.

This is nothing but cowardice on the part of Obama and Rahm, the latter of whom as been revealed once again as nothing but a classic bully. He's ALL bark because he knows that when a fight starts he is helpless.

But the real problem here rests with Obama. I remember candidate Obama who, when asked about how he would stand up to the Right, said, "I don't do cowering."

Mr. Obama, you lie.

And if Obama can't defend himself from a clown like Andrew Breitbart, how can we expect him to defend us from bin Laden, BP, the crooks on Wall Street, or the rest of our enemies who want to kill, poison, and rob us.

There is absolutely no evidence that Obama knew about this whole Sherrod situation, that he was briefed on it, before it all went down. You can make an argument that *someone* in the WH screwed up, but you'll have a hard time convincing me that Obama himself threw this lady under the bus, considering how certain clips of his own race speech ("typical white person anyone?) were taken out of context to attack him.

If the Republican Party has any integrity, they will condemn him for race baiting and lying.

Earth to Time magazine: Despite this story being old, old, old, anyone who relies on leftist political advocacy groups like Time magazine, ABC, CBS, NBC, PBS, CNN, NPR, A-Mess-NBC, ESPN, ESPN2, Sports Illustrated, the Associated (with terrorists) Press, et al., for information would not know anything about this story because all of the above have ignored the story for the obvious reasons that they all live entirely in their own leftist bubbles and that bringing any attention to the unrepentant race baiting of the NAA[Leftist]CP doesn't help promote the agenda of the above named political advocacy groups. Consequently, said political advocacy groups had a complete blackout on the story until a few hours ago. It also explains why clueless Bob Scheiffer announced on Sunday that he knew nothing about the Obama so-called

"Justice" Department dismissing the default judgment won against the thugs of Obama's New Black Panther Party. Schieffer said that it wasn't in the news. Therefore, he knew nothing about it. Of course, that's the same story Charlie Gibson gave for his complete ignorance of Obama's criminal voter fraud outfit ACORN advising a "pimp" and a "ho" how to run a child prostitution ring. Gibson said that he knew nothing about the story because none of the above had informed him about it.

Tom Vilsack should be defending this person, he should be standing up for honesty and redemption in matters of race and power. He should be doing everything in his power to make the truth --as evidenced by the full video of her remarks-- known and understood, so that the credibility of his department can be borne upward by its association with someone of Shirley Sherrod's integrity.

But if Vilsack is right, and this episode makes it literally impossible to do her job, then who is indicted by that reality?

In what circumstances is it possible for someone like Breitbart to falsely smear an honorable person caught in the crossfire of a political battle between factions, for the full context of her remarks to be perfectly accessible to the Administration and the press corps -- everyone-- within hours, and yet for there to be any controversy whatsoever that renders further credible service impossible?

People of the character and profession of Breitbart will always exist. They've been with us since the very beginning, since the first moment we began to realize that integrity was a precious bond between humans. There's a biblical commandment devoted to condemning witnesses of the nature of Andrew Breitbart --it's right there next to "Thou shalt not steal." We've always known about falsehood and its profiteers, and they are still with us. Not that much has changed since we were given the commandment regarding false witness against our neighbors.

So, to me that means it isn't really Breitbart who needs examining here.

It's those who allow Breitbart to succeed who need to be held accountable. Tom Vilsack is one of them. The press corps who either cannot or will not view their role as being the opponents of false witness are another. The Obama Administration is probably yet another --the buck, as has been noted by prior Presidents, stops there.

These are the people who turn Andrew Breitbart from just another squeaking little rodent into a wealthy assassin with another notch on his belt. They make our democracy worse. They are, as someone said just a few short years ago, "hurting America."

One gets the impression that, if the current political-media class in Washington were in power in the early 1950's, the McCarthy era would still be going on today. The Shirley Sherrods of our nation would be sacked over and over again, as many times as they could be fired, just in order for everyone else to live a little longer putting off the fear that obviously comes with the task of defending integrity against falsehood. One gets the impression that the blackballing, the firings and the smears would never have ended, if these people were in the positions they hold now, back then.

I totally agree with your comments. To fire this lady without even checking out the story completely is a cowardly act. You don't throw people under the bus without proof they did something wrong. This administration feels so strongly that their cause is right that honor, honesty and doing the right thing comes in second or third on the priority list.

She was told to resign because the film clip would be on the Beck 5:00 show. It was not. Beck did show it this evening a day later and said there is no way she should have been fired

because of the film clip. He showed more of her speech that showed her intent to show how she had overcome those feelings from 24 years ago.

We've done to one another "I'll correct that statement", but in jest at one another's opinions (without pretending it was what you said) and you know how the movement of words can make the exact opposite point.

Yes, the administration and the State of Georgia did make some terrible errors. However, those errors were in trusting a far right dishonest propagandist (not all far right are even propagandist much less dishonest - but Briebart is, clearly is both of the above).

There is nothing any reasonable person can say when seeing or reading the statement to come to any other conclusion. There is nothing in this case about the beholder. It is a clear cut case of the truth that Sherrod is both very opposed to ordinary racism and equally opposed to reverse racism and the lie being that she is supporting reverse racism.

"Why won't BrightBoy release the full speech? Is he afraid that the full context of the speech will reveal the intent of her point [i.e., you can't judge a book by its cover] versus taking snippets and using them as prima facie 'evidence' of racism?"

What a sorry spectacle. The only person who looks good in this whole story is Shirley Sherrod.

According to her, she was told she had to be fired because she was "going to be on Glenn Beck tonight." Oh good, now we're puffing up Glenn Beck by letting fear of him call the tunes.

One of the people who should be fired is the stooge who told Sherrod this. When you're firing someone because you're afraid of adverse publicity, you don't give them a soundbite that will give you adverse publicity. Said person also told Sherrod "the White House" wants your resignation. So either the stooge was lying, or Vilsack was, or the White House was. Great.

Get that woman back on the job in a hurry, or face the reality she could and should sue for wrongful termination of employment. It's outrageous she wasn't so much as asked to explain herself.

I'd like to see Vilsac sacked, if he's responsible for this.

Ms Sherrod should get her job back, but not as a reward for realizing what she did initially was wrong for basing her decision to help or not help on the color of someone's skin. What she admitted to was wrong, and like a child, she should be commended for her change in behavior and encouraged to not make the same mistake in the future.

You place her on some pedestal as a victim, when in fact she was the perpetrator of the crime. Unbelievable. It is like an adulterer, who finally admits to having the affair, and is asking for our forgiveness. We should forgive, but not forget the act. Shirley should be forgiven, but strongly urged not to repeat the same offense in the future. Her record at the USDA should have been looked at, and if there are any instances of the repeated behavior she has admitted to, then she should have been fired. It would be quite simple to look at all the cases she had any part of to see who exactly she helped and who she admittedly "only did what I had to do".

With that said, where is the same outrage as expressed on this very site for the false allegations accusing the TEA Party of racism. Those on the left simply took the "word" of some leftist jouno who claimed he heard racial epithets shouted out against a member of the Black Caucus, at a TEA Party protest held this past March. But, our dear friends on the left are still silent, why is that? No proof has been rendered by anyone despite the rewards offered. But, those on the left continue to vilify the members of the TEA Party as "racists".

The same tactic that those on the Journo-list said they would use against anyone who challenged this President or his character.

The double standards set by those on the left are as objectionable as anything Andrew Breitbart has played in a 20 something second video clip.

"(...) but not as a reward for realizing what she did initially was wrong for basing her decision to help or not help on the color of someone's skin. What she admitted to was wrong, and like a child, she should be commended for her change in behavior and encouraged to not make the same mistake in the future."

It's a interesting notion that a person that lost her father to a racial murder somehow changed her 'behavior'. The speech in full context talks about a lesson; that eventhough she could have responded in kind to the white farmer she didn't because she realized unlike the people that killer her father that the root cause isn't black or white - it's poverty.

I wonder what the person who killed her father did, what did he realize? In order for someone to change they have to do something first and it's clear that she resisted the temptation to base her options on what happened to her and her family but to look at the problem at hands. Unlike much of your race baiting comments here.

While you say that she should get her job back you can't resist the urge to assume there's some kind of fault here, but in your entire rant you place absolutely no blame on the person who doctored the video to make her look like a reverse racist. Instead you continue the discussion about 'what she did wrong' when there's nothing in what she said that indicate that she did something wrong.

If she resisted the urge to be just like you, she is indeed guilty as charged, but you're grasping at straws if you claim that her strong show of integrity to do the right thing despite her history is anything like your complete lack of humanity.

If you have the flexibility to do this, it's not exactly hard work.

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DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:11 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; USDA Clips; JIC1, OC -USDA; JIC2, OC -USDA; JIC3, OC -USDA; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: FW: Top Outlets "vilsack" : Longer Video of Speech in Question Is Released by N.A.A.C.P.

From: Factiva[SMTP:EMAILEDNEWS@EMAIL.GLOBAL.FACTIVA.COM]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:10:30 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Top Outlets "vilsack" : Longer Video of Speech in Question Is Released by N.A.A.C.P.
Auto forwarded by a Rule

Your topic is Top Outlets "vilsack"

Longer Video of Speech in Question Is Released by N.A.A.C.P.
21 July 2010, 14:58 GMT, The New York Times [1663 Words]

Updated | 10:51 a.m. As my colleague Sarah Wheaton reported, "The president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People apologized Tuesday to a black civil servant whose ouster the civil rights organization had originally cheered."

Shirley Sherrod, who was until Tuesday the head of the Department of Agriculture's rural development office in Georgia, came under fire after an edited video clip posted online by a conservative activist accused her of admitting racism while speaking at an N.A.A.C.P. event in Douglas, Ga., in March. In the two-and-a-half-minute edited clip, Ms. Sherrod was seen explaining that, when asked to help a white farmer save his land 24 years ago, she initially "didn't give him the full force of what I could do" since she thought at the time that it was more important for her to help black people.

Ms. Sherrod and her supporters said the edited clip was misleading because the excerpts were taken from a longer story she told about overcoming prejudice and learning, from working with this white farmer, that her job was to help poor people regardless of their race.

After the N.A.A.C.P. reviewed a longer tape of the speech (embedded at the top of this post), the group said in a statement posted on its Web site, "we have come to the conclusion we were snookered by Fox News and Tea Party Activist Andrew Breitbart," the conservative blogger who drew attention to the speech.

The organization added:

Having reviewed the full tape, spoken to Ms. Sherrod, and most importantly heard the testimony of the white farmers mentioned in this story, we now believe the organization that edited the documents did so with the intention of deceiving millions of Americans.

The fact is Ms. Sherrod did help the white farmers mentioned in her speech. They personally credit her with helping to save their family farm. Moreover, this incident and the lesson it prompted occurred more than 20 years before she went to work for U.S.D.A.

Finally, she was sharing this account as part of a story of transformation and redemption. In the full video, Ms. Sherrod says she realized that the dislocation of farmers is about "haves

and have notes." "It's not just about black people, it's about poor people," says Sherrod in the speech. "We have to get to the point where race exists but it doesn't matter."

On Wednesday, The Washington Post reported, "as the full context of the video became known, U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said he would review his decision to ask U.S.D.A. official Shirley Sherrod to step down."

Here is the edit of the tape released by Andrew Breitbart:

Mr. Breitbart's edit seems to suggest that Ms. Sherrod was working for the government when the encounter she pointed to as a learning experience took place. On Tuesday, CNN reported that Ms. Sherrod explained "that the incident with the farmer in 1986 occurred before she started work for the U.S.D.A. and was working at the nonprofit Federation of Southern Cooperatives."

Roger Spooner, the farmer who turned to Ms. Sherrod for help, told CNN that she had helped him to save his farm, adding, "If it hadn't been for her, we would've never known who to see or what to do."

The 43-minute tape of Ms. Sherrod's speech released by the N.A.A.C.P. shows that she began the story of what she had learned from dealing with the white farmer by talking about how she had decided to stay in the Georgia and "work for change" the night that her father was killed by a white man who was never punished for the crime.

The longer tape does include at least one edit - a dissolve at one stage near the end of her somewhat rambling telling of the story - but it also explains the context in which she admitted feeling influenced by her own experience of racism decades ago.

Ms. Sherrod's story began this way:

It was 45 years ago today that my father's funeral was held. I was a young girl at the age of 17 when my father was murdered by a white man in Baker County. In Baker County, the murder of black people occurred periodically and in every case the white men who murdered them were never punished. It was no different in my father's case. There were three witnesses to his murder but the grand jury refused to indict the white man who murdered him.

She went on to explain that she made "a commitment" to stay in the South and work for social change while praying after her father's death, even though her family had suffered greatly from racist hate crimes, like having a relative lynched by a local sheriff and a cross burned on their lawn.

Here is the longer version of Ms. Sherrod's story of what she said she had learned from working with the white farmer to save his land:

God is good I can tell you that.

When I made that commitment I was making that commitment to black people, and to black people only. But you know, God will show you things and he'll put things in your path so that you realize that the struggle is really about poor people.

You know, the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm he took a long time talking but he was trying to show me that he was superior. I knew what he was doing but he had come to me for help. What he didn't know, while he was taking all that time trying to show me that he was superior to me, was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him.

I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough so that when he - I assumed the Department of Agriculture had sent him to me, either that or the Georgia Department of Agriculture - and he needed to go back and report that I did try to help him.

So I took him to a white lawyer [who] had attended some of the training that we had provided because Chapter 12 bankruptcy had just been enacted for the family farm. So I figured if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him. That's when it was revealed to me that it's about poor versus those that have and not so much - it is about white and black but, it opened me eyes because I took him to one of his own and I put him in his hands and felt, O.K., I've done my job.

But during that time we would have these injunctions against the Department of Agriculture and so they couldn't foreclose on him. And I want you to know that the country supervisor did something to him that I have not seen yet that they've done to any other farmer black or white. And what they did to him caused him to not be able to file Chapter 12 bankruptcy

So everything was going along fine. I'm thinking he's being taken care of by the white lawyer, and then they lifted the injunction against U.S.D.A. in May of '87, for two weeks, and he was one of 13 farmers in Georgia who received a foreclosure notice.

He called me. I said, Well go ahead and make an appointment at the lawyer's, let me know when it is and I'll meet you there. So we met at the lawyer's office on the date they had given him and this lawyer sat there - he had been paying this lawyer, y'all, that's what got me, he had been paying the lawyer since November and this was May - and the lawyer sat there and looked at him and said, Well y'all getting old, why don't you just let the farm go?

I could not believe he said that. So I said to the lawyer, I told him, I can't believe you said that. I said, It's obvious to me that if he can't file a Chapter 12 bankruptcy to stop this foreclosure you have to file an 11. And the lawyer said to me, I'll do whatever you say, whatever you think, that's the way he put it.

But he was paying him - he wasn't paying me any money, you know. So he said, the lawyer said, he would work on it. And then, about seven days before that land would have been sold at the court house steps, the farmer called me and said the lawyer wasn't doing anything. And that's when I spent time there in my office calling everybody I could think of to help me find a lawyer who would handle this and finally I remembered that I had gone to see one just 40 miles away in Americus. [...]

But working with him made me see that it's really about those who have versus those who don't, you know, and they could be black, they could be white, they could be Hispanic. And it made me realize then that I needed to work to help poor people, those who don't have access the way others have.

<http://global.factiva.com/redirect/default.aspx?p=sta&ep=AE&an=WCNYTF0020100721e67100067&fid=300612057&cat=w&aid=9USD000900&ns=18&fn=Top%20Outlets%20%22vilsack%22&ft=g&OD=V2AUBjNaqd6b5Ap%2b90PrU4iu6h%2fp8T%2byJNGtxGUDhq6zQx18ytkPQ7A%3d%3d%7c2>

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DeJong, Justin

From: OC.JIC4@oc.usda.gov
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:10 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Weaver, Caleb; Mather, Chris; Misailidis, Sarah; DeJong, Justin
Subject: CNN Congressional Black Caucus Statement

Station: CNN
Date: 07/21/2010 12:06:58 - 12:16:58 PM

wants to further review the encouraging of this resignation.

that's absolutely right, fred. and i think we are going to have to see how this plays out in the next 12 hours or so, whether or not people are satisfied, whether or not people are convinced here, and whether or not the president, quite frankly, can be shielded from this. because a lot of people have looked at the president for guidance when it comes to racial discussions, racial matters. it is something that he himself made a part of the campaign, saying that he would like to bridge that racial divide and help the country do that in a very reasonable way. we'll see if he takes this as a teachable moment, or if he feels that it is important for this to be a teachable moment for someone else, like secretary vilsack, and those who were directly involved.

suzanne malveaux, thanks so much. from the white house, appreciate that. and, of course, we will bring you live coverage of today's white house briefing with spokesman robert gibbs and whomever else might show up for that, scheduled for 1:00 eastern time.

african-american lawmakers are calling for shirley **sherrod** to get her job back. we just received this statement a short time ago. the congressional black caucus continues to believe i'm reading a quote now, that mrs. **sherrod** was unfairly asked to resign without due process, and should be reinstated immediately. of there are many individuals still serving in the department of agriculture who were responsible for years of discrimination against african-american farmers. the basis for mrs. **sherrod**'s resignation is another example of why we must not sweep race under the rug. rather, we must come together as a nation and recognize that we do not live in a post-racial era, and that while difficult, we must confront these issues head-on with clarity and without fear. the statement coming from the congressional black caucus as it pertains to shirley **sherrod**. so **sherrod**'s story has a lot of people talking about race, power, politics, and we're hearing from you, as well, on our blog. keep sending your comments to cnn.com/tony. we'll read more of them this hour.

DeJong, Justin

From: googlealerts-noreply@google.com
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:09 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Google Alert - "tom vilsack"

News 6 new results for "tom vilsack"

The firing of Shirley Sherrod -- and the cowardice of Tom Vilsack

Washington Post (blog)

The coward in question is Agriculture Secretary **Tom Vilsack** who, even though from Iowa, fired Sherrod in a New York minute, and by extension and tradition ? ...

[See all stories on this topic »](#)

In meeting, Messina praised Sherrod handling

Politico (blog)

White House officials yesterday afternoon told reporters they did not press Agriculture Secretary **Tom Vilsack** to demand the resignation of Shirley Sharrod, ...

[See all stories on this topic »](#)

"Can Breitbart Possibly Survive?"

The Atlantic

Tom Vilsack, the media, etc. have hardly covered themselves in glory. But the purposeful deceit propagated by Breitbart is a mitigating factor for everyone ...

[See all stories on this topic »](#)

Jackson Demanding Apology For Sherrod's Ouster

WXIA-TV

Jackson said he talked to Agriculture Secretary **Tom Vilsack** late Tuesday night before Vilsack said that he would reconsider his department's decision to ask ...

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Jobless benefits extension moving ahead...Financial overhaul being signed

9&10 News

Shirley Sherrod tells NBC's "Today" show she was shocked at being forced to resign by Agriculture Secretary **Tom Vilsack**. He now says he's willing to ...

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Kansas governor seeks disaster declaration for 9 counties

AG Week

Parkinson's request Tuesday to US Agriculture Secretary **Tom Vilsack** cites production losses and equipment damage from powerful storms that struck between ...

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DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:08 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: FW: USDA Release: Obama Administration Names Shirley Sherrod to Serve as State Director for Rural Development in Georgia

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED] Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: USDA News [mailto:oc.news@usda.gov]
Sent: Thursday, July 30, 2009 4:12 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: USDA Release: Obama Administration Names Shirley Sherrod to Serve as State Director for Rural Development in Georgia

Contact:
Office of Communication 202-720-4623

Obama Administration Names Shirley Sherrod to Serve as State Director for Rural Development in Georgia

WASHINGTON, July 30, 2009- The Obama Administration today announced that Shirley Sherrod will serve as Georgia State Director for Rural Development at the USDA.

"Shirley Sherrod will be an important advocate on behalf of rural communities throughout the state and help administer the valuable programs and services provided by the USDA that can enhance their economic success," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack.

Since 1985, Sherrod has served as Director of the Georgia Field Office for the Federation of Southern Cooperative/Land Assistance Fund. She has also served as Georgia State Lead for the Southern Rural Black Women's Initiative for Economic and Social Justice. From 1999-2000, Sherrod served as Executive Director for Community Alliances of Interdependent Agriculture, Inc., in Albany, Ga. Sherrod has more than 15 years experience working with agriculture-focused organizations. Sherrod received a B.A. in Sociology from Albany State University in Albany, Ga., and a M.A. in Community Development from Antioch University in Yellow Springs, Ohio.

Rural Development administers and manages over 40 housing, business, and community infrastructure and facility programs as laid out by Congress through a network of 6,100 employees located in 500 national, state and local offices. These programs are designed to improve the economic stability of rural communities, businesses, residents, farmers and ranchers and improve the quality of life in rural America. Rural Development has an existing portfolio of over \$114 billion in loans and loan guarantees.

The USDA provides leadership on food, agriculture and natural resources and touches the life of every American. Reflecting President Obama's commitment to expanding economic opportunities in rural America, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and the USDA are working to enhance availability of broadband, promote the development of renewable energy, to conserve,

maintain and improve our natural resources and environment, and promote a sustainable, safe, sufficient and nutritious food supply.

USDA News
oc.news@usda.gov
202 720-4623

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DeJong, Justin

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:07 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: FW: Fox News (Elena Isella): DS Schedule for today?

Can we do?

From: Maisel, Chad
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:04 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris; Purchia, Liz
Cc: Palmieri, Suzanne
Subject: RE: Fox News (Elena Isella): DS Schedule for today?

Right, no more open press events. She does have the stakeholders meeting at 4:30p, which isn't open press but there's the chance of someone show up. Might make sense to have a press person at the entrance...

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:58 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris; Purchia, Liz
Cc: Maisel, Chad
Subject: Fox News (Elena Isella): DS Schedule for today?

The deputy doesn't have any open press events for the rest of the day, right?

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Elena.Isella@foxnews.com [mailto:Elena.Isella@foxnews.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:50 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Cc: SARAH.Ridolfi@foxnews.com
Subject: Schedule

Good Morning Stephanie,

Per our conversation, I just wanted to follow up find out if Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan will be attending the National Rural Education Technology Summit at the National Museum of the American Indian.

And if Secretary Vilsack's schedule does change today. Can you please email the updated schedule to the Fox News assignment desk at: dc.desk@foxnews.com

Thank you,

Elena Isella
Fox News Channel
202-824-6369

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:05 PM
To: Misailidis, Sarah; DeJong, Justin
Subject: FW: Your Agri-Pulse has arrived!
Attachments: Agri-Pulse-07212010-3E492F8BFBA640CFA10D4B856D181CDD.pdf

From: sara@agri-pulse.com[SMTP:SARA@AGRI-PULSE.COM]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:27:14 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Your Agri-Pulse has arrived!
Auto forwarded by a Rule

Date: 7/21/2010 10:27:14 AM
Agri-Pulse Newsletter: 07212010
Link to Download this Issue: [Click Here to Download Issue \(please allow 30 seconds\)](#)

Greetings,

With all due respect to Alice in Wonderland, the curious case of Shirley Sherrod, the former USDA Rural Development Director for the state of Georgia who was forced to resign on Monday, continues to grow "curiouser and curiouser." Undoubtedly, there are a few people at the White House and the NAACP who probably wish they could join Alice in escaping for awhile. Unfortunately for them, the story continued to unfold on all of the major networks and Hill publications this morning. As Jim Webster points out, Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack fanned a political brush fire into a nationwide firestorm. Since Monday, Vilsack has issued three separate statements on the topic, ranging from announcing Sherrod's resignation and the department's "zero tolerance" policy on racial discrimination Monday to a late night statement issued Tuesday where he offered to conduct "a thorough review and consider additional facts." More on the controversy in this issue and at www.Agri-Pulse.com Other highlights in this issue.

- Senate clears key roadblock on unemployment.
- Lawmakers lash out at USDA over proposed livestock rule
- House members & USDA agree on need to streamline rural programs
- Vilsack calls for farm sector sacrifice & understanding
- NACD's Robinson fighting hard to keep conservation funds flowing
- Demand for EQIP funds continues to outpace supply
- Climate change challenges expected to continue
- Administration's Climate Change task force grapples with impact on agriculture
- Pork and beef exports soar
- NMPF plan would moderate milk market volatility, FAPRI says
- For future vets, the government giveth and taketh away

- CARD study looks at life without current ethanol policies
- News briefs: Liberty link, BP buys out Verenum venture, Dole Foods tainted trial, Genetically modified crops, Domino's "Smart Slice" program, Protecting big oil, and Lonely Beef debate.
- Farm Hands: Sherrod, Paige, Cook, Steen, Potts, Adcock, McKinney, Kruse, Serra, Snyder, Davis, Nelsen, Gumina, Curtis, Vinduska, Fruth, Shauman, Fast, Schaaf, USDA's National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection, and Sanderson,

New audio update for Tuesday - USDA's Avalos says regs for revamped animal ID program will be proposed next spring.

<http://www.agri-pulse.com/uploaded/AnimalID072010.mp3>

Please let me know if you have any comments or questions. You can reach me at www.Agri-Pulse.com

Best regards,

Sara R. Wyant

Editor

Agri-Pulse

██████████ (cell)

573-873-0802 (Camdenton, MO. office)

202-547-5588 (Washington, DC office)

www.Agri-Pulse.com

DeJong, Justin

From: Harless, Angela -USDA
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:04 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Purchia, Liz
Subject: FW: Protesters

From: Shaffer, Debra **On Behalf Of** OpsCenter
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:03 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Repass, Todd; Harless, Angela -USDA; Maddux, Sheryl -USDA; Lescallett, Kenneth; Crew, John
Cc: 'Pavek, John - Washington, DC'; Zaina, Lisa; Redington, JamesH
Subject: Protesters

All cameras and protesters have departed the scene. No incidents. Will continue to monitor but all is quiet.

v/r-

Deb.

Debra Shaffer
USDA OpsCenter
202-720-5711

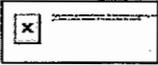
DeJong, Justin

From: googlealerts-noreply@google.com
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:02 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Google Alert - "chris mather"

News 1 new result for "chris mather"

[Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said he will reconsider the ...](#)

HotIndieNews.com

Before Vilsack's statement of reconsideration, Agriculture Department spokesman **Chris Mather** had said Sherrod was let go because of what she said in March ... 

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DeJong, Justin

From: Jalonick, Mary Clare [mjalonick@ap.org]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:33 AM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: FW: Jalonick (USDA reconsiders employee ouster over race remarks)

FYI – I am going to go to sleep for a bit but call me if you need to. Thanks much again for the call tonight.

From: AP Exchange notification [mailto:noreply.apexchange@notification.ap.org]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:28 AM
To: Jalonick, Mary Clare
Subject: Jalonick (USDA reconsiders employee ouster over race remarks)

Date: 07/21/2010 02:27 AM

US-USDA-Racism-Resignation/1093
USDA reconsiders employee ouster over race remarks
BEN EVANS
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said Wednesday he will reconsider the department's decision to oust a black employee over racially tinged remarks after learning more about what she said.

Vilsack issued a short statement early Wednesday morning after Shirley Sherrod, who until Tuesday was the Agriculture Department's director of rural development in Georgia, said she was pressured to resign because of her comments that she didn't give a white farmer as much help as she could have 24 years ago.

Sherrod said her remarks, delivered in March at a local NAACP banquet in Georgia, were part of a larger story about learning from her mistakes and racial reconciliation, not racism, and they were taken out of context by bloggers who posted only part of her speech.

Vilsack's statement came after the NAACP posted the full video of Sherrod's comments Tuesday night.

"I am of course willing and will conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts to ensure to the American people we are providing services in a fair and equitable manner," Vilsack said.

The Obama administration's move to reconsider her employment was an absolute reversal from hours earlier, when a White House official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said President Barack Obama had been briefed on Sherrod's resignation after the fact and stood by the Agriculture Department's handling of it.

But growing calls for the administration to reconsider the decision put pressure on Vilsack, who stressed that the decision to ask for her resignation was his alone. The NAACP, which initially condemned Sherrod's remarks and supported her ouster, later said she should keep her job. The civil rights group said it and millions of others were duped by the conservative website that posted partial video of her speech on Monday.

The white farming family that was the subject of the story also stood by Sherrod and said she should stay.

"We probably wouldn't have (our farm) today if it hadn't been for her leading us in the right direction," said Eloise Spooner, the wife of farmer Roger Spooner of Iron City, Ga. "I wish she could get her job back because she was good to us, I tell you."

As Sherrod reached out to media to plead her case and more people came to her defense, the administration faced criticism that officials nervous about racial perceptions overreacted to her comments and made her a political sacrifice amid dueling allegations of racism between the NAACP and the tea party movement.

In the clip posted on BigGovernment.com, Sherrod described the first time a white farmer came to her for help. It was 1986, and she worked for a nonprofit rural farm aid group. She said the farmer came in acting "superior" to her and she debated how much help to give him.

"I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland, and here I was faced with helping a white person save their land," Sherrod said.

Initially, she said, "I didn't give him the full force of what I could do" and only gave him enough help to keep his case progressing. Eventually, she said, his situation "opened my eyes" that whites were struggling just like blacks, and helping farmers wasn't so much about race but was "about the poor versus those who have."

The full video of Sherrod's speech showed that while she took some shots at conservatives and spoke of continued racial inequities, she focused on encouraging blacks, particularly the younger generation, to do more to help themselves.

"We have to overcome the divisions that we have," she told the audience. "Change has to start with us. ... Our young people, I'm not picking on you, but y'all gotta step up to the plate. ... You are capable of being those doctors and lawyers."

The two-minute, 38-second clip posted Monday by BigGovernment.com was presented as evidence that the NAACP was hypocritical in its recent resolution condemning what it calls racist elements of the tea party movement. The website's owner, Andrew Breitbart, said the video shows the civil rights group condoning the same kind of racism it says it wants to erase. Biggovernment.com is the same outfit that gained fame last year after airing video of workers at the community group ACORN counseling actors posing as a prostitute and her boyfriend.

In his original statement on the matter Tuesday morning, Vilsack said he had accepted Sherrod's resignation and stressed that the department had "zero tolerance for discrimination." Later in the day, after Sherrod spoke to the media about the intention of her comments, Vilsack sent out a second statement that said the controversy surrounding Sherrod's comments could, rightly or wrongly, cause people to question her decisions as a federal employee and lead to lingering doubts about civil rights at the agency, which has a troubled history of discrimination.

Sherrod said officials showed no interest in listening to her explanation when she was asked to resign. She said she was on the road Monday when USDA deputy undersecretary Cheryl Cook called her and told her to pull over and submit her resignation on her Blackberry because the White House wanted her out.

"It hurts me that they didn't even try to attempt to see what is happening here, they didn't care," Sherrod said. "I'm not a racist. ... Anyone who knows me knows that I'm for fairness."

In the full 43-minute video, Sherrod also criticized what she called the "mean-spirited" reaction to the Democratic health care bill.

"Some of the racism we thought was buried, didn't it surface?" she said. "Now we endured eight years of the Bushes, and we didn't do the stuff these Republicans are doing because you have a black president."

She also told the story of her father's death in 1965, saying he was killed by white men who were never charged. She said she made a commitment to stay in the South the night of her father's death, despite the dreams she had always had of leaving her rural town.

"When I made that commitment I was making that commitment to black people and to black people only," she said. "But you know God will show you things and he'll put things in your path so that you realize that the struggle is really about poor people."

Online:

Full video posted by NAACP: http://www.naacp.org/news/entry/video_sherrod

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Summary

Date: 07/21/2010 02:27 AM
Slug: US-USDA-Racism-Resignation
Headline: USDA reconsiders employee ouster over race remarks
Byline: BEN EVANS
Byline Title: Associated Press Writer
Copyright Holder: AP
Priority: u (3)
With Photo:
Dateline: WASHINGTON
Editors' Note:
Word Count: 1093
File Name (Transref): NY134
Editorial Type:
AP Category: w
Format:

mjalonick@ap.org - cd22e260bc7b43288bc57ad19526f39b

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and delete this e-mail. Thank you.

[IP_US_DISC]msk dccc60c6d2c3a6438f0cf467d9a4938

DeJong, Justin

From: googlealerts-noreply@google.com
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:02 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Google Alert - usda

News

4 new results for usda

AT&T wins \$350 million government contract

The Associated Press

AT&T will provide data services to over 5000 **USDA** locations across the country. AT&T shares climbed 12 cents to \$24.91 in morning trading.

[See all stories on this topic »](#)

Ex-worker: USDA 'wasn't interested in hearing the truth'

CNN (blog)

racism is racism black or white! I am a black man, I will not protect Mrs. Sherrod in one hand and ask the tea party to kick out racist.

...
[See all stories on this topic »](#)

» Kanab City Council hears from Rural Development

Southern Utah News

A presentation by Dave Conine of the **USDA's** Rural Development Program provided information on what he described was "an underutilized program" for obtaining ...

[See all stories on this topic »](#)

Livestock Call By John Otte

Farm Futures

USDA reported mostly inactive trading in all feeding regions on Tuesday. Scattered fed cattle bids surfaced in the Plains states Tuesday morning at \$92 on a ...

[See all stories on this topic »](#)



Farm Futures

Tip: Use a plus sign (+) to match a term in your query exactly as is.: [Learn more.](#)

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[Manage your alerts.](#)

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:00 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Purchia, Liz
Subject: Washington Times (Valerie Richardson): Update on Shirley story

FYI-

Stephanie Chun

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chun@oc.usda.gov*

From: Valerie Richardson [mailto:vmrichardson@msn.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:32 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Wash Times story/Shirley Sherrod

Hi, Stephanie. I'm trying to get an update on the USDA's position on Shirley Sherrod. I understand Mr. Vilsack released a statement this morning saying that her status is under review. Can you tell me if that's the USDA's latest statement, and if so, would you mind emailing me a copy?

Thanks very much for your help.

Valerie

Valerie Richardson
The Washington Times
Denver bureau
Office: 303.470.7078
Fax: 303.470.6684
vmrichardson@msn.com

DeJong, Justin

From: E.J.Stapler@one.usda.gov
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:00 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin
Cc: Timothy.McNeilly@one.usda.gov
Subject: Media Query

I received a voice message overnight from Vera Hill with Input - N. VA area. 703-593-4074. She's asking if a replacement has been made for Shirley Sherrod.

Please let me know if you want me to call her back - I'm referring this per instructions.

EJ

E. J. Stapler | Public Information Coordinator
Rural Development
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Georgia State Office
355 East Hancock Ave. (Stop 310) | Athens, GA 30601
Phone; 706-546-2165, ext. 5904 | Fax: 706-546-2126
<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ga>

DeJong, Justin

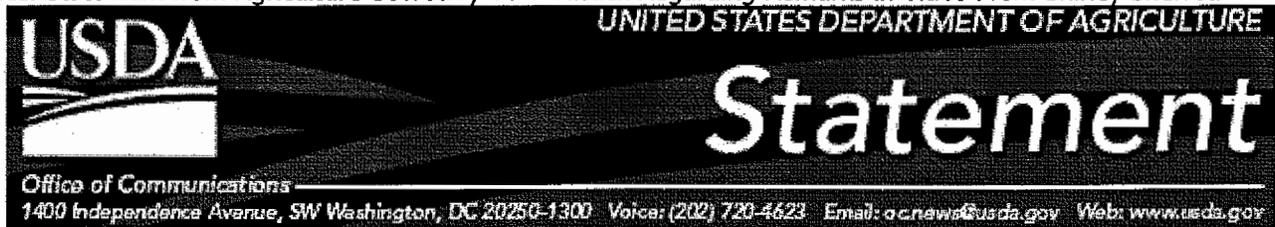
From: Jalonick, Mary Clare [mjalonick@ap.org]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:41 AM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

And when he says release of remarks in video – you mean release of full video tonight?

From: DeJong, Justin [mailto:Justin.DeJong@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:29 AM
To: Jalonick, Mary Clare; Jalonick, Mary Clare
Subject: Fw: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

Here ya go.

From: USDA Office of Communications
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wed Jul 21 01:03:38 2010
Subject: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod



Release No. PENDING

Contact:
USDA Office of Communications
(202) 720-4623

Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

WASHINGTON, July 21, 2010 - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack tonight released the following statement in response to the release of remarks in video from Shirley Sherrod:

"I am of course willing and will conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts to ensure to the American people we are providing services in a fair and equitable manner."

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This message was sent from USDA Office of Communications to Justin.dejong@oc.usda.gov. It was sent from: OC News, USDA Office of

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[IP_US_DISC]msk dccc60c6d2c3a6438f0cf467d9a4938

DeJong, Justin

From: Marc Yacht [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:15 PM
To: chris.mather@usda.gov
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; Sandretti, David; DeJong, Justin; Chan, Stephanie; kathryn.hill@usda.gov
Subject: Firing of Ms. Sherrod

**Chris Mather
Office of the Director
For Tom Vilsack - Secretary**

Dear Mr. Mather:

Please forward this to Tom Vilsack. I cannot find contact information.

Reappoint Ms. Shirley Sherrod

Admit to a terrible error on the part of the Director, due to a rush to judgment, and immediately reappoint Ms. Sherrod to her position without loss of pay.

The actions by the Secretary were despicable and premature. His continued defense of the firing is outrageous. His cold blooded lack of judgment and good sense in this incident bring questions as to his own value and competence.

Sincerely,

Marc J. Yacht, MD, MPH (signed)

Marc J. Yacht MD, MPH

www.marcyacht.com

DeJong, Justin

From: Douglas Montgomery [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:29 AM
To: chris.mather@usda.gov; Sandretti, David; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; orrin.evans@oc.usda.gov; Chan, Stephanie; Gravitz, Bobby; Normile, Cheryl -USDA; marci.hilt@usda.gov; aaron.lavalle@oc.usda.gov; kathryn.hill@usda.gov; mocile.trotter@usda.gov; barbara.robinson@usda.gov; Black, David -OC; pat.o'leary@usda.gov; Ellison, Bob -USDA; Crawford, Gary -USDA; rod.bain@usda.gov; Carter, Susan; Mitchell, Carrie -USDA; ron.hall@usda.gov; mark.palmer@wdc.usda.gov; james.meidinger@wdc.usda.gov; kent.politsch@wdc.usda.gov; johnathan.grovesman@wdc.usda.gov; andre.kok@wdc.usda.gov; jim.meisenheimer@mn.usda.gov; murray.watts@tn.usda.gov; brenda.carlson@tx.usda.gov; paul.lehman@ca.usda.gov; maryhelen.askins@wdc.usda.gov; latawnya.dia@wdc.usda.gov; Pugh, Shirley; Michelle.Bouchard@rma.usda.gov; Hand, Michael; Baker, Heyward; timwitt@rma.usda.gov; Ray, Terrie; susan.siemietkowski@fns.usda.gov; scott.carter@fns.usda.gov; jean.daniel@fns.usda.gov; susan.acker@fns.usda.gov; hans.billger@fns.usda.gov
Subject: Mr. Vilsack's resignation - re: Shirley Sherrod

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to call for Mr. Vilsack's immediate resignation regarding his hasty and misguided action in the firing of Shirley Sherrod.

Fox New's obviously deceptive and dishonest journalism practices have egregiously slandered and libeled Ms. Sherrod and Mr. Vilsack and the USDA are party to these same injustices.

Please do the right thing and step down Mr. Vilsack. Defamation suits on behalf of Ms. Sherrod, against Fox News and the USDA should be the next step.

With Best Regards,
Douglas Montgomery

--

Douglas Montgomery

Independent Design Solutions LLC

1128 Central Avenue

Downers Grove, IL 60516 USA

Tel: [REDACTED]

www.independentdesignsolutions.com

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:54 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Purchia, Liz
Subject: Washington Post (Rocci Fisch): Online Chat with Secretary on Shirey Sherrod story on Friday.

Looping chris and liz-

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:51 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: FW: ONLINE REQUEST

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Rocci.Fisch@washingtonpost.com [mailto:Rocci.Fisch@washingtonpost.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:49 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin
Subject: ONLINE REQUEST

Would Tom Vilsack be available today to do an online chat with the Washington Post about the Shirley Sherrod incident?
Would take ½ hour; done online, with questions coming from our WP readers and are screened.
We could do it at 11, 12, 1, 2 or 3 ET today.
Rocci Fisch
202-334-9429

DeJong, Justin

From: Jean.Daniel@fns.usda.gov
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:53 PM
To: Julie.Paradis@fns.usda.gov; Elizabeth.Dugger@fns.usda.gov; Audrey.Rowe@fns.usda.gov; Michelle.Bucci@fns.usda.gov; Lisa.Pino@fns.usda.gov; Marisa.Kirk-Epstein@fns.usda.gov; Jeffrey.Tribiano@fns.usda.gov; Tim.OConnor@fns.usda.gov; Patricia.Dombroski@fns.usda.gov; Connie.Slough@fns.usda.gov; Ronald.Vogel@fns.usda.gov; Diane.Kriviski@fns.usda.gov; MaryJane.Whitney@fns.usda.gov; Darlene.Barnes@fns.usda.gov; Jessica.Shahin@fns.usda.gov; Art.Foley@fns.usda.gov; Laura.Griffin@fns.usda.gov; Steve.Carlson@fns.usda.gov; Richard.Lucas@fns.usda.gov; Bruce.Alexander@fns.usda.gov; Susan.Siemietkowski@fns.usda.gov; Scott.Carter@fns.usda.gov; DeJong, Justin; Misailidis, Sarah; Deluhery, Norah; Lavalley, Aaron; Blake, Nathan; Thornton, Janey; Concannon, Kevin
Subject: Articles of Interest

CNN: Agriculture Secretary to Review Resignation of USDA Worker

<http://www.cnn.com/2010/POLITICS/07/21/agriculture.employee.usda/>

AP: Indiana Accused of Cutting Aid to Food Stamp Users

http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5iMpFOJoLNpIP9_uGUUV0xnVqfkPAD9H2V5CO0

New York Times: Baseball Players Join First Lady's Anti-Obesity Campaign

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/21/business/media/21obesity.html?src=busln>

Jackson (MS) Clarion-Ledger: Food Stamp Fraud Hit Hard

<http://www.clarionledger.com/article/20100721/NEWS/7210358/Food+stamp+fraud+hit+hard>

Agweek: House Committee Approves Child Nutrition Bill

<http://www.agweek.com/event/article/id/16768/>

DeJong, Justin

From: Purchia, Liz
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:52 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Harless, Angela -USDA
Subject: Re: Protest

One camera crew is out front filming.

Liz Purchia
U.S. Department of Agriculture
202-407-6698

From: Mather, Chris
To: DeJong, Justin; Harless, Angela -USDA
Cc: Purchia, Liz
Sent: Wed Jul 21 12:30:01 2010
Subject: Re: Protest

But who is watching this? We can't wait for reports. What TV is there.
Chris Mather

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Harless, Angela -USDA; Mather, Chris
Cc: Purchia, Liz
Sent: Wed Jul 21 12:27:14 2010
Subject: RE: Protest
Please keep Liz in loop as well.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Harless, Angela -USDA
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:27 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin
Subject: FW: Protest

This update just came in....

From: Shaffer, Debra **On Behalf Of** OpsCenter
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:23 PM
To: Repass, Todd; Jett, Carole
Cc: Redington, JamesH; OpsCenter; Harless, Angela -USDA
Subject: Protest

As of 12:20pm, crowe is increasing slowly in size though still peaceful. USDA Security is coordinating with Federal Protective Service who is on scene.

v/r-

Deb.

Debra Shaffer
USDA OpsCenter
202-720-5711

DeJong, Justin

From: Purchia, Liz
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:48 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Harless, Angela -USDA
Subject: Re: Protest

Pretty much over. Security just took a photo of the cameramen. 5 older women in pinks shirts still there talking.

Bunch left with signs.

People walking by really didn't even know it was going on.

I'm heading back in.

Liz Purchia
U.S. Department of Agriculture
202-407-6698

From: Purchia, Liz
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Harless, Angela -USDA
Sent: Wed Jul 21 12:34:04 2010
Subject: Re: Protest

10 protesters

Reinstate shirley sherrod posters, 3 of them
Liz Purchia
U.S. Department of Agriculture
202-407-6698

From: Mather, Chris
To: DeJong, Justin; Harless, Angela -USDA
Cc: Purchia, Liz
Sent: Wed Jul 21 12:30:01 2010
Subject: Re: Protest

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Cc: Purchia, Liz
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(cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

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To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin
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v/r-

Deb.

Debra Shaffer
USDA OpsCenter
202-720-5711

DeJong, Justin

From: googlealerts-noreply@google.com
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:48 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Google Alert - "chris mather"

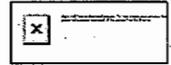
News

1 new result for "chris mather"

USDA to reconsider ousting of worker over race charges

msnbc.com

Vilsack — not the White House — made the decision to ask Sherrod to resign, said USDA spokeswoman **Chris Mather**. She said Sherrod willingly resigned when ...



msnbc.com

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DeJong, Justin

From: Hagstrom, Jerry [JHagstrom@nationaljournal.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:29 AM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Dallas today

I hope at hearing today Dallas can explain what happened with the Georgia rd director and tells what deputy undersecretary called her or tell who in the white house ordered the firing morning Joe is going on and on about white house panic

DeJong, Justin

From: googlealerts-noreply@google.com
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:43 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Google Alert - "tom vilsack"

News

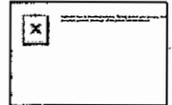
1 new result for "tom vilsack"

The shame of right-wing "journalism"

Salon

Unbelievably, Agriculture Secretary **Tom Vilsack** fired Sherrod based on Breitbart's creative editing, which left out Sherrod's real point (and in fact, ...

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DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:41 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Purchia, Liz
Subject: Politics Daily (Walter Shapiro): Resignation details and Shirley's interaction with the Secretary

Called to make sure he had the information detailing Shirleys resignation- whether she was *asked to resign or if she voluntarily resigned*. He said the AP story states that the "they...asked me to pull over to the side of the road and submit my resignation on my Blackberry, and that's what I did" whereas Chris' statement says that Sherrod "willingly resigned."

Reporter would also like to know how often (if at all) has Shirley interacted with the Secretary prior to this.

Deadline: Reporter plans to write in the next 2 hrs

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Ross, Lori -USDA
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:04 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: media inquiry

Walter Shapiro
Politics Daily
Re: wants to run something by you on Shirley Sherrod
202-462-2957 waltershapiro@politicsdaily.com

DeJong, Justin

From: googlealerts-noreply@google.com
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:40 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Google Alert - "tom vilsack"

Web 1 new result for "tom vilsack"

Tom Vilsack Needs to Rehire Shirley Sherrod Now | Mother Jones

This should go without saying but **Tom Vilsack** needs to apologize and rehire Sherrod and he needs to do it with the same dispatch that he fired her in the ...

motherjones.com/.../tom-vilsack-needs-rehire-shirley-sherrod-...

Tip: Use a plus sign (+) to match a term in your query exactly as is.. [Learn more.](#)

[Remove](#) this alert.

[Create](#) another alert.

[Manage](#) your alerts.

DeJong, Justin

From: Hagstrom, Jerry [JHagstrom@nationaljournal.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:39 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin

Chris, Justin:

I have received statements from the Congressional Black Caucus, the Rural Coalition and the Federation of Southern Cooperatives all criticizing the forced resignation of Shirley Sherrod. Do you or Secretary Vilsack wish to respond to the comments? If you have not received them, I am willing to forward them to you. Jerry

DeJong, Justin

From: Purchia, Liz
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:34 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Harless, Angela -USDA
Subject: Re: Protest

CNN and NBC
Liz Purchia
U.S. Department of Agriculture
202-407-6698

From: Mather, Chris
To: DeJong, Justin; Harless, Angela -USDA
Cc: Purchia, Liz
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Subject: Re: Protest

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Cc: Purchia, Liz
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Subject: RE: Protest
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Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
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Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:27 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin
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To: Repass, Todd; Jett, Carole
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Subject: Protest

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v/r-

Deb.

Debra Shaffer
USDA OpsCenter
202-720-5711

DeJong, Justin

From: Purchia, Liz
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:31 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Harless, Angela -USDA
Subject: Re: Protest

I'm walking outside now
Liz Purchia
U.S. Department of Agriculture
202-407-6698

From: Mather, Chris
To: DeJong, Justin; Harless, Angela -USDA
Cc: Purchia, Liz
Sent: Wed Jul 21 12:30:01 2010
Subject: Re: Protest

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From: Harless, Angela -USDA
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:27 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin
Subject: FW: Protest

This update just came in....

From: Shaffer, Debra **On Behalf Of** OpsCenter
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:23 PM
To: Repass, Todd; Jett, Carole
Cc: Redington, JamesH; OpsCenter; Harless, Angela -USDA
Subject: Protest

As of 12:20pm, crowe is increasing slowly in size though still peaceful. USDA Security is coordinating with Federal Protective Service who is on scene.

v/r-

Deb.

Debra Shaffer
USDA OpsCenter
202-720-5711

DeJong, Justin

Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:11 PM
Subject: FW: USDA Civil Rights Efforts_7.21
Attachments: USDA Civil Rights Efforts_7.21.docx

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548

(cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Purchia, Liz
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:04 AM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: USDA Civil Rights Efforts_7.21

Justin,

Attached are the following articles you requested. Taylor is pulling together a summary of Pigford and Garcia Clips. They'll be coming over shortly.

Articles and Commentary on USDA's Civil Rights Efforts

Time nearly up for black farmers (The Atlanta Journal – Constitution 3/31/2010)

By Ralph Paige – Opinion
Link Unavailable

The USDA and The Value of Black Land (The Root 2/23/2010)

By Frank McCoy
<http://www.theroot.com/print/39698>

A Race Czar for Black Farmers (The Root 5/19/2009)

By Terence Samuel
<http://www.theroot.com/print/11561>

Thanks to black farmers who didn't give up; Settlement too long coming, but fight for it an inspiration (Chicago Sun-Times 2/23/2010)

By Mary Mitchell
Link Unavailable

Q&A with Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack (The Washington Post 2/19/2010)

By Krissah Thompson
http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/02/15/AR2010021503001_pf.html

Pay Up (The New York Times 2/8/2010)

Editorial Desk
<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/08/opinion/08mon3.html?scp=1&sq=pay%20up&st=cse>

Arkansan called back to tackle USDA bias He faces civil-rights-neglect backlog (Arkansas Democrat-Gazette 11/15/2009)

By Alex Daniels
Link Unavailable

DeJong, Justin

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:23 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: Rev. jackson on MSNBC

No need to forward - chan already sent.
Chris Mather

From: DeJong, Justin
To: DeJong, Justin; Ross, Karen -ChlefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Mather, Chris
Sent: Wed Jul 21 12:20:36 2010
Subject: RE: Rev. jackson on MSNBC

my big question today, who is to blame for the rush to judgment? reverend jesse jackson is the head of the rainbow push coalition. who do you blame for this rush to judgment, reverend?
well, those who made the determination to force her to resign or to fire her clearly this is a distorted story where with the low cable standards this thing became viral. she was hurt by it and in some sense maybe damaged by it. she deserves an apology and restoration and the department of agriculture should be investigated for the decision made relative to her.

i had a guy write to me today who said, i personally think everyone involved in that lady's firing should be ashamed. the white house, the usda, the naacp, and the media. what does this say to you about how motivated the administration is by whatever is the controversy of the day on conservative cable?

i think last week the tea party was so much a focus of the naacp convention last week. some of this was kind of a retaliation to prove that blacks are racist and so now we've sunk to a new level of who is a racist. that's not a good thing. i hope that president barack obama, when he had the beer summit and it would be beautiful to see shirley sherrod whom i've known for so many years and the spooner family come to the white house and be accommodated in some way. this really is a good news ending. here is a basic rural white family salvaged by a rural black woman who now found common ground. it is a tough story but really a good news ending.

there is the theory out there that this may have been payback for the naacp accusing the tea party of harboring racists. how much is race now becoming the motivating factor in political anger do you think, reverend?
it has been there for a long time and this does not address the need for a meaningful, racial justice session because while we have these exceptions in athletics, exceptions in president barack obama, blacks are still three times the national average in unemployment for example, number one in poverty, number one in short life expectancy, number one in prenatal deaths, number one in school expulsions, 2.3 million americans in prison over half are african-americans so the issue of racial disparity is very real and deserves halfway meaningful discussion but also some remedy.

okay, reverend jackson, good of you to join us today. thank you.

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From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:09 PM

To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Mather, Chris
Subject: Rev. Jackson on MSNBC

Said something about "USDA should be investigated for how they are handling." We'll have transcript shortly.

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DeJong, Justin

From: OC.JIC4@oc.usda.gov
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:17 PM
To: Weaver, Caleb; Mather, Chris; Chan, Stephanie; Misailidis, Sarah; DeJong, Justin
Subject: MSNBC Reverend Jesse Jackson 7/21

Reverend in yellow.

Station: MSNBC

Date: 07/21/2010 11:57:46 - 12:07:46 PM

agriculture department. greatly appreciate it. that does it for me in this hour. i'll see you back here at 2:00 p.m. eastern time. we'll talk with a senior white house economic adviser about the signing of the historic wall street reform bill. is it going to change anything?

coming up we have the big interview, the woman at the center of that controversy, shirley sherrod the federal employee at the center of this controversy over her speech at the naacp accused of being a racist, forced to resign. now the white house and naacp are backtracking but she has choice words for them.

actually coming out with something negative on someone who's -- and that someone is me -- who has dedicated her life to fairness, to civil rights work all through the years. that hurt i think probably even more than the reaction of the department of agriculture.

my one-on-one interview with shirley sherrod coming up plus reverend jesse jackson weighs in as well. stay with us.

good day, everybody. i'm contessa brewer, covering the big news coast to coast. the big story this hour is the growing pressure on the federal government to rehire shirley sherrod. she was pushed out of her job at the agriculture department after a right wing blogger publicized a video of her speech at the naacp.

i was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land and here i was faced with having to help a white person save their land. so i didn't give him the full force of what i could do.

well, critics accused her of racism. naacp called her comments shameful. sherrod says her bosses at the usda warned her that the white house and the agriculture secretary tom vilsack wanted her out. she says they wouldn't listen to her side of the story. now for the rest of the story. the blogger andrew Breitbart significantly edited sherrod's words leaving out the climax of her story with the white farmers. the whole point of her speech, in fact, not there.

working with him made me see that it's really about those who have versus those who don't. you know, and they could be black, they could be white, they could be hispanic. it made me realize then that i needed to work to help poor people.

well, now the naacp admits it was, quote, snookered by the right wing media who publicized the edited video. the agriculture secretary is promising to review his decision to ask sherrod to step aside, and the white farmers who were supposedly victims of sherrod's racism are rushing to defend and praise her.

i guess you could say she went out of her way to help us and i never forgot her either. i appreciated everything she done for us. and we got our farm back.

we'll learn more about the white house response to this one hour from now when press secretary robert gibbs gives his briefing. i spoke with shirley sherrod about this controversy earlier today. ms. sherrod, could you please explain to me your reaction to this story, the fact that the usda now says it will reconsider your position within the agriculture department?

you know, it's hard to know what to think about that, especially when they would not listen at the very beginning, when i said, please, look at the whole story. listen to my whole message. and to think that only after so much outpouring of support with the naacp realizing they made a mistake and changing now the department at the late hour is now trying to say they are willing to look at it. it's bitter sweet i guess.

in what way was that video edited? what was left out of the video that would have put your comments in context?

you know, the whole message -- my whole message is about coming together. i grew up in the segregated south. i grew up in a county that was particularly tough in the early years and know what that's like, so, you know, i -- my message to everyone white and black is that it's time for us to come together and move beyond where we were. if they had listened to the whole message they would have seen that hasn't changed. that's what i've said and what i say all the time. i've lived the other way. i know that the region can be a better area if we work together on making that happen.

all right. what's your reaction -- i mean, the video edit had you saying you were struggling with the fact that so many black people lost their farm land. here you were faced with helping a white person save their land. what point were you making to your audience?

if you look at where, when that was, i was trying to say, 24 years ago that was the way i thought. and when i tell the story i try to help them see where i was at that point but i also move on to say where i am now and where i am now is to say we need to come together. you know, i've said --

the naacp has said it was snookered by fox news and by andrew Breitbart the blogger who edited the video and put it out there in the first place. they say that they're going to be more suspicious of the sources in the future. what's your reaction to the naacp which took a very strong stand calling your comments shameful?

yeah, you know, that really hurt, because when you look at my civil rights work that started 45 years ago and to have the very agency that so many of us have looked to through the years be so quick to judge without getting the facts and actually coming out with something negative on someone who's -- and that someone is me -- who's dedicated her life to fairness, to civil rights work, all through the years. that hurt i think probably even more than the reaction of the department of agriculture.

well, listen. it does look as though the agriculture secretary is ready to look at this fully, to look at all the facts in this. i hope it bodes well for you in the future and i appreciate you've spent a few moments with us today. thanks.

thank you.

a couple points to make here. number one is that shirley says that she was reluctant to even go back even if the offer was provided to go back to the usda. she is now saying she is reconsidering it if the offer comes that she'll consider it seriously. second point here the blogger in question is denying that he edited the videotape. he says the edited video was provided to him. we've got an interview. mara schiavocampo sat down with the blogger. we have that coming up. my big question today, who is to blame for the rush to judgment? reverend jesse jackson is the head of the rainbow push coalition. who do you blame for this rush to judgment, reverend?

well, those who made the determination to force her to resign or to fire her clearly this is a distorted story where with the low cable standards this thing became viral. she was hurt by it and in some sense maybe damaged by it. she deserves an apology and restoration and the department of agriculture should be investigated for the decision made relative to her.

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okay, reverend jackson, good of you to join us today. thank you.

we want to congratulate shirley for being so courageous and her husband, charles sherrod, this is a great family. i hope president barack obama will respond and bring them to the white house, the spooner family and shirley. that would be such a great good news ending to this story.

we'll be watching to see if that happens. reverend, thanks for your time. remember, a lot of folks interested in this story and they've already been reaching out. i'd like to encourage you to do so, too. do you like to share your thoughts? get me on facebook, twitter, contessa@msnbc.com.

DeJong, Justin

From: Purchia, Liz
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:10 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: USDA Civil Rights Efforts_7.21

Ok, I'll look

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:10 PM
To: Purchia, Liz
Subject: RE: USDA Civil Rights Efforts_7.21

It may have quoted Pearlie instead of S.

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From: Purchia, Liz
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:09 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: USDA Civil Rights Efforts_7.21

I only saw these two.

The USDA and The Value of Black Land (The Root 2/23/2010)

By Frank McCoy
<http://www.theroot.com/print/39698>

A Race Czar for Black Farmers (The Root 5/19/2009)

By Terence Samuel
<http://www.theroot.com/print/11561>

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:08 PM
To: Purchia, Liz
Subject: RE: USDA Civil Rights Efforts_7.21

There is another.

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justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Purchia, Liz
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:07 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: USDA Civil Rights Efforts_7.21

It's in there

A Race Czar for Black Farmers (The Root 5/19/2009)
By Terence Samuel
<http://www.theroot.com/print/11561>

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:07 PM
To: Purchia, Liz
Subject: RE: USDA Civil Rights Efforts_7.21

There is one more The Root column by Terence Samuel.

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justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Purchia, Liz
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:04 AM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: USDA Civil Rights Efforts_7.21

Justin,

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Thanks to black farmers who didn't give up; Settlement too long coming, but fight for it an inspiration (Chicago Sun-Times 2/23/2010)

By Mary Mitchell

Link Unavailable

Q&A with Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack (The Washington Post 2/19/2010)

By Krissah Thompson

http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/02/15/AR2010021503001_pf.html

Pay Up (The New York Times 2/8/2010)

Editorial Desk

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/08/opinion/08mon3.html?scp=1&sq=pay%20up&st=cse>

Arkansan called back to tackle USDA bias He faces civil-rights-neglect backlog (Arkansas Democrat-Gazette 11/15/2009)

By Alex Daniels

Link Unavailable

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:03 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; USDA Clips; JIC1, OC -USDA; JIC2, OC -USDA; JIC3, OC -USDA; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: FW: Top Outlets "vilsack" : USDA worker quits over 1986 racial incident

From: Factiva[SMTP:EMAILEDNEWS@EMAIL.GLOBAL.FACTIVA.COM]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:02:26 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Top Outlets "vilsack" : USDA worker quits over 1986 racial incident Auto forwarded by a Rule

Your topic is Top Outlets "vilsack"

USDA worker quits over 1986 racial incident 20 July 2010, Washington Post.com [678 Words]

A U.S. Agriculture Department official from Georgia resigned late Monday after she was caught on tape admitting that 24 years ago she did not help a white farmer as much as she could have because of his race.

Shirley Sherrod, USDA state director of rural development, made the remarks on March 27 at an NAACP Freedom Fund banquet. Her videotaped remarks surfaced online on Monday.

Sherrod reminded the crowd that black farmers have faced years of discrimination and difficulty saving their farmland. She recounted the story of a white farmer who visited her asking for assistance keeping his farm.

"Here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land," she said (see above). "So, I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough so that when he, I assumed the Department of Agriculture had sent him to me. Either that or the Georgia Department of Agriculture. He needed to go back and report that I did try to help him."

As Sherrod tells the story of denying aid to the white farmer, she explains that she ultimately realized her mistake, but did not give any indication that she had rectified the situation.

The incident took place in 1986 when she was working for a nonprofit group and long before she joined USDA, Sherrod said Tuesday.

"I was speaking to that group, like I've done many groups, and I tell them about a time when I thought the issue was race and race only," she said in an interview on CNN. "I was telling the story of how working with him helped me to see the issue is not about race. It's about those who have versus those who do not have."

The white farmer, his wife and Sherrod later wound up as friends, she said.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack appointed Sherrod to her post in July 2009 and accepted her resignation on Monday.

"There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person," Vilsack said in a statement. "We have been working hard

through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously."

It was not immediately clear if Sherrod was given an opportunity to explain her remarks to USDA officials or Vilsack before she resigned. A USDA spokesman did not immediately return requests for further clarification.

NAACP President and Benjamin Jealous issued a strongly worded statement condemning Sherrod Monday night, before she told CNN that the incident occurred before she worked for USDA.

"Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race," Jealous said.

"We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers," he added.

Jealous said Sherrod's behavior "is even more intolerable in light of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's well documented history of denying opportunities to African American, Latino, Asian American, and Native American farmers, as well as female farmers of all races."

The NAACP's comments come days after it denounced what it called "racist elements" of the Tea Party movement.

Black, Hispanic, Native American and female farmers have large discrimination lawsuits pending against USDA. Black farmers have been awarded a settlement worth \$1 billion for similar claims of discrimination.

Sherrod previously served as Georgia director of the Southern Cooperative/Land Assistance Fund and has worked with other rural and women's groups. Her office is part of USDA's Rural Development program, which administers more than \$114 billion in loans and loan guarantees. It is part of a larger network that manages more than 40 housing, business and community infrastructure programs at about 500 state, local and federal offices nationwide.

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DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:32 AM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Purchia, Liz
Subject: CBS Evening News (Christine Ruffini): Interview with Secretary Vilsack, need to know by 2-3p.m.

CBS evening news would like to do an interview with Secretary Vilsack and would like to know if we can do this by 2-3 p.m. The will be sending details shortly.

CBS evening news interview with Jan Crawford

Christine Ruffini
202-457-4385
Ruffinic@cbsnews.com

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

DeJong, Justin

From: OC.JIC4@oc.usda.gov
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:17 AM
To: Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris; Misailidis, Sarah; DeJong, Justin
Subject: CNN Vilsack Statement 7/21

Station: CNN
Date: 07/21/2010 11:01:04 - 11:11:04 AM

look at the facts. will sherrrod get her job back and an apology? does she even want it?

when i look back over the past couple of days, it seems oh unreal.

president obama will sign a financial reform bill this hour that will affect your wallet.

good morning, i'm frederica whitfield in for tony harris. these stories and your comments right here right now in the cnn newsroom.

what a difference a day of media frenzy makes. the agriculture department is reconsidering a case of an african-american employee pressed to resign over comments about a white farmer. it's a case about race and power, context and controversy. shirley sherrrod says the videotaped comments about an incident 24 years ago were misconstrued. she said she was actually speaking out against racial discrimination. agriculture secretary tom vilsack released a statement saying, quote, i am, of course, willing and will conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts to ensure to the american people we are providing services in a fair and equitable manner end quote. the farmer in question and his wife came to sherrrod's defense. we heard from the wife while tony was interviewing sherrrod live on television yesterday.

that was not right. they have not treated her right. she's the one i give credit to helping us save our farm.

earlier today, cnn's kyra phillips asked sherrrod if she would return to the usda if she were offered her job back.

you know, my first reaction was i'm just not show sure. i don't know. i've been receiving calls -- i received a call this morning from the president of the naacp in douglas, georgia, where i made that speech, and he said i just called you to say i wish you would consider, if they offer, going back. he said, i think you can do even more for us at this point. i hadn't looked at it in that light.

and, right now, the white house agrees that the sherrrod case deserves another look. suzanne malveaux joins us live with that part of the story. was the white house also on board? did everyone seem to be in agreement on her resignation?

reporter: well, fred, first of all, i want to apologize for the construction noise in the background if it's difficult to hear me. about 4:30 yesterday, a white house official told me they were not involved in this and insisted this came from secretary vilsack and him alone that it was not the white house contributing to this. we heard from the secretary who said the same thing, about two hours later, between 6:30 and 7:00 last night, the white house and another official, was still saying that the president was aware and was briefed about the secretary's decision and that he had his full support and agreed with it. now, fastforward, the overnight developments, the naacp releasing the full video and them putting out a statement that they were snickered, and vilsack saying he was going to take a second look at all of this, and a white house official told me this this morning, and i'm quoting, we're not sure what the ultimate result will be, but it's clear with the new information, the full speech, longer look needing to be taken, the without contacted the department late last night and agreed the case should be reviewed. fred, we're two hours away from the briefing with robert gibbs to try to get some answer. it has been radio silence here all morning on really some of the basics here, whether or not the president will pick up the phone and call shirley sherrrod, whether or not we will see him in a surprise appearance in the briefing role. if he's going to play any role, we have to wait and see. there are a lot of unanswered questions. i spoke to shelton from the naacp yesterday. he said one of the things that happened yesterday that was so frustrating was trying to get that tape out of naacp in douglas, georgia. they found it around 11:00 in the morning. they had to transfer it, get it on the internet, and that took hours and hours. they were so frustrated that they literally played the tape over the phone and held the receiver up so that ben jealous of the naacp could listen to that critical segment of the tape. about 4:00 in the afternoon, he called secretary vilsack and described what was on the tape and thought there was information, evidence that she should be reconsidered for her job, but it was not until much, much later, well into the evening, close to early morning that we got that vilsack statement saying that they had, in fact, reversed their position.

if you are able to hear me, can you tell where the white house feels satisfied that they have some real clarity on the sequence of events that led up to secretary vilsack that office encouraging sherrrod to resign?

i think there's been an incredible amount of frustration on the part of the white house because you had this window where you had the full tape that was stuck in one place and then started to basically be disseminated through the naacp. they had the full story, full information. it was not until about 7:00 or so that secretary vilsack had even access to that tape, the full tape that was on the

internet around that time. that was the time that the rest of us were getting that full tape, the public, so there was a window where they did not have the story. you had a statement from the white house around 7:00 saying the president had backed him on this. there are still a lot of unanswered questions on this story. less than two hours we will bring it to you on the briefing.

a lot of questions that will be peppered to the white house at that 1:00 eastern time white house press conference with robert gibbs. we will carry that live.

the twists and turns in the shirley sherrod reflect the volatile issue in race and discrimination in america. what's the real story at the heart of this latest controversy? lisa sylvester does some fact checking.

reporter: here's part of the youtube clip what set off the firestorm.

to help a white person save their land. so i didn't give him the full force of what i could do.

reporter: usda official shirley sherrod admitting in remarks at an naacp event that she did not do everything she could to help white farmer, that she took him to a white lawyer, so quote his own kind would take care of him. conservative news outlets pounced. naacp monday called her actions shameful, and he bosses at the department of agriculture forced her to resign, but were they quick to judge? she says, yes.

i did not discriminate against him, and, in fact, i went all out. i had to frantically look for a lawyer at the last minute because the first lawyer we went to was not doing anything to really help them.

reporter: we did some fact checking. the incident in question happened more than two decades ago. sherrod was not working for the government at the time, but a nonprofit called the federation of southern cooperatives land assistance fund, and the internet clips were heavily edited and what about not doing enough to help the white farmer because he seemed to have a quote superior attitude. eloise and roger spooner credited her for helping to save the farm.

we give her credit.

that's right. i give her all of the credit.

reporter: so why did she say the things that she did? sherrod said in her speech she was reflecting on the past, the moment when she realized black and white farmers were facing the same plight.

this was my first time trying to help white farmer save his land. i wasn't really sure of what i could do because at that time, i thought they had the advantages. i learned that that was not the case in working with this farmer.

reporter: the head of the nonprofit where sherrod worked for more than two decades said that over the years, she has helped all kinds of people.

she is not a racist. she did not discriminate against the woman and the family that she helped, and this was 26 years ago. shirley has always been a very dedicated person, dedicated to helping people. you know, and that is in regards to race, color, kind, whatever.

one person who attended the naacp freedom fund banquet was the mayor of douglas, georgia, who is white. she left before the speech but there were no rumblings in the community about it being a racist speech, and she has dealt with shirley sherrod on several occasions, and wilson said she always treated people fairly.

fast forward. after the viewing of that tape and it getting play on the web, the naacp was quick to condemn shirley sherrod, but after reviewing the entire video, the civil rights organization reversed its opinion and says it was schnookered. the president, ben jealous personally apologized and explained their initial reaction.

it was late at night. our statement came out at 1:00 a.m. that we were dealing with this. we woke up people in ga good and tried to figure out what was going on. we didn't condone it. we didn't realize it was sliced and diced six ways from sunday so as to completely hide this beautiful story of transformation that you see if you go to our website and look at the full video.

sherrod's story has a lot of people talking about race, power, politics, and we're hearing from you on our blog as well. keep sending your comment is to cnn.com/tony.

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:14 AM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Purchia, Liz
Subject: PBS (Elizabeth Summers): Newsmaker Interview with Secretary Vilsack

FYI- request for live interview between 6-7 tonight.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED] Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: Elizabeth Summers [mailto:Esummers@newshour.org]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:08 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: PBS NewsHour - request for Sec. Vilsack

Stephanie,

Thanks so much for your help on the phone just now. As I mentioned, I'd like to put in a request for an interview with Secretary Vilsack with one of our anchors, likely Jim Lehrer, for tonight's broadcast. We air live between 6 and 7pm and our studios are located in Arlington, VA -- getting the secretary here live would be ideal. Of course I know how busy he must be, so we would definitely be willing to be flexible in terms of timing and location -- whatever is most convenient for him, we could make it work.

We would bill this as a newsmaker interview and it would probably run about 10 minutes in length. I think the NewsHour could be a great venue for the Secretary to talk about his side of this conservative media/Sherrod firing story.

Thanks very much in advance, I look forward to hearing back from you.

Elizabeth Summers
Reporter, Politics
The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer
Office 703.998.2108
Mobile [REDACTED]

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:10 AM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Purchia, Liz
Subject: RE: Lou Dobbs radio (Bobby Sherwood): Interview with Shirley

Details below- he is hoping Shirley can speak on the program, Lou Dobs doesn't think she should have been let go

Dear Stephanie,

This is Bobby Sherwood from the Lou Dobbs Radio Show, thanks very much for getting back to me, I really appreciate it. I was writing to see if Shirley Sherrod would be available to come on the program with us this afternoon for a few minutes to get her thoughts on the NAACP speech she gave, what her obvious meaning was when she gave the speech, why the USDA let her go, and the prospects of her coming back if she was offered. Lou does not think she should have been let go and would like to have her on to discuss that.

Our show is on from 2pm-5pm eastern Monday-Friday and we were looking to do the interview this afternoon at either 2:35 or 3:15 today for about 8-10 minutes. If you would like any more information about the stations we are on or the host, you may go to our website www.loudobbs.com

I can be reached by phone at (212)536-3647 or email at bobby@loudobbsradio.com

Thanks very much Stephanie, I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Bobby Sherwood

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: ([REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:17 AM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Lou Dobbs radio (Bobby Sherwood): Interview with Shirley

FYI- I emailed and left message, haven't heard back yet.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Ross, Lori -USDA
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:08 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: media inquiry - Lou Dobbs radio

DeJong, Justin

From: Sarah.Misailidis@oc.usda.gov
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:08 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie; Purchia, Liz; DeJong, Justin
Subject: The Hill Blog: Vilsack a no show at rural education summit

Vilsack a no-show at rural education summit

By Eric Zimmermann - 07/21/10 10:24 AM ET
The Hill Blog

Dogged by a controversy surrounding one of his former employees, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack was a no-show at a rural education summit this morning.

Vilsack had been scheduled to speak at the National Rural Education Summit today, alongside Education Secretary Arne Duncan, FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski, and Smithsonian Institution Secretary G. Wayne Clough.

Instead, Deputy Ag Secretary Kathleen Merrigan showed up in his place.

A spokesman for the USDA said Vilsack was in Ohio earlier this week, and had originally planned to fly back last night to make today's hearing.

But "due to a scheduling conflict he had to come back this morning instead of last night," the spokesman said.

The Ag Secretary **announced** this morning that he would review the firing of Shirley Sherrod, the USDA's Georgia director of rural development. Sherrod was forced to resign this week after video surfaced of her telling an NAACP audience that she once gave less than-complete assistance to a white farmer due to race.

But it later became clear that the incident took place over 20 years ago, before Sherrod was employed by the USDA. The unedited video of her speech revealed that she regretted her actions and viewed the incident as a lesson that race doesn't matter.

Several conservative commentators have called for Sherrod to be re-hired by the department.

Sarah Misailidis
Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
(202) 720-4691
Sarah.Misailidis@oc.usda.gov

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:51 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; USDA Clips; JIC1, OC -USDA; JIC2, OC -USDA; JIC3, OC -USDA; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: FW: Top Outlets "vilsack" : Official Ousted From Ag Department Had Taken USDA to Court, Won

From: Factiva[SMTP:EMAILEDNEWS@EMAIL.GLOBAL.FACTIVA.COM]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:50:42 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Top Outlets "vilsack" : Official Ousted From Ag Department Had Taken USDA to Court, Won Auto forwarded by a Rule

Your topic is Top Outlets "vilsack"

Official Ousted From Ag Department Had Taken USDA to Court, Won 20 July 2010, 22:54 GMT, FOXNews.com [707 Words]

The Agriculture Department has a lengthy history with the official forced to resign Monday over a controversial YouTube clip -- it turns out she and a group she helped found with her husband won millions last year in a discrimination suit settlement with the federal government.

The information about the suit only thickens the plot that has evolved seemingly by the hour since Shirley Sherrod resigned late Monday as the department's Georgia director of rural development.

She claims the video clip, which showed her telling a story about how she withheld her full assistance to a white farmer, omitted key details, and she argues she was pushed out by the Obama administration without getting a chance to tell her side. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack is standing by his decision.

But it's not the first time Sherrod faced off against the federal government. Days before she was appointed to the USDA post last year, her group reportedly won a \$13 million settlement in a longstanding discrimination suit against the USDA known commonly as the Pigford case.

The Rural Development Leadership Network announced last summer that New Communities Inc. -- a group Sherrod formed with husband Charles, who is a civil rights activist, and with other black farmers -- had reached the agreement. The RDLN said the USDA had "refused" to offer new loans or restructure old loans to members of New Communities, leading to the discrimination claim.

The announcement said that in addition to the \$13 million to New Communities, Shirley and Charles Sherrod would each get \$150,000 for "pain and suffering."

A USDA official told FoxNews.com on Tuesday that the settlement had "nothing to do with" Sherrod's hiring last year -- likewise, the official said her resignation was only the result of her comments in the video.

"This is all about her comments," the official said.

Sherrod's settlement was a drop in the bucket in terms of the money the federal government has paid out in Pigford claims to other black farmers over the years. The suit claimed the USDA racially discriminated against black farmers by not giving them fair treatment when they applied for loans or assistance. The case was first settled in 1999, resulting to date in more than \$1 billion in compensation payments from the federal government.

In addition, the Obama administration has called for another \$1.15 billion to settle claims for other black farmers -- Congress has not yet granted the money.

However, the case has attracted some scrutiny.

Former Agriculture Secretary Ed Schafer told Fox News that while those who were discriminated against "should be reimbursed," there are other hangers-on trying to game the system.

"The problem you have with the class-action lawsuits is a lot of people jump in that may be on the fringe, that maybe don't deserve it, that sounded good because their neighbor got a check ... (It) is very expensive, very time consuming," Schafer said. "It probably in the long run is going to be cheaper just to settle the whole thing -- so some people will get paid that probably don't deserve it. And to me, I don't like that kind of thing. I like to settle it on merit."

Vilsack appeared to reference the Pigford case, or the backstory behind it, in his statement Tuesday defending his decision to effectively dismiss Sherrod.

"Yesterday, I asked for and accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation for two reasons. First, for the past 18 months, we have been working to turn the page on the sordid civil rights record at USDA and this controversy could make it more difficult to move forward on correcting injustices. Second, state rural development directors make many decisions and are often called to use their discretion," he said.

Sherrod claims the administration never bothered to find out "the truth" about the video clip. She says she was telling a story about something that happened more than two decades ago when she was working for a local nonprofit group. She ended up helping that farmer and says she was, in recalling the story, trying to impart a lesson about the importance of looking beyond race.

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DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:51 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; USDA Clips; JIC1, OC -USDA; JIC2, OC -USDA; JIC3, OC -USDA; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: FW: Top Outlets "vilsack" : Will Blago Testify in His Own Trial?

From: Factiva[SMTP:EMAILEDNEWS@EMAIL.GLOBAL.FACTIVA.COM]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:50:22 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Top Outlets "vilsack" : Will Blago Testify in His Own Trial?
Auto forwarded by a Rule

Your topic is Top Outlets "vilsack"

Will Blago Testify in His Own Trial?
21 July 2010, 14:08 GMT, FOXNews.com [1307 Words]

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack on Tuesday stood by his decision to demand the resignation of a Georgia official over a controversial YouTube clip, though the ex-official claimed afterward that the Obama administration never gave her a chance to tell her side of the story.

Shirley Sherrod, the department's ex-Georgia director of Rural Development, said the White House forced her out after the video surfaced showing her telling a story about how she withheld help to a white farmer in trouble. But she claimed the video omitted key context and that the administration just got scared.

"They were not interested in hearing the truth. No one wanted to hear the truth," she said in a television interview Tuesday morning.

Still, after intense media coverage of the fallout from the resignation, Vilsack released a written statement Tuesday afternoon defending and explaining his decision. He said the controversy itself was enough to make her job difficult.

"Yesterday, I asked for and accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation for two reasons. First, for the past 18 months, we have been working to turn the page on the sordid civil rights record at USDA and this controversy could make it more difficult to move forward on correcting injustices. Second, state rural development directors make many decisions and are often called to use their discretion," he said. "The controversy surrounding her comments would create situations where her decisions, rightly or wrongly, would be called into question making it difficult for her to bring jobs to Georgia."

Administration officials said the White House had nothing to do with Vilsack's decision.

Vilsack repeated an earlier statement that the USDA has "zero tolerance for discrimination."

But the NAACP, after earlier condemning Sherrod, reversed its position Tuesday and called on Vilsack to "reconsider."

NAACP CEO Benjamin Todd Jealous originally released a statement overnight calling Sherrod's comments "shameful" and saying the group was "appalled by her actions." But after Sherrod

started telling her side of the story, the NAACP said it would conduct an "investigation" and review the full tape, which was shot for the NAACP by DCTV.

Late Tuesday, Jealous effectively retracted his earlier statement and blamed the media for the confusion.

"With regard to the initial media coverage of the resignation of USDA official Shirley Sherrod, we have come to the conclusion we were snookered by Fox News and Tea Party activist Andrew Breitbart into believing she had harmed white farmers because of racial bias," he said. "Having reviewed the full tape, spoken to Ms. Sherrod, and most importantly heard the testimony of the white farmers mentioned in this story, we now believe the organization that edited the documents did so with the intention of deceiving millions of Americans."

He said "the fact is" Sherrod helped the farmers mentioned in her remarks and called the issue a "false controversy."

It remains unclear who edited and released the video. Breitbart's BigGovernment.com featured the video clip early Monday. Vilsack announced Sherrod's resignation shortly after FoxNews.com's initial story Monday evening, for which Sherrod could not be reached for comment. FoxNews.com was unable to obtain a copy of the full video.

The wife of the farmer who was the subject of Sherrod's story also told FoxNews.com on Tuesday that there was no discrimination. She said the administration should not have forced out Sherrod, who actually helped the couple save their farm.

"She'll always be my friend," Eloise Spooner said. She said the incident Sherrod was referring to happened more than two decades ago and that she and her husband Roger worked together closely to keep the farm out of foreclosure.

"I don't think they gave her a chance to tell really what happened," Eloise Spooner said. "I don't think they'll find anybody that can fill the job any better than she did. That's my opinion."

The video clip that launched the controversy is two-and-a-half minutes long. In it, Sherrod describes "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm."

Sherrod, who is black, claimed the farmer took a long time trying to show he was "superior" to her. The audience laughed as she described how she handled the situation.

"He had to come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," she said. "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land -- so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough."

Sherrod explained in the video that, at the time, she assumed the state or federal Department of Agriculture had referred the white farmer to her. In order to ensure that the farmer could report back that she was indeed helpful, she said she took him to see "one of his own" -- a white lawyer.

"I figured that if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him," she said.

The ex-official first told her side of the story in an interview overnight with The Atlanta Journal-Constitution. She said that in the clip she was telling a story about events that happened 24 years ago when she was working for a local nonprofit group. She added that she worked with the farmer for two years to help save his farm from foreclosure.

But the point of her story wasn't entirely clear from the clip.

"It was revealed to me that it's about poor versus those who have," she said toward the end, suggesting she had learned that race is less important.

Spooner told FoxNews.com that Sherrod's story did not "bother" her. She explained that Sherrod did not send them directly to the white lawyer, either -- she said she initially suggested a black lawyer and a white lawyer, and that the couple saw the black lawyer first. After several months, the black lawyer had to withdraw from the case, citing too much workload, Spooner said. The couple then visited the white lawyer, with Sherrod's help, she said.

Spooner said Sherrod did not display discrimination. Asked about the claim that her husband was acting "superior" during that first conversation, Spooner said: "That's just his way."

Sherrod on Tuesday told CNN she blamed the NAACP, which put out a statement condemning her for her remarks overnight. Sherrod claimed the NAACP never contacted her and that the civil rights group's high-profile fight with the Tea Party over allegations of racism set the stage for her forced resignation.

"They are the reason why this happened," she said.

Sherrod added that an administration official "harassed" her with warnings about the attention she was going to receive after the video surfaced.

Cheryl Cook, deputy undersecretary for Rural Development, called her several times on Monday to eventually demand her resignation on behalf of the White House. Sherrod was driving at the time and said Cook told her to pull over to the side of the road to resign, "because you're going to be on Glenn Beck tonight."

She said the whole video would reveal that she eventually came to work closely with the white farmer and that she was trying to impart a lesson about how important it is to get "beyond the issue of race."

"I went on to work with many more white farmers," she said. "The story helped me realize that race is not the issue."

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DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:50 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; USDA Clips; JIC1, OC -USDA; JIC2, OC -USDA; JIC3, OC -USDA; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: FW: Top Outlets "vilsack" : USDA Rethinks Ouster Of Official for Remarks

From: Factiva[SMTP:EMAILEDNEWS@EMAIL.GLOBAL.FACTIVA.COM]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:50:12 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Top Outlets "vilsack" : USDA Rethinks Ouster Of Official for Remarks Auto forwarded by a Rule

Your topic is Top Outlets "vilsack"

USDA Rethinks Ouster Of Official for Remarks
21 July 2010, 14:07 GMT, FOXNews.com [952 Words]

WASHINGTON -- Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said Wednesday he will reconsider the department's decision to oust a black employee over racially tinged remarks after learning more about what she said.

Vilsack issued a short statement early Wednesday morning after Shirley Sherrod, who until Tuesday was the Agriculture Department's director of rural development in Georgia, said she was pressured to resign because of her comments that she didn't give a white farmer as much help as she could have 24 years ago.

Sherrod said her remarks, delivered in March at a local NAACP banquet in Georgia, were part of a larger story about learning from her mistakes and racial reconciliation, not racism, and they were taken out of context by bloggers who posted only part of her speech.

Vilsack's statement came after the NAACP, which initially condemned Sherrod's remarks and supported her ouster, posted what was believed to be the full video of Sherrod's comments Tuesday night.

[Click here to watch the video.](#)

"I am of course willing and will conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts to ensure to the American people we are providing services in a fair and equitable manner," Vilsack said.

A White House official who asked not to be named told Fox News on Tuesday that President Obama was briefed on the circumstances behind Vilsack's decision to fire Sherrod after the fact and fully supported the decision.

Vilsack announced Monday night that Sherrod had resigned based on the release of the shorter video, saying the department has "zero tolerance for discrimination."

But subsequent news reports in which Sherrod explained the full context of her remarks -- later substantiated by the wife of the white farmer in an interview with FoxNews.com -- sparked growing calls for the administration and Vilsack to reconsider the decision.

In the earlier version of the video Sherrod, then Georgia director of rural development, is seen telling a story about assistance she provided to a white farmer 24 years ago.

The video released by the NAACP on Tuesday night shows Sherrod explaining how she initially didn't help the farmer with "full force," but realized she was wrong and went on to help him save his farm.

Sherrod, who is black and was working at the time for a nonprofit group, said she learned that the plight of poverty goes beyond race.

"When I made that commitment I was making that commitment to black people and to black people only," she said in the video released Tuesday. "But you know, God will show you things. ... You realize that the struggle is really about poor people."

The video excerpt published Monday online by the website Biggovernment.com, which is run by Andrew Breitbart, focused on Sherrod's admission that she was reluctant to help the white farmer in part because so many black farmers were suffering.

The Monday excerpt excluded the end of Sherrod's story, seen Tuesday, in which she talks of helping save the white farmer's property from foreclosure.

"Working with him made me see that it's really about those who have versus those who don't," she said later in the video. "And they could be black, they could be white, they could be Hispanic -- it made me realize that I needed to help poor people."

NAACP CEO Benjamin Todd Jealous originally released a statement calling Sherrod's comments "shameful" and saying the group was "appalled by her actions." But the NAACP later said Tuesday it would conduct an "investigation" and review the full tape, which was shot for the NAACP by media company DCTV.

Late Tuesday, Jealous effectively retracted his earlier statement and blamed the media for the confusion.

"With regard to the initial media coverage of the resignation of USDA official Shirley Sherrod, we have come to the conclusion we were snookered by Fox News and Tea Party activist Andrew Breitbart into believing she had harmed white farmers because of racial bias," he said.

"Having reviewed the full tape, spoken to Ms. Sherrod, and most importantly heard the testimony of the white farmers mentioned in this story, we now believe the organization that edited the documents did so with the intention of deceiving millions of Americans."

FoxNews.com was among several media organizations that carried the story of the initial video released Monday.

It remains unclear who edited and released the shorter video.

Breitbart, who initially reported the story on Monday, said in an interview Tuesday with Fox News' Sean Hannity, that he received the video from "an individual in Georgia." He said he decided to post it on his website as an example of hypocrisy at the NAACP, which recently condemned racism within the conservative Tea Party movement.

Sherrod, in a TV interview Tuesday morning, said she lost her job because the Obama administration overreacted to the original story.

"They were not interested in hearing the truth. No one wanted to hear the truth," she said.

As for the white farmer Sherrod helped, his wife told FoxNews.com on Tuesday that there was no discrimination. She said the administration should not have forced out Sherrod. "She'll always be my friend," Eloise Spooner said.

She said the incident Sherrod was referring to happened more than two decades ago and that she and her husband Roger worked together closely to keep the farm out of foreclosure.

"I don't think they gave her a chance to tell really what happened," Spooner said. "I don't think they'll find anybody that can fill the job any better than she did. That's my opinion."

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

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DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:48 AM
To: Purchia, Liz; Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: NBC Nightly News (Dona Bass): Interview with Secretary

Looping liz also-

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:48 AM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin
Subject: NBC Nightly News (Dona Bass): Interview with Secretary

This would be for an interview with Brian to let the secretary have his say on the situation. They would like him live at 6:30 p.m. this evening for a quick 3 minute interview. They can also do pre-tape but would prefer live.

They are hoping to be the first evening broadcast to have an interview with him and would be interested in this story whenever he is ready to speak about it even if it is not this evening.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Powell, Tamika -USDA
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:37 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: media inquiry: NBC Nightly News (URGENT)

Donna Bass
Donna.bass@nbc.com
212-664-2261
[REDACTED]

RE: interview with Brian Williams and the Secretary they will be running a story this afternoon

Tamika J. Powell-Bellamy
Information Support Specialist
Office of Communications, USDA

(202)690-1059 (o)
(202)720-5402 (f)

" All great things are simple, and many can be expressed in single words: freedom, justice, honor, duty, mercy, hope. "

DeJong, Justin

From: OC.JIC4@oc.usda.gov
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:38 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie; Misailidis, Sarah; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Shirley Sherrod Interview - CNN 7/21

Station:CNN Date:07/21/2010 09:33:34 - 9:53:27 AM

racist, prejudice, out of touch, just 24 hours, shirley sherrod has been viciously attacked from every end of the political and ethnic spectrum. unfair and outrageous accusations against an african-american whom says she's been fighting for civil rights her entire life. you probably heard her story. have you probably seen the video clips. key word here. if you watched the former usda official address members of the naacp this way, you probably would think she was a racist.

i was struggling with the fact so many black people lost their livelihoods here i was faced with that with the white person. i'm going to give him the full force of what i can do.

okay. it sounds offensive. right? well, here's the problem. that's what happens when you manipulate the message. tinker with the truth twist it. how about we tell you what shirley sherrod really meant. it is funny because this part of the speech never made the conservative blog the first time around.

25 years ago, i couldn't stand here and say what i'm saying, what i will say to you tonight. like i told you, god helped me to see it is not just about black people. it is about poor people. and i have come a long way. i knew that i couldn't do it with hate, you know. as my mother has said to so many, if we had tried to live with hate in our hearts we probably would be dead now. but i come to realize that we have to work together. you know, sad that we don't have room for the white and blacks here tonight. because we have to overcome the divisions we have.

that's right. shirley sherrod was actually preaching not living with hate, overcoming divisions among races, and that's what we are going to talk about this morning. shirley's nonedited message. great to see you.

good to see you.

your life has changed in 24 hours.

it certainly has.

it is going to end up being a good thing, wouldn't you say?

i think so. you know. when we look at all -- what's happened in the last 24 hours, the truth is out there. and people are beginning to see just what happened, how they were manipulate flood thinking one thing when it was really something else. i think it will make us all conscious of how quick we come to judge.

let's have -- do this right. okay. your speech. it was actually a story about redemption.

yes.

decades ago you did have these racist feelings. but you had a revelation. and you wanted to tell members of the naacp about that revelation. let me ask you, why did you feel you needed to tell those members this story?

well, i tried to use my life because that's what -- you know, when you look at where i have come from, you know, it is just not telling them this is what you need to do. it is really showing them where i have come from to get to a place where i don't need to look at the color of a person's skin to determine whether or not i can help them or will help them.

you know, that's bold to be able to say this is how i did feel. this is what i did when i felt that way. but hold on. i did change. you talked so much about your past. let's go back once again a few decades, okay. and your father allegedly killed by racist farmers. that farmer never indicted, we should point out. but that hate crime triggered a huge movement in baker county.

yes, it did.

tell me about the murder of your father. and how that impacted you and your thought process.

you know, that was a time in my life just like these last two days when it just seemed so unreal to have our father there, you know, my mother was not much older than i am. she is about 16 years older. he had six girls. there were five daughters. and our mother during the -- during the -- during his lifetime. he was just the perfect father. so compassionate. so much there for his girls. to have his life taken away from us was so tragic at the time. and i'm the oldest of -- there are six. my father always wanted a son. he had -- kept having all these girls. there were five of us. they stopped. then during my senior year of high school he convinced my mother just one more time for this son. and that's -- i found out she kept getting sick. my best friend told me at school one day that -- she asked, she said, how's your mom? i said she is not getting any better. girl, your mother is pregnant. your daddy was at the store yesterday giving out cigars. he told everyone this was his son and, in fact, it was. he didn't live to see him. the son was -- i mean, my father was murdered two months before my brother was born. my brother was born on the day i graduated from high school. and then during that month, we started with the help of the student on violent coordinating committee being led by the person who later became my husband, charles sherrod. we started the baker county movement. and baker county had a particularly bad sheriff during those years. they --

not surprise.

they called him the gator. he liked being called the gator. we had to actually face the gator during the summer of 1965. there was bloody saturday. people don't hear about that. there was bloody saturday in baker county where when the march went to the courthouse, there were all of these white men with chains and ax handles. the person that murdered my daddy was one of them. you know, beating the people who were there to march. and there were many, many times when we had some very, very scary times as we worked to bring change in baker county during the summer. then in september of that year, i went away. i didn't go far. my intent was to go to the north, to college. but after what happened i didn't know whether i would get to go to college at all but ended up going to ft. valley. and calling home in september and found that a group of white men, the klan, that included the sheriff, were burning a cross in front of our home. the house, my mother, my four sisters and baby brother.

can i ask you, was it the murder of your father, was it the cross burning, was it the klan members you saw walking through the town with those chains, is that what created that hatred? is that what led to that moment you talked about in that speech?

that was all part of it. some things that happened even before. i can remember being in high school and back in those days, they have they call what a visiting teacher. segregated school there in baker county. i can see it just

like it was yesterday. the visiting teacher that was white coming in and taking over the classroom from the teacher and putting words up on the board and making us pronounce them until we pronounced them like she did, as if we were not being taught. as if we couldn't talk. you know, unless we talked the way she did. i can think of many, many other incidents.

it is interesting listening to the background and what happened to your family. i could understand, i think anyone could understand, where that frustration, hatred, would build. yet, you ended up working for the same organization that at that time had the same racist views, black farmers were being treated so unfairly, totally being thrown under the bus, but your whole attitude changed about white people and even this organization you end up working for this organization. i mean, what -- that's so ironic. how did that happen? how did that turn around?

when you look at the fact that i spent years helping farmers and others trying to access programs through the very agency i ended up working for and having to manage some of the very people who actually did some of those acts, you know, in the early years. you know, you about i felt that i worked on the issues from where i was, outside of the agency, and i felt being in the agency, this gave me a chance to try to bring some of the changes i felt needed to happen from that level. i needed to make sure that the staff and everyone else knew that this was an agency where everyone had equal access. i don't think that was -- most people don't even know what rural development in georgia does. this is one agency that could build a whole city. you know. because we deal with all -- you know, hospitals, homes, you know, just -- getting people into decent and affordable homes. you know, so much can happen from that agency with the right person being at the head of it. i felt because of what i have been through, i was the -- i was time. a person who was right for the

could make that difference. you mentioned you manage -- ended up managing people that treated and your family unfairly years back. which leads me to the question the farmer, cal hall, accused of killing your father. did you ever end up talking to him, his family, having interaction? did you ever find peace with that family?

no. we didn't. not at all. i was told, as i remember, he died of cancer some years later. and i think when he was near his death bed, he wanted to try to talk to my mother's brother or someone. i don't think that ever happened.

i'm just having visions of emmett till and what that family went through. your father, i want to bring it back to that, he would be so proud of you.

yes, he would.

today. what do you -- i mean, i am sure that everything that you have been through and how you got to this point is so much in his honor and his death had -- really breathed new life into you and now look at how this has all come. do you even think i if it got to this point you would be able to make the difference you are making now? you are on your way. you have a national audience now to tell your message.

yes.

and to talk about his life and what happened in your past.

this is something i have always -- to talk about his life and what happened to him was one of my goals from way back when i made the decision.

i love the picture we have of him as well. we probably have been looking at it right there. i love this picture. it is just -- you can just tell that -- the love in his face. continue. you have been wanting to tell his story and writing a book.

yes. you know, because he -- he was a person who looked out for the entire community. there are individuals that would tell you back in that day a lot of people didn't have the vehicles to ride in and the kids' activities in school, my father would go around in the truck, picking up in our community, taking people to school. he was very active in the community. and he was just great -- you know, a great person for us and all of these girls. we all had boys' nicknames. he wanted a son so bad.

what was your nickname?

my name was bill.

okay, bill. as we wrap up here, i have to ask you this, would you go back and work for the usda if secretary vilsack said i'm sorry, we want you back?

you know, my first reaction was i'm just not so sure, i don't know. i have been receiving calls. i received a call this morning from the president of the naacp in douglas, georgia, where i made that speech. he said i just called you to say i wish you would consider if they offer going back. he said, i think you can do even more for us at this point. i hadn't looked at it in that light.

naacp, is it still relevant? they were the first ones not to have your back. this is the organization that is supposed to have your back. you would think they would have looked at the whole tape.

yes. you know, and maybe for those at the national level, it doesn't mean to them what it does for those at the local level. i know for some of them it means so much to have the naacp as an organization in their community.

well, it has been a pleasure talking with you this morning. by the way with i want to mention this is now giving you a platform to write about your father. i know a lot of people are going to be eager. have you gotten a publisher yet?

no, i don't. i would love to be able to -- people have been asking me for years, knowing my story, when are you going to write your book? i have always said i don't have time.

i tell what you, we have a blog, cnn.com/kyra. we have all kinds of fascinating people that write in to our blog. i'm sure there are many publishers out there. i'm going to go ahead and plug it now. shall we? let's just say are there any publishers out there? how about any fantastic organizations that would love to have shirley come head your group? let's see what kind of feedback we get. what a pleasure to talk with you. what a pleasure to see something so nasty and so awful turn into such a beautiful thing. now you have a forum to really get your message out there. your background is amazing. it is sweet justice, wouldn't you say?

yes, it is. thank you. thank you. you are the one to help get it started. so thank you.

it is my honor. it is something that my fema and i believe strongly in. that's civil rights. thanks, shirley.

thank you.

DeJong, Justin

From: Lavallee, Aaron
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:37 AM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb
Subject: Media Inquiry from The Hill

See below

Aaron Lavallee

From: Eric Zimmermann [mailto:eric.zimmermann@thehill.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:24 AM
To: Lavallee, Aaron
Subject: Comment on Vilsack missing summit

Hi Aaron -- I write for The Hill newspaper. I'm wondering why Secretary Vilsack dropped out of the rural education summit this morning. Does it have anything to do with the Shirley Sherrod situation? Thanks.

Best,
Eric

--
Eric Zimmermann
Blog Editor
The Hill newspaper
Phone: 202-628-8523
Cell: 

- CNN America Morning (Rachel Streitfeld, Rachel.Streitfeld@turner.com [REDACTED]): Questions on WH request – PENDING
 - We just had on the wife of the farmer on air confirming Shirley helped them. On CNN now. Can you offer somebody to respond to this?
- CNN America Morning (John Roberts, John.Roberts@turner.com):
 - Was USDA aware of the full context of her remarks before it asked for her resignation? Did USDA know the story was 24 years old?
- CNN Campbell Brown (Allison Gilbert, Allison.gilbert@turner.com):
 - Interview request for Secretary and Cheryl Cook tonight 8 p.m. re: Shirley Sherrod, resignation details- PENDING
 - Timeline of the phone call
- CNN Situation Room (Brad Hodges, [REDACTED] brad.hodges@turner.com; lisa.sylvester@turner.com):
 - Statement/Interview on Shirley Sherrod - PENDING
- CNN Network booking (Sarah Baker 202 351 4403 Sarah.Baker@cnn.com): Statement request – PENDING
- CNN Newsroom AM w/Tony Harris (Diane Durham 404-827-4102 Diane.Durham@turner.com):
 - Ms. Cook, CNN Newsroom AM w/Tony Harris is requesting a live interview as soon as possible with you regarding Shirley Sherrod's dismissal. Please call me so we might discuss the possibility of this interview. Thank you.
- CNN Newsroom with Kyra Phillips (Nyja Green, [REDACTED] nyja.greene@turner.com): Updated statement, interview request – PENDING
 - I would like to request an interview with Cheryl Cook, Deputy Undersecretary for Rural Development or Secretary Vilsack for tomorrow morning to appear on CNN Newsroom w/Kyra Phillips between 9:30am-10:00am. (Exact hit time will be discussed if she is available.) Please call me at either [REDACTED] or cell phone [REDACTED]. We would like to speak to her about Shirley Sherrod's claims that she was asked to pull over to the side of the road and resign yesterday.
- The Takeaway (Samantha Fields, samantha.a.fields@gmail.com):
 - I am a producer with The Takeaway, a nationally broadcast morning news show based out of WNYC (New York Public Radio), and produced in partnership with the New York Times, the BBC, Public Radio International and WGBH Boston. We are very interested in getting in touch with Shirley Sherrod to see if we can get her on the show tomorrow morning. It would be for a segment tomorrow at 6:30 a.m. EST, and we'd be happy to have Shirley join us by phone. The segment would be about 5-7 minutes long, and would focus primarily on her story, her resignation, and the response to it so far. I appreciate any help you can give me -- I know you're probably being slammed with similar requests. I can be reached by email here, and by phone at [REDACTED]. Very much looking forward to speaking with you.
- ABC Atlanta Affiliate (Rebecca Lynstrom, [REDACTED] Rebecca.lindstrom@wsbtv.com): Interview with local rep on story. Statement request – PENDING
- NPR All things Considered (Chelsea Jones | c.jones@npr.org, 202.511.2108): Secretary interview on NAACP video - PENDING
 - Chelsea Jones here from NPR's *All Things Considered*. We're interested in an interview with the Secretary today about the Shirley Sherrod/NAACP video. Is he commenting at all on this? If so, let me know.
- Reuters (David Beasley, [REDACTED]): Statement request, USDA response to Shirley's calls from WH- PENDING
 - Hello, I am David Beasley, reporter working with Reuters on the Sherrod case. Could I get the U.S.D.A statement on that? Also could you respond to her statement that the White House pressured USDA to pressure her to resign before looking at all the facts? Thanks. My phone number is [REDACTED].
- Asylum.com/Mediaite.com (Tommy Christopher, [REDACTED] tommy@mediaite.com):
 - Ms. Sherrod alleges that she explained to the USDA that her comments at the NAACP dinner were edited, and that she wasn't at USDA when this occurred, and that she went on to spend 2 years helping the man save his farm. She said it made no difference, that her resignation was still demanded. Do you have a statement on this? Why not wait to see the full video or transcript before effectively firing her?
- Joe Madison (Darrell Greene, [REDACTED] darrell.greene@xmradio.com): 730, 745, 9am and 10 am (15 min slots). PENDING
- Afro American newspaper (Gregory Dalegdale@afro.com): Request for statement - PENDING
- Talking Points Memo (Rachel Slajda, rachel@talkingpointsmemo.com [REDACTED])
 - How did the video first come to the USDA's attention?
 - Sherrod said today that she was forced to resign, and that Cheryl Cook told her she had to resign because the story was going to be on Glenn Beck. That true?
 - Sherrod also says that the full video shows the context of her remarks, and claims that she was telling the story of the white farmer in order to illustrate how she had overcome her initial prejudice. Has Secretary Vilsack, or anyone

as the USDA, seen the full video? If it does show what Sherrod says, is there the possibility he made a mistake? That she could be reinstated?

- Atlanta NPR Stn (Charles Edwards cedwards@pba.org): Interview on Shirley Sherrod - PENDING
 - I would like to do a phone interview about why Mrs. Sherrod no longer works for the department.
- Anderson Cooper (Ben Finley): Interview with Cheryl Cook > CM Called - DONE
- WSI (Louise Radnofsky): Background Conversation > CM called > Sent additional questions - DONE
- CBS News (Ward Stone): Questions on statement > CM called - DONE
 - I want to double check this statement on the firing/resignation of Ms. Sherrod. First, at the time she was terminated - did the Secretary understand that her comments about helping a white farmer were from an incident 24 years ago when she was working for another agency? Second, did the Secretary understand that the white farmer's family says today Ms. Sherrod helped them keep their farm?
 - What was the procedure for firing or accepting Ms. Sherrod's resignation? Was she given any kind of hearing or avenue to protest the basis of the Secretary's decision?
 - We plan to go on air tonight with a report, and I would like to have the latest statement based on the information given by Ms. Sherrod in a CNN interview. The statement below appears to be an earlier statement issued to Foxnews.com and was reprinted this morning in the Atlanta Journal Constitution.
- Atlanta Journal Constitution (Christian boone cboone@ajc.com):
- Jennifer Kay with MSNBC booking is looking for S tomorrow to be live in studio.
- Los Angeles ABC Radio (Les Seigel): Interview with Shirley Sherrod

- Madison the Black Eagle (Darrell Green Jr. Darrell.Greene@siriusxm.com):
 - I'm following up on Ms. Sherrod for this morning, and if not today, tomorrow morning. Mr. Madison really wants her to come on the show, either 7:30, 7:45, 9am, 9:30am or 10am ET this morning or tomorrow morning. Thank you.
- NBC Ed Schultz show (Barbara Fant barbara.fant@nbcuni.com):
 - I wanted to check in again with you as Ed Schultz is very much hoping the Secretary will join him tonight on MSNBC at 6pm ET to talk about the Shirley Sherrod events. I'm sure he would like a chance to give his agency's views on this unfolding story. Please let me know if we might confirm.
- Bloomberg (bgreenberg2):
 - Statement request, SC Sent.
- Abba Brech
 - Statement request, SC sent]
- CBS News ('CKX@cbsnews.com)
 - Statement request, SC Sent
- NBC Universal (Dax Tejera Dax.Tejera@nbcuni.com)
 - Statement request, SC Sent
- CNN (Allison Harding Allison.harding@turner.com):
 - Statement request, SC Sent
- CNN (Rachel Streitfeld,)
 - Statement request, SC sent
 - Schedule? When decision might be made? Is he getting briefed on it, any info we can give?
- NewsCore (Anna Brech anna.brech@newscore.com):
 - Re: questions, I just wondered whether Tom Vilsack was expected to make any comment about Shirley Sherrod at the education event he's currently attending, or later today? would it be possible to forward me any press releases from him if/when they transpire? and I know this is a long shot and you may not be in a position to sort it - but if he is doing any interviews, we would obviously be interested in speaking with him.
- CNN Assignment Desk 202-898-7911 Lindy Royce
 - Schedule
- CBS (Laruen Seifert): Secretary's Schedule
- Rachel Maddow Show (Andrew Dallos, andrew.dallos@msnbc.com): Interview with Secretary Tonight
- Good morning. This is Andrew Dallos with the Rachel Maddow show at MSNBC. Would it be possible for me to call you please? If so, the number to reach you on? It's regarding our show tonight and a possible interview with Secretary Vilsack.
- WALB (Jennifer Emert jennifer.emert@walb.com): Statement request: SC sent
 - Also requesting an interview with someone from USDA, interested in getting info on our reaction.
- CBS Early Show (Gina Garcia garcia@nbc.com): Interview with Secretary
 - Layout, what happened past 24 hrs. Want to hear straight from Secretary's mouth. Any new USDA initiatives

- GA NBC (Jennifer Emer [redacted] jennifer.emert@walb.com): Phone interview re: Shirley Sherrod
 - Request additional statements when they come out
- ABC Assignment Desk (Dee Carden [redacted] dee.w.carden@abc.com): How long will the review take and what will process be like?
- Lou Dobbs radio (Bobby Sherwood [redacted] bobby@loudobbsradio.com): Interview with Shirley > SC called and emailed
- CNN Network booking (Sarah Baker [redacted] Sarah.Baker@cnn.com): if he is ready to do an interview with S or Cook- she can help organize. She the person to contact. would like first interview because they have Mandate from president of cnn and political unit.
- GMA (Katie Bosland [redacted] Katie.Bosland@abc.com): Schedule and interview request for Secretary

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [redacted]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov [redacted]*

DeJong, Justin

From: Andrea OBrien [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:21 AM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: sherrod

Hello,

Ms Sherod should be removed from the USDA. IF this is what our directors do, they should all be removed....

Why was she at this event, as a USDA rep. or on her own....why was the information spoken of, is this public information or not! Poor judgment on very bad for the agency.

She must be removed....

Thanks for your time,
andy wiltshire

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:17 AM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Lou Dobbs radio (Bobby Sherwood): Interview with Shirley

FYI- I emailed and left message, haven't heard back yet.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Ross, Lori -USDA
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:08 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: media inquiry - Lou Dobbs radio

Bobby Sherwood
Lou Dobbs Radio
Re: interview with Shirley Sharod
212-536-3647 bobby@loudobbsradio.com

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:07 AM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin
Subject: GA NBC (Jennifer Emert): Phone interview re: Shirley Sherrod

FYI- I just sent the statement to her, she would also be interested in a phone interview.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Ross, Lori -USDA
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:32 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: media inquiry

Jennifer Emert
WALB NBC in Albany GA
Re: would like a statement on Shirley Sharod
229-344-1074 jennifer.emert@walb.com

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:53 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; USDA Clips; JIC1, OC -USDA; JIC2, OC -USDA; JIC3, OC -USDA; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: FW: Top Outlets "vilsack" : USDA worker pressured to resign over race comments

From: Factiva[SMTP:EMAILEDNEWS@EMAIL.GLOBAL.FACTIVA.COM]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:52:46 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Top Outlets "vilsack" : USDA worker, pressured to resign over race comments Auto forwarded by a Rule

Your topic is Top Outlets "vilsack"

USDA worker pressured to resign over race comments
21 July 2010, 01:42 GMT, Houston Chronicle [1127 Words]

FILE - In this Dec. 18, 2006 file photo, Iowa Gov. Tom Vilsack appears on "The Daily Show with Jon Stewart" in New York City. The Obama administration is standing by its quick decision to oust a black Agriculture Department employee, Shirley Sherrod, on Tuesday July 20, 2010, over racially tinged remarks at an NAACP banquet in Georgia, despite evidence that her remarks were misconstrued and growing calls for USDA to reconsider. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, not the White House, made the decision to ask Sherrod to resign, said USDA spokeswoman Chris Mather. (AP Photo/Adam Rountree, File)

WASHINGTON — The Obama administration is standing by its quick decision to oust a black Agriculture Department employee over racially tinged remarks at an NAACP banquet in Georgia, despite evidence that her remarks were misconstrued and growing calls for USDA to reconsider.

Shirley Sherrod, who until Tuesday was the Agriculture Department's director of rural development in Georgia, says the administration caved to political pressure by pushing her to resign for saying that she didn't give a white farmer as much help as she could have 24 years ago when she worked for a nonprofit group.

Sherrod says her remarks, delivered in March at a local NAACP banquet in Georgia, were part of a story about racial reconciliation, not racism. The white farming family that was the subject of the story stood by Sherrod and said she should keep her job.

"We probably wouldn't have (our farm) today if it hadn't been for her leading us in the right direction," said Eloise Spooner, the wife of farmer Roger Spooner of Iron City, Ga. "I wish she could get her job back because she was good to us, I tell you."

The NAACP, which initially condemned Sherrod's remarks and supported Sherrod's ouster, joined the calls for her to keep her job. The civil rights group said it and millions of others were duped by the conservative website that posted partial video of her speech on Monday.

"We have come to the conclusion we were snookered ... into believing she had harmed white farmers because of racial bias," said the statement from NAACP President Benjamin Todd Jealous.

A White House official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said President Barack Obama was briefed on the matter after Sherrod's resignation and stands by the Agriculture Department's handling of it.

The website, biggovernment.com, gained fame last year after airing video of workers at the community group ACORN counseling actors posing as a prostitute and her boyfriend. It posted the Sherrod video as evidence that the NAACP, which recently passed a resolution condemning what it calls racist elements of the Tea Party, condones racism of its own.

Sherrod said she was on the road Monday when USDA deputy undersecretary Cheryl Cook called her and told her the White House wanted her to resign because her comments were generating a cable news controversy.

"They called me twice," she told The Associated Press in an interview. "The last time they asked me to pull over to the side of the road and submit my resignation on my Blackberry, and that's what I did."

Sherrod said administration officials weren't interested in hearing her explanation. "It hurts me that they didn't even try to attempt to see what is happening here, they didn't care," she said. "I'm not a racist ... Anyone who knows me knows that I'm for fairness."

The administration gave a different version of events.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack – not the White House – made the decision to ask Sherrod to resign, said USDA spokeswoman Chris Mather. She said Sherrod willingly resigned when asked.

In a statement, Vilsack said the controversy surrounding Sherrod's comments could, rightly or wrongly, cause people to question her decisions as a federal employee and lead to lingering doubts about civil rights at the agency, which has a troubled history of discrimination.

"There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA," Vilsack said. "We have a duty to ensure that when we provide services to the American people we do so in an equitable manner."

USDA is sensitive to the issue because the agency has for decades faced charges of discrimination against black farmers who said they could not get aid that routinely went to whites. The department agreed to a final \$1.25 billion settlement earlier this year in a class-action suit that has been pending for more than a decade. The payout of that settlement is pending in Congress, and Vilsack has made fixing past wrongs over civil rights a top priority.

The current controversy began Monday when biggovernment.com posted a two-minute, 38-second video clip in which Sherrod describes the first time a white farmer came to her for help. It was 1986, and she worked for a nonprofit rural farm aid group. She said the farmer came in acting "superior" to her and that she debated how much help to give him.

"I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland, and here I was faced with helping a white person save their land," Sherrod said.

Initially, she said, "I didn't give him the full force of what I could do" and only gave him enough help to keep his case progressing. Eventually, she said, his situation "opened my eyes" that whites were struggling just like blacks, and helping farmers wasn't so much about race but was "about the poor versus those who have."

Sherrod said Tuesday the incomplete video appears to intentionally twist her message. She says she became close friends with the farmer and helped him for two years.

In the full 43-minute video of her speech released by the NAACP Tuesday evening, Sherrod tells the story of her father's death in 1965, saying he was killed by white men who were never charged. She says she made a commitment to stay in the South the night of her father's death, despite the dreams she had always had of leaving her rural town.

"When I made that commitment I was making that commitment to black people and to black people only," she said. "But you know God will show you things and he'll put things in your path so that you realize that the struggle is really about poor people."

Sherrod said in the speech that working with Spooner, who she does not name, changed her entire outlook.

"She's always been nice and polite and considerate. She was just a good person," Eloise Spooner said. "She did everything she could trying to help."

<http://global.factiva.com/redir/default.aspx?p=sta&ep=AE&an=WCHOU00020100721e67100001&fid=300612057&cat=w&aid=9USD000900&ns=18&fn=Top%20Outlets%20%22vilsack%22&ft=g&OD=V2AubjNaqd6b5Ap%2b90PrU4iu6h%2fp8T%2byJNGtxGUDhq6zQx18ytkPQ7A%3d%3d%7c2>

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DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:52 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; USDA Clips; JIC1, OC -USDA; JIC2, OC -USDA; JIC3, OC -USDA; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: FW: Top Outlets "vilsack" : Agriculture secretary to review case that led to official's resignation over race comments

From: Factiva[SMTP:EMAILEDNEWS@EMAIL.GLOBAL.FACTIVA.COM]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:51:31 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Top Outlets "vilsack" : Agriculture secretary to review case that led to official's resignation over race comments Auto forwarded by a Rule

Your topic is Top Outlets "vilsack"

Agriculture secretary to review case that led to official's resignation over race comments 20 July 2010, 23:31 GMT, The Hartford Courant [546 Words]

(CNN) -- Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said early Wednesday that he will review the case that led to the resignation of Shirley Sherrod.

"I am of course willing and will conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts to ensure to the American people we are providing services in a fair and equitable manner," Vilsack said in a statement.

Sherrod stepped down Monday as the department's director of rural development for Georgia after conservative media outlets aired a video in which she said 24 years ago she shirked from helping a white farmer avoid foreclosure because of his race.

President Barack Obama was briefed after Vilsack decided to seek Sherrod's resignation and fully supported that decision, a White House official said Tuesday.

Meanwhile, the NAACP retracted its original statement condemning Sharrod's comments. The civil rights organization said in a statement Tuesday that it was "snookered by Fox News" and conservative Web site publisher Andrew Breitbart.

"Having reviewed the full tape by Shirley Sherrod, who is the woman who was fired by the Department of Agriculture, and most importantly heard the testimony of the white farmers mentioned in this story, we now believe that the organization that edited the documents did so with the intention of deceiving millions of Americans," the statement from NAACP President Benjamin Jealous said.

The organization also urged Vilsack to reconsider Sherrod's resignation.

Roger Spooner told CNN he's the farmer she speaks of in the video and that "there wasn't any white or black or whatnot involved whatsoever" and "if it hadn't been for her, we would've never known who to see or what to do." He and his wife, Eloise, said they were speaking out to help Sherrod as she helped them.

Breitbart originally posted the video, which was picked up by Fox News.

While officials say the White House didn't ask for Shirley Sherrod's resignation, the former black Agriculture Department employee insisted Tuesday that the push for her to step down came from the Obama administration.

But Vilsack said he asked her to resign without interacting with the White House.

"When I saw the statements and the context of the statements, I determined that it would make it difficult for her to do her job as a rural development director, and compromise our capacity to close the chapter on civil rights cases, I didn't want anything to jeopardize her job in terms of getting the job done and getting people to work in Georgia," Vilsack said.

"I made this decision, it's my decision. Nobody from the White House contacted me about this at all."

Earlier, an official from the White House confirmed Vilsack's statement that it didn't influence USDA or Sherrod in the controversy.

"It was the secretary's decision, as he has said," the official told CNN.

Sherrod said on CNN's "Rick's List" that she was told differently.

"That's not what they told me," she said in a phone interview. "That's not what (USDA Deputy Undersecretary for World Development) Cheryl Cook conveyed to me. Each time she said it, she said 'the White House.'"

<http://global.factiva.com/redirect/default.aspx?p=sta&ep=AE&an=WCHFCT0020100721e67k0000e&fid=300612057&cat=w&aid=9USD000900&ns=18&fn=Top%20Outlets%20%22vilsack%22&ft=g&OD=V2AUBjNaqd6b5Ap%2b90PrU4iu6h%2fp8T%2byJNGtxGUDhq6zQx18ytzkPQ7A%3d%3d%7c2>

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DeJong, Justin

From: Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:49 AM
To: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: Federal Eye: Tom Vilsack, USDA and civil rights

Update: Chris wanted Shirley Sherrod clips in their own packet. I have excluded them from AM clips and Top Clips as a result. Look out for the Sherrod clips being emailed around shortly.

Thanks!

From: Weaver, Caleb
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:38 AM
To: Misailidis, Sarah; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: Federal Eye: Tom Vilsack, USDA and civil rights

Agree. We probably need a sampling.

From: Misailidis, Sarah
To: DeJong, Justin
Cc: Weaver, Caleb
Sent: Wed Jul 21 09:01:57 2010
Subject: RE: Federal Eye: Tom Vilsack, USDA and civil rights
Will do.

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:02 AM
To: Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: Re: Federal Eye: Tom Vilsack, USDA and civil rights

Prob not. But ask caleb, we may need to do small sampling.

From: Misailidis, Sarah
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Wed Jul 21 07:56:54 2010
Subject: Re: Federal Eye: Tom Vilsack, USDA and civil rights

Do you want any other shirley sherrod articles in clips??

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie; Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Wed Jul 21 07:23:31 2010
Subject: Fw: Federal Eye: Tom Vilsack, USDA and civil rights

Sarah, for top clips. Tx.

From: ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com
Sent: Wed Jul 21 07:12:16 2010
Subject: Federal Eye: Tom Vilsack, USDA and civil rights

http://voices.washingtonpost.com/federal-eye/2010/07/tom_vilsack_usda_and_civil_rig.html

Tom Vilsack, USDA and civil rights

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said early Wednesday morning that he's willing to reconsider his decision to force Shirley Sherrod's resignation.

"I am of course willing and will conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts to ensure to the American people we are providing services in a fair and equitable manner," Vilsack said in a statement that arrived in inboxes after 2 a.m.

But to understand why he sought Sherrod's resignation so quickly, let's go back to February 2009. That's when Vilsack publicly vowed to tackle USDA's troubled civil rights history by ensuring that employees fairly treated minority and women farmers.

"Some folks refer to USDA as the last plantation, and it has a pretty poor history of taking care of people of color," Vilsack said at the time. "You've got outright bias and discrimination."

"Also you've got good people who don't even know that they're discriminating," said Vilsack. "It's necessary to begin the process of reeducating people."

Vilsack made those comments in Albany, Ga., Sherrod's home town. And he said them at a conference hosted by the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund, the same group Sherrod worked for in 1986 when she first met white farmer Roger Spooner.

Reeducating employees required an \$8 million consulting contract with Jackson Lewis Corporate Diversity Counseling Group. And it required reviewing tens of thousands of complaints leveled against USDA during George W. Bush's presidency. The review has been led by a 34-year USDA veteran whom Vilsack coaxed out of retirement.

"When this department was established in 1862 by Abraham Lincoln, he referred to it as the people's department," Vilsack told colleague Krissah Thompson in February. "In order to be consistent with that legacy, it's necessary that our programs and our approach reflect an appreciation for everyone's rights. We took a look at [these] prior issues and are in the process of trying to address each of them."

The efforts received little national news coverage until this week when a three-minute clip of Sherrod's now-infamous speech surfaced. Her message -- that Americans need to see beyond a person's skin color -- was tainted by an impolitic delivery White House officials consider too damaging.

"This controversy could make it more difficult to move forward on correcting injustices," Vilsack said Tuesday, adding later that, "The controversy surrounding [Sherrod's] comments would create situations where her decisions, rightly or wrongly, would be called into question making it difficult for her to bring jobs to Georgia."

"Our policy is clear," he continued. "There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA and we strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have a duty to ensure that when we provide services to the American people we do so in an equitable manner. But equally important is our duty to instill confidence in the American people that we are fair service providers."

Did Vilsack make the right decision, or did he overreact at the mercy of the web and cable news cycle? Or did he have to accept Sherrod's resignation in order to reinforce his work on civil rights? It's a question many in Washington will continue asking today.

Continue reading the Wednesday Eye Opener: http://voices.washingtonpost.com/federal-eye/2010/07/tom_vilsack_usda_and_civil_rig.html

Ed O'Keefe
The Federal Eye
The Washington Post
ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com

(c)

DeJong, Justin

From: Ealons, Corey A. [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:10 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: FW: Sec. Vilsack on Madison

Justin I'm sure you have a number of these request, but if you are honoring any of them you may want to consider this one. Let me know when you can. Thank you.

Corey Ealons

White House Office of Media Affairs // [REDACTED]

From: Madison, Sharon [mailto:Sharon.Madison@siriusxm.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:28 PM
To: Ealons, Corey A.
Subject: Sec. Vilsack on Madison

Hello Corey,

Now that clarity is coming to the Shirley Sherrod episode, Joe would like to briefly interview Sec. Vilsack tomorrow or Friday.

We have between 6-8am ET or 9:15-10am ET on Thursday or Friday. If necessary, we could also tape a segment in the afternoon either day.

Appreciate your assistance.

Sharon
The Madison Show
6:00-10:00am ET
XM 169 The Power
[REDACTED] - cell

DeJong, Justin

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:19 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Fw: WaPo Ed Board (Eva Rodriguez): Administration's handling of Shirley Sherrod Resignation

Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Purchla, Liz
Sent: Wed Jul 21 14:15:04 2010
Subject: WaPo Ed Board (Eva Rodriguez): Administration's handling of Shirley Sherrod Resignation
Imagine this needs to be flagged for WH

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Eva Rodriguez [mailto:RodriguezE@washpost.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:01 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Washington Post editorial board re. SHERROD

Hi Stephanie,
I'm writing an editorial for publication tomorrow about the administration's handling of the Shirley Sherrod matter. I'd like to speak with you at your earlier convenience; my deadline is 5:30 p.m. In the meantime, I'd be grateful to receive any statements/press releases you've issued on this matter. I can be reached at this email and at the number below.
Thanks in advance,
Eva

Eva Rodriguez
The Washington Post
Editorial Board
202-334-4134

DeJong, Justin

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:36 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Let me know

When you have something

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:48 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie

Do you have gibbs email address? We use on week ahead.

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:51 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: Re:

I did

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:35:41 2010

Do we need to alert Chan re need for release?
Chris Mather

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:54 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: To send to gibbs

Steph do you have his email address?



DeJong, Justin

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:59 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Cc: DeJong, Justin

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Sent from my Verizon Wireless BlackBerry

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:45 AM
To: Zaina, Lisa
Subject: Re: Hate to bug u

On road with s. We'll see what sort of fireworks we have today.

----- Original Message -----

From: Zaina, Lisa
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:33:56 2010
Subject: Re: Hate to bug u

Thanks J...how are things?
Lisa Zaina

----- Original Message -----

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Zaina, Lisa
Cc: Chan, Stephanie; Weaver, Caleb
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:31:45 2010
Subject: Re: Hate to bug u

Yes, please forward to main office of communications. 202-720-4623. Steph chan is managing intake. Btw our statement is below. I understand caleb is staffing dallas on hill today.

Please see below for statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack regarding Shirley Sherrod's resignation yesterday:

Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.

----- Original Message -----

From: Zaina, Lisa
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:28:58 2010
Subject: Hate to bug u

In case we get calls about Georgia, to whom should they be referred. I think we need one point of contact and thought your shop would want to manage. Thx.
Lisa Zaina

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:03 AM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: Fw: NAACP Statement on Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

Came from naacp president.

From: Stephanie Chan
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:50:30 2010
Subject: NAACP Statement on Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

fyi-

NAACP Statement on Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

by **Publius**

July 19, 2010

(BALTIMORE, MD) NAACP President and CEO Benjamin Todd Jealous issued the following statement today after learning of the resignation of Shirley Sherrod of the United States Department of Agriculture:

“Since our founding in 1909, the NAACP has been a multi-racial, multi-faith organization that— while generally rooted in African American communities— fights to end racial discrimination against all Americans.

We concur with US Agriculture Secretary Vilsack in accepting the resignation of Shirley Sherrod for her remarks at a local NAACP Freedom Fund banquet.

Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race.

We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers.

Her actions were shameful. While she went on to explain in the story that she ultimately realized her mistake, as well as the common predicament of working people of all races, she gave no indication she had attempted to right the wrong she had done to this man.

The reaction from many in the audience is disturbing. We will be looking into the behavior of NAACP representatives at this local event and take any appropriate action.

We thank those who brought this to our national office’s attention, as there are hundreds of local fundraising dinners each year.

Sherrod’s behavior is even more intolerable in light of the US Department of Agriculture’s well documented history of denying opportunities to African American, Latino, Asian American, and Native American farmers,

as well as female farmers of all races. Currently, justice for many of these farmers is being held up by Congress. We would hope all who share our outrage at Sherrod's statements would join us in pushing for these cases to be remedied.

The NAACP will continue to advance the ideals of America and fight for freedom, justice and fairness for all Americans."

Founded in 1909, the NAACP is the nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization. Its members throughout the United States and the world are the premier advocates for civil rights in their communities, conducting voter mobilization and monitoring equal opportunity in the public and private sectors.

--
Stephanie Chan



DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:04 AM
To: 'AgriPulse@aol.com'
Subject: Re: Sherrod

Hi sara,

Please see below for statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack regarding Shirley Sherrod's resignation yesterday:

Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.

From: AgriPulse@aol.com
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:53:22 2010
Subject: Sherrod
Hi Justin,

Did you guys release a statement on Shirley Sherrod's resignation and if so, can you please share?

Thanks,

Sara

Sara R. Wyant
Editor
Agri-Pulse

[REDACTED] (cell)
573-873-0802 (Camdenton, MO. office)
202-547-5588 (Washington, DC office)
www.Agri-Pulse.com

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:15 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Re: Vilsack statement on resignation of Georgia usda employee?

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:57:43 2010
Subject: Re: Vilsack statement on resignation of Georgia usda employee?

CHRIS MATHER

----- Original Message -----

From: DeJong, Justin
To: 'ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com' <ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com>; Mather, Chris
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:31:55 2010
Subject: Re: Vilsack statement on resignation of Georgia usda employee?

Hi ed,

Please see below for statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack regarding Shirley Sherrod's resignation yesterday:

Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.

----- Original Message -----

From: ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com <ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com>
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:25:54 2010
Subject: Vilsack statement on resignation of Georgia usda employee?

Hey guys:

Do you have the statement from Second Vilsack regarding the resignation of the USDA employee after her statements about a white farmer surfaced on video? Thanks in advance.

Ed O'Keefe
The Federal Eye, The Washington Post
ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:27 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Fw: Question on Vilsack's decision to fire Sherrod

From: Ed O'Keefe
To: DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris
Sent: Tue Jul 20 09:58:13 2010
Subject: Question on Vilsack's decision to fire Sherrod
Justin and Chris:

Disregard my previous question about Sherrod's statement, I found that she spoke to CNN this morning.

Which raises an important question: If the incident she describes occurred in 1986, as she said it did, then why did Sec. Vilsack accept her resignation? Was she forced to leave? Was she given the opportunity to explain herself to USDA and Vilsack before she resigned?

And should other USDA officials now expect to be fired for incidents that occurred more than two decades ago before they were hired by USDA?

Ed O'Keefe

The Federal Eye

The Washington Post

ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com

202.334.5546. (o) | [REDACTED] (c)

AIM: edatpost | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [GovLoop](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

From: DeJong, Justin [<mailto:Justin.DeJong@oc.usda.gov>]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:32 AM
To: Ed O'Keefe; Mather, Chris
Subject: Re: Vilsack statement on resignation of Georgia usda employee?

Hi ed,

Please see below for statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack regarding Shirley Sherrod's resignation yesterday:

Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.

----- Original Message -----

From: ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com <ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com>
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:25:54 2010
Subject: Vilsack statement on resignation of Georgia usda employee?

Hey guys:

Do you have the statement from Second Vilsack regarding the resignation of the USDA employee after her statements about a white farmer surfaced on video? Thanks in advance.

Ed O'Keefe
The Federal Eye, The Washington Post
ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:48 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: Re: Morning Joe: Shirley Sherrod Story

Sorry, I recall after seeing the story but needed a refresher.

From: Mather, Chris
To: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Chan, Stephanie
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Tue Jul 20 10:38:02 2010
Subject: Re: Morning Joe: Shirley Sherrod Story

S knows all about this. he brought it up to me two weeks ago.
Chris Mather

From: Weaver, Caleb
To: DeJong, Justin; Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Tue Jul 20 10:06:55 2010
Subject: Re: Morning Joe: Shirley Sherrod Story

Sorry - I can generally answer this one. Fox News has been continuing to hammer on DOJ for failing to pursue an incident where some representatives of the new black panther party were filmed outside a polling location. The allegation is that this was an incident of voter intimidation that is not being pursued.

Hope that helps.

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Tue Jul 20 09:50:18 2010
Subject: Re: Morning Joe: Shirley Sherrod Story

Really would be good to have this context? Sara, steph?

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:50:49 2010
Subject: Re: Morning Joe: Shirley Sherrod Story

What is the story behind the black panthers tape? What is this?

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah

Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:32:42 2010

Subject: Morning Joe: Shirley Sherrod Story

Please see below for transcripts from Morning Joe from 6:44 this morning and 8:11 a few minutes ago. They mention the Secretary's statement and briefly discuss why it wasn't 'covered by mainstream media' earlier.

Station: MSNBC

Date: 07/20/2010 06:44:36 - 6:54:36 AM

Well, another story of reverse discrimination comes out today.

this one is really interesting. i'm thinking that this woman regrets this comment. a usda official in georgia has resigned after i youtube clip shows her admitting that race helped determine how much aid would be given to a white farmer.

you're not supposed to do that, are you? i mean, i'm not --

it's probably not a good idea.

for being so stupid.

it's not even -- well, how about you just don't do it. anyway, the state's director of rural development apparently made the comments during an naacp banquet in march. take a listen.

the first time i was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking, but he was trying to show me he was superior to me. what he didn't know while he was taking all that time to show me he was superior to me was i was trying to decide just how much help i was going to give him. i was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland, and here i was faced with having to help a white person save their land. so, i didn't give him the full force of what i could do.

wow.

how about if shirley and mark williamson, tea party guy, are locked in a room together as their punishment.

wow.

that was something, huh?

so she -- so this guy was trying to save his land, and she decided she didn't like the white farmer acting the way the white farmer acted but she decided not to do.

agriculture secretary tom vilsack has accepted her resignation. ben jealous, the president of the naacp, called their communities shameful.

a narrative is going to emerge, margaret, though, certainly on the right, with this tape that's just come out. you'll be hearing this the next couple days. i think its relevance relates back to a new black panthers tape that had been out there. there are a lot of conservatives that think the mainstream media is not following these type of stories to protect barack obama. actually, ""the washington post"" came out this past weekend, and said we haven't been following this story. is that a fair critique?

absolutely. it's every bit as hateful. i mean, look at that woman. i mean, aren't you ashamed?

yes. and you know, the agriculture secretary went on to say that they have zero tolerance for this type of thing.

yeah.

i mean, there's more on one side than the other, but that doesn't --

that doesn't make either way right.

which side would that be?

pat, you're not going to be talking this segment. norah, what do you think?

do you want me --

but, norah, every day, though, we've been hearing conservatives complain, you guys aren't running this story. you're not running this story. it's clear voter intimidation. and it started under bush. but the obama administration decided to brush it aside. is it a fair critique of the press to say, because you'll have a lot of people say, you guys didn't talk enough about the van jones story.

mm-hmm.

until it already exploded. you guys didn't talk enough about a.c.o.r.n. until it had already exploded. you guys didn't talk enough about the new black panther story until it exploded. are these fair critiques? and if so, where is our blind spot?

well, i do think there's some fair critiques out there. certainly with the new black panther story. ""the washington post"" ombudsman weighed in saying they should have done the story earlier. one of the editors said they didn't have enough resources to cover the story. on this particular case, while this is egregious in my mind, though, it is an isolated, we believe, incident. there's no suggestion that 9 usda is doing this, you know, a.

right.

so i just worry that in a climate that there have now been -- there is an effort to pile up a lot of these racially charged stories that concern me about things. that we're, you know, setting up these black versus white stories in this country, that these instances are -- are trying to create some sort of narrative about where we are in this country. and that makes me nervous. do you know what i'm trying to say?

mike barnicle, it's also these sort of stories obviously make the white house nervous. if you go back to last summer, last july, a year ago, remember the beer summit.

mm-hmm.

you can look at barack obama's numbers. the first time his numbers took a bit of a jag down was after that blowup in cambridge over police officer crowley and professor gates.

joe, all of us here and everyone out in the country knows if you lead any sort of a normal life that race remains the third rail of american culture and american life. always has been that way. probably, unfortunately, always will be that way. i would submit to you that the news media probably is a little guilty for not covering some of these stories. for ignoring them for too long. but i would also suggest that out there in this big, large universe beyond television, that people are more obsessed with other issues, like their jobs and their incomes, than they are with what someone said in march, from working for the department of agriculture.

i would guess, though, mike on this black panther story which we reported when it came out but didn't cover it daily, i would guess mike, that a lot of people would be asking, why is it that you've got two guys who are clearly engaging in

voter intimidation, and if they were whites doing that to black voters passing by, carrying billy clubs, that we would have had a hand wringing 28-part series on the front page of every major newspaper for a month.

well, i don't know if it would have been on the front page. they would have been arrested immediately if they were white. i don't think there's any doubt about that. the story would have been covered immediately had they been white. i don't think there's any doubt about that. but i think at this point the incessant coverage of it with all of the questions, it's like scratching a sore. that's all it's doing.

but who's covered it? fox has covered it. but, even ""the washington post"" said nobody else has covered it. the boston globe covered it? has ""the new york times"" covered it incessantly?

they now make minor mention of it in light of fox's coverage of it. bob schieffer this past weekend was asked why he didn't cover it and he gave an honest answer. he said, i didn't even know about it. now he didn't know about it because it wasn't covered by the mainstream media. there's no doubt about that. but now this whipping this thing up into a near frenzy. why didn't we cover it? we would have done it if they were white. it's just pulling a scab at a time when people are worried about their jobs.

what stories do we decide to ignore, though? i guess i don't understand.

maybe not ignore it. i mean there's so many stories that slip by and go through the cracks that you don't know. because i've seen this -- i now know all the facts of the story. i think this story is out there and being covered. the minute you know something like this, you go to it. but mike makes this good point. you know, it's a tender subject. we have a black president, which makes it, i think, even more delicate. why that agriculture person had to be fired immediately.

doesn't that make it relevant, though, when the justice department passes on this new black panther case?

well, we did prosecute the guy who was holdage the billy club. at an almost all-black precinct. intimidating white voters at an all-black precinct, would you go to another precinct where there might be more -- help you mo.

Station: MSNBC

Date: 07/20/2010 08:01:56 - 8:11:56 AM

okay. welcome back to ""morning joe."" we are at the nbc news washington bureau. changed up the conversation a little bit with deede meijers and eugene robinson. p> what's the back story?

u.s.d.a. official in georgia after she admitted that race determined how much aid given to a white farmer. shirley sharad apparently made the comments during a naacp banquet in march. the agriculture secretary tom vilsack said today i have accepted the resignation. there is zero tolerance for discrimination at usda and i strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. we have been working hard to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously. ben jealous is also chimed in calling the comments shameful.

gene, we seem to be getting to this july where we were last july. it was a year ago.

interesting.

that we were talking about officer crowley in austin and also professor gates and talked about that throughout most of july. but race is bubbling up again in the heat of the summer. you have a column about it today. a lot of people talking about the tea parties. are they racist or not? tea partiers calling the naacp racist. it is just sort of ugly all around.

it is our yearly race seminar. you know? we keep saying we went to have a national conversation about race. my theory is that we don't want to sit around and sing and have a nation at conversation about race but when things happen we talk about race. and you know, in this case, now it's the whole naacp and tea party thing. this latest incident with the official who resigned and many --

talk about your column today.

well, it was about the tea party and, you know, i think the naacp's point was proven by mark williams, the california -- the sacramento former radio host who was the head of something called tea party express.

right.

which got booted out of the tea party federation. good for federation.

in so doing --

the --

the tea party federation, i didn't know there was a federation.

right, right.

kicked him out. did what ben jealous told them to do which is call out --

yeah. i mean, it is an interesting -- this will be an interesting process of maturation, i think, for the tea party movement as it sorts out. you know, how can you be a movement without a leadership? and so, this federation group has emerged as a leadership. clearly, there were racial issues there. i mean, if you read what this guy mark williams wrote, it is disgusting. and it is --

absolutely.

way over the line. and he was, you know, a substantial thinker --

you condemn that.

exactly.

they did it.

Stephanie C. Chan
Press Assistant
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 2050

Office: (202) 720-5555

Cell: [REDACTED]

Email: Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:02 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: Ap on sherrod

Ap mary clare spoke to sherrod. She has sherrod on the record saying she was on the road traveling when cheryl cook called twice saying that wh was asking for her resignation that she needed to pull over and send the email with resignation. Also went on to say that wh asked for resignation because of a pending story from glenn beck, although mary clare wasn't sure she wanted to include that in story.



DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:07 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: Fw: Jalonick (USDA worker quits over racism charge from video)

From: Jalonick, Mary Clare
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 11:00:57 2010
Subject: FW: Jalonick (USDA worker quits over racism charge from video)
This is a short update and there will be another one soon

From: AP Exchange notification [mailto:noreply.apexchange@notification.ap.org]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:58 AM
To: Jalonick, Mary Clare
Subject: Jalonick (USDA worker quits over racism charge from video)

Date: 07/20/2010 10:56 AM

US-USDA-Racism-Resignation/312
USDA worker quits over racism charge from video
BEN EVANS
Associated Press Writers

WASHINGTON (AP) - A black employee who resigned from the Agriculture Department over racially charged comments at a Georgia NAACP meeting says her remarks are being intentionally misconstrued by conservative groups stoking racial tensions.

Shirley Sherrod says she was forced to step down by the White House even though her comments, in which she says she withheld support for a farmer because he was white, were really part of a story of racial reconciliation. In an interview, Sherrod said the White House's wishes were relayed by an Agriculture Department undersecretary.

The incident occurred some 24 years ago when she worked for a nonprofit aid group.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a statement Tuesday that the department has no tolerance for discrimination and he accepted her resignation.

THIS IS A BREAKING NEWS UPDATE. Check back soon for further information. AP's earlier story is below.

ATLANTA (AP) - A black federal worker has resigned from a Georgia agricultural job after a video clip showed her saying she had not helped a farmer as much as she could have because he was white.

U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a statement Tuesday he had accepted the resignation of Shirley Sherrod. Vilsack says the USDA has no tolerance for discrimination.

Sherrod told the Atlanta-Journal Constitution she was forced out of her job as the USDA's rural development director for Georgia. She said the two-minute, 38-second video posted online Monday misconstrued her message.

Sherrod's taped remarks were from a local meeting of the civil rights group NAACP.

National NAACP President Benjamin Todd Jealous welcomed the resignation because the group opposes racism of all kinds.

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Summary

Date: 07/20/2010 10:56 AM
Slug: US-USDA-Racism-Resignation
Headline: USDA worker quits over racism charge from video
Byline: BEN EVANS
Byline Title: Associated Press Writers
Copyright Holder: AP
Priority: r (4)
With Photo:
Dateline: WASHINGTON
Editors' Note:
Word Count: 312
File Name (Transref):
Editorial Type:
AP Category: w
Format:

mjalonick@ap.org - d8489305ec7a41d19240ea9508597ff8

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[IP_US_DISC]msk dccc60c6d2c3a6438f0cf467d9a4938

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:07 AM
To: 'mjalonick@ap.org'
Subject: Re: Jalonick (USDA worker quits over racism charge from video)

Tx.

From: Jalonick, Mary Clare
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 11:00:57 2010
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Byline: BEN EVANS
Byline Title: Associated Press Writers
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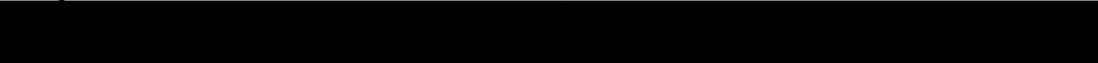
[IP_US_DISC]msk dccc60c6d2c3a6438f0cf467d9a4938

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:16 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Re: Secretary Vilsack for MSNBC tonight with Ed Schultz

I have not. Will not see him until around 1 pm.

From: Mather, Chris
To: Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 11:11:31 2010
Subject: RE: Secretary Vilsack for MSNBC tonight with Ed Schultz



From: Weaver, Caleb
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:07 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie; DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris
Subject: Fw: Secretary Vilsack for MSNBC tonight with Ed Schultz
Importance: High

Request from Ed Schultz show.

From: Fant, Barbara (NBC Universal)
To: Weaver, Caleb
Sent: Tue Jul 20 09:52:46 2010
Subject: Secretary Vilsack for MSNBC tonight with Ed Schultz

Good morning,

Ed Schultz is very much hoping that Secretary Vilsack might be available to join him tonight during his 6-7pm primetime program to talk about his accepting Sherrod's resignation in light of her recent remarks involving racial based preferences.

It's an important part of today's race discussions.

Might he be interested and available? It would only take about 5 minutes during our live broadcast.

Thank you for your consideration, and let me know if you have questions.

Barbara Fant

Barbara Fant Senior Producer NBC News 202.885.4646 cell 

barbara.fant@nbcuni.com

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:22 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris; Misailidis, Sarah; Weaver, Caleb
Subject: Cnn

Just heard sherrod was on cnn for like 10 min interview.

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:24 AM
To: 'Mark.Palmer2@one.usda.gov'; Weaver, Caleb
Cc: 'Kent.Politsch@one.usda.gov'; Mather, Chris
Subject: Re: information requested

Looping mather.

From: Mark.Palmer2@one.usda.gov
To: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Cc: Kent.Politsch@one.usda.gov
Sent: Tue Jul 20 11:17:49 2010
Subject: FW: information requested

Gentlemen – knowing your situation, this came to me this a.m. I have told folks this is not an FSA issue per se, but what else should we do in handling any mis-guided inquiries – just refer them to you I assume?

Let me know how you would like to handle this one.

Thanks

MMP

=====
Mark M. Palmer
Senior Advisor
Office of External Affairs
USDA
Mark.Palmer@wdc.usda.gov
www.fsa.usda.gov

From: Kevin Phillips [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:35 AM
To: Watts, Murray - Clarksville, TN; andre.kok@wdc.usda.gov; johnathan.groveman@wdc.usda.gov; Sioca, Sueellen - Washington, DC; Politsch, Kent - Washington, DC; james.meidinger@wdc.usda.gov; Palmer, Mark - Washington, DC; Pugh, Shirley (RMA); jean.daniel@fns.usda.gov; sara.bradshaw@fns.usda.gov; debbie.haston-hillger@fns.usda.gov; Mcquinn, Mary - Athens, GA; louise.reynnells@ars.usda.gov; vbest@csrees.usda.gov; shutchison@ars.usda.gov; vherberger@ars.usda.gov; acuster@ers.usda.gov; Fletcher, Jay - Washington, DC; Dan.Campbell@usda.gov; Kasting, Dick - Washington, DC; Shunk, Joseph - Washington, DC; Morgan, Ritam (OMS)
Subject: information requested

I would like information as to the outcome of the employment status of Shirley Sherrod. This USDA employee has been taped admitting discrimination *in her job*.

From her statements, it's clear she based her decisions on the color of the applicants skin. Not just this one time, but throughout her career. This was not a one time instance.

I know if a white USDA official had bragged publicly about discriminating against a black farmer, the white

USDA official would have been fired and would lose all pensions and rights obtained throughout a career of discrimination. I also know that every black organization (NAACP etc) and organizers (J Jackson, A Sharpton etc) would have called for firing, loss of pensions, AND criminal prosecution had the white USDA official been the one to make these racist statements.

This Shirley Sherrod was a Director of Rural Development for the state of Georgia? Has she been training or at least suggesting to her underlings that this is the way to treat whites?

Shirley Sherrod is a disgrace and a criminal and should be dealt with as such.

Sincerely,

Kevin Phillips

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:28 AM
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Eve, Malcolm
Subject: Re: Is the press avail before the tour

Following the tour.

Tour at 1 pm

Avail at 140 pm

We have no indication that media attending will ask about sherrod situation, but should be prepared.

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: DeJong, Justin
Cc: Eve, Malcolm
Sent: Tue Jul 20 11:24:23 2010
Subject: Is the press avail before the tour

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:50 AM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: Re: Now seeking clarification

From: Mather, Chris
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 11:39:33 2010
Subject: RE: Now seeking clarification

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:38 AM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: Fw: Now seeking clarification

From: Ed O'Keefe
To: Cherlin, Reid H. ; Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 11:31:04 2010
Subject: Now seeking clarification
Reid:

I'm assuming y'all have seen Ms. Sherrod on CNN saying that undersecretary of Agriculture Cheryl Cook called her several times to ask for resignation and that the administration forced her out without letting her tell her side of the story.

Looking to see once again if the White House or USDA has further comment? Thanks in advance.

Ed O'Keefe
The Federal Eye
The Washington Post
ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com
202.334.5546. (o) | ██████████ (c)
AIM: edatpost | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [GovLoop](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:58 AM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: Re:

From: Mather, Chris
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 11:48:08 2010
Subject:

Just you. Another statement?

Chris Mather

Director of Communications

USDA

1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 402A

Washington, DC 20250

202-690-0060

chris.mather@usda.gov

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:11 PM
To: Deluhery, Norah; Lavalée, Aaron
Subject: Re: CNN breaking

We're all over it. Its rd.

----- Original Message -----

From: Deluhery, Norah
To: Lavalée, Aaron
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 12:03:05 2010
Subject: CNN breaking

Hey, by chance I just caught CNN in the hallway at POC. The headline was something like "ousted USDA official speaks out." And then she's quoted saying "I was driving in WV and I got calls from the WH asking me to resign." Any idea what that's all about?

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:13 PM
To: Lavallee, Aaron
Subject: Re: CNN breaking

Like white on rice

----- Original Message -----

From: Lavallee, Aaron
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 12:11:44 2010
Subject: RE: CNN breaking

Is it safe to assume you just saw the live interview on CNN with Shirley and the farm family in question?

Aaron Lavallee

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:24 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: Re: Jalonick (USDA worker quits over racism charge from video, 3...)

Hmmm just saw jalonick on others

From: Mather, Chris
To: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie; Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Tue Jul 20 12:21:00 2010
Subject: Re: Jalonick (USDA worker quits over racism charge from video, 3...)

He wrote first two.
Chris Mather

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie; Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Tue Jul 20 12:19:28 2010
Subject: Fw: Jalonick (USDA worker quits over racism charge from video, 3...)

Fyi that next write thru will include more context about civil rights at usda. Looks like ben evans our ap civil rights reporter has joined the story.

From: Jalonick, Mary Clare
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 12:14:01 2010
Subject: FW: Jalonick (USDA worker quits over racism charge from video, 3...)
Hey Justin, here is latest writethru. We are going to add background in next writethru

From: AP Exchange notification [mailto:noreply.apexchange@notification.ap.org]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:04 PM
To: Jalonick, Mary Clare
Subject: Jalonick (USDA worker quits over racism charge from video, 3...)

Date: 07/20/2010 12:02 PM

US--USDA-Racism-Resignation/490
Eds: Replaces last graf to correct reference to 'he said'.
USDA worker quits over racism charge from video
Associated Press Writers

WASHINGTON (AP) - A black employee who resigned from the Agriculture Department over comments at a Georgia NAACP meeting said Tuesday the White House forced her out of her job over a manufactured racial controversy.

Shirley Sherrod said she was on the road Monday after an event in rural Georgia when USDA deputy undersecretary Cheryl Cook called her and told her the White House wanted her to resign. "They called me

twice," Sherrod told The Associated Press in an interview. "The last time they asked me to pull over the side of the road and submit my resignation on my Blackberry, and that's what I did."

The controversy began Monday when the conservative website biggovernment.com posted a two-minute, 38-second video clip of Sherrod's remarks to a local NAACP chapter.

In the video, she says the first time a white farmer came in for help, he was acting "superior" to her and that she struggled to decide how much help to provide him when so many black farmers were struggling. She said she didn't give him the full force of help she could have, but gave him enough.

The website called it proof that the NAACP - which recently accused the Tea Party of including racist elements - condones racism.

Sherrod said her comments to the local NAACP group that she withheld support some 24 years ago from a farmer because he was white are really part of a story of racial reconciliation. She said she ultimately became friends with the farmer and worked closely with him for two years to keep him from losing his farm. At the time, she worked for a nonprofit farm aid group.

"My point in telling that story is that working with him helped me to see that it wasn't just a black and white issue," she told The AP. "It was about those who have and those who do not. That's why I take the time to tell that story is to tell people we need to get beyond it and work together."

Hours after her resignation, Sherrod accused administration officials of lacking backbone. A USDA spokesman would not comment on whether the White House was involved.

Secretary Tom Vilsack issued a statement saying the agency has no tolerance for discrimination.

"We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously," the statement said.

National NAACP President Benjamin Todd Jealous issued a statement Monday night - before Sherrod's explanation - supporting the resignation. Jealous said the group opposes racism of all kinds.

"According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race," he said. "We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers."

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Summary

Date: 07/20/2010 12:02 PM
Slug: US--USDA-Racism-Resignation
Headline: USDA worker quits over racism charge from video
Byline: BEN EVANS
Byline Title: Associated Press Writers
Copyright Holder: AP
Priority: r (4)

With Photo:
Dateline: WASHINGTON
Lead
Editors' Note: Eds: Replaces last graf to correct reference to 'he said'.
Word Count: 490
File Name (Transref):
Editorial Type: Lead
AP Category: w
Format:

mjalonick@ap.org - ec2092fe2fbb4232bcd31de0f3a3e569

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[IP_US_DISC]msk dccc60c6d2c3a6438f0cf467d9a4938

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:25 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Cc: Mather, Chris
Subject: Fw: All Things Considered interview with Secretary Vilsack?

From: CJones@npr.org
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 12:19:58 2010
Subject: All Things Considered interview with Secretary Vilsack?
Hi Justin,

Chelsea Jones here from NPR's *All Things Considered*...we're interested in an interview with the Secretary today about the Shirley Sherrod/NAACP video. Is he commenting at all on this? If so, let me know.

Thanks so much,

Chelsea

NPR | Chelsea Jones | *All Things Considered* | cjones@npr.org | 202 513 2108

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:42 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah; JIC4, OC -USDA
Subject: Re: FOX Transcript: Shirley Sharrod Preview

Is there a glenn beck transcript?

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah; JIC4, OC -USDA
Sent: Tue Jul 20 12:41:05 2010
Subject: FOX Transcript: Shirley Sharrod Preview
FYI- FOX previewing the upcoming interview with Shirley.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: JIC4, OC -USDA
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:34 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: this is all that's come in since cnn

From fox news: (CNN ran another little bit but it was just a repeat of the previous story, just clips of the same interview)

Station: Fox News
Date: 07/20/2010 11:56:28 - 12:12:57 PM

in the meantime, we have new reaction to shocking charges of racism at the department of agriculture, this woman, shirley sherrrod, stepping down after this controversial comment to an audience about help ago white farmer. take a listen: [inaudible video]

jenna: we have new reaction from the obama administration on that controversy. we'll cover those stories and all the rest, coming up in just a few minutes.

...

an agriculture official resigned after racial comments at an event back in march. take a listen.

so many black people have lost their [unintelligible] white person say [unintelligible] i didn't give him the full force of what i can do. jenna: james rosen is live in washington with this. the official shirley sherrrod said today she was misunderstood?

reporter: why this story is still breaking and developing in a very hot way right now. shirley sherrrod claims the story she was telling in that video clip was not about the merits of reverse discrimination but really how she came to see beyond race. in interviews with a rival network this morning and we want to emphasize shirley sherrrod will be appearing on fox news less than 90 minutes from now, she says she was describing work she did in 1986 to help a white farmer stave off foreclosure when she wasn't working for the federal government but for a nonprofit in southern, georgia. that part of the clip and the part we played in the introduction right now to the segment to suggest a racial motive in shirley sherrrod's comment. another clip appeared to corroborate her stance that she was trying to unite them in racial tolerance.] unintelligible]

reporter: the chapter that commissioned the shooting of that tape has refused to release the speech in its entirety. we are asking the group to reverse the decision. jenna: what was the response to this.

reporter: it was swift and it involved the termination of shirley sherrod. the reaction from the obama administration will this story. She said she received sever telephone calls yesterday from an undersecretary at the agriculture department. while she was behind the wheel of her c the first of which placed her on administrative leave. the second which told her she needed to resign. the third of which said she needed to pull over her car and resign at once. the white house also wanted her to resign. she says fox news and the tea parties are scaring the administration. governor vilsack said in his statement there is zero tolerance for discrimination at usda. i strongly condemn any act of discrimination of any person. we have been working hard for the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take this very seriously. among the unanswered questions that are perk late w-g this story one of them may turn out to be did the white house railroad an innocent woman on this because they are on edge themselves because of the van jones controversy, the black panther party case, we expect more answers from shirley sherrod who will be appearing on fox news less than 90 minutes from now and possibly from the white house if we get the opportunity.

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:06 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: Re:

Yup.

----- Original Message -----
From: Mather, Chris
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 14:05:43 2010
Subject: RE:

Only those two outlets?

-----Original Message-----
From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:06 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: Re:

No questions on sherrod.

----- Original Message -----
From: Mather, Chris
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 13:55:45 2010
Subject: Re:

Need you to type what he is saying. Questions and answers. This is imp.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----
From: DeJong, Justin
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tue Jul 20 13:50:56 2010
Subject: Re:

The press conf is happening now. Dispatch reporter and local abc reporter. No indication they are here for anything other than event. I am recording audio.

----- Original Message -----
From: Mather, Chris
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 13:48:09 2010

Need play by play of press interaction to share with team. Feel free to bombard us with updates.
Chris Mather

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:39 PM
To: Harless, Angela -USDA; Weaver, Caleb
Cc: Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: Re: heads up -

Good flag ang.

From: Harless, Angela -USDA
To: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb
Sent: Tue Jul 20 14:36:13 2010
Subject: RE: heads up -
Update – within the past hour...Sherrod declined to the interview w/FNC during America Live after having accepted it -- so they've just said they've left the door open for her.

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:29 PM
To: Harless, Angela -USDA
Subject: Re: heads up -

On it. Tracking story now.

From: Harless, Angela -USDA
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 13:28:00 2010
Subject: RE: heads up -
What does "onit" mean?

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:24 PM
To: Harless, Angela -USDA; Weaver, Caleb
Subject: Re: heads up -

Onit

From: Harless, Angela -USDA
To: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb
Sent: Tue Jul 20 13:21:53 2010
Subject: heads up -

I just saw that RD person will be interviewed on FNC's American Live w/Megyn Kelly this afternoon. The reporter prefaced the interview by stating that the dep sec called her 3 x from the road and told her to pull over & forced her to resign.

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:09 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: O'Brien, Doug; Harden, Krysta
Subject: Re: For S

[REDACTED]

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: O'Brien, Doug; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 14:59:40 2010
Subject: Re: For S

Secretarys edits reflected below:

[REDACTED]

From: Mather, Chris
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 14:34:56 2010
Subject: For S

[REDACTED]

Chris Mather

Director of Communications

USDA

1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 402A

Washington, DC 20250

202-690-0060

chris.mather@usda.gov

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:17 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Fw: ABC News / Good Morning America

From: Bosland, Katie
To: Sandretti, David; larry.quinn@usda.gov ; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 15:14:18 2010
Subject: ABC News / Good Morning America

Hi David, Larry, Caleb and Justin -

My name is Katie Bosland and I am a producer with ABC News / Good Morning America with George Stephanopoulos and Robin Roberts. I wanted to reach out to see if Secretary Vilsack would be available in the morning to come on the show to talk with George? We will be covering and talking about the Agriculture Director's resignation and would welcome the opportunity to have the Secretary on the show and hear his thoughts on the matter. Is there a number where I can best reach you. I am reachable via cell at 

Hope to speak soon and take care—

Katie Bosland

Katie Bosland | Segment Producer | ABC News, *Good Morning America* | Katie.Bosland@abc.com | 202.222.7331

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:42 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Re: CNN Transcript: Reading of USDA Statement

You've done a great job.

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:39:57 2010
Subject: RE: CNN Transcript: Reading of USDA Statement
My dork friends immediately started txtng "RICK SANCHEZ SAID YOUR NAME!!" :[Nerrdy

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:39 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Subject: Re: CNN Transcript: Reading of USDA Statement

Btw stephanie chan is now famous.

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:36:17 2010
Subject: CNN Transcript: Reading of USDA Statement
Station: CNN
Date: 07/20/2010 15:43:25 - 3:53:25 PM

shirley sherrod has said that the department of agriculture was pressured by the white house to ask her to resign. that's essentially what she told my colleague, tony harris, earlier today. we've been waiting for government to respond to her accusations and we just got that in, in the form of a statement. we expect we might get more. but here's the first statement as i read it to you, literally fresh off the press. this is from tom vilsack, agriculture secretary from the united states of america. yesterday, i asked for and accepted ms. sherrod's resignation for two reasons. first, for the past 18 months we have been working to turn a page on the sordid civil rights record at the usd and that controversy could make it more difficult to move forward. second, state directors are often called to use their discretion. the controversy surrounding her comments would create situations where her situations, rightly or wrongly, would be called into question, making it difficult for her to bring jobs to georgia. now, remember, ms. sherrod is saying here on cnn, if you took it in context, if you listen to the totality of what i actually said in this speech and not just the edited portions of it, you would understand that i was trying to make a point that says discrimination is not good. but the usda, her boss, tom vilsack, secretary of agriculture, does not appear to be buying that or even giving her reconsideration. why? let me read on. our policy is clear, he writes, there is zero tolerance for discrimination at usda and we strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. we have a duty to ensure that when we provide services to the american people, we do so in an equitable manner. but equally important is our duty to instill confidence in the american people that we are fair service providers. this comes from a stephanie chan, press secretary, press assistant office of communication, u.s. department of agriculture. says here a statement by agriculture secretary tom vilsack. just got this. it's the reaction to the accusation from shirley sherrod saying, look, i was taken out of context. if you listen to me in totality, you will understand i was trying to say something else. reconsider your decision. we just reported the naacp is apparently reconsidering. we'll hear from them soon. as far as the government goes, it doesn't

look like they are. we'll be right back. granola nut clusters 100% natural nuts and granola in bite sized clusters. it's a little bit of nature... a little bit better. and nature approves. granola nut clusters from nature valley. dan malloy has helped my business expand and created a lot of jobs. green jobs and high tech jobs and i have a job because of dan malloy dan malloy has put a lot of people to work helping create jobs that was my job as mayor of stamford and i'll do the same as governor by investing in high tech and clean energy holding down property taxes and lowering electric rates so people want to live here and businesses can afford to stay here that's how we'll turn connecticut's economy around dan malloy has got the experience that money can't buy approve this message i'm dan malloy and i

we're getting a lot of people talking about this shirley sherrod story. a lot of you saying, she's falsely accused. some of you saying, no, she should have been fired. so back and forth we go. we'll continue bringing you the details. they are still coming in, folks.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 5:36 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Weaver, Caleb
Attachments: 021210 Civil Rights WaPo.doc; 021710 Civil Rights Pigford.doc

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 5:49 PM
To: O'Brien, Doug
Subject: Fw: Secretary's comments in yellow

From: JIC4, OC -USDA
To: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris; Chan, Stephanie; Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Tue Jul 20 17:10:40 2010
Subject: Secretary's comments in yellow

let me just look at some notes here. suzanne malveaux, one of our correspondents is recording this from the white house. the white house did not pressure her. it was the secretary's decision as he has said.

that's not what they told me. that's not what cheryl cooke conveyed to me. each time she said it she said the white house.

are you still there?

i'm still here.

sorry about that. shirley, hold on just a moment. i understand we just got some sound with your boss, the secretary of agriculture. that would be tom vilsack. we just now concluded an interview with him. i think we're ready to turn some sound around on this. let's do it. rog, if you've got it, go ahead.

this is obviously a very difficult circumstance for all concerned. but when you're the state rural development director your principal job is to try to develop job growth in the state of georgia. unfortunately the statements and the context of the statements created a circumstance where in the future if people were not satisfied with the decisions that the rural development director made they could attribute the decision to a wide variety of reasons that weren't necessarily related to the job.

did you hear what he said there, shirley? that's part of it.

what did he say?

well, he went back to the comment that you made and he referred specifically to the context of the comment in the way it was -- he seemed to be indicating the way it was broadcast. so he says that -- do we have some more? all right. let's go ahead and listen to some more of this. can you hear it, shirley?

yes, i can hear it.

all right. let's play some more of this. it's coming in in parts. as we get it, we'll share it with you.

when i saw the statements and the context of the statements, i determined that it would make it difficult for her to do her job as rural development director and potentially compromise our capacity to close the chapter on civil rights cases. i didn't want to do anything to jeopardize her job in terms of getting people to work in georgia. i certainly didn't want us to have a controversy making it more difficult to turn the page. it was my decision. nobody from the white house contacted me about this at all.

i heard that, but that's not what i was told. that's not what i was told.

what do you make of the fact that he says you would compromise the department?

you know, rural development, you don't even work directly with farmers.

what about the fact that he said it would have been difficult for you to do your job?

you know, it was -- it would be great to talk to some of the people, the people that i touched while i was there. they know me and they know that's the case. all of this stuff is coming from people in other areas. it's not coming from people here in the state of georgia that i know of, you know? and people know that i'm not a racist.

what did ms. cooke tell you? the first time you heard of this. you had a conversation with a ms. cooke. tell our viewers who she is and what she said to you yesterday.

she's the deputy. i'm the secretary for rural development. and she initially put me on administrative leave, you know? she told me to go home. and that's why i told the staff -- i was there in a leadership staff meeting. i told them what was going on and told them i had to leave. and since i was in one of the government-issued cars, i told them i was driving to athens with the car and i would pick up my car and go home. i was doing exactly what she told me to do. and then on the way i received three different calls about resigning.

did she tell you that the white house wanted you out --

yes.

-- because a right wing commentator was about to do a story about you?

when she told me i said, cheryl, what happened? she said, well, when glenn beck said you would be on his show tonight, that did it.

so the white house, she says, was responding to that threat?

yes.

do you at this point, shirley, do you at this point feel that if they had given you a chance to explain your story and give it proper context that they would have not made the decision that they made?

you know, i don't know what decision they would have made, but at least they would have made the decision knowing the truth. they made the decision not knowing and didn't care to know. and they can say all they want, that it would have compromised and the decision. they better deal with some of those that are being made that are really compromising the decisions. because everything i did while i was there was all about fairness. that's the one thing i stressed with the staff. i said to them over and over, if i don't do anything else while i'm here, i want to make sure people know the programs of this agency and know that they have equal access. i said that day in and day out.

well, let me give you an opportunity to respond as perhaps you seem to suggest you would have liked to. if i were secretary tom vilsack and i had called you last night and i said, shirley, why in the world in that speech did you use those words where you seemed to be suggesting that you would not do as much for this white farmer as you could have, why did you say that, shirley? now, tom vilsack maybe didn't ask you that. but if he would have, what would you have said?

i would have taken the time to explain why i said it the way i did. and then i would have explained what i did, my actions as the spooners have told you. it would have spoken volumes for what i did. you know. i can't think of any farmer, black or white, that i refused to help. i can't think of one that i didn't help. who came to me for help.

look, i know that life is often difficult to reexamine and we all do things and say things. let me ask you this question. given an opportunity to do this speech again, would you say it differently?

i know now that there are racist people out there who would try to take it to mean something else. i would look at a different way of trying to say the same thing. you know. i talked about a time in my life where i realize -- you know, i don't know where you grew up but i grew up in the south. and i grew up in racism and had to fight it all of my life. and that's why i fight so much against it. and that's why i know that racism is not something that's a part of me.

let me ask you this question, because i raised this a while ago when brooke baldwin was here. and we were just wondering -- there may be some people out there who would say -- we just learned that your father was killed, murdered by the kkk?

murdered. no, by a white farmer in the county that i grew up in and the county where we live.

was that a racist murder?

yes. and that it happened and there were witnesses and the grand jury refused to indict him.

is that -- how have you been able to deal with that throughout your life --

you know what i did?

go ahead.

what i had to do was turn that into a positive. and i did it. by devoting my life to working for change. i made a commitment on the night my father died, that i would not leave the south and i would stay here and work to make a difference. that's what the last 45 years have been like.

what a story. shirley, can you hang on for just a moment? we're going to take a quick break and come back and continue this special report. we're going to keep shirley. we'll be joined by some other guests and more reaction to this. we would like to thank eloise and roger spooner now for joining us and sharing their perspective with us on this story as well. you're watching a special edition of "rick's list." and this is a part of our national conversation and we're going to be right back. ies who d tdd# 1-800-345-2550 assistance getting around their homes. there is a medicare benefit that may qualify you for a new power chair or scooter at little or no cost to you. imagine... one scooter or power chair that could improve your mobility and your life. with private insurance, one medicare benefit that, may entitle you to pay little to nothing to own it. one company that can make it all happen ... your power chair will be paid in full. the scooter store. hi i'm doug harrison. we're experts at getting you the power chair or scooter you need. in fact, if we qualify you for medicare reimbursement and medicare denies your claim, we'll give you your new power chair or scooter free. i didn't pay a penny out of pocket for my power chair. with help from the scooter store, medicare and my insurance covered it all. call the scooter store for free information today.

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:39 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fw: POLITICO Breaking News

From: breakingnews@politico.com
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 18:35:31 2010
Subject: POLITICO Breaking News
POLITICO Breaking News:

The NAACP on Tuesday said □we were snookered□ by Fox News and conservative Internet entrepreneur Andrew Breitbart into criticizing former USDA official Shirley Sherrod, who was captured on videotape saying she once withheld assistance to a white farmer. □The tape of Ms. Sherrod□s speech at an NAACP banquet was deliberately edited to create a false impression of racial bias, and to create a controversy where none existed,□ the group said in a statement.

For more information...<http://www.politico.com>

To stop alerts, visit:
http://dyn.politico.com/Unsubscribe_auto.cfm?email=justin.dejong@usda.gov&uuid=EA3B34A9-188B-4976-D10CEC82C5230B02&alertID=1

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:50 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Cnn

Just called from atlanta and they wondered secretaries public schedule tomorrow. I pushed back and said I wasn't sure why they were asking since we answered questions so thoroughly this afternoon. That we spent 12+ minutes answering questions fully and we didn't leave any question unanswered. Also that I had some concerns because the transcripts that I have seen of what they are airing doesn't fully reflect the secretarys statements. That they are not airing all answers to questions. He said he would pass concern on and that they will be airing additional footage throughout the night.

If you want to follow up at all, contact is chuck johnston, 

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:53 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: Fw: Secretary's comments in yellow

Krysta, please see below. Cnn transcript with secretary interview.

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: JIC4, OC -USDA; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris; Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Tue Jul 20 18:35:39 2010
Subject: RE: Secretary's comments in yellow
TV eyes Clip: [Video](#)

(includes video of secretary about 40 seconds in)

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: JIC4, OC -USDA
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 5:11 PM
To: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris; Chan, Stephanie; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: Secretary's comments in yellow

let me just look at some notes here. suzanne malveaux, one of our correspondents is recording this from the white house. the white house did not pressure her. it was the secretary's decision as he has said.

that's not what they told me. that's not what cheryl cooke conveyed to me. each time she said it she said the white house.

are you still there?

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-- because a right wing commentator was about to do a story about you?

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but i grew up in the south. and i grew up in racism and had to fight it all of my life. and that's why i fight so much against it. and that's why i know that racism is not something that's a part of me.

let me ask you this question, because i raised this a while ago when brooke baldwin was here. and we were just wondering -- there may be some people out there who would say -- we just learned that your father was killed, murdered by the kkk?

murdered. no, by a white farmer in the county that i grew up in and the county where we live.

was that a racist murder?

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is that -- how have you been able to deal with that throughout your life --

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what a story. shirley, can you hang on for just a moment? we're going to take a quick break and come back and continue this special report. we're going to keep shirley. we'll be joined by some other guests and more reaction to this. we would like to thank eloise and roger spooner now for joining us and sharing their perspective with us on this story as well. you're watching a special edition of ""rick's list."" and this is a part of our national conversation and we're going to be right back. ies who d tdd# 1-800-345-2550 assistance getting around their homes. there is a medicare benefit that may qualify you for a new power chair or scooter at little or no cost to you. imagine... one scooter or power chair that could improve your mobility and your life. with private insurance, one medicare benefit that, may entitle you to pay little to nothing to own it. one company that can make it all happen ... your power chair will be paid in full. the scooter store. hi i'm doug harrison. we're experts at getting you the power chair or scooter you need. in fact, if we qualify you for medicare reimbursement and medicare denies your claim, we'll give you your new power chair or scooter free. i didn't pay a penny out of pocket for my power chair. with help from the scooter store, medicare and my insurance covered it all. call the scooter store for free information today.

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:29 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fw: Is there an updated ap story?

From: Misailidis, Sarah
To: DeJong, Justin; Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb
Sent: Tue Jul 20 19:21:01 2010
Subject: RE: Is there an updated ap story?

USDA worker pressured to resign over race comments

By BEN EVANS and MARY CLARE JALONICK (AP) – 23 minutes ago

WASHINGTON — The Obama administration is standing by its quick decision to oust a black Agriculture Department employee over racially tinged remarks at an NAACP banquet in Georgia, despite evidence that her remarks were misconstrued and growing calls for USDA to reconsider.

Shirley Sherrod, who until Tuesday was the Agriculture Department's director of rural development in Georgia, says the administration caved to political pressure by pushing her to resign for saying that she didn't give a white farmer as much help as she could have 24 years ago, when she worked for a nonprofit group.

Sherrod says her remarks, delivered in March at a local NAACP banquet in Georgia, were part of a story about racial reconciliation, not racism. The white farming family that was the subject of the story stood by Sherrod and said she should keep her job.

"We probably wouldn't have (our farm) today if it hadn't been for her leading us in the right direction," said Eloise Spooner, the wife of farmer Roger Spooner of Iron City, Ga. "I wish she could get her job back because she was good to us, I tell you."

The NAACP, which initially condemned Sherrod's remarks and supported Sherrod's ouster, joined the calls for her to keep her job. The civil rights group said it and millions of others were duped by the conservative website that posted partial video of her speech on Monday.

"We have come to the conclusion we were snookered ... into believing she had harmed white farmers because of racial bias," said the statement from NAACP President Benjamin Todd Jealous.

The website, biggovernment.com, gained fame last year after airing video of workers at the community group ACORN counseling actors posing as a prostitute and her boyfriend. It posted the Sherrod video as evidence that the NAACP, which recently passed a resolution condemning what it calls racist elements of the Tea Party, condones racism of its own. Sherrod said she was on the road Monday when USDA deputy undersecretary Cheryl Cook called her and told her the White House wanted her to resign because her comments were generating a cable news controversy.

"They called me twice," she told The Associated Press in an interview. "The last time they asked me to pull over to the side of the road and submit my resignation on my Blackberry, and that's what I did."

Sherrod said administration officials weren't interested in hearing her explanation. "It hurts me that they didn't even try to attempt to see what is happening here, they didn't care," she said. "I'm not a racist ... Anyone who knows me knows that I'm for fairness."

The administration gave a different version of events.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack — not the White House — made the decision to ask Sherrod to resign, said USDA spokeswoman Chris Mather. She said Sherrod willingly resigned when asked.

In a statement, Vilsack said the controversy surrounding Sherrod's comments could, rightly or wrongly, cause people to question her decisions as a federal employee and lead to lingering doubts about civil rights at the agency, which has a troubled history of discrimination.

"There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA," Vilsack said. "We have a duty to ensure that when we provide services to the American people we do so in an equitable manner."

The administration is sensitive to the issue because the Agriculture Department has for decades faced charges of discrimination against black farmers who said they could not get aid that routinely went to whites. The department agreed

to a final \$1.25 billion settlement earlier this year in a class-action suit that has been pending for more than a decade. The payout of that settlement is pending in Congress, and Vilsack has made fixing past wrongs over civil rights a top priority. The current controversy began Monday when biggovernment.com posted a two-minute, 38-second video clip in which Sherrod describes the first time a white farmer came to her for help. It was 1986, and she worked for a nonprofit rural farm aid group. She said the farmer came in acting "superior" to her and that she debated how much help to give him.

"I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland, and here I was faced with helping a white person save their land," Sherrod said.

Initially, she said, "I didn't give him the full force of what I could do" and only gave him enough help to keep his case progressing. Eventually, she said, his situation "opened my eyes" that whites were struggling just like blacks, and helping farmers wasn't so much about race but was "about the poor versus those who have."

Sherrod said Tuesday the incomplete video appears to intentionally twist her message. She says she became close friends with the farmer and helped him for two years.

"She's always been nice and polite and considerate. She was just a good person," Eloise Spooner said. "She did everything she could trying to help."

Locals said the controversy was unwelcome.

"This is a shame," said Olivia Pearson, a local commissioner for rural Douglas, Ga., who attended the event. "I can assure you that what Mrs. Sherrod said was not a racial statement. She was just trying to tell them about life."

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From: DeJong, Justin

Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:01 PM

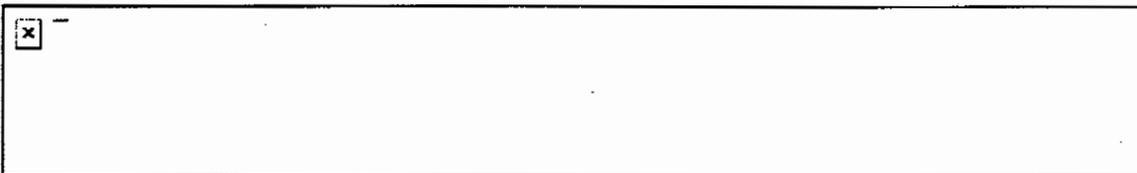
To: Chan, Stephanie; Misailidis, Sarah

Subject: Is there an updated ap story?

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:34 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fw: Shirley Sherrod summary clips packet
Attachments: image001.jpg; 7.20.10_ShirleySherrodclips.doc

From: Sarah.Misailidis@oc.usda.gov
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie; Purchia, Liz; DeJong, Justin
Cc: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 19:30:53 2010
Subject: Shirley Sherrod summary clips packet
Please see below and attached. I will update in the morning. Thank you.



Office of Communications (202) 720-4623

USDA Clips

Tuesday, July 20, 2010

USDA Clips are intended for use by authorized government personnel only. Redistribution by any means to any unauthorized person violates copyright on the source material.

Rural Development clips

USDA worker pressured to resign over race comments (AP 7/20)

The Obama administration is standing by its quick decision to oust a black Agriculture Department employee over racially tinged remarks at an NAACP banquet in Georgia, despite evidence that her remarks were misconstrued and growing calls for USDA to reconsider.

Shirley Sherrod, who until Tuesday was the Agriculture Department's director of rural development in Georgia, says the administration caved to political pressure by pushing her to resign for saying that she didn't give a white farmer as much help as she could have 24 years ago, when she worked for a nonprofit group. Sherrod says her remarks, delivered in March at a local NAACP banquet in Georgia, were part of a story about racial reconciliation, not racism. The white farming family that was the subject of the story stood by Sherrod and said she should keep her job. [Link](#)

USDA worker resigns over racism charge from video (AP 7/20)

A black employee who resigned from the Agriculture Department over comments at a Georgia NAACP meeting said Tuesday the White House forced her out of her job over a manufactured racial controversy. Shirley Sherrod, who until Tuesday was USDA's director of rural development in Georgia, said she was on the road Monday when USDA deputy undersecretary Cheryl Cook called her and told her the White House wanted her to resign. "They called me twice," Sherrod told The Associated Press in an interview. "The last time they asked me to pull over the side of the road and submit my resignation on my Blackberry, and that's what I did." A USDA spokesman would not comment on whether the White House was involved, but Secretary Tom Vilsack issued a statement saying the agency has no tolerance for discrimination. [Link](#)

USDA worker quits over racism charge from video (AP 7/20)

A black federal worker has resigned from a Georgia agricultural job after a video clip showed her saying she had not helped a farmer as much as she could have because he was white. U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a statement Tuesday he had accepted the resignation of Shirley Sherrod. Vilsack says the USDA has no tolerance for discrimination. Sherrod told the Atlanta-Journal Constitution she was forced out of her job as the USDA's rural development director for Georgia. She said the two-minute, 38-second video posted online Monday misconstrued her message. Sherrod's taped remarks were from a local meeting of the civil rights group NAACP. National NAACP President Benjamin Todd Jealous welcomed the resignation because the group opposes racism of all kinds. [Link](#)

Dismissed employee blames media (UPI 7/20)

An employee of the U.S. Department of Agriculture says she lost her job because the media misconstrued a speech she gave at an NAACP banquet. Shirley Sherrod, who was forced out as the USDA's rural development director for Georgia, is seen on a video admitting she didn't do everything she could to help a white farmer who needed aid, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported Tuesday. What the media didn't report, Sherrod says, was that the incident she was relating on the video happened 24 years ago when she was working for another organization, not the federal government. Also left out, Sherrod says, is the part where she says she was trying to figure out how to help someone who was condescending. [Link](#)

Ex-USDA official insists she was told White House wanted her to quit (CNN 7/20)

While officials say the White House didn't ask for Shirley Sherrod's resignation, the former black Agriculture Department employee insisted Tuesday that the push for her to step down came from the Obama administration. But Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack said he asked her to resign without interacting with the White House. "When I saw the statements and the context of the statements, I determined that it would make it difficult for her to do her job as a rural development director, and compromise our capacity to close the chapter on civil rights cases, I didn't want anything to jeopardize her job in terms of getting the job done and getting people to work in Georgia," Vilsack said. [Link](#)

Former USDA employee says White House pressured her to resign (CNN 7/20)

A black former Agriculture Department employee, who resigned after a video clip surfaced of her discussing a white farmer, insisted Tuesday she "went all out" to help the man keep his farm and said she resigned under pressure from the Obama administration. Shirley Sherrod, who resigned Monday as the department's director of rural development for Georgia, told CNN she had four calls telling her the White House wanted her to resign. "They asked me to resign, and in fact they harassed me as I was driving back to the state office from West Point, Georgia, yesterday," she said. The last call "asked me to pull to the side of the road and do it [resign]," she said. [Link](#)

Ex-worker: USDA 'wasn't interested in hearing the truth' (CNN 7/20)

A former USDA employee who resigned after a video surfaced of her talking about a white farmer told CNN on Tuesday that the administration "wasn't interested in hearing the truth." Shirley Sherrod, who resigned Monday as the department's state director of rural development for Georgia, told CNN she had four calls telling her the White House wanted her to resign. She said she was driving at the time, and the last call asked her to pull to the side of the road and offer her resignation. Sherrod's resignation came after media outlets aired the video, in which she tells and audience she did not give the white farmer "the full force of what I could do" to help him avoid foreclosure. [Link](#)

USDA employee says statements on white farmer misconstrued (CNN 7/20)

A black Agriculture Department employee who resigned after a video clip showed her talking about a white farmer said Tuesday her remarks were taken out of context. Shirley Sherrod, the department's former state director of rural development for Georgia, told CNN on Tuesday the incident she discusses in the clip took place more than two decades ago -- and she recounted it to an audience to make the point that people should move beyond race. "I was speaking to that group, like I've done many groups, and I tell them about a time when I thought the issue was race and race only," Sherrod told CNN's "American Morning" from her home in Albany, Georgia. The incident took place in 1986, while she worked for a nonprofit and before she worked for the USDA, she said. "I was telling the story of how working with him helped me to see the issue is not about race. It's about those who have versus those who do not have." [Link](#)

NAACP: We were 'snookered' by Sherrod tape (CNN Blog 7/20)

The NAACP has retracted its earlier statement condemning statements made by a former Agriculture Department employee, saying it was "snookered by Fox News" and conservative website publisher Andrew Breitbart. "Having reviewed the full tape by Shirley Sherrod, who is the woman who was fired by the Department of Agriculture, and most importantly heard the testimony of the white farmers mentioned in this story, we now believe that the organization that edited the documents did so with the intention of deceiving millions of Americans," the statement from NAACP President Benjamin Jealous says. The organization also urged Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack to reconsider Sherrod's resignation. [Link](#)

Race remarks cost USDA official her job (CNN Blog 7/20)

An African-American Agriculture Department worker resigns over her handling of a white Georgia farmer's case when she worked for a nonprofit group in 1986. It came to light when Shirley Sherrod talked about the case at an NAACP banquet earlier this year. Were her remarks a teaching moment that backfired, or evidence of racism? Sherrod says her comments were taken out of context – that the point of her story was to unite people. Tony Harris will be talking to Sherrod at 11:00am ET on CNN, and we'll post that interview here. Watch some of her speech and phone interview with CNN's American Morning below, then tell us what you think. We'll share some of your comments on air in the CNN Newsroom, 11:00am – 1:00pm ET. [Link](#)

Why Was Shirley Sherrod Fired? (Fox News – Glenn Beck 7/20)

Let me show you the comments from Shirley Sherrod, the USDA's director of rural development in Georgia. Back in March, while addressing the NAACP, she said this about helping a white farmer: (BEGIN VIDEO CLIP) SHIRLEY SHERROD, FORMER USDA OFFICIAL: I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough. So that when he, I assumed the Department of Agriculture had sent him to me, either that or the Georgia Department of Agriculture, and he needed to go back and report that I did try to help him. [Link](#)

Forcing Ga. Official to Resign Over YouTube Clip was the Right Call, Agriculture Chief Says (Fox News 7/20)

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack on Tuesday stood by his decision to demand the resignation of a Georgia official over a controversial YouTube clip, though the ex-official claimed afterward that the Obama administration never gave her a chance to tell her side of the story. Shirley Sherrod, the department's ex-Georgia director of Rural Development, said the White House forced her out after the video surfaced showing her telling a story about how she withheld help to a white farmer in trouble. But she claimed the video omitted key context and that the administration just got scared. "They were not interested in hearing the truth. No one wanted to hear the truth," she said in a television interview Tuesday morning. [Link](#)

Ex-Ag Official Says Video Showing 'White Farmer' Story Excludes Key Context (Fox News 7/20)

The Department of Agriculture official who resigned Monday night over comments she made at an NAACP dinner in March is claiming that the video clip that caused the firestorm excluded critical context. Shirley Sherrod said the Obama administration got scared after the YouTube clip surfaced. In the video, the department's ex-Georgia director of Rural Development is shown telling the story about how she withheld help to a white farmer in trouble. But Sherrod, in an interview overnight with The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, said she was telling a story about events that happened 24 years when she was working for a local non-profit group. [Link](#)

Video Shows USDA Official Saying She Didn't Give 'Full Force' of Help to White Farmer (FOX News 7/20)

Days after the NAACP clashed with Tea Party members over allegations of racism, a video has surfaced showing an Agriculture Department official regaling an NAACP audience with a story about how she withheld help to a white farmer facing bankruptcy -- video that now has forced the official to resign. Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, is shown in the clip describing "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." Sherrod, who is black, claimed the farmer took a long time trying to show he was "superior" to her. The audience laughed as she described how she determined his fate..."There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly

condemn any act of discrimination against any person," Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a written statement. "We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously. [Link](#)

Gingrich Responds to Discrimination at USDA (Fox News 7/20)

SEAN HANNITY, HOST: And this is a Fox News alert. An Obama administration official resigned just a short time ago after she was caught on tape appearing to tell an audience that she had used her position to racially discriminate against white farmers. Now the woman, Shirley Sherrod, was the Georgia state director at the Department of Agricultural. Now the president's Agricultural Secretary Tom Vilsack just released a statement saying the USDA has a zero tolerance policy against discrimination. Here's part of the shocking video that ignited this controversy. (BEGIN VIDEO CLIP) SHIRLEY SHERROD, FORMER USDA GA STATE DIRECTOR: The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking but he was trying to show me he was superior to me. I know what he was doing. But he had come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him. [Request Story](#)

Black USDA official resigns after admitting she only 'did enough' for white farmer (MSNBC 7/20)

A black USDA official in Georgia has resigned after publicly admitting she didn't help a white man trying to save his farm to the "full force" of her power and instead referred him to "one of his own." Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said he had accepted Shirley Sherrod's resignation, saying there was "zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA." The NAACP, which recently condemned racism in tea party groups, also issued a statement Monday night saying: "Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race." [Link](#)

Morning Joe (MSNBC 7/20)

Well, another story of reverse discrimination comes out today. This one is really interesting. I'm thinking that this woman regrets this comment. a USDA official in Georgia has resigned after I YouTube clip shows her admitting that race helped determine how much aid would be given to a white farmer. You're not supposed to do that, are you? I mean, I'm not --it's probably not a good idea. for being so stupid. It's not even -- well, how about you just don't do it. Anyway, the state's director of rural development apparently made the comments during an NAACP banquet in March. Take a listen. The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking, but he was trying to show me he was superior to me. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time to show me he was superior to me was i was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him. I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So, I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. [Request Story](#)

Shirley Sherrod: White House Forced My Resignation (CBS 7/20)

The Department of Agriculture employee who resigned after a controversy erupted over recent remarks she made is now saying that the White House forced her resignation. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, however, is taking responsibility for the resignation, and the White House reportedly says it had no part in his decision. Shirley Sherrod, the USDA's former director of rural development in Georgia, said USDA deputy undersecretary Cheryl Cook called her Monday and said the White House wanted her to resign, the Associated Press reports. "They called me twice," Sherrod told the AP, noting that she was driving when she received the calls. "The last time they asked me to pull over the side of the road and submit my resignation on my Blackberry, and that's what I did." [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Resigns Over USDA Race Remark Furor (CBS News 7/20)

A high-ranking black employee of the U.S. Department of Agriculture has resigned after remarks she made about race were distributed by conservative web sites and aired on Fox News. A video clip of Shirley Sherrod, the USDA's Georgia State Director of Rural Development, was circulated by conservative blogger Andrew Breitbart and his site, biggovernment.com, in which Sherrod talked of withholding help to a white man facing the loss of his family farm. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack released a statement Tuesday saying he had accepted Sherrod's resignation, and added that the department has no tolerance for discrimination. [Link](#)

USDA worker quits over 1986 racial incident (The Washington Post 7/20)

A U.S. Agriculture Department official from Georgia resigned late Monday after she was caught on tape admitting that she had not helped a farmer as much as she could have because he was white. Shirley Sherrod, USDA state director of rural development, made the remarks on March 27 at an NAACP Freedom Fund banquet. Her videotaped remarks surfaced on YouTube on Monday. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack accepted Sherrod's resignation, saying, "There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously." NAACP President and Benjamin Jealous called Sherrod's actions shameful and agreed with the decision to fire her. [Link](#)

White House official: We didn't push for Sherrod's firing (Washington Post 7/20)

A White House official insists that the White House didn't pressure Shirley Sherrod to resign, or pressure USDA chief Tom Vilsack to fire her, over the Andrew Breitbart video allegedly showing her claiming she didn't help a white farmer 24 years ago because of racial reasons. "We did not pressure USDA or Ms. Sherrod," the White House official emails me. Ben Smith was told something similar. Separately, Vilsack, who fired Sherrod while declaring zero tolerance for "discrimination," released a statement that seemed to take ownership of the firing, without quite clarifying whether the White House had any role: Yesterday, I asked for and accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation for two reasons. First, for the past 18 months, we have been working to turn the page on the sordid civil rights record at USDA and this controversy could make it more difficult to move forward on correcting injustices. [Link](#)

Did White House fire woman on strength of bogus Breitbart video? (Washington Post 7/20)

By now you've heard about the story burning up the right: A U.S. Agriculture Department official says the USDA forced her to resign because Andrew Breitbart posted a video of her supposedly describing how she didn't help a white farmer 24 years ago because of racial reasons. The woman has now said the video is bogus and that she said nothing of the kind, and she's hinted that the White House urged her firing. So the question is this: Did the White House have this woman fired before the facts were known, all in response to what may prove to be a Breitbart-manufactured racial controversy? If so, this would illustrate an appalling White House willingness to "jump" when Breitbart says "how high," as Digby put it in a scorching post today. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod: Racist or scapegoat? (Washington Post 7/20)

Were the administration and the NAACP too hasty in their reactions to Shirley Sherrod, the Department of Agriculture employee who resigned (i.e., was fired) for allegedly racist comments? A video clip posted online Monday shows Sherrod delivering a speech at a March NAACP banquet, where she talks about her failure to help a white farmer who was in danger of losing his farm. Her suggestion: If he'd been black, she would have moved heaven and earth to help him. "There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, in accepting Sherrod's resignation. The NAACP, which last week accused the Tea Party of racism, rushed out a searing condemnation of Sherrod: "We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers," said NAACP president Benjamin Jealous. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod: Sacrificial lamb on the altar of race (Washington Post Blog 7/20)

As teachable moments in the minefield of race in America go, the case of Shirley Sherrod is a big one. When I first saw the video clip this morning, I was astonished. There was a black agriculture department official, Sherrod, boasting about how she used her federal position to deny help to a white farmer. Oh yeah. She needed to go. Or so I thought. As the day wore on and the truth was revealed, my heart sank. The videotape that caused a firestorm had been selectively edited. Sherrod was relating a story of redemption from 1986 when she worked for a non-profit in Georgia. Sure, she didn't want to help the white man before her too much because he displayed what she called a superior attitude towards her. But Sherrod went on to talk about how she spent the next two years trying to help the man save his farm. Sherrod said she learned from that experience. That it wasn't so much about black and white as it was about helping the poor. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod: Racist or scapegoat? (Washington Post Blog 7/20)

Were the administration and the NAACP too hasty in their reactions to Shirley Sherrod, the Department of

Agriculture employee who resigned (i.e., was fired) for allegedly racist comments? A video clip posted online Monday shows Sherrod delivering a speech at a March NAACP banquet, where she talks about her failure to help a white farmer who was in danger of losing his farm. Her suggestion: If he'd been black, she would have moved heaven and earth to help him. "There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, in accepting Sherrod's resignation. The NAACP, which last week accused the Tea Party of racism, rushed out a searing condemnation of Sherrod: "We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers," said NAACP president Benjamin Jealous. [Link](#)

An Ag official's bum racism rap (Chicago Tribune Blog 7/20)

Did Shirley Sherrod get a bum rap? The USDA's rural development director lost her job after a video turned up in which she appears to confess to having discriminated years ago against a white farmer who came to her for help. In the clip from a speech she made in March at a local NAACP banquet, Sherrod, who is black, appears to tell the crowd she didn't do everything she could to help a white farmer whom she said was condescending when he came to her for aid - at least not at first. "What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was, I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," Sherrod said in the video, recorded March 27 in Douglas in southeast Georgia. The trouble is that the clip does not show what the late, great Paul Harvey used to call "the rest of the story." [Link](#)

USDA Official Resigns in Racial Flap (TIME 7/20)

A U.S. Department of Agriculture official who is African American has resigned after a tape of discriminatory comments she made at an NAACP event was posted to the web. Shirley Sherrod, who had been Georgia's state director of rural development told CNN the video, first shown by conservative web publisher Andrew Breitbart, was taken out of context. In the clip, Sherrod describes how in 1986 she didn't offer her "full force" of help to a white farmer. Sherrod told CNN that at the time of the incident, she was not working for the USDA, but for a nonprofit organization and that she had been trying to help the farmer who had been foreclosed on. "I was telling the story of how working with him helped me to see the issue is not about race," she said "It's about those who have versus those who do not have." [Link](#)

Ex-USDA Official's Tale Just Another Racial Landmine Example (NPR 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod is getting her 15 minutes of fame and what a 15 minutes it is. She, of course, is the black woman, a former U.S. Agriculture Department official forced to resign because of what sounded like an admission that, more than two decades ago, long before she at the USDA but still working in a farmer-assistance program, she didn't help a white farmer in danger of losing his farm to the fullest extent possible because of race. A video of Sherrod making the statement went into heavy rotation on conservative media outlets like Breitbart.com and Fox News. Sherrod has been called a racist; the Obama Administration has been accused of harboring same. [Link](#)

Couple says fired USDA official helped save their land; USDA won't rehire (Atlanta Journal Constitution 7/20)

Despite being defended by the white farmer she allegedly discriminated against, former U.S. Department of Agriculture official Shirley Sherrod will not get her job back. Sherrod "kept us out of bankruptcy," said Eloise Spooner, 82. She and her husband Roger Spooner, who own a farm in Iron City, located in southwest Georgia, approached Sherrod in 1986 -- when she worked with the Georgia field office for the Federation of Southern Cooperative/Land Assistance Fund -- seeking assistance. Sherrod, who is black, was asked to resign Monday night by USDA Deputy Under Secretary Cheryl Cook after videotaped comments she made in March at a local NAACP banquet surfaced on the web indicating that she did not work as hard as she could on behalf of white farmers. [Link](#)

Farmer's wife says fired USDA official helped save their land (Atlanta Journal Constitution 7/20)

The wife of the white farmer allegedly discriminated against by the USDA's rural development director for Georgia said Shirley Sherrod "kept us out of bankruptcy." Eloise Spooner, 82, awoke Tuesday to discover that Sherrod had lost her job after videotaped comments she made in March at a local NAACP banquet surfaced on the web. Sherrod, who is black, told the crowd she didn't do everything she could to help a white farmer whom she said was condescending when he came to her for aid. She said the video was

selectively edited but regardless U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack was adamant that she resign.
[Link](#)

Resigned USDA official says racial story misconstrued (Atlanta Journal Constitution 7/20)

The USDA's rural development director for Georgia says she was forced out of her federally appointed job after a "snippet" of a speech she gave in March appeared to show her admission to only half-heartedly aiding a struggling white farmer because of his race. But in a phone interview from her home in Albany early Tuesday morning, Shirley Sherrod told the Atlanta-Journal Constitution that the two-minute, 38-second video posted online Monday by biggovernment.com and reported on by FoxNews.com and the AJC completely misconstrued the message she was trying to convey. Sherrod, 62, insisted her statements in the video were not racist. "For Fox to take a spin on this like they have done, and know it's not the truth ... it's very upsetting," she said. [Link](#)

In the curious case of Shirley Sherrod, let's see the whole tape (Atlanta Journal Constitution Blog 7/20)

A couple of folks in comments yesterday brought up the case of USDA official Shirley Sherrod, a black woman caught on tape at an NAACP meeting here in Georgia apparently bragging about being less than diligent in helping a white farmer. The folks at Big Government posted a portion of her speech as part of the running feud between the NAACP and the Tea Party over which organization is more racist. By the end of the day Monday, Sherrod had been forced to resign her post, and NAACP President Ben Jealous had released a statement agreeing with the forced resignation: "Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race. [Link](#)

Sherrod blames NAACP for firing (Politico 7/20)

The Agriculture Department official who has resigned after a video surfaced showing her saying she withheld assistance from a white farmer insisted on Tuesday that she really lost her job over the tea party's clash with the NAACP. A video of Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of rural development, telling an NAACP audience that she didn't give a white farmer the "full force" of what she could provide, went viral Tuesday and prompted Sherrod to leave the department. The NAACP condemned Sherrod's comments in a statement, calling them "shameful." Asked about the NAACP's actions during an interview with CNN on Tuesday, Sherrod said the only reason the video surfaced was in response to an NAACP resolution accusing the tea party of using "racist" tactics. "They got into a fight with the tea party, and all of this came out as a result of that," Sherrod said. [Link](#)

NAACP: Breitbart 'snookered' us (Politico Blog 7/20)

NAACP President Ben Jealous on Tuesday said the organization had been "snookered" into condemning former Agriculture Department official Shirley Sherrod. Sherrod was fired Monday after a video — posted on one of Andrew Breitbart's conservative sites — showed Sherrod saying she had not given a white farmer her "full force." On Tuesday, the family of the Georgia farmer Sherrod was speaking of in the video came forward to defend her. Additionally, Sherrod took to CNN to defend herself and attack the NAACP for criticizing her without first calling her to confirm details. [Link](#)

Georgia family defends USDA official (Politico Blog 7/20)

The family involved in a 24-year-old incident that resulted in a Department of Agriculture official resigning Monday night is speaking out on her behalf. Shirley Sherrod stepped down from her post as Georgia director of rural development Monday night, two days after a video surfaced in which she explains to an audience at the NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet in March that she did not do everything she could have to help a struggling farmer because he was white. In the video, Sherrod describes the incident, that took place when she was working with the Georgia field office for the Federation of Southern Cooperative/Land Assistance Fund. [Link](#)

Fired Ag Department employee says Obama White House wanted her out (USA Today 7/20)

The Obama White House has been dragged into the controversy over an U.S. Agriculture Department employee fired for comments about a white farmer. Shirley Sherrod, a black woman who was the USDA's director of rural development in Georgia, told the Associated Press that a department official said the White House wanted her resignation. "They called me twice," Sherrod said, referring to the Ag Department. "The last time they asked me to pull over the side of the road and submit my resignation on

my Blackberry, and that's what I did." Sherrod told CNN the White House was worried about more attacks from Fox conservative commentator Glenn Beck. [Link](#)

Former Agriculture Department Official Denies Racism; Secretary Vilsack Stands By Her Firing (ABC News Blog 7/20)

A former Department of Agriculture official said her termination was an unfair casualty of a larger political spat on race between the Tea Party movement and the NAACP, but Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack Tuesday afternoon stood by his decision to seek her termination based on a controversial anecdote she told earlier this year. On Monday morning, conservative blogger Andrew Breitbart posted a video of Shirley Sherrod, then the US Department of Agriculture's director of rural development for Georgia, along with an essay titled "Video Proof: The NAACP Awards Racism - 2010." [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Resigns USDA Job After Admitting Use Of Racial Preference During NAACP Banquet (VIDEO) (The Huffington Post 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod, who resigned Monday from the USDA. 756 Shirley Sherrod, a USDA official in Georgia, has resigned after publicly admitting that race played a factor in her decision to limit how much aid would be given to a white farmer. Sherrod, who is African American, made the comments during a local NAACP banquet on March 27, according to information displayed on the video. A clip of her speech first appeared Monday morning on BigGovernment.com and aired that evening on Fox News. Her resignation as the agency's state director of rural development was quickly accepted by U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. He cited a zero-tolerance policy and told CNN that he was working to "reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department." In her controversial speech, Sherrod discussed the first time she was "faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." She claimed that during the conversation, the man "was trying to show me he was superior to me." [Link](#)

Would Shirley Sherrod's Full NAACP Speech Give a Different Impression? (AOL News 7/20)

In the ongoing war over who is more racist -- the NAACP or the tea party -- the right has delivered a blow with revealing footage of a black USDA official, Shirley Sherrod, speaking at an NAACP conference and admitting to doing less than she could have to help a white farmer. On Monday, Sherrod resigned. But she also sought to clarify the record, and her version jibes with the fact that the footage released by the website Big Government was cut off at just about the point where it appeared Sherrod was beginning to disown her own prejudice. She was starting to say how class distinctions trumped racial ones, and that poor blacks and whites should feel solidarity. Just before the segment ends, Sherrod tells the audience: "That's when it was revealed to me that it's about poor, versus those who have. It's not so much about white ... it is about white and black. But it's not, you know, it opened my eyes." [Link](#)

Black USDA Official Resigns in Flap Over White Farmer (AOL News 7/20)

A black USDA official who was pressured to resign over comments she made about not helping a struggling white farmer as much as she could have says the agency didn't know the whole story and succumbed to political pressure. Shirley Sherrod resigned Monday as the USDA's rural development director for Georgia after a clip of the speech was posted online by conservative outlets, biggovernment.com and later FoxNews. [Link](#)

NAACP Slams Shirley Sherrod's Actions As 'Shameful' (My Fox New York 7/20)

The actions of a black U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) official who admitted withholding help to a white farmer facing bankruptcy were late Monday described as "shameful" by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, was exposed in a video recorded at an NAACP banquet describing "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." Sherrod claimed the farmer took a long time trying to show he was "superior" to her. "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land -- so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough," she said in the video. The Agriculture Department announced Monday, shortly after FOXNews.com published its initial report on the video, that Sherrod had resigned. [Link](#)

Ga. USDA Official Resigns Over Comments (My Fox Atlanta 7/19)

Racially charged comments have led to the abrupt resignation of an agriculture department official. Shirley Sherrod was the top official who oversaw rural development in the state of Georgia. According to FOX

News, Sherrod, the director of the USDA's rural development agency, resigned over comments she made at an NAACP meeting. FOX News obtained taped comments from an NAACP meeting that took place in Douglas, Georgia in March. According to FOX News, Sherrod is seen talking about how she withheld help to a white farmer who was facing bankruptcy. "I didn't give him the full force of what I could do, I did enough," Sherrod said during the meeting. In the video, Sherrod said she was struggling with the fact so many black people have lost their farmland and she was faced with having to help a white person save their land. Sherrod said she took him to see a white lawyer. "I figured if I took him to one of them his own kind, [they] would take care of him," said Sherrod. According to FOX News, the agriculture department announced Monday that Sherrod had resigned. [Link](#)

Georgia's Rural Development Director resigns (Fox 31 7/20)

A black USDA worker has resigned after a video of her making racist remarks has surfaced. US Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced Monday he has accepted the resignation of Georgia's Rural Development Director Shirley Sherrod, who lives in Albany. Here is a comment Sherrod made about helping a white farmer during her speech at the NAACP's 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet in March. "So many black people had lost their farm land and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough" says Sherrod. National NAACP President Benjamin Todd Jealous welcomed the resignation because the group opposes racism of all kinds. Sherrod is married to a prominent Civil Rights Activist in Albany. [Link](#)

USDA big quits in bias-boast shock (The New York Post 7/20)

A black official in the US Agriculture Department resigned yesterday after a video surfaced of her bragging to the NAACP that she didn't do everything she could to help a white farmer facing bankruptcy. Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, told the audience at a March banquet in Atlanta that she claimed the man felt "superior" to her, according to FoxNews.com. "He had come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was talking all that time, trying to show me he was superior to me, was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," Sherrod said. "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land -- so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do." "I did enough," she said. [Link](#)

White House forced me to resign over fabricated racial controversy (NY Daily News 7/20)

One strike and she was out. A black employee who resigned from the Agriculture Department on Monday said the White House forced her out after remarks that she says have sparked a fabricated racial controversy. Shirley Sherrod, the former Georgia director of Rural Development, said she received a phone call from the USDA's deputy undersecretary Cheryl Cook on Monday while she was in a car. Cook told her that the White House wanted her to call it quits. "They called me twice," Sherrod told the Associated Press. "The last time they asked me to pull over the side of the road and submit my resignation on my Blackberry, and that's what I did." [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod's Disappearing Act: Not So Fast (Washington Examiner 7/20)

My oh my, that happened quickly. Perhaps too quickly. Until yesterday, Shirley Sherrod was Georgia Director of Rural Development for the USDA. Earlier in the day at Big Government, Andrew Breitbart put up a video that exposed Ms. Sherrod as someone all too willing to discriminate based on race. Within hours of the video's release, USDA Director Tom Vilsack announced Sherrod's recognition, and in the process issued an exceptionally strong condemnation ("We are appalled by her actions ... Her actions were shameful ... she gave no indication she had attempted to right the wrong she had done to this man"). The NAACP, at whose Freedom Fund Banquet Sherrod spoke of her discriminatory posture, and at which the audience seemed to indicate approval of her outlook, followed a short time later, virtually echoing Vilsack. [Link](#)

BREAKING: Racist Obama administration member resigns (Manhattan Conservative Examiner 7/19)

Shirley Sherrod of the USDA's Georgia Rural Development office has resigned following the airing of overtly racist remarks she made in a speech before—of all organizations—the NAACP. At a local NAACP meeting in March of 2010, Sherrod boasted of withholding assistance to a farmer based on the color of his skin, which happened to be white. Sherrod (surprise!) is black. In her comments, which are captured in the video below, Sherrod freely admits to "struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost

their farm land, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land." She further confesses to abusing her position by refusing to "give him the full force of what I could do." The remarks conclude with a racist gem: "I took him to a white lawyer... I figured that if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him." [Link](#)

USDA Official Implicated in NAACP Racism Flap (Buckeye Ag Network 7/20)

Days after the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) denounced the Conservative Tea Party movement on allegations of racism, the organization was itself implicated in charges of racism involving a USDA official. In a video released at BigGovernment.com, USDA's Director of Rural Development in Georgia Shirley Sherrod was depicted acknowledging discriminating against white farmers. The video, of a speech Sherrod gave to the NAACP's Freedom Fund banquet in March of this year, stirred quite a controversy on the internet this week, forcing Sherrod's resignation from the department Monday. Sherrod's remarks in the NAACP speech indicated that she "didn't give [a white farmer] the full force of what I could do," because "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land." [Link](#)

The rest of the story (Arkansas Times Blog 7/20)

The right-wing echo chamber has been beating the drums for a couple of days now about a supposedly racist (black) USDA worker, promptly sacked by Ag Secretary Tom Vilsack on the strength of Fox reporting of her supposedly offensive remarks. The rest of the story is instructive. Hardly what Fox News or the odious Andrew Breitbart reported. The full video apparently will back up her account, in the appropriate fuller context, of what she said and did TWENTY-FOUR YEARS AGO. It is Acorn Faux reporting redux. It occurs to me that Sen. Blanche Lincoln could score some courage points here. No breath being held. [Link](#)

Breitbart's Skilled Editing (The Atlantic Blog 7/20)

The quotes that former USDA worker Shirley Sherrod gave on the edited tapes disseminated by Andrew Breitbart are indeed indefensible, but is it not fair to provide some kind of context? To wit: Sherrod said the short video clip excluded the breadth of the story about how she eventually worked with the man over a two-year period to help ward off foreclosure of his farm, and how she eventually became friends with him and his wife. "And I went on to work with many more white farmers," she said. "The story helped me realize that race is not the issue, it's about the people who have and the people who don't. When I speak to groups, I try to speak about getting beyond the issue of race." [Link](#)

White House wants it both ways on Sherrod firing (Salon 7/20)

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack issued a statement today explaining that he asked for Georgia rural development director Shirley Sherrod's resignation yesterday because "the controversy surrounding her comments would create situations where her decisions, rightly or wrongly, would be called into question making it difficult for her to bring jobs to Georgia." As Alex Pareene explained, the controversy Vilsack is referring to was whipped up when Andrew Breitbart released an edited video clip of Sherrod, it was mindlessly picked up by other media, and the Obama administration followed suit. But now that Breitbart's story of Sherrod being a racist has been exposed as bogus, the White House is trying to have it both ways: They say they support Vilsack's decision but at the same time had absolutely nothing to do with his making it. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod, scalp for the right wing (Salon 7/20)

Sweaty conservative culture warrior and Internet publisher Andrew Breitbart won yet another scalp today when Shirley Sherrod, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's rural development director for Georgia, was forced to resign for the offense of appearing in an obviously edited video clip that was posted to one of Breitbart's websites. Sherrod was speaking to a Georgia chapter of the NAACP. In the speech, according to Breitbart's characterization, Sherrod is explaining how she refused to help a white farmer as much as she could have because she preferred to help black people. Breitbart: We are in possession of a video from in which Shirley Sherrod, USDA Georgia director of rural development, speaks at the NAACP Freedom Fund dinner in Georgia. In her meandering speech to what appears to be an all-black audience, this federally appointed executive bureaucrat lays out in stark detail that her federal duties are managed through the prism of race and class distinctions. [Link](#)

USDA worker quits over racism charge from video (Salon 7/20)

A black federal worker has resigned from a Georgia agricultural job after a video clip showed her saying

she had not helped a farmer as much as she could have because he was white. U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a statement Tuesday he had accepted the resignation of Shirley Sherrod. Vilsack says the USDA has no tolerance for discrimination. Sherrod told the Atlanta-Journal Constitution she was forced out of her job as the USDA's rural development director for Georgia. She said the two-minute, 38-second video posted online Monday misconstrued her message. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod: It just hurt (WALB 7/20)

An Albany woman who fought for civil rights says she's unfairly labeled a racist. 62-year-old Shirley Sherrod is in our nation's headlines, following her resignation as Rural Development Director for the USDA. She says she was forced to quit her job Monday after video of a speech to the NAACP became public. In the video, Sherrod talks about helping a white farmer back in the 80's. Shirley Sherrod should be at her office in Athens. Instead she's in her Albany living room under fire for what's been called racial comments, upset she was forced to pull over and resign late yesterday afternoon. "You know it just hurt," she said. This land has been owned by 87-year-old Roger Spooner of Iron City and his family for decades, in part thanks to the help Shirley Sherrod gave the Spooners in the 80's. [Link](#)

State-level USDA official resigned after accused of racism (Headliner Watch 7/20)

A state-level U.S. Department of Agriculture official resigned officially after she was accused of racism. She was found speaking of not providing enough help to a white in a video. Shirley Sherrod, the former Georgia director of Rural Development, southeast Georgia, said a white farmer was "struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land." "What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was, I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," Sherrod said she said she decided to hold back the assistance, and sent the white farmer to a "white attorney", because "if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him." But Sherrod on Tuesday claimed that the video was manipulated and blamed Fox News. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Leaves USDA Over Racism Charge (News One 7/20)

A black USDA official in Georgia has resigned after publicly admitting she didn't help a white man trying to save his farm to the "full force" of her power and instead referred him to "one of his own." Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said he had accepted Shirley Sherrod's resignation, saying there was "zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA." [Link](#)

Reinstate Shirley Sherrod (Daily Kos 7/20)

This had better be a trial balloon: Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack this afternoon took responsibility for firing an official, Shirley Sherrod, whose appearance on video recalling her behavior toward a white farmer drew charges of racism, and whose immediate firing drew suggestions that the administration had over-reacted to an edited video clip. A White House official told me just now that the White House backs Vilsack's decision -- but that it was Vilsack's alone. The official said the White House -- contrary to the Sherrod's charge -- did not pressure the Department to fire her. Unfortunately, Greg Sargent is hearing similar things. Sorry, but simultaneously saying it wasn't our call' and 'we support the decision' just won't cut it. Firing Shirley Sherrod was a bad decision, motivated by the wrong reasons, and it should be reversed. She should be reinstated, and it's not a close call. [Link](#)

Point of Clarification (TPM Muckraker 7/20)

There's been some confusion today over one aspect of this Breitbart/USDA story that I want to try to clear up. Shirley Sherrod, the USDA official forced out, did an on camera interview with CNN at midday. In the interview, Sherrod described the pressure she came under yesterday from within the USDA to resign her post in light of the Breitbart video. Shortly after that, the Washington Post had a write-up of the interview in which they quote Sherrod as saying, "I got three calls from the White House. At one point they asked me to pull over to the side of the road and do it because you are going to be on Glenn Beck tonight." Now that purported declaration -- that she got three calls from the White House demanding her resignation -- seems off to anyone who follows these things. Sherrod is a low-level official. [Link](#)

Brietbart Speaks (Talking Points Memo 7/20)

Andrew Breitbart, who published the video clip of Shirley Sherrod's speech that led to her forced resignation, tells TPM he doesn't have the entire video either and that the clip came to him from a source already edited. But he's seen enough: "I think the video speaks for itself. The way she's talking about

white people ... is conveying a present tense racism in my opinion. But racism is in the eye of the beholder." [Link](#)

NAACP Now 'Conducting Investigation' Into Sherrod Video (Talking Points Memo Muckraker 7/20)

The NAACP, which originally condemned USDA appointee Shirley Sherrod, is now saying it is conducting an investigation of her story and will issue a new statement. "The NAACP is conducting an investigation into the recent revelations about the situation with Ms. Shirley Sherrod, including attempting to speak with Ms. Sherrod, the farmer in question and viewing the full video," the NAACP said in a statement to CNN. "Following a full and comprehensive process, we will issue an updated statement." Sherrod was forced to resign her position as the Georgia director of rural development for the USDA after Big Government posted a video clip of her telling a local NAACP chapter that she had once, before her time at the USDA, not helped a farmer as much as she could have because he was white. [Link](#)

Breitbart On Sherrod's NAACP Speech: 'I Did Not Edit This Thing' (Talking Points memo Muckraker 7/20)

The crux of the Shirley Sherrod controversy is what she said outside of the two-minute video clip posted by Big Government -- whether she was, as she claims, telling a story about how she overcame racial prejudice while helping poor farmers in Georgia, or whether the clip is a good encapsulation of her views. So we asked Andrew Breitbart, the founder of Big Government, why he hasn't posted the full video. "I don't have it," Breitbart told TPMuckraker in an interview. Breitbart said his source sent him just the edited clips at first, but is in the process of sending the full video. Breitbart said he'll post the full video, if he can get permission from the video production company who filmed it for a local NAACP chapter. He also maintained that he didn't edit the clip and that it was sent to him already edited. [Link](#)

USDA Appointee Forced To Resign After Edited Speech Released By Breitbart (VIDEO) (Talking Points Memo Muckraker 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod, an appointee to the USDA, was forced to resign yesterday after *Big Government* posted a video of a speech Sherrod gave in March. In the video, Sherrod, who is black, recounts how, 24 years ago, she didn't help a white farmer as much as she could. In the speech, given to a local Georgia chapter of the NAACP, Sherrod recounts a time when, while she was working for a land assistance fund, a white farmer came and asked her for help. "What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was, I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," she said. "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough." [Link](#)

An Alleged Racist Stance From 1980s Catches Up With USDA Official (Politics Daily 7/20)

A mid-level Agriculture Department official says she was forced to resign over an allegedly racist stance she took 24 years ago before she worked for the federal government. Shirley Sherrod, USDA Georgia state director for rural development, got in trouble over a video clip, aired by a conservative website, from a speech she made on March 27 to the NAACP Freedom Forum, according to The Washington Post. In it, Sherrod, who is African-American can be heard recounting her meeting with a struggling white farmer who came to her for help in 1986. "Here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So, I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough so that when he (went to state or federal officials) he needed to go back and report that I did try to help him." That's what the video clip showed. But Sherrod told CNN on Tuesday there was more to the story. In her March speech, she said she described the decades-old incident with the white farmer because she has since come to realize her mistake. "Working with him helped me realize the issue is not about race, it's about those who have and those who have not," she told the network in a telephone interview. She said she subsequently helped the farmer find a lawyer -- a white lawyer -- to deal with a bankruptcy proceeding, and later struck up a friendship with him and his wife. [Link](#)

NAACP 'appalled' by black USDA official's racial discrimination (Daily Caller 7/20)

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People President Benjamin Todd Jealous said late Monday he was "appalled" by the actions of U.S. Department of Agriculture official Shirley Sherrod, who resigned earlier in the day after video surfaced of her speaking at an NAACP event about discriminating against a white farmer seeking government help. Jealous also promised to look into why members of the

audience at an NAACP fundraiser in Georgia this past March reacted, as shown in the video, by nodding and in some cases laughing at Sherrod's remarks. But Jealous distanced the national NAACP from the incident. Coming just days after the NAACP condemned racist elements inside the Tea Party movement, Sherrod's remarks place the storied civil rights organization in an uncomfortable position. "Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race," Jealous said. "We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers." "Her actions were shameful. While she went on to explain in the story that she ultimately realized her mistake, as well as the common predicament of working people of all races, she gave no indication she had attempted to right the wrong she had done to this man," Jealous said (read his full statement below). [Link](#)

Former USDA Employee Accused Of Racism: "I Did Not Discriminate" [Video] (IndyPosted 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod quickly lost her job with the U.S. Department of Agriculture after a 2 minute, 38 second video clip surfaced that included a description of racism during a speech. But Sherrod's defending herself, saying the video clip is just that, a clip that was taken out of context, and does not show her entire speech, which was more of a story about racial reconciliation. In the clip, Sherrod can be seen describing herself not doing as much as she could have to help a white farmer avoid foreclosure. She said the farmer acted "superior" to her, so she "did enough" for him, steering him to "one of his own kind" for help, apparently a white lawyer. Sherrod doesn't deny those comments, but told CNN she did not discriminate against the farmer. She said her comments describing the experience with the farmer were taken out of context, and represent only part of the whole story. She says she in fact helped the man, and became good friends with his family. Sherrod adds that the experience she was speaking of happened 24 years ago when she worked at a nonprofit, long before she joined the USDA, and noted she was telling the story to make a point about how everyone should make a greater effort to reach out across racial boundaries. [Link](#)

Department of Agriculture Employee Shirley Sherrod Resigns Amid Racial Controversy (Associated Content 7/20)

There are a lot of high-profile people who make controversial statements relating to possible racism, and the statements usually come with controversy. Shirley Sherrod, who was an employee of the Department of Agriculture, is just the latest high-profile person to make a controversial statement regarding racism which has led to her resignation. According to the Washington Post, Department of Agriculture employee Shirley Sherrod has resigned due to pressure from the Obama administration over controversial comments she made at an NAACP banquet. The NAACP banquet happened in March, and she talked about how, back in 1986, she did not help a white farmer as much as she could have due to his race. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Resigns (Associated Content 7/20)

Was She Treated Unfairly? Shirley Sherrod, the USDA official who was caught on tape recounting an incident in which she discriminated against a white farmer seeking government help, was obliged to resign from her position because of her remarks. In the meantime, the NAACP, which so recently condemned "racist elements" in the Tea Party, was obliged to condemn the remarks, made before a meeting of NAACP members, who cheered some of the most egregious parts of the story. Having condemned the mote in the eye of the Tea Party, the NAACP was forced to deal with the beam in its own eye. Some are already suggesting that both the Obama administration, which had obliged Shirley Sherrod to resign, and the NAACP, which condemned her remarks, may have acted in haste. Eva Rodriguez of the Washington Post is among those who think that Sherrod was railroaded: [Link](#)

Get ready for another phony race story on FOX News (Milwaukee Journal Sentinel 7/20)

I'm sure the folks at FOX News will do as much with the resignation of Shirley Sherrod as they did with the fake outrage over the New Black Panther Party. Sherrod, who worked for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, was forced to resign after being accused of discriminating against a white farmer. A video of a talk she gave to black farmers that went viral on right-wing blogs seemed to suggest she admitted not helping the white farmer as much as she could have. But it turns out, the farmer's wife told CNN Sherrod did help her husband and did the best she could to help save their farm. Sherrod thinks she was forced to resign because of the recent political backlash over an NAACP statement condemning racism in the Tea Party Movement. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod update: Shirley Sherrod, former USDA worker, says White House pressured her to resign (videos) (Health and Beauty News 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod, the former USDA Director of Rural Development for the state of Georgia, and black woman, resigned from her position after a video showing her making racist comments was posted online. Though she resigned, Sherrod now says that she received multiple phone calls saying that the White House wanted her to resign her post. Speaking with CNN news, Shirley Sherrod said, "They asked me to resign, and in fact they harassed me as I was driving back to the state office from West Point, Georgia, yesterday. The last call "asked me to pull to the side of the road and do it [resign]." "I don't feel good about it, because I know I didn't do anything wrong. During my time at USDA, I gave it all I had." [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod update: Shirley Sherrod resigns from USDA after racist statements at NAACP Banquet (Health and Beauty News 7/20)

Racism is a two way street and after the NAACP has accused the Tea Party of harboring racists and racist views, allegations have fired back. Shirley Sherrod resigned from her post at the USDA after making racist statements during an NAACP banquet. The website Big Government exposed the story and showed video from the NAACP 20th Annual Banquet. You may view the video in the player embedded below. In the video, taken from March 27, 2010, Shirley Sherrod reveals that she let race play a factor when assisting a white farm owner who was losing his land. Shirley Sherrod explains in the video that the man was trying to show he was 'superior' to her and in return, she did not give the full force of what she could do. She also pointed him in the direction of a 'white' lawyer- one of his own kind, she said. [Link](#)

Fox smears Sherrod as racist, Sherrod cancels Fox interview (Media Matters 7/20)

Late in her program today, Megyn Kelly announced that her interview with former USDA official Shirley Sherrod -- which Kelly had touted throughout the show -- was off. Kelly said that Sherrod had "changed her mind," even after Fox had "offered her a considerable amount of time" to "clear the air" and "tell her story." Boy, I wonder why that happened? Maybe it had something to do with Fox's initial coverage of "her story," in which numerous Fox figures responded to Andrew Breitbart's heavily-edited clip of Sherrod's speech by claiming it was evidence that Sherrod was a racist. FoxNews.com's first report on Sherrod reported her statements made in the clip, but gave no indication that it might have been taken out of context. It reported that Fox was "seeking a response from both the NAACP and the USDA," but not that they had attempted to find the full version of the tape or contact Sherrod herself. [Link](#)

Breitbart's Sherrod narrative unravels (Media Matters 7/20)

Based on what appears to be selectively edited footage, Andrew Breitbart falsely suggested that Shirley Sherrod said that, in her former position with the USDA, she had discriminated against a white farmer. In fact, Sherrod's statements in the video corroborate her statement that the story she was discussing is 24 years old. Moreover, Sherrod says that the video took her remarks out of context to omit that she was actually telling story about her work to get "beyond the issue of race." [Link](#)

Confirmed: Breitbart called Sherrod a racist without having the full tape (Media Matters 7/20)

This afternoon in a Hot Air blog post, Ed Morrissey wrote: [Former USDA official Shirley] Sherrod and others can complain about Fox News and the editing of the tape, but two points should be remembered. First, Andrew Breitbart made it clear to me last night that this was the entirety of the speech he had in his possession. He also wants to find the whole speech and is trying to get it. Are you kidding me? In his post yesterday -- headlined "Video Proof: The NAACP Awards Racism - 2010" -- Breitbart claimed to have "video evidence of racism" on Sherrod's part. He said it showed her describing "how she racially discriminates against a white farmer," and referred to it as her "racist tale." The piece was illustrated with a literal "race card." According to Breitbart: In the first video, Sherrod describes how she racially discriminates against a white farmer. She describes how she is torn over how much she will choose to help him. And, she admits that she doesn't do everything she can for him, because he is white. Eventually, her basic humanity informs that this white man is poor and needs help. But she decides that he should get help from "one of his own kind". She refers him to a white lawyer. [Link](#)

The racism case of Shirley Sherrod - Complete video (allvoices 7/20)

Recently, NAACP clashed with Tea Party members over allegations of racism and racist remarks of the U.S. official Shirley Sherrod. Now, a full video tape has hit the internet in which the Agriculture Department official Shirley Sherrod entertains an NAACP audience with an awful story about how she withdrew her help to a white farmer facing bankruptcy. The video of Shirley Sherrod released on the web

forced her to resign from her official post of the department's Georgia Director of Rural Development by the end of Monday. In the video clip, Shirley Sherrod elaborates the whole saga of abusing her power. The black woman Shirley Sherrod claimed that white farmer was showing his superiority over her and later on, she detailed about how she decided his destiny. The act of Shirley Sherrod has been considered as discrimination and has been strongly condemned by the U.S government. Shirley Sherrod took unfair advantage of her position and mistreated a white farmer because of his race, and therefore, don't deserve the post, said NAACP President Ben Jealous. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod: 'They Made Me Quit Because I was Going to be on Glenn Beck' (Big Government 7/20)

The video showed Ms Sherrod, USDA Georgia Director of Rural Development, speaking at an NAACP Freedom Fund dinner in Georgia. Ms Sherrod, who is a federally appointed bureaucrat lays out in shockingly lays out that how race played a part in executing her duties. Sherrod was forced to resign almost immediately after the video was posted. Incredibly, it seems however that her firing was less about what she said in the speech, and more about the story being broadcast on Fox News. In interviews today, Ms Sherrod describes what was behind her speech and how, after the video cuts off, she explains that moment was a turning point in her life where she learned to beyond race. [Link](#)

USDA official resigns over racial comments (Government Executive 7/20)

An Agriculture Department official resigned on Monday over controversial racial remarks she made at a March NAACP banquet, according to various news reports. USDA Georgia State Director of Rural Development Shirley Sherrod told CNN Tuesday that the Obama administration forced her to resign after she described during the March NAACP speech a 1986 encounter with a white farmer in Georgia, whom she said she did not help as much as she could have because of his race. Sherrod, who is African American, was the state's director for the Federation of Southern Cooperatives Land Assistance Fund at the time. Historically, the organization's mission is to provide aid to black farmers. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod: Talks Too Loud (WagerRun 7/20)

As an over all rule, people with positions of power are expected to act and speak with political correctness all the time. However, where one man's idea of being PC ends, another begins. Not always to the good folks with powerful hands agree on what is acceptable. For Shirley Sherrod, she spoke what she thought and has now resigned from her position with the USDA. The reports are that she resigned but the basic information appears that she was really fired. The USDA's only statement is regarding their no-tolerance policy when it comes to racism. The NAACP indicates that the problem was the fact that two farmers of different races were compared with a negative reflection on the black farmer. Shirley Sherrod simply stated that in the present economy, farmers are hurting and that white farmers get less help than black farmers do. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Says 'Racial' Comments Were Misinterpreted (HULIQ 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod is the former Georgia director of Rural Development at the USDA. She was forced to resign on Monday after publicly admitting she didn't help a white man some 24 years ago with the "full force" she had available, but was the punishment fit for the crime? Shirley Sherrod, 62, in an interview with CNN, said the incident, and the comment, have been misconstrued. She made the initial remarks to the NAACP. To CNN, she said: "I was speaking to that group, like I've done many groups, and I tell them about a time when I thought the issue was race and race only. I was telling the story of how working with him helped me to see the issue is not about race. It's about those who have versus those who do not have." [Link](#)

Justice Not Only Obama Department Not Equally Enforcing Law (Heritage Foundation Blog 7/20)

This morning we reviewed the still unfolding New Black Panther Party scandal at the Department of Justice where a whistle blower, testifying under oath, quoted Deputy Assistant Attorney General Julie Fernandes as saying that "the Voting Section will never or will not, at least while she is there, bring any more cases against blacks or other national minorities." In other words, Fernandes has reportedly admitted that the Obama Justice Department is not enforcing the nation's civil rights law equally and in a race-neutral manner. The Obama Justice Department has refused to confirm or deny that Fernandes made this statement. Now Andrew Breitbart has unearthed a very similar statement from another Obama political appointee, this time from the Department of Agriculture. In the video, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Director of Rural Development for Georgia Shirley Sherrod tells an NAACP audience . . . First Justice. Now Agriculture. How many other Obama Department's are refusing to enforce our nation's laws equally? [Link](#)

USDA Worker Resigns Over Racism Charge (CBN 7/20)

Accusations of racism have cost federal employee Shirley Sherrod her job at the U.S. Agriculture Department. The charges stem from remarks she made 24 years ago at a meeting for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. She talked about purposely not doing enough to help a white farmer in Georgia. "The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm he took a long time talking, but he was trying to show me he was superior to me. I know what he was doing, but he had come to me for help," she said at that meeting. "But what he didn't know was that while he was talking, all that time trying to show me that he was superior to me, I was trying to decide how much help I was going to give him," she continued. [Link](#)

NAACP meeting calmly listened to racist remarks from black fed official (American Thinker 7/20)

Andrew Breitbart has scored another bullseye, revealing hypocrisy of the highest order on the part of another leftist establishment organization, the NAACP. On March 27 of this year, speaking before an NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet, Shirley Sherrod, the Department of Agriculture director for the State of Georgia -- responsible for over a billion dollars a year in spending -- boasts of denying a white farmer her full efforts because of his race. The audience does not react with shock or disapproval, but rather just sits there. So much for NAACP President Ben Jealous denouncing the tea parties for tolerating racists. Only after Breitbart gave the incriminating video national exposure did the NAACP issue the obligatory denunciation, to prevent further embarrassment. But when nobody was looking, the NAACP audience was totally cool with the racism expressed by their speaker. [Link](#)

Newt Gingrich praises NAACP (Black Redding News Review 7/20)

Former Republican House Speaker Newt Gingrich today applauded the NAACP's condemnation of a USDA official's racially insensitive remarks at its organization's event. Shirley Sherrod, USDA Rural Development Georgia State Director, was at the NAACP's 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet when she said she used race as a factor in doing her job. Sherrod has resigned because of her comments, which received strong rebuke from NAACP President Benjamin Todd Jealous. Gingrich told Sirius XM's Joe Madison her forced resignation and Jealous' strong rebuke is "exactly the right attitude," and "was an opportunity for the NAACP to prove that it was opposed to all racism," [Link](#)

Former USDA official tells her side of racial controversy (Federal Times 7/20)

CNN has an interview with Shirley Sherrod, an Agriculture Department official who stepped down yesterday after a video surfaced where she describes a 1986 incident where she didn't help a white farmer as much as she could because of his race. The NAACP applauded her resignation, but Sherrod — who was USDA's director of rural development in Georgia — said the comments in the video don't tell the whole story, and said the incident took place before she joined USDA. What do you think? Did Sherrod cross the line? Or is this a puffed-up controversy? [Link](#)

Another Win For Andrew Breitbart (National Review Blog 7/20)

The USDA official who admitted to discrimination against a white farmer, exposed in this video on Big Government, has resigned: Days after the NAACP clashed with Tea Party members over allegations of racism, a video has surfaced showing an Agriculture Department official regaling an NAACP audience with a story about how she withheld help to a white farmer facing bankruptcy — video that now has forced the official to resign. Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, is shown in the clip describing "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." Sherrod, who is black, claimed the farmer took a long time trying to show he was "superior" to her. The audience laughed as she described how she determined his fate. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Comments Results in Resignation (Lalate Blog 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod has resigned following her comments about a white farmer. Shirley Sherrod's remarks appeared in a video from BigGovernment.com, dated by the website as March 27. Shirley Sherrod has been the USDA's Georgia director of Rural Development. In the video, Sherrod addresses an NAACP banquet stating "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland and here I was faced with

having to help a white person save their land — so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough". Late Monday the USDA announced Sherrod had resigned. NAACP President and CEO Benjamin Todd Jealous issued a statement against Sherrod's comments. [Link](#)

USDA's Shirley Sherrod Disputes Clip of 'Racist' NAACP Banquet Comments (Mediaite 7/20)

In the latest in a series of racially-charged summer shark-week stories, USDA official Shirley Sherrod has resigned over a Breitbart-promoted YouTube clip that shows a portion of her March 27 speech at an NAACP banquet. In the clip, Sherrod talks about resenting a white farmer's condescending attitude, and as a result, not giving him "the full force of what I could do." The NAACP and the Secretary of Agriculture have weighed in, but there may be more to this story than meets YouTube's 2-minute eye. [Link](#)

USDA Official Resigns After Racial Comments Surface; NAACP Calls Comments "Shameful" (Mediaite 7/20)

An edited two-minute clip of an African American United States Department of Agriculture official has brought about her resignation after BigGovernment.com published it yesterday. Shirley Sherrod has resigned, the NAACP has condemned her "shameful" comments about withholding help for a white farmer and Sherrod has said she was taken out of context. In the video clip, put out by Andrew Breitbart's site and a speech she gave at a March NAACP banquet, she describes an interaction with a white farmer... [Link](#)

Andrew Breitbart Perfects 'White Victimology' (Newser 7/20)

Andrew Breitbart has played on the fears of conservative whites to claim another black victim, writes Tom Scocca for Slate. The latest is Shirley Sherrod of the USDA, who had to resign over a 24-year-old video twisted completely out of context. Sherrod—who wasn't a USDA employee at the time—was actually making the case against racism, but no matter. Breitbart's "lie" stands, aided and abetted by Fox News. "Breitbart is rapidly perfecting the 21st-century mau-mau: conservative white people are so afraid of being discriminated against that if you mention the fact that sometimes black people don't like white people—even if you are telling a story about why racism is bad—you are automatically committing a hate crime, against white conservatives," Scocca writes. "After three or four decades of whining about reverse racism, America now has achieved full-blown white victimology." [Link](#)

Farmer's Wife: Fired USDA Official Saved Us (Newser 7/20)

The wife of the white farmer at the heart of the Shirley Sherrod controversy has come forward, saying she considers Sherrod her "friend for life." Backstory: Sherrod lost her job over a video clip in which she said she hadn't done all she could to help the farmer keep his farm because he spoke condescendingly to her. But the farmer's wife, 82-year-old Eloise Spooner, tells the Atlanta Journal-Constitution that in reality, Sherrod did save their farm and "kept us out of bankruptcy." Sherrod's quote was part of a story about an incident in her past—long before her USDA tenure, when she worked for a Georgia land assistance office—in which she learned to see past race. "She took probably two or three trips with us to Albany just to help us out," says Spooner, who called Sherrod this morning to console her. "She's very sad about it. She told me she was so glad we talked. I just can't believe this is happening to her." [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod of USDA resigns (Buzz Tab 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod, USDA's black employee has resigned from her post on Monday in the wake of outburst of a video at conservative media outlets in which Shirley Sherrod is shown telling one of the audience that she had not given a white farmer the full force of what I could do to help him save his family farm. Tom Vilsack, the Agriculture Secretary said that he had accepted Shirley Sherrod's resignation. Shirley Sherrod was working as USDA's State Director of Rural Development for Georgia. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said he had accepted the resignation of Shirley Sherrod, the department's state director of rural development for Georgia. Tom Vilsack further added that in USDA, they are following a zero tolerance for discrimination. He said that being Secretary Agriculture he condemns any discriminatory act against any person. He further added that at USDA, they are working hard for past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history and they are taking fairness and equality as a serious matter at USDA. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Has Officially Resigned From Her Job Due To Racial Preference! (Moms Word Blog 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod, who is known as a USDA official in Georgia, has finally resigned after publicly admitting that race played a factor in her decision to limit how much aid would be given to a white farmer. Sherrod,

who is African American, made the comments during an NAACP banquet on March 27, according to the information in the video above. In fact a clip of her speech was being aired on BigGovernment.com and also Fox News Monday morning. Sherrod said during the now famous speech about the first time she was "faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." She claims that during the conversation, the man "was trying to show me he was superior to me." "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland," Sherrod told the crowd. "And here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land." [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod (Commonwealth Magazine 7/20 2:25)

Shirley Sherrod should get her job back (though I wonder whether she even wants it at this point), and Tom Vilsack should publicly apologize to this woman. It's scandalous that anyone in this administration would push someone to resign based on a Fox News/Andrew Breitbart report without conducting a full investigation to ascertain the real facts. The NAACP should also be ashamed [for condemning Sherrod before it bothered to get her story]. As for Breitbart and Fox, we already know they have no shame. UPDATES: Vilsack doubles down on stupid. Breitbart admits he hasn't even seen the whole video. What a sorry, sordid episode. [Link](#)

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DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:13 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Re: CNN Transcript: Reading of USDA Statement

Had hoped so but if something went south I wanted to be here to help manage.

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:10:34 2010
Subject: Re: CNN Transcript: Reading of USDA Statement

Yech.
By the way, what happened with your flight? I thought you were good to fly tonight?

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:07:51 2010
Subject: Re: CNN Transcript: Reading of USDA Statement

No they shouldn't have read your name. I think it was in poor taste.

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:06:30 2010
Subject: RE: CNN Transcript: Reading of USDA Statement

am I going to get in trouble because I didn't make it clear that my name was to appear nowhere in the news? :/

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:39 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Subject: Re: CNN Transcript: Reading of USDA Statement

Btw stephanie chan is now famous.

DeJong, Justin

From: Hutchinsonreport@aol.com
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:39 PM
To: chris.mather@usda.gov
Cc: Sandretti, David; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; orrin.evans@oc.usda.gov; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Press Advisory Civil Rights Leaders Call for Sherrod Reinstatement

Los Angeles Urban Policy Roundtable

July 20, 2010

for Immediate Release

Contact: Earl Ofari Hutchinson

323-383-6145

Press Advisory:

Civil Rights Leaders Call on Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack to Apologize and Reinstatement Shirley Sherrod

Los Angeles Urban Policy Roundtable President Earl Ofari Hutchinson, Los Angeles Civil Rights Assn. President Eddie Jones, Youth Advocacy Coalition President, Lita Herron, and Pedro Baez, Editor Voice of the People, on Tuesday, July 20 called on Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack to apologize to and immediately reinstate Shirley Sherrod to her post as the Agriculture Department's director of rural development in Georgia. Sherrod resigned possibly under pressure from the department for purported racially biased treatment of a white farmer.

The bias did not happen. The incident was manufactured by a well-known rightwing ideologue and used by conservative outlets to taint Sherrod's sterling reputation as an honorable public servant, and to hammer the NAACP and other civil rights organizations for recently calling out the tea party activists for their racism.

"The attack on Sherrod was a con job by the right and Vilsack fell for it," says Hutchinson, "He can now do the right, just and fair thing and apologize and reinstate Sherrod. This will not totally make up for the wrong to her but it will send the message that government administrators can admit and reverse bad decisions, and even more remove the taint from the name and reputation of a dedicated black public servant."

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From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:36:17 2010
Subject: CNN Transcript: Reading of USDA Statement
Station: CNN
Date: 07/20/2010 15:43:25 - 3:53:25 PM

shirley sherrod has said that the department of agriculture was pressured by the white house to ask her to resign. that's essentially what she told my colleague, tony harris, earlier today. we've been waiting for government to respond to her accusations and we just got that in, in the form of a statement. we expect we might get more. but here's the first statement as i read it to you, literally fresh off the press. this is from tom vilsack, agriculture secretary from the united states of america. yesterday, i asked for and accepted ms. sherrod's resignation for two reasons. first, for the past 18 months we have been working to turn a page on the sordid civil rights record at the usd and that controversy could make it more difficult to move forward. second, state directors are often called to use their discretion. the controversy surrounding her comments would create situations where her situations, rightly or wrongly, would be called into question, making it difficult for her to bring jobs to georgia. now, remember, ms. sherrod is saying here on cnn, if you took it in context, if you listen to the totality of what i actually said in this speech and not just the edited portions of it, you would understand that i was trying to make a point that says discrimination is not good. but the usda, her boss, tom vilsack, secretary of agriculture, does not appear to be buying that or even giving her reconsideration. why? let me read on. our policy is clear, he writes, there is zero tolerance for discrimination at usda and we strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. we have a duty to ensure that when we provide services to the american people, we do so in an equitable manner. but equally important is our duty to instill confidence in the american people that we are fair service providers. this comes from a stephanie chan, press secretary, press assistant office of communication, u.s. department of agriculture. says here a statement by agriculture secretary tom vilsack. just got this. it's the reaction to the accusation from shirley sherrod saying, look, i was taken out of context. if you listen to me in totality, you will understand i was trying to say something else. reconsider your decision. we just reported the naacp is apparently reconsidering. we'll hear from them soon. as far as the government goes, it doesn't look like they are. we'll be right back. granola nut clusters 100% natural nuts and granola in bite sized clusters. it's a little bit of nature... a little bit better. and nature approves. granola nut clusters from nature valley. dan malloy has helped my business expand and created a lot of jobs. green jobs and high tech jobs and i have a job because of dan malloy dan malloy has put a lot of people to work helping create jobs that was my job as mayor of stamford and i'll do the same as governor by investing in high tech and clean energy holding down property taxes and lowering electric rates so people want to live here and businesses can afford to stay here that's how we'll turn connecticut's economy around dan malloy has got the experience that money can't buy approve this message i'm dan malloy and i

we're getting a lot of people talking about this shirley sherrod story. a lot of you saying, she's falsely accused. some of you saying, no, she should have been fired. so back and forth we go. we'll continue bringing you the details. they are still coming in, folks.

Stephanie Chan

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Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:20 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Cc: Mather, Chris
Subject: Fw: CNN Campbell Brown: Transcript

Here is link to video.

From: Stephanie Chan
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Berge, John; krysta.harden@ocec.usda.gov
Cc: Sarah Misailidis ; Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tue Jul 20 21:15:59 2010
Subject: CNN Campbell Brown: Transcript

This basically states that the whole video (just posted by NAACP [here](#)) clearly shows she was just telling a story about her life and struggle with race that was inappropriately edited to put her in a negative light and that USDA and NAACP jumped the gun and USDA should reconsider its decision.

Station: CNN
Date: 07/20/2010 20:03:13 - 8:13:13 PM

a conservative blogger, andrew breitbart posted a link to that video, showing it clearly showed racism and the racism was being tolerated by the naacp. sherrod claimed she was effectively fired yesterday after the usda demanded her resignation. we just learned president obama supported the usda's move. joe johns has been working this story for us. here's the latest from joe.

reporter: hey campbell. this is a story about race and politics and america's history in the south, the story of the personal journey of shirley sherrod, a top ranking agriculture official in the state of georgia and of a white farmer who came to her for help decades ago, also sherrod's boss, the agriculture secretary, who asked for her resignation. sherrod's tale is the expert of the tape you saw was taken out of context. she says she's not a racist and she treated the white farmer and her story fairly.

i did not discriminate against him. in fact, i went all out. i had to frantically look for a lawyer at the last minute, because the first lawyer we went to was not doing anything to really help him. in fact, that lawyer suggested they should just let the farm go. all of that process -- that's why i tell it, because everything that happened in dealing with him -- he was the first white farmer who had come to me for help. everything that i did working with him helped me to see that it wasn't about race, it's about those who have and those who don't.

as it turns out the farmer and his wife, roger and eloise spooner are on sherrod's side and became good friends with her, telling cnn that shirley sherrod was just like she said she was, big help to them when they were in financial trouble.

she put us in touch with a lawyer that knew what to do. he helped us save our farm.

she went with us. she went with us in our car. she asked us, did we want her to go. we definitely wanted her to go. i don't know what brought up the racist mess.

and perhaps a thing that added gasoline to the fire in this case was sherrod's assertion that the white house, which is run by, of course, the first black president, was somehow involved in asking her for resignation. it's

pretty evidence this case could become a political problem for democrats in an election year if someone hadn't acted decisively to try to put it to rest when the department of agriculture called for her resignation, she said they told her the white house itself wanted it.

they asked me to resign. and, in fact, they harassed me as i was driving back to the state office from westpoint, georgia yesterday. i had at least three calls telling me the white house want node resign.

now, the secretary of agriculture, however, told us that just wasn't the case, and it didn't matter whether shirley sherrod felt she had been taken out of context. what mattered was what she said that was captured on the videotape.

i didn't speak to anybody at the white house. when i saw the statements and the context of the statements, i determined that it would make it difficult for her to do her job as a rural development director and potentially compromise our ability to close the chapter on the civil rights cases. didn't want anything to jeopardize her job in terms of getting the job done and getting people work in georgia and didn't want a controversy having it more difficulty to turn the page. i made this decision, it was my decision. nobody from the white house contacted me about this at all.

a white house official confirmed to cnn after vilsack made his decision yesterday, president obama was briefed on it, fully supported the secretary's demand for sherrod's resignation. at least what we have is another story about how unforgiving washington can be to political office holders and appointees who make personal disclosures that can get blown out of proportion.

or taken out of context here. i'm just curious to know whether these decisions were made before they heard her completed remarks, because it was pretty clear, at least when i heard them all, that she was telling a story to make a point, a broader point, right?

it is pretty clear they looked at just the excerpts they saw on the website and did not see the completed tape. that's my understanding, campbell. in fact, we've been trying to get the whole tape all day and there have been technical problems getting it here. i'm not so sure a lot of people have seen the wider remarks. vilsack said that's not what matters. what matters to the agriculture department is what she was caught on tape saying because the agriculture department has had a lot of legal problems relating to discrimination, and they said, this was not going to help them turn the corner.

that doesn't make sense to me. we'll see if they change their tune once they hear the entire context of her remarks, because as i understand it, joe, also, the naacp has just posted all of those remarks. we are going to -- with the entire video, you can listen to all of it. we will put it up on our website which should help clarify this issue for a lot of people. it certainly did for me when i saw the broader context of what she had to say. as we pointed out today, late today, the naacp did a 180 after originally backing sherrod's ouster. president ben jealous released a statement later saying in part we have come to the conclusion we were snookered by fox news and fatherty activist andrew breitbart that she had harmed white farmers and deliberately edited it to create false impression of racial bias and create a controversy where none existed. joining me now, the senior vice president and director to the naacp's washington bureau. in case it's not clear to our viewers, i want to be very clear about what she exactly said. people may have heard just that beginning snippet. what she was saying was she had learned from this experience and it had taught her a lot about raism how the inequalities were about poverty rather than race. in the end what most people heard and posted on these websites was just the beginning of those comments, just to clarify that. i want to be clear with you, mr. shelton, you spoke with miss sherrod this afternoon and ben jealous did as well. did you apologize to her?

we did apologize to her when we found out in context what was said on that videotape. as you saw in the comments earlier, this was a tape carefully and insidiously edited to depict miss sherrod as some kind of racist,

someone that worked for the department of agriculture at the time she made those statements, which was not true and very well someone, that was not have given white farmers the same kind of hard work and respect they very well deserve in times of challenging controversy.

do i have to ask you, since when exactly does the naacp listen to fox news and conservative bloggers before trying to verify someone who has spoken at your event? trying to verify whether this information was accurate. shirley sherrod said the naacp did not reach out to her yesterday to check her story before going out and criticizing her.

the decision was made at midnight last night and very well the information available at that time was all we had to work with. we continued to dig into the issue. as a matter of fact, reaching back to that unit to find out who had a copy of those statements in full context. even as we supported the position based on the information we had, we continued to dig. and in digging we found that this was 2 1/2 minutes, taken from a 45 minute keynote address at an naacp event at a small town in georgia. very well, even getting that information, actually heard mr. johns say a little earlier was extremely difficult to do but we continued to fight to make sure we did.

let me stop you right there. you came out and you called her actions, your word, shameful, and you did that without even reviewing her entire speech, because frankly, you didn't have to listen to that much more of her speech. it was pretty clear the point she was trying to make if you just listened to another minute.

it was done by certain people within the naacp, based on information that was before them. they made a decision, quite frankly, if all she said you heard on that tape, you would have agreed, as the naacp has always maintained we have a no tolerance policy on racial discrimination and racial statements.

i get that. that's not what she was saying and clearly had you done even the smallest amount of homework, you would have known that.

once we got the full video and listened to the whole thing in its entirety, it was very clear, not only was she not a racist, she moved beyond the call of duty to make sure the spooners did whatever they needed to do to save their homes and did so for many other families and we moved deeper into it. we were snookered by a combination of very insidious.

i have to stop you there. i don't believe you were snookered. you allowed yourself to be snookered. you are the one to blame. you had the tape in your possession and you could have easily watched it in the full context of your remarks. you didn't have to take your information solely from these conservative bloggers you say snookered you.

the only video available was on the website. the video on youtube. we listened to it very carefully, took from it what it was saying and realized something more needed to be added. we responded to what was in there but then we continued to dig and actually getting a full copy of the text.

i will stop you there. i think that's a lesson learned for everybody who hasn't always figured it out. not everything you see on internet is true.

i know that's right.

let's move on here. yesterday, you backed agriculture secretary, tom vilsack, in having her resign. you, i guess now, are you in the position of wanting him to reconsider? how are you going to help her try to get her job back? are you going to try to make up for this in some way?

he clearly needs to reconsider, based on the information in its full context that we have, this is someone that has

given her life to helping not only african-american farmers but farmers of all ethnicities, races and backgrounds, someone that should have been in the position she is in, someone they should reconsider very carefully. we all have to learn from this, we looked at it, the white house looked at it, the department of agriculture looked at it and we deduced the fear on things before us. it's clear the elements of seeing the tea party, right wing extremist elements, racist elements we criticized at our national convention were using this as a tool to not only get back at us but also hurt a woman giving her life to these issues in the process.

let me ask you to dig a little deeper on that. andrew breitbart, originally posted the video clip posted it earlier saying he was targeting you, a targeting the naacp in releasing the video and he wanted to show you guys tolerate racist behavior. i guess, how much do you believe she's a victim, not of what they did but of this war, this -- your battle that you're having with the tea party activists right now?

i think she very well is. i think they chose her because they'd gotten word how effective she had been throughout the south. this is someone whose father had been killed by a white farmer a member of the local clan unit, someone that rose above those circumstances and committed a life she could have left the south. she stayed because she felt so much more needed to be done. they saw this as a way of neutralizing her and the naacp and embarrassing the administration all-in-one stroke.

can you take away from this a little bit of people shouldn't jump to conclusions, maybe you shouldn't jump to conclusions about everybody who claims to be a tea party activist and maybe they shouldn't jump to conclusions about what she was trying to say, as you did in this instance?

we did not jump to conclusions on the tea party issue. the information we have on tea parties was extremely well researched. we have additional information as we move ahead. the tea party responded by actually kicking out certain elements they knew were very racist in their activities. in this case, we see they utilized this opportunity to use the most modern of technologies, putting it on the internet and utilizing fox news to pressure us in being consistent in our remarks saying we don't tolerate racial discrimination who guardless who's doing it, we don't.

that video was in your possession all along. i recognize it took you guys a while to get the entire video to see exactly what was said, glad you did. thank you for your time and tell our viewers the naacp has released the entire video of shirley sherrod's speech, so you can watch it for yourself on our website at cnn.com/campbellbrown. when we come back, we will pick this up a little bit more and talk a little bit about what it says, about race relations in our country and what the white house may have to do now. we have a powerful panel with us to hash this out after the break. don't go anywhere. one word turns into revolutionary performance. one word makes the difference between defining the mission and accomplishing the mission. one word makes the difference in defending our nation and the cause of freedom. how... is the word that makes all the difference. could switching to geico really save you fifteen percent or more on car insurance? does a former drill sergeant make a terrible therapist? patient: and that's why yellow makes me sad. i think. sarge: that's interesting. you know what makes me sad? you do! maybe we should chug on over to mambie pambie land where maybe we can find some self-confidence for you. ya jackwagon! tissue? crybaby. geico. fifteen minutes could save you fifteen percent or more.

we're back now, talking about the pretty explosive controversy over the forced resignation of an agricultural employee because of reverse racism, another story that puts the issue of race in the spotlight and the story has been changing almost by the minute throughout the day. i want to bring in cnn political analyst, roland martin, tim wiese, an author and expert on racial relations and david gergen to talk about this. roland, i want to start with you. you were among the voices saying sherrod was right to be forced to resign for her comments and comments clearly now seemed to have been taken largely out of context. did you jump the gun here?

looking at in terms of the naacp releasing the full video and having access it to, you see the full breath of it.

when you look at someone who makes a comment, they say, yeah, i didn't do all i was supposed to do, as somebody who believes in absolute opportunity, who does not believe in the denial of opportunities for african-americans for anybody else, that is going to be the reaction. so when you have the full record lay out, it does paint a different picture. again, i'm not going to sit here and demand accountability of somebody else who targets african-americans and then not do the exact same thing for african-americans.

but should you have given her the benefit of the doubt or allow this time to figure out what was really going on and hear her side of the story?

well, first of all, if the department of agriculture makes a decision, i initially thought that they had actually done that particular due diligence. they clearly didn't. jumping the gun absolutely. i can tell you right now, speaking against any form of sort of prejudice not assisting somebody, i have always been, whether it is race or whether it is sex.

david, the sherrod essentially is blaming i think, the naacp right now, for inflaming this whole mess by denouncing her in that original statement. i just want to play a little bit of what she said earlier on cnn. take a listen.

the naacp has not tried to contact me one time. they are the reason why this happened. they got into a fight with the tea party and all of this came out as a result of them.

does she have a point there, david? do you think this would have happened? would it certainly not have perhaps been as big of a story if the naacp and the tea party weren't this week locked in this battle? does the statement, guess, help them now saying, we made a mistake here, make up for the gaffe or is the damage already done?

campbell, we're in the theater of the absurd, aren't we?

yeah.

with all sorts of people dancing around word and not saying what they really believe. look, the naacp blew it here. they jumped the gun way too fast. at least, they have had the courage to say, we were wrong, to apologize and put out the full tape. now, it's up to the president of the united states to do the same thing. the president tonight should ask the department of agriculture to reopen this case, give it a full and fair hearing, and then if this woman, as it appears now, let's hear the whole tape, but if the facts are as they appear, they should reinstate her and apologize to her.

and, tim, let me have you take this a little broader. you've studied the issue of race in america. what do you make offer the episode? what does it tell you how skittish we are as a country when it comes to talking about this kind of stuff?

it tells me the administration and president are getting bumped by fear people and post racial, they refused to call out these reverse race button pushing behaviors not just Breitbart and his video, the phony intimidation story, Rush Limbaugh saying the president is deliberately trying to destroy the economy to pay people back for slavery.

at some point if the administration does not call this out and name this behavior for what it is, an attempt to Willie Horton this administration, it's like the kid in the schoolyard who's getting bullied, if you don't fight back, you know what happens to that kid, he ends up on his rear end. it's time for the administration to grow a spine, push back and call out the behavior and call of us to our better natures to rise to the better angels of our nature than rise to the racial fears that Breitbart and Limbaugh and Glenn Beck and some of those trying to push for two years.

DeJong, Justin

From: Irene Dave BARTLETT [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:41 PM
Subject: Firing of Shirley Shirrod -- inexcusable!!

The forced resignation of Shirley Shirrod is appalling. As an Iowa resident who supported then Governor Vilsack, I can not believe anyone with experience in the management of people would react in such a knee-jerk fashion. I shook your hand multiple times & thought you truly understood that color is inconsequential, and that was the gist of her story. What is important is what a person does. How the individual responds to life, its challenges; how one learns from life experiences. That is what Shirley was saying in her speech.

Your response -- Tom Vilsack's response -- was wrong. Even a low level manager knows to get the WHOLE story before taking action. You -- Tom Vilsack -- should state the action was taken too quickly, the full story and all the facts are now out.

The offer to reinstate Shirley Shirrod should be extended right away. There is no way this incident will reflect poorly on her, or interfere with her ability to do her job. If anything the opposite is true. People are now so familiar with her true nature that they will be eager to work with her.

I'd like to tell Tom Vilsack himself but couldn't find his email [our transparent government at it's best] so I guessed based on other email addresses & maybe it'll get to him. If not, I hope you will pass this info on to him.

I know it's tough as a national government figure to step back & say "I was wrong". It takes someone with incredible personal ethics, strength beyond that demonstrated by most political figures, but I'd like to think your years in Iowa gave you the guts to stand up & say "I WAS WRONG!!"

Please do the right thing . . . don't perpetuate the fallacy that all Iowans are uneducated and bigoted.

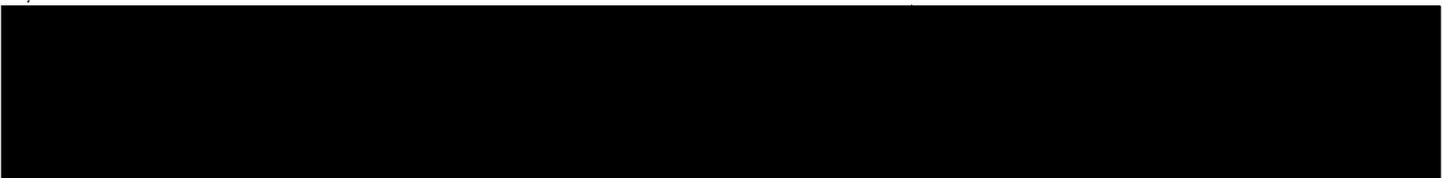
I would appreciate a response.

Dave & Irene Bartlett
[REDACTED]

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:54 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: To send to gibbs

Steph do you have his email address?



DeJong, Justin

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:59 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Cc: DeJong, Justin

Ag second tv statement regarding shirley sherrod video

[REDACTED]

Sent from my Verizon Wireless BlackBerry

DeJong, Justin

From: Stephanie Chan [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:04 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: [REDACTED]

That is the email we send week ahead to.

Please let me know if you get this or the message from my BB. Im not sending/receiving everything and citrix isnt working for me

--
Stephanie Chan
[REDACTED]



DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:05 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED] Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

DeJong, Justin

From: Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:09 AM
To: Misailidis, Sarah; [REDACTED]; [REDACTED];
Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie; DeJong, Justin
Cc: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: RE: Rural Development summary clips
Attachments: image001.jpg

Can someone print the actual clips so we have on paper?

From: Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:01 AM
To: [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; 'Justin, DeJong';
Chan, Stephanie
Cc: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: Rural Development summary clips



Office of Communications (202) 720-4623

USDA Clips

Tuesday, July 20, 2010

USDA Clips are intended for use by authorized government personnel only. Redistribution by any means to any unauthorized person violates copyright on the source material.

Rural Development clips

USDA worker quits over racism charge from video (AP 7/20)

A black federal worker has resigned from a Georgia agricultural job after a video clip showed her saying she had not helped a farmer as much as she could have because he was white. U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a statement Tuesday he had accepted the resignation of Shirley Sherrod. Vilsack says the USDA has no tolerance for discrimination. Sherrod told the Atlanta-Journal Constitution she was forced out of her job as the USDA's rural development director for Georgia. She said the two-minute, 38-second video posted online Monday misconstrued her message. Sherrod's taped remarks were from a local meeting of the civil rights group NAACP. National NAACP President Benjamin Todd Jealous welcomed the resignation because the group opposes racism of all kinds. [Link](#)

Dismissed employee blames media (UPI 7/20)

An employee of the U.S. Department of Agriculture says she lost her job because the media misconstrued a speech she gave at an NAACP banquet. Shirley Sherrod, who was forced out as the USDA's rural development director for Georgia, is seen on a video admitting she didn't do everything she could to help a white farmer who needed aid, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported Tuesday. What the media didn't report, Sherrod says, was that the incident she was relating on the video happened 24 years ago when she was working for another organization, not the federal government. Also left out, Sherrod says, is the part where she says she was trying to figure out how to help someone who was condescending. [Link](#)

USDA employee says statements on white farmer misconstrued (CNN 7/20)

A black Agriculture Department employee who resigned after a video clip showed her talking about a white farmer said Tuesday her remarks were taken out of context. Shirley Sherrod, the department's former state director of rural development for Georgia, told CNN on Tuesday the incident she discusses in the clip took place more than two decades ago -- and she recounted it to an audience to make the point that people should move beyond race. "I was speaking to that group, like I've done many groups, and I tell them about a time when I thought the issue was race and race only," Sherrod told CNN's "American Morning" from her home in Albany, Georgia. The incident took place in 1986, while she worked for a nonprofit and before she worked for the USDA, she said. "I was telling the story of how working with him helped me to see the issue is not about race. It's about those who have versus those who do not have." [Link](#)

Race remarks cost USDA official her job (CNN Blog 7/20)

An African-American Agriculture Department worker resigns over her handling of a white Georgia farmer's case when she worked for a nonprofit group in 1986. It came to light when Shirley Sherrod talked about the case at an NAACP banquet earlier this year. Were her remarks a teaching moment that backfired, or evidence of racism? Sherrod says her comments were taken out of context -- that the point of her story was to unite people. Tony Harris will be talking to Sherrod at 11:00am ET on CNN, and we'll post that interview here. Watch some of her speech and phone interview with CNN's American Morning below, then tell us what you think. We'll share some of your comments on air in the CNN Newsroom, 11:00am -- 1:00pm ET. [Link](#)

Video Shows USDA Official Saying She Didn't Give 'Full Force' of Help to White Farmer (FOX News 7/20)

Days after the NAACP clashed with Tea Party members over allegations of racism, a video has surfaced showing an Agriculture Department official regaling an NAACP audience with a story about how she withheld help to a white farmer facing bankruptcy -- video that now has forced the official to resign. Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, is shown in the clip describing "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." Sherrod, who is black, claimed the farmer took a long time trying to show he was "superior" to her. The audience laughed as she described how she determined his fate... "There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person," Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a written statement. "We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously." [Link](#)

Gingrich Responds to Discrimination at USDA (Fox News 7/20)

SEAN HANNITY, HOST: And this is a Fox News alert. An Obama administration official resigned just a short time ago after she was caught on tape appearing to tell an audience that she had used her position to racially discriminate against white farmers. Now the woman, Shirley Sherrod, was the Georgia state director at the Department of Agricultural. Now the president's Agricultural Secretary Tom Vilsack just released a statement saying the USDA has a zero tolerance policy against discrimination. Here's part of the shocking video that ignited this controversy. (BEGIN VIDEO CLIP) SHIRLEY SHERROD, FORMER USDA GA STATE DIRECTOR: The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking but he was trying to show me he was superior to me. I know what he was doing. But he had come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him. [Request Story](#)

Black USDA official resigns after admitting she only 'did enough' for white farmer (MSNBC 7/20)

A black USDA official in Georgia has resigned after publicly admitting she didn't help a white man trying to save his farm to the "full force" of her power and instead referred him to "one of his own." Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said he had accepted Shirley Sherrod's resignation, saying there was "zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA." The NAACP, which recently condemned racism in tea party groups, also issued a statement Monday night saying: "Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race." [Link](#)

Morning Joe (MSNBC 7/20)

Well, another story of reverse discrimination comes out today. This one is really interesting. I'm thinking that this woman regrets this comment. a USDA official in Georgia has resigned after I YouTube clip show: her admitting that race helped determine how much aid would be given to a white farmer. You're not supposed to do that, are you? I mean, I'm not --it's probably not a good idea. for being so stupid. It's no even -- well, how about you just don't do it. Anyway, the state's director of rural development apparently made the comments during an NAACP banquet in March. Take a listen. The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking, but he was trying to show me he was superior to me. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time to show me he was superior to me was i was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him. I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So, I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. [Request Story](#)

Shirley Sherrod Resigns Over USDA Race Remark Furor (CBS News 7/20)

A high-ranking black employee of the U.S. Department of Agriculture has resigned after remarks she made about race were distributed by conservative web sites and aired on Fox News. A video clip of Shirley Sherrod, the USDA's Georgia State Director of Rural Development, was circulated by conservative blogger Andrew Breitbart and his site, biggovernment.com, in which Sherrod talked of withholding help to a white man facing the loss of his family farm. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack released a statement Tuesday saying he had accepted Sherrod's resignation, and added that the department has no tolerance for discrimination. [Link](#)

USDA worker quits over 1986 racial incident (The Washington Post 7/20)

A U.S. Agriculture Department official from Georgia resigned late Monday after she was caught on tape admitting that she had not helped a farmer as much as she could have because he was white. Shirley Sherrod, USDA state director of rural development, made the remarks on March 27 at an NAACP Freedom Fund banquet. Her videotaped remarks surfaced on YouTube on Monday. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack accepted Sherrod's resignation, saying, "There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously." NAACP President and Benjamin Jealous called Sherrod's actions shameful and agreed with the decision to fire her. [Link](#)

In the curious case of Shirley Sherrod, let's see the whole tape (Atlanta Journal Constitution 7/20)

A couple of folks in comments yesterday brought up the case of USDA official Shirley Sherrod, a black woman caught on tape at an NAACP meeting here in Georgia apparently bragging about being less than diligent in helping a white farmer. The folks at Big Government posted a portion of her speech as part of the running feud between the NAACP and the Tea Party over which organization is more racist. By the end of the day Monday, Sherrod had been forced to resign her post, and NAACP President Ben Jealous had released a statement agreeing with the forced resignation: "Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race. [Link](#)

Resigned USDA official says racial story misconstrued (Atlanta Journal Constitution 7/20)

The USDA's rural development director for Georgia says she was forced out of her federally appointed job after a "snippet" of a speech she gave in March appeared to show her admission to only half-heartedly aiding a struggling white farmer because of his race. But in a phone interview from her home in Albany early Tuesday morning, Shirley Sherrod told the Atlanta-Journal Constitution that the two-minute, 38-second video posted online Monday by biggovernment.com and reported on by FoxNews.com and the AJC completely misconstrued the message she was trying to convey. Sherrod, 62, insisted her statements in the video were not racist. "For Fox to take a spin on this like they have done, and know it's not the truth ... it's very upsetting," she said. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Resigns USDA Job After Admitting Use Of Racial Preference During NAACP Banquet (VIDEO) (The Huffington Post 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod, who resigned Monday from the USDA. 756 Shirley Sherrod, a USDA official in Georgia, has resigned after publicly admitting that race played a factor in her decision to limit how much aid would be given to a white farmer. Sherrod, who is African American, made the comments during a local NAACP

banquet on March 27, according to information displayed on the video. A clip of her speech first appeared Monday morning on BigGovernment.com and aired that evening on Fox News. Her resignation as the agency's state director of rural development was quickly accepted by U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. He cited a zero-tolerance policy and told CNN that he was working to "reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department." In her controversial speech, Sherrod discussed the first time she was "faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." She claimed that during the conversation, the man "was trying to show me he was superior to me." [Link](#)

NAACP Slams Shirley Sherrod's Actions As 'Shameful' (My Fox New York 7/20)

The actions of a black U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) official who admitted withholding help to a white farmer facing bankruptcy were late Monday described as "shameful" by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, was exposed in a video recorded at an NAACP banquet describing "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." Sherrod claimed the farmer took a long time trying to show he was "superior" to her. "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land -- so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough," she said in the video. The Agriculture Department announced Monday, shortly after FOXNews.com published its initial report on the video, that Sherrod had resigned. [Link](#)

Ga. USDA Official Resigns Over Comments (My Fox Atlanta 7/19)

Racially charged comments have led to the abrupt resignation of an agriculture department official. Shirley Sherrod was the top official who oversaw rural development in the state of Georgia. According to FOX News, Sherrod, the director of the USDA's rural development agency, resigned over comments she made at an NAACP meeting. FOX News obtained taped comments from an NAACP meeting that took place in Douglas, Georgia in March. According to FOX News, Sherrod is seen talking about how she withheld help to a white farmer who was facing bankruptcy. "I didn't give him the full force of what I could do, I did enough," Sherrod said during the meeting. In the video, Sherrod said she was struggling with the fact so many black people have lost their farmland and she was faced with having to help a white person save their land. Sherrod said she took him to see a white lawyer. "I figured if I took him to one of them his own kind, [they] would take care of him," said Sherrod. According to FOX News, the agriculture department announced Monday that Sherrod had resigned. [Link](#)

USDA big quits in bias-boast shock (The New York Post 7/20)

A black official in the US Agriculture Department resigned yesterday after a video surfaced of her bragging to the NAACP that she didn't do everything she could to help a white farmer facing bankruptcy. Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, told the audience at a March banquet in Atlanta that she claimed the man felt "superior" to her, according to FoxNews.com. "He had come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was talking all that time, trying to show me he was superior to me, was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," Sherrod said. "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land -- so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do." "I did enough," she said. [Link](#)

NAACP 'appalled' by black USDA official's racial discrimination (Daily Caller 7/20)

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People President Benjamin Todd Jealous said late Monday he was "appalled" by the actions of U.S. Department of Agriculture official Shirley Sherrod, who resigned earlier in the day after video surfaced of her speaking at an NAACP event about discriminating against a white farmer seeking government help. Jealous also promised to look into why members of the audience at an NAACP fundraiser in Georgia this past March reacted, as shown in the video, by nodding and in some cases laughing at Sherrod's remarks. But Jealous distanced the national NAACP from the incident. Coming just days after the NAACP condemned racist elements inside the Tea Party movement, Sherrod's remarks place the storied civil rights organization in an uncomfortable position. "Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race," Jealous said. "We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers." "Her actions were shameful. While she went on to explain in the story that she ultimately realized her mistake, as well as the common

predicament of working people of all races, she gave no indication she had attempted to right the wrong she had done to this man," Jealous said (read his full statement below). [Link](#)

BREAKING: Racist Obama administration member resigns (Manhattan Conservative Examiner 7/19)

Shirley Sherrod of the USDA's Georgia Rural Development office has resigned following the airing of overtly racist remarks she made in a speech before—of all organizations—the NAACP. At a local NAACP meeting in March of 2010, Sherrod boasted of withholding assistance to a farmer based on the color of his skin, which happened to be white. Sherrod (surprise!) is black. In her comments, which are captured in the video below, Sherrod freely admits to "struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land." She further confesses to abusing her position by refusing to "give him the full force of what I could do." The remarks conclude with a racist gem: "I took him to a white lawyer... I figured that if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him." [Link](#)

USDA Official Implicated in NAACP Racism Flap (Buckeye Ag Network 7/20)

Days after the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) denounced the Conservative Tea Party movement on allegations of racism, the organization was itself implicated in charges of racism involving a USDA official. In a video released at BigGovernment.com, USDA's Director of Rural Development in Georgia Shirley Sherrod was depicted acknowledging discriminating against white farmers. The video, of a speech Sherrod gave to the NAACP's Freedom Fund banquet in March of this year, stirred quite a controversy on the internet this week, forcing Sherrod's resignation from the department Monday. Sherrod's remarks in the NAACP speech indicated that she "didn't give [a white farmer] the full force of what I could do," because "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land." [Link](#)

USDA worker quits over racism charge from video (Salon 7/20)

A black federal worker has resigned from a Georgia agricultural job after a video clip showed her saying she had not helped a farmer as much as she could have because he was white. U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a statement Tuesday he had accepted the resignation of Shirley Sherrod. Vilsack says the USDA has no tolerance for discrimination. Sherrod told the Atlanta-Journal Constitution she was forced out of her job as the USDA's rural development director for Georgia. She said the two-minute, 38-second video posted online Monday misconstrued her message. [Link](#)

Justice Not Only Obama Department Not Equally Enforcing Law (Heritage Foundation Blog 7/20)

This morning we reviewed the still unfolding New Black Panther Party scandal at the Department of Justice where a whistle blower, testifying under oath, quoted Deputy Assistant Attorney General Julie Fernandes as saying that "the Voting Section will never or will not, at least while she is there, bring any more cases against blacks or other national minorities." In other words, Fernandes has reportedly admitted that the Obama Justice Department is not enforcing the nation's civil rights law equally and in a race-neutral manner. The Obama Justice Department has refused to confirm or deny that Fernandes made this statement. Now Andrew Breitbart has unearthed a very similar statement from another Obama political appointee, this time from the Department of Agriculture. In the video, U.S. Department of Agriculture Director of Rural Development for Georgia Shirley Sherrod tells an NAACP audience . . . First Justice. Now Agriculture. How many other Obama Department's are refusing to enforce our nation's laws equally? [Link](#)

NAACP meeting calmly listened to racist remarks from black fed official (American Thinker 7/20)

Andrew Breitbart has scored another bullseye, revealing hypocrisy of the highest order on the part of another leftist establishment organization, the NAACP. On March 27 of this year, speaking before an NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet, Shirley Sherrod, the Department of Agriculture director for the State of Georgia -- responsible for over a billion dollars a year in spending -- boasts of denying a white farmer her full efforts because of his race. The audience does not react with shock or disapproval, but rather just sits there. So much for NAACP President Ben Jealous denouncing the tea parties for tolerating racists. Only after Breitbart gave the incriminating video national exposure did the NAACP issue the obligatory denunciation, to prevent further embarrassment. But when nobody was looking, the NAACP audience was totally cool with the racism expressed by their speaker. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Comments Results in Resignation (Lalate Blog 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod has resigned following her comments about a white farmer. Shirley Sherrod's remarks appeared in a video from BigGovernment.com, dated by the website as March 27. Shirley Sherrod has been the USDA's Georgia director of Rural Development. In the video, Sherrod addresses an NAACP banquet stating "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land — so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough". Late Monday the USDA announced Sherrod had resigned. NAACP President and CEO Benjamin Todd Jealous issued a statement against Sherrod's comments. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod of USDA resigns (Buzz Tab 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod, USDA's black employee has resigned from her post on Monday in the wake of outburst of a video at conservative media outlets in which Shirley Sherrod is shown telling one of the audience that she had not given a white farmer the full force of what I could do to help him save his family farm. Tom Vilsack, the Agriculture Secretary said that he had accepted Shirley Sherrod's resignation. Shirley Sherrod was working as USDA's State Director of Rural Development for Georgia. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said he had accepted the resignation of Shirley Sherrod, the department's state director of rural development for Georgia. Tom Vilsack further added that in USDA, they are following a zero tolerance for discrimination. He said that being Secretary Agriculture he condemns any discriminatory act against any person. He further added that at USDA, they are working hard for past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history and they are taking fairness and equality as a serious matter at USDA. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Has Officially Resigned From Her Job Due To Racial Preference! (Moms Word Blog 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod, who is known as a USDA official in Georgia, has finally resigned after publicly admitting that race played a factor in her decision to limit how much aid would be given to a white farmer. Sherrod, who is African American, made the comments during an NAACP banquet on March 27, according to the information in the video above. In fact a clip of her speech was being aired on BigGovernment.com and also Fox News Monday morning. Sherrod said during the now famous speech about the first time she was "faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." She claims that during the conversation, the man "was trying to show me he was superior to me." "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland," Sherrod told the crowd. "And here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land." [Link](#)

*Sarah Misailidis
Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
(202) 720-4691
Sarah.Misailidis@oc.usda.gov*

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:47 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re:

I had just seen the video a few min before we talked on the phone. I was listening to it to get a sense of what was said and said I was going to send it around along with a bit of detail on contents.

I am happy to transcribe it now.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED] Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Chan, Stephanie
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:20:51 2010
Subject: Re:

You said hours ago you were typing up the video the NAACP released.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:17:41 2010
Subject: Re:

I've been trying to find one but I don't think there is one. I can do that now and clip the segments later.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED] Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Chan, Stephanie
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:10:49 2010

Do you have transcript from tape yet? That's most important thing.
Chris Mather

DeJong, Justin

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:34 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Re: CNN Campbell Brown: Transcript

We need to translate this immediately.
Chris Mather

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Chan, Stephanie
Cc: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:20:10 2010
Subject: Fw: CNN Campbell Brown: Transcript

Here is link to video.

From: Stephanie Chan
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Berge, John; krysta.harden@ocec.usda.gov
Cc: Sarah Misailidis ; Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tue Jul 20 21:15:59 2010
Subject: CNN Campbell Brown: Transcript

This basically states that the whole video (just posted by NAACP [here](#)) clearly shows she was just telling a story about her life and struggle with race that was inappropriately edited to put her in a negative light and that USDA and NAACP jumped the gun and USDA should reconsider its decision.

Station: CNN
Date: 07/20/2010 20:03:13 - 8:13:13 PM

a conservative blogger, andrew breibart posted a link to that video, showing it clearly showed racism and the racism was being tolerated by the naacp. sherrod claimed she was effectively fired yesterday after the usda demanded her resignation. we just learned president obama supported the usda's move. joe johns has been working this story for us. here's the latest from joe.

reporter: hey campbell. this is a story about race and politics and america's history in the south, the story of the personal journey of shirley sherrod, a top ranking agriculture official in the state of georgia and of a white farmer who came to her for help decades ago, also sherrod's boss, the agriculture secretary, who asked for her resignation. sherrod's tale is the expert of the tape you saw was taken out of context. she says she's not a racist and she treated the white farmer and her story fairly.

i did not discriminate against him. in fact, i went all out. i had to frantically look for a lawyer at the last minute, because the first lawyer we went to was not doing anything to really help him. in fact, that lawyer suggested they should just let the farm go. all of that process -- that's why i tell it, because everything that happened in dealing with him -- he was the first white farmer who had come to me for help. everything that i did working with him helped me to see that it wasn't about race, it's about those who have and those who don't.

as it turns out the farmer and his wife, roger and eloise spooner are on sherrod's side and became good friends with her, telling cnn that shirley sherrod was just like she said she was, big help to them when they were in financial trouble.

she put us in touch with a lawyer that knew what to do. he helped us save our farm.

she went with us. she went with us in our car. she asked us, did we want her to go. we definitely wanted her to go. i don't know what brought up the racist mess.

and perhaps a thing that added gasoline to the fire in this case was sherrod's assertion that the white house, which is run by, of course, the first black president, was somehow involved in asking her for resignation. it's pretty evidence this case could become a political problem for democrats in an election year if someone hadn't acted decisively to try to put it to rest when the department of agriculture called for her resignation, she said they told her the white house itself wanted it.

they asked me to resign. and, in fact, they harassed me as i was driving back to the state office from westpoint, georgia yesterday. i had at least three calls telling me the white house want node resign.

now, the secretary of agriculture, however, told us that just wasn't the case, and it didn't matter whether shirley sherrod felt she had been taken out of context. what mattered was what she said that was captured on the videotape.

i didn't speak to anybody at the white house. when i saw the statements and the context of the statements, i determined that it would make it difficult for her to do her job as a rural development director and potentially compromise our ability to close the chapter on the civil rights cases. didn't want anything to jeopardize her job in terms of getting the job done and getting people work in georgia and didn't want a controversy having it more difficulty to turn the page. i made this decision, it was my decision. nobody from the white house contacted me about this at all.

a white house official confirmed to cnn after vilsack made his decision yesterday, president obama was briefed on it, fully supported the secretary's demand for sherrod's resignation. at least what we have is another story about how unforgiving washington can be to political office holders and appointees who make personal disclosures that can get blown out of proportion.

or taken out of context here. i'm just curious to know whether these decisions were made before they heard her completed remarks, because it was pretty clear, at least when i heard them all, that she was telling a story to make a point, a broader point, right?

it is pretty clear they looked at just the excerpts they saw on the website and did not see the completed tape. that's my understanding, campbell. in fact, we've been trying to get the whole tape all day and there have been technical problems getting it here. i'm not so sure a lot of people have seen the wider remarks. vilsack said that's not what matters. what matters to the agriculture department is what she was caught on tape saying because the agriculture department has had a lot of legal problems relating to discrimination, and they said, this was not going to help them turn the corner.

that doesn't make sense to me. we'll see if they change their tune once they hear the entire context of her remarks, because as i understand it, joe, also, the naacp has just posted all of those remarks. we are going to -- with the entire video, you can listen to all of it. we will put it up on our website which should help clarify this issue for a lot of people. it certainly did for me when i saw the broader context of what she had to say. as we pointed out today, late today, the naacp did a 180 after originally backing sherrod's ouster. president ben jealous released a statement later saying in part we have come to the conclusion we were snookered by fox news and fatherty activist andrew breibart that she had harmed white farmers and deliberately edited it to create false impression of racial bias and create a controversy where none existed. joining me now, the senior vice president and director to the naacp's washington bureau. in case it's not clear to our viewers, i want to be very clear about

what she exactly said. people may have heard just that beginning snippet. what she was saying was she had learned from this experience and it had taught her a lot about racism how the inequalities were about poverty rather than race. in the end what most people heard and posted on these websites was just the beginning of those comments, just to clarify that. i want to be clear with you, mr. shelton, you spoke with miss sherrod this afternoon and ben jealous did as well. did you apologize to her?

we did apologize to her when we found out in context what was said on that videotape. as you saw in the comments earlier, this was a tape carefully and insidiously edited to depict miss sherrod as some kind of racist, someone that worked for the department of agriculture at the time she made those statements, which was not true and very well someone, that was not have given white farmers the same kind of hard work and respect they very well deserve in times of challenging controversy.

do i have to ask you, since when exactly does the naacp listen to fox news and conservative bloggers before trying to verify someone who has spoken at your event? trying to verify whether this information was accurate. shirley sherrod said the naacp did not reach out to her yesterday to check her story before going out and criticizing her.

the decision was made at midnight last night and very well the information available at that time was all we had to work with. we continued to dig into the issue. as a matter of fact, reaching back to that unit to find out who had a copy of those statements in full context. even as we supported the position based on the information we had, we continued to dig. and in digging we found that this was 2 1/2 minutes, taken from a 45 minute keynote address at an naacp event at a small town in georgia. very well, even getting that information, actually heard mr. johns say a little earlier was extremely difficult to do but we continued to fight to make sure we did.

let me stop you right there. you came out and you called her actions, your word, shameful, and you did that without even reviewing her entire speech, because frankly, you didn't have to listen to that much more of her speech. it was pretty clear the point she was trying to make if you just listened to another minute.

it was done by certain people within the naacp, based on information that was before them. they made a decision, quite frankly, if all she said you heard on that tape, you would have agreed, as the naacp has always maintained we have a no tolerance policy on racial discrimination and racial statements.

i get that. that's not what she was saying and clearly had you done even the smallest amount of homework, you would have known that.

once we got the full video and listened to the whole thing in its entirety, it was very clear, not only was she not a racist, she moved beyond the call of duty to make sure the spooners did whatever they needed to do to save their homes and did so for many other families and we moved deeper into it. we were snookered by a combination of very insidious.

i have to stop you there. i don't believe you were snookered. you allowed yourself to be snookered. you are the one to blame. you had the tape in your possession and you could have easily watched it in the full context of your remarks. you didn't have to take your information solely from these conservative bloggers you say snookered you.

the only video available was on the website. the video on youtube. we listened to it very carefully, took from it what it was saying and realized something more needed to be added. we responded to what was in there but then we continued to dig and actually getting a full copy of the text.

i will stop you there. i think that's a lesson learned for everybody who hasn't always figured it out. not everything you see on internet is true.

i know that's right.

let's move on here. yesterday, you backed agriculture secretary, tom vilsack, in having her resign. you, i guess now, are you in the position of wanting him to reconsider? how are you going to help her try to get her job back? are you going to try to make up for this in some way?

he clearly needs to reconsider, based on the information in its full context that we have, this is someone that has given her life to helping not only african-american farmers but farmers of all ethnicities, races and backgrounds, someone that should have been in the position she is in, someone they should reconsider very carefully. we all have to learn from this, we looked at it, the white house looked at it, the department of agriculture looked at it and we deduced the fear on things before us. it's clear the elements of seeing the tea party, right wing extremist elements, racist elements we criticized at our national convention were using this as a tool to not only get back at us but also hurt a woman giving her life to these issues in the process.

let me ask you to dig a little deeper on that. andrew breitbart, originally posted the video clip posted it earlier saying he was targeting you, a targeting the naacp in releasing the video and he wanted to show you guys tolerate racist behavior. i guess, how much do you believe she's a victim, not of what they did but of this war, this -- your battle that you're having with the tea party activists right now?

i think she very well is. i think they chose her because they'd gotten word how effective she had been throughout the south. this is someone whose father had been killed by a white farmer a member of the local clan unit, someone that rose above those circumstances and committed a life she could have left the south. she stayed because she felt so much more needed to be done. they saw this as a way of neutralizing her and the naacp and embarrassing the administration all-in-one stroke.

can you take away from this a little bit of people shouldn't jump to conclusions, maybe you shouldn't jump to conclusions about everybody who claims to be a tea party activist and maybe they shouldn't jump to conclusions about what she was trying to say, as you did in this instance?

we did not jump to conclusions on the tea party issue. the information we have on tea parties was extremely well researched. we have additional information as we move ahead. the tea party responded by actually kicking out certain elements they knew were very racist in their activities. in this case, we see they utilized this opportunity to use the most modern of technologies, putting it on the internet and utilizing fox news to pressure us in being consistent in our remarks saying we don't tolerate racial discrimination who guardless who's doing it, we don't.

that video was in your possession all along. i recognize it took you guys a while to get the entire video to see exactly what was said, glad you did. thank you for your time and tell our viewers the naacp has released the entire video of shirley sherrod's speech, so you can watch it for yourself on our website at cnn.com/campbellbrown. when we come back, we will pick this up a little bit more and talk a little bit about what it says, about race relations in our country and what the white house may have to do now. we have a powerful panel with us to hash this out after the break. don't go anywhere. one word turns into revolutionary performance. one word makes the difference between defining the mission and accomplishing the mission. one word makes the difference in defending our nation and the cause of freedom. how... is the word that makes all the difference. could switching to geico really save you fifteen percent or more on car insurance? does a former drill sergeant make a terrible therapist? patient: and that's why yellow makes me sad. i think. sarge: that's interesting. you know what makes me sad? you do! maybe we should chug on over to mambie pambie land where maybe we can find some self-confidence for you. ya jackwagon! tissue? crybaby. geico. fifteen minutes could save you fifteen percent or more.

we're back now, talking about the pretty explosive controversy over the forced resignation of an agricultural employee because of reverse racism, another story that puts the issue of race in the spotlight and the story has been changing almost by the minute throughout the day. i want to bring in cnn political analyst, roland martin, tim wiese, an author and expert on racial relations and david gergen to talk about this. roland, i want to start with you. you were among the voices saying sherrod was right to be forced to resign for her comments and comments clearly now seemed to have been taken largely out of context. did you jump the gun here?

looking at in terms of the naacp releasing the full video and having access it to, you see the full breath of it. when you look at someone who makes a comment, they say, yeah, i didn't do all i was supposed to do, as somebody who believes in absolute opportunity, who does not believe in the denial of opportunities for african-americans for anybody else, that is going to be the reaction. so when you have the full record lay out, it does paint a different picture. again, i'm not going to sit here and demand accountability of somebody else who targets african-americans and then not do the exact same thing for african-americans.

but should you have given her the benefit of the doubt or allow this time to figure out what was really going on and hear her side of the story?

well, first of all, if the department of agriculture makes a decision, i initially thought that they had actually done that particular due diligence. they clearly didn't. jumping the gun absolutely. i can tell you right now, speaking against any form of sort of prejudice not assisting somebody, i have always been, whether it is race or whether it is sex.

david, the sherrod essentially is blaming, i think, the naacp right now, for inflaming this whole mess by denouncing her in that original statement. i just want to play a little bit of what she said earlier on cnn. take a listen.

the naacp has not tried to contact me one time. they are the reason why this happened. they got into a fight with the tea party and all of this came out as a result of them.

does she have a point there, david? do you think this would have happened? would it certainly not have perhaps been as big of a story if the naacp and the tea party weren't this week locked in this battle? does the statement, guess, help them now saying, we made a mistake here, make up for the gaffe or is the damage already done?

campbell, we're in the theater of the absurd, aren't we?

yeah.

with all sorts of people dancing around word and not saying what they really believe. look, the naacp blew it here. they jumped the gun way too fast. at least, they have had the courage to say, we were wrong, to apologize and put out the full tape. now, it's up to the president of the united states to do the same thing. the president tonight should ask the department of agriculture to reopen this case, give it a full and fair hearing, and then if this woman, as it appears now, let's hear the whole tape, but if the facts are as they appear, they should reinstate her and apologize to her.

and, tim, let me have you take this a little broader. you've studied the issue of race in america. what do you make offer the episode? what does it tell you how skittish we are as a country when it comes to talking about this kind of stuff?

it tells me the administration and president are getting bumped by fear people and post racial, they refused to call out these reverse race button pushing behaviors not just Breitbart and his video, the phony intimidation story, Rush Limbaugh saying the president is deliberately trying to destroy the economy to pay people back for

slavery.

at some point if the administration does not call this out and name this behavior for what it is, an attempt to willie horton this administration, it's like the kid in the schoolyard who's getting bullied, if you don't fight back, you know what happens to that kid, he ends up on his rear end. it's time for the administration to grow a spine, push back and call out the behavior and call of us to our better natures to rise to the better angels of our nature than rise to the racial fears that breitbart and limbaugh and glenn beck and some of those trying to push for two years.

talk to me, roland about the pressure they're feeling.

first, you obviously have pressure there. you have a situation, where you have the national black farmers association sitting here waiting for congress to act on a billion dollars settlement based upon years of discrimination against black farmers, women farmers and hispanic farmers trying to get class status action and the government hasn't addressed that as well. you talk to this whole notion of race, it speaks to you how do you present day pay for the since of the past. no different than when you saw the death of senator robert byrd, he gave many interviews he was frankly sorry for his particular past and you still had folks saying, yeah, but i still can't forgive him. it says whether we're black or white we are still grappling with the issue of race it is so personal and so deeply embedded in our dna.

with all due respect, this is not about the racial since of the past of which we've talked forever, not about rush limbaugh, this is about a vry simple case, a woman who gave a speech that was distorted and twisted on the internet, as so often happens and an administration and naacp and a lot of other people who jumped the gun in going after her and crusifing her. first, they hung her and now we're going to get around to a trial. what needs to be done is to correct what appears to be a deep injustice to this woman. miss sherrod deserves by all accounts -- this is not --

i'm with david on this. i don't think there's any question, everybody screwed up and needs to admit they screwed up, end of story.

campbell asked a broader question to which tim was speaking to, i was talking to as well, here's the deal, naacp makes their statment. let's say they review the sherrod case. the reality is there's still people in the department of agriculture who discriminate against folks still have jobs. the settlement still hasn't been funded by congress. my point is there is still a broader interest in this country we still have to contend with.

there is no question there are broader issues. tonight, the issue is this woman apparently a victim.

who was attacked by andrew breitbart.

no question.

gentlemen, we have to end it there. many thanks, appreciate it tim, david, roland, as always.

--
Stephanie Chan

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:16 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re:

[REDACTED]

I had asked the interns to pull up contact info for every reporter who worked on the story earlier and all those folks received the statement. We also sent to all the folks who called USDA and our in house folks.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED] Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Chan, Stephanie
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:08:55 2010

Steph did our statement this afternoon go to our entire list as we discussed?
Chris Mather

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:11 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: CNN Transcript: Reading of USDA Statement

Yech.

By the way, what happened with your flight? I thought you were good to fly tonight?

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:07:51 2010
Subject: Re: CNN Transcript: Reading of USDA Statement

No they shouldn't have read your name. I think it was in poor taste.

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:06:30 2010
Subject: RE: CNN Transcript: Reading of USDA Statement

am I going to get in trouble because I didn't make it clear that my name was to appear nowhere in the news? :/

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:39 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Subject: Re: CNN Transcript: Reading of USDA Statement

Btw stephanie chan is now famous.

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:36:17 2010
Subject: CNN Transcript: Reading of USDA Statement
Station: CNN
Date: 07/20/2010 15:43:25 - 3:53:25 PM

shirley sherrod has said that the department of agriculture was pressured by the white house to ask her to resign. that's essentially what she told my colleague, tony harris, earlier today. we've been waiting for government to respond to her accusations and we just got that in, in the form of a statement. we expect we might get more. but here's the first statement as i read it to you, literally fresh off the press. this is from tom vilsack, agriculture secretary from the united states of america. yesterday, i asked for and accepted ms. sherrod's resignation for two reasons. first, for the past 18 months we have been working to turn a page on the sordid civil rights record at the usd and that controversy could make it more difficult to move forward. second, state directors are often called to use their discretion. the controversy surrounding her comments would create situations where her situations, rightly or wrongly, would be called into question, making it difficult for her to bring jobs to georgia. now, remember, ms. sherrod is saying here on cnn, if you took it in context, if you listen to the totality of what i actually said in this speech and not just the edited portions of it, you would understand that i was trying to make a point that says discrimination is not good. but the usda, her boss, tom vilsack, secretary of agriculture, does not appear to be buying that or even giving her reconsideration. why? let me read on. our policy is clear, he writes, there is zero tolerance for discrimination at usda and we strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. we have a duty to ensure that when we provide services to the american people, we do so in an equitable manner. but equally important is our duty to instill confidence in the american people that we are fair service providers. this comes from a stephanie chan, press secretary, press assistant office of communication, u.s. department of agriculture. says here a statement by agriculture secretary tom vilsack. just got this. it's the reaction to the accusation from shirley sherrod saying, look, i was taken out of context. if you listen to me in totality, you will understand i was trying to say something else. reconsider your decision. we just reported the naacp is apparently reconsidering. we'll hear from them soon. as far as the government goes, it doesn't look like they are. we'll be right back. granola nut clusters 100% natural nuts and granola in bite sized clusters. it's a little bit of nature... a little bit better. and nature approves. granola nut clusters from nature valley. dan malloy has helped my business expand and created a lot of jobs. green jobs and high tech jobs and i have a job because of dan malloy dan malloy has put a lot of people to work helping create jobs that was my job as mayor of stamford and i'll do the same as governor by investing in high tech and clean energy holding down property taxes and lowering electric rates so people want to live here and businesses can afford to stay here that's how we'll turn connecticut's economy around dan malloy has got the experience that money can't buy approve this message i'm dan malloy and i

we're getting a lot of people talking about this shirley sherrod story. a lot of you saying, she's falsely accused. some of you saying, no, she should have been fired. so back and forth we go. we'll continue bringing you the details. they are still coming in, folks.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

DeJong, Justin

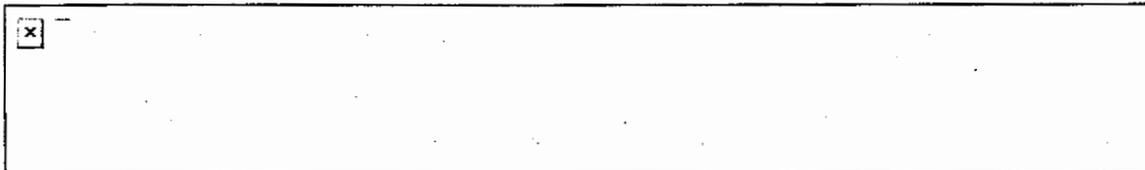
From: Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:49 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: Shirley Sherrod summary clips packet

Np

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Tue Jul 20 19:35:39 2010
Subject: Re: Shirley Sherrod summary clips packet

Tx.

From: Sarah.Misailidis@oc.usda.gov
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie; Purchia, Liz; DeJong, Justin
Cc: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 19:30:53 2010
Subject: Shirley Sherrod summary clips packet
Please see below and attached. I will update in the morning. Thank you.



Office of Communications (202) 720-4623

USDA Clips

Tuesday, July 20, 2010

USDA Clips are intended for use by authorized government personnel only. Redistribution by any means to any unauthorized person violates copyright on the source material.

Rural Development clips

USDA worker pressured to resign over race comments (AP 7/20)

The Obama administration is standing by its quick decision to oust a black Agriculture Department employee over racially tinged remarks at an NAACP banquet in Georgia, despite evidence that her remarks were misconstrued and growing calls for USDA to reconsider.

Shirley Sherrod, who until Tuesday was the Agriculture Department's director of rural development in Georgia, says the administration caved to political pressure by pushing her to resign for saying that she didn't give a white farmer as much help as she could have 24 years ago, when she worked for a nonprofit group. Sherrod says her remarks, delivered in March at a local NAACP banquet in Georgia, were part of a story about racial reconciliation, not racism. The white farming family that was the subject of the story stood by Sherrod and said she should keep her job. [Link](#)

USDA worker resigns over racism charge from video (AP 7/20)

A black employee who resigned from the Agriculture Department over comments at a Georgia NAACP meeting said Tuesday the White House forced her out of her job over a manufactured racial controversy. Shirley Sherrod, who until Tuesday was USDA's director of rural development in Georgia, said she was on the road Monday when USDA deputy undersecretary Cheryl Cook called her and told her the White House wanted her to resign. "They called me twice," Sherrod told The Associated Press in an interview. "The last time they asked me to pull over the side of the road and submit my resignation on my Blackberry, and that's what I did." A USDA spokesman would not comment on whether the White House was involved, but Secretary Tom Vilsack issued a statement saying the agency has no tolerance for discrimination. [Link](#)

USDA worker quits over racism charge from video (AP 7/20)

A black federal worker has resigned from a Georgia agricultural job after a video clip showed her saying she had not helped a farmer as much as she could have because he was white. U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a statement Tuesday he had accepted the resignation of Shirley Sherrod. Vilsack says the USDA has no tolerance for discrimination. Sherrod told the Atlanta-Journal Constitution she was forced out of her job as the USDA's rural development director for Georgia. She said the two-minute, 38-second video posted online Monday misconstrued her message. Sherrod's taped remarks were from a local meeting of the civil rights group NAACP. National NAACP President Benjamin Todd Jealous welcomed the resignation because the group opposes racism of all kinds. [Link](#)

Dismissed employee blames media (UPI 7/20)

An employee of the U.S. Department of Agriculture says she lost her job because the media misconstrued a speech she gave at an NAACP banquet. Shirley Sherrod, who was forced out as the USDA's rural development director for Georgia, is seen on a video admitting she didn't do everything she could to help a white farmer who needed aid, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported Tuesday. What the media didn't report, Sherrod says, was that the incident she was relating on the video happened 24 years ago when she was working for another organization, not the federal government. Also left out, Sherrod says, is the part where she says she was trying to figure out how to help someone who was condescending. [Link](#)

Ex-USDA official insists she was told White House wanted her to quit (CNN 7/20)

While officials say the White House didn't ask for Shirley Sherrod's resignation, the former black Agriculture Department employee insisted Tuesday that the push for her to step down came from the Obama administration. But Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack said he asked her to resign without interacting with the White House. "When I saw the statements and the context of the statements, I determined that it would make it difficult for her to do her job as a rural development director, and compromise our capacity to close the chapter on civil rights cases, I didn't want anything to jeopardize her job in terms of getting the job done and getting people to work in Georgia," Vilsack said. [Link](#)

Former USDA employee says White House pressured her to resign (CNN 7/20)

A black former Agriculture Department employee, who resigned after a video clip surfaced of her discussing a white farmer, insisted Tuesday she "went all out" to help the man keep his farm and said she resigned under pressure from the Obama administration. Shirley Sherrod, who resigned Monday as the department's director of rural development for Georgia, told CNN she had four calls telling her the White House wanted her to resign. "They asked me to resign, and in fact they harassed me as I was driving back to the state office from West Point, Georgia, yesterday," she said. The last call "asked me to pull to the side of the road and do it [resign]," she said. [Link](#)

Ex-worker: USDA 'wasn't interested in hearing the truth' (CNN 7/20)

A former USDA employee who resigned after a video surfaced of her talking about a white farmer told CNN on Tuesday that the administration "wasn't interested in hearing the truth." Shirley Sherrod, who resigned Monday as the department's state director of rural development for Georgia, told CNN she had four calls telling her the White House wanted her to resign. She said she was driving at the time, and the last call asked her to pull to the side of the road and offer her resignation. Sherrod's resignation came after media outlets aired the video, in which she tells an audience she did not give the white farmer "the full force of what I could do" to help him avoid foreclosure. [Link](#)

USDA employee says statements on white farmer misconstrued (CNN 7/20)

A black Agriculture Department employee who resigned after a video clip showed her talking about a white farmer said Tuesday her remarks were taken out of context. Shirley Sherrod, the department's former

state director of rural development for Georgia, told CNN on Tuesday the incident she discusses in the clip took place more than two decades ago -- and she recounted it to an audience to make the point that people should move beyond race. "I was speaking to that group, like I've done many groups, and I tell them about a time when I thought the issue was race and race only," Sherrod told CNN's "American Morning" from her home in Albany, Georgia. The incident took place in 1986, while she worked for a nonprofit and before she worked for the USDA, she said. "I was telling the story of how working with him helped me to see the issue is not about race. It's about those who have versus those who do not have." [Link](#)

NAACP: We were 'snookered' by Sherrod tape (CNN Blog 7/20)

The NAACP has retracted its earlier statement condemning statements made by a former Agriculture Department employee, saying it was "snookered by Fox News" and conservative website publisher Andrew Breitbart. "Having reviewed the full tape by Shirley Sherrod, who is the woman who was fired by the Department of Agriculture, and most importantly heard the testimony of the white farmers mentioned in this story, we now believe that the organization that edited the documents did so with the intention of deceiving millions of Americans," the statement from NAACP President Benjamin Jealous says. The organization also urged Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack to reconsider Sherrod's resignation. [Link](#)

Race remarks cost USDA official her job (CNN Blog 7/20)

An African-American Agriculture Department worker resigns over her handling of a white Georgia farmer's case when she worked for a nonprofit group in 1986. It came to light when Shirley Sherrod talked about the case at an NAACP banquet earlier this year. Were her remarks a teaching moment that backfired, or evidence of racism? Sherrod says her comments were taken out of context -- that the point of her story was to unite people. Tony Harris will be talking to Sherrod at 11:00am ET on CNN, and we'll post that interview here. Watch some of her speech and phone interview with CNN's American Morning below, then tell us what you think. We'll share some of your comments on air in the CNN Newsroom, 11:00am - 1:00pm ET. [Link](#)

Why Was Shirley Sherrod Fired? (Fox News - Glenn Beck 7/20)

Let me show you the comments from Shirley Sherrod, the USDA's director of rural development in Georgia. Back in March, while addressing the NAACP, she said this about helping a white farmer: (BEGIN VIDEO CLIP) SHIRLEY SHERROD, FORMER USDA OFFICIAL: I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough. So that when he, I assumed the Department of Agriculture had sent him to me, either that or the Georgia Department of Agriculture, and he needed to go back and report that I did try to help him. [Link](#)

Forcing Ga. Official to Resign Over YouTube Clip was the Right Call, Agriculture Chief Says (Fox News 7/20)

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack on Tuesday stood by his decision to demand the resignation of a Georgia official over a controversial YouTube clip, though the ex-official claimed afterward that the Obama administration never gave her a chance to tell her side of the story. Shirley Sherrod, the department's ex-Georgia director of Rural Development, said the White House forced her out after the video surfaced showing her telling a story about how she withheld help to a white farmer in trouble. But she claimed the video omitted key context and that the administration just got scared. "They were not interested in hearing the truth. No one wanted to hear the truth," she said in a television interview Tuesday morning. [Link](#)

Ex-Ag Official Says Video Showing 'White Farmer' Story Excludes Key Context (Fox News 7/20)

The Department of Agriculture official who resigned Monday night over comments she made at an NAACP dinner in March is claiming that the video clip that caused the firestorm excluded critical context. Shirley Sherrod said the Obama administration got scared after the YouTube clip surfaced. In the video, the department's ex-Georgia director of Rural Development is shown telling the story about how she withheld help to a white farmer in trouble. But Sherrod, in an interview overnight with The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, said she was telling a story about events that happened 24 years when she was working for a local non-profit group. [Link](#)

Video Shows USDA Official Saying She Didn't Give 'Full Force' of Help to White Farmer (FOX News 7/20)

Days after the NAACP clashed with Tea Party members over allegations of racism, a video has surfaced showing an Agriculture Department official regaling an NAACP audience with a story about how she withheld help to a white farmer facing bankruptcy -- video that now has forced the official to resign. Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, is shown in the clip describing "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." Sherrod, who is black, claimed the farmer took a long time trying to show he was "superior" to her. The audience laughed as she described how she determined his fate... "There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person," Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a written statement. "We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously. [Link](#)

Gingrich Responds to Discrimination at USDA (Fox News 7/20)

SEAN HANNITY, HOST: And this is a Fox News alert. An Obama administration official resigned just a short time ago after she was caught on tape appearing to tell an audience that she had used her position to racially discriminate against white farmers. Now the woman, Shirley Sherrod, was the Georgia state director at the Department of Agricultural. Now the president's Agricultural Secretary Tom Vilsack just released a statement saying the USDA has a zero tolerance policy against discrimination. Here's part of the shocking video that ignited this controversy. (BEGIN VIDEO CLIP) SHIRLEY SHERROD, FORMER USDA GA STATE DIRECTOR: The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking but he was trying to show me he was superior to me. I know what he was doing. But he had come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him. [Request Story](#)

Black USDA official resigns after admitting she only 'did enough' for white farmer (MSNBC 7/20)

A black USDA official in Georgia has resigned after publicly admitting she didn't help a white man trying to save his farm to the "full force" of her power and instead referred him to "one of his own." Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said he had accepted Shirley Sherrod's resignation, saying there was "zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA." The NAACP, which recently condemned racism in tea party groups, also issued a statement Monday night saying: "Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race." [Link](#)

Morning Joe (MSNBC 7/20)

Well, another story of reverse discrimination comes out today. This one is really interesting. I'm thinking that this woman regrets this comment. a USDA official in Georgia has resigned after I YouTube clip shows her admitting that race helped determine how much aid would be given to a white farmer. You're not supposed to do that, are you? I mean, I'm not --it's probably not a good idea. for being so stupid. It's not even -- well, how about you just don't do it. Anyway, the state's director of rural development apparently made the comments during an NAACP banquet in March. Take a listen. The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking, but he was trying to show me he was superior to me. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time to show me he was superior to me was i was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him. I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So, I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. [Request Story](#)

Shirley Sherrod: White House Forced My Resignation (CBS 7/20)

The Department of Agriculture employee who resigned after a controversy erupted over recent remarks she made is now saying that the White House forced her resignation. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, however, is taking responsibility for the resignation, and the White House reportedly says it had no part in his decision. Shirley Sherrod, the USDA's former director of rural development in Georgia, said USDA deputy undersecretary Cheryl Cook called her Monday and said the White House wanted her to resign, the Associated Press reports. "They called me twice," Sherrod told the AP, noting that she was driving when she received the calls. "The last time they asked me to pull over the side of the road and submit my resignation on my Blackberry, and that's what I did." [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Resigns Over USDA Race Remark Furor (CBS News 7/20)

A high-ranking black employee of the U.S. Department of Agriculture has resigned after remarks she made about race were distributed by conservative web sites and aired on Fox News. A video clip of Shirley Sherrod, the USDA's Georgia State Director of Rural Development, was circulated by conservative blogger Andrew Breitbart and his site, biggovernment.com, in which Sherrod talked of withholding help to a white man facing the loss of his family farm. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack released a statement Tuesday saying he had accepted Sherrod's resignation, and added that the department has no tolerance for discrimination. [Link](#)

USDA worker quits over 1986 racial incident (The Washington Post 7/20)

A U.S. Agriculture Department official from Georgia resigned late Monday after she was caught on tape admitting that she had not helped a farmer as much as she could have because he was white. Shirley Sherrod, USDA state director of rural development, made the remarks on March 27 at an NAACP Freedom Fund banquet. Her videotaped remarks surfaced on YouTube on Monday. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack accepted Sherrod's resignation, saying, "There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously." NAACP President and Benjamin Jealous called Sherrod's actions shameful and agreed with the decision to fire her. [Link](#)

White House official: We didn't push for Sherrod's firing (Washington Post 7/20)

A White House official insists that the White House didn't pressure Shirley Sherrod to resign, or pressure USDA chief Tom Vilsack to fire her, over the Andrew Breitbart video allegedly showing her claiming she didn't help a white farmer 24 years ago because of racial reasons. "We did not pressure USDA or Ms. Sherrod," the White House official emails me. Ben Smith was told something similar. Separately, Vilsack, who fired Sherrod while declaring zero tolerance for "discrimination," released a statement that seemed to take ownership of the firing, without quite clarifying whether the White House had any role: Yesterday, I asked for and accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation for two reasons. First, for the past 18 months, we have been working to turn the page on the sordid civil rights record at USDA and this controversy could make it more difficult to move forward on correcting injustices. [Link](#)

Did White House fire woman on strength of bogus Breitbart video? (Washington Post 7/20)

By now you've heard about the story burning up the right: A U.S. Agriculture Department official says the USDA forced her to resign because Andrew Breitbart posted a video of her supposedly describing how she didn't help a white farmer 24 years ago because of racial reasons. The woman has now said the video is bogus and that she said nothing of the kind, and she's hinted that the White House urged her firing. So the question is this: Did the White House have this woman fired before the facts were known, all in response to what may prove to be a Breitbart-manufactured racial controversy? If so, this would illustrate an appalling White House willingness to "jump" when Breitbart says "how high," as Digby put it in a scorching post today. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod: Racist or scapegoat? (Washington Post 7/20)

Were the administration and the NAACP too hasty in their reactions to Shirley Sherrod, the Department of Agriculture employee who resigned (i.e., was fired) for allegedly racist comments? A video clip posted online Monday shows Sherrod delivering a speech at a March NAACP banquet, where she talks about her failure to help a white farmer who was in danger of losing his farm. Her suggestion: If he'd been black, she would have moved heaven and earth to help him. "There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, in accepting Sherrod's resignation. The NAACP, which last week accused the Tea Party of racism, rushed out a searing condemnation of Sherrod: "We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers," said NAACP president Benjamin Jealous. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod: Sacrificial lamb on the altar of race (Washington Post Blog 7/20)

As teachable moments in the minefield of race in America go, the case of Shirley Sherrod is a big one. When I first saw the video clip this morning, I was astonished. There was a black agriculture department official, Sherrod, boasting about how she used her federal position to deny help to a white farmer. Oh yeah. She needed to go. Or so I thought. As the day wore on and the truth was revealed, my heart sank.

The videotape that caused a firestorm had been selectively edited. Sherrod was relating a story of redemption from 1986 when she worked for a non-profit in Georgia. Sure, she didn't want to help the white man before her too much because he displayed what she called a superior attitude towards her. But Sherrod went on to talk about how she spent the next two years trying to help the man save his farm. Sherrod said she learned from that experience. That it wasn't so much about black and white as it was about helping the poor. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod: Racist or scapegoat? (Washington Post Blog 7/20)

Were the administration and the NAACP too hasty in their reactions to Shirley Sherrod, the Department of Agriculture employee who resigned (i.e., was fired) for allegedly racist comments? A video clip posted online Monday shows Sherrod delivering a speech at a March NAACP banquet, where she talks about her failure to help a white farmer who was in danger of losing his farm. Her suggestion: If he'd been black, she would have moved heaven and earth to help him. "There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, in accepting Sherrod's resignation. The NAACP, which last week accused the Tea Party of racism, rushed out a searing condemnation of Sherrod: "We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers," said NAACP president Benjamin Jealous. [Link](#)

An Ag official's bum racism rap (Chicago Tribune Blog 7/20)

Did Shirley Sherrod get a bum rap? The USDA's rural development director lost her job after a video turned up in which she appears to confess to having discriminated years ago against a white farmer who came to her for help. In the clip from a speech she made in March at a local NAACP banquet, Sherrod, who is black, appears to tell the crowd she didn't do everything she could to help a white farmer whom she said was condescending when he came to her for aid - at least not at first. "What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was, I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," Sherrod said in the video, recorded March 27 in Douglas in southeast Georgia. The trouble is that the clip does not show what the late, great Paul Harvey used to call "the rest of the story." [Link](#)

USDA Official Resigns in Racial Flap (TIME 7/20)

A U.S. Department of Agriculture official who is African American has resigned after a tape of discriminatory comments she made at an NAACP event was posted to the web. Shirley Sherrod, who had been Georgia's state director of rural development told CNN the video, first shown by conservative web publisher Andrew Breitbart, was taken out of context. In the clip, Sherrod describes how in 1986 she didn't offer her "full force" of help to a white farmer. Sherrod told CNN that at the time of the incident, she was not working for the USDA, but for a nonprofit organization and that she had been trying to help the farmer who had been foreclosed on. "I was telling the story of how working with him helped me to see the issue is not about race," she said "It's about those who have versus those who do not have." [Link](#)

Ex-USDA Official's Tale Just Another Racial Landmine Example (NPR 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod is getting her 15 minutes of fame and what a 15 minutes it is. She, of course, is the black woman, a former U.S. Agriculture Department official forced to resign because of what sounded like an admission that, more than two decades ago, long before she at the USDA but still working in a farmer-assistance program, she didn't help a white farmer in danger of losing his farm to the fullest extent possible because of race. A video of Sherrod making the statement went into heavy rotation on conservative media outlets like Breitbart.com and Fox News. Sherrod has been called a racist; the Obama Administration has been accused of harboring same. [Link](#)

Couple says fired USDA official helped save their land; USDA won't rehire (Atlanta Journal Constitution 7/20)

Despite being defended by the white farmer she allegedly discriminated against, former U.S. Department of Agriculture official Shirley Sherrod will not get her job back. Sherrod "kept us out of bankruptcy," said Eloise Spooner, 82. She and her husband Roger Sooner, who own a farm in Iron City, located in southwest Georgia, approached Sherrod in 1986 -- when she worked with the Georgia field office for the Federation of Southern Cooperative/Land Assistance Fund -- seeking assistance. Sherrod, who is black, was asked to resign Monday night by USDA Deputy Under Secretary Cheryl Cook after videotaped comments she made

in March at a local NAACP banquet surfaced on the web indicating that she did not work as hard as she could on behalf of white farmers. [Link](#)

Farmer's wife says fired USDA official helped save their land (Atlanta Journal Constitution 7/20)

The wife of the white farmer allegedly discriminated against by the USDA's rural development director for Georgia said Shirley Sherrod "kept us out of bankruptcy." Eloise Spooner, 82, awoke Tuesday to discover that Sherrod had lost her job after videotaped comments she made in March at a local NAACP banquet surfaced on the web. Sherrod, who is black, told the crowd she didn't do everything she could to help a white farmer whom she said was condescending when he came to her for aid. She said the video was selectively edited but regardless U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack was adamant that she resign. [Link](#)

Resigned USDA official says racial story misconstrued (Atlanta Journal Constitution 7/20)

The USDA's rural development director for Georgia says she was forced out of her federally appointed job after a "snippet" of a speech she gave in March appeared to show her admission to only half-heartedly aiding a struggling white farmer because of his race. But in a phone interview from her home in Albany early Tuesday morning, Shirley Sherrod told the Atlanta-Journal Constitution that the two-minute, 38-second video posted online Monday by biggovernment.com and reported on by FoxNews.com and the AJC completely misconstrued the message she was trying to convey. Sherrod, 62, insisted her statements in the video were not racist. "For Fox to take a spin on this like they have done, and know it's not the truth ... it's very upsetting," she said. [Link](#)

In the curious case of Shirley Sherrod, let's see the whole tape (Atlanta Journal Constitution Blog 7/20)

A couple of folks in comments yesterday brought up the case of USDA official Shirley Sherrod, a black woman caught on tape at an NAACP meeting here in Georgia apparently bragging about being less than diligent in helping a white farmer. The folks at Big Government posted a portion of her speech as part of the running feud between the NAACP and the Tea Party over which organization is more racist. By the end of the day Monday, Sherrod had been forced to resign her post, and NAACP President Ben Jealous had released a statement agreeing with the forced resignation: "Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race. [Link](#)

Sherrod blames NAACP for firing (Politico 7/20)

The Agriculture Department official who has resigned after a video surfaced showing her saying she withheld assistance from a white farmer insisted on Tuesday that she really lost her job over the tea party's clash with the NAACP. A video of Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of rural development, telling an NAACP audience that she didn't give a white farmer the "full force" of what she could provide, went viral Tuesday and prompted Sherrod to leave the department. The NAACP condemned Sherrod's comments in a statement, calling them "shameful." Asked about the NAACP's actions during an interview with CNN on Tuesday, Sherrod said the only reason the video surfaced was in response to an NAACP resolution accusing the tea party of using "racist" tactics. "They got into a fight with the tea party, and all of this came out as a result of that," Sherrod said. [Link](#)

NAACP: Breitbart 'snookered' us (Politico Blog 7/20)

NAACP President Ben Jealous on Tuesday said the organization had been "snookered" into condemning former Agriculture Department official Shirley Sherrod. Sherrod was fired Monday after a video — posted on one of Andrew Breitbart's conservative sites — showed Sherrod saying she had not given a white farmer her "full force." On Tuesday, the family of the Georgia farmer Sherrod was speaking of in the video came forward to defend her. Additionally, Sherrod took to CNN to defend herself and attack the NAACP for criticizing her without first calling her to confirm details. [Link](#)

Georgia family defends USDA official (Politico Blog 7/20)

The family involved in a 24-year-old incident that resulted in a Department of Agriculture official resigning Monday night is speaking out on her behalf. Shirley Sherrod stepped down from her post as Georgia director of rural development Monday night, two days after a video surfaced in which she explains to an audience at the NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet in March that she did not do everything she could have to

help a struggling farmer because he was white. In the video, Sherrod describes the incident, that took place when she was working with the Georgia field office for the Federation of Southern Cooperative/Land Assistance Fund. [Link](#)

Fired Ag Department employee says Obama White House wanted her out (USA Today 7/20)

The Obama White House has been dragged into the controversy over an U.S. Agriculture Department employee fired for comments about a white farmer. Shirley Sherrod, a black woman who was the USDA's director of rural development in Georgia, told the Associated Press that a department official said the White House wanted her resignation. "They called me twice," Sherrod said, referring to the Ag Department. "The last time they asked me to pull over the side of the road and submit my resignation on my Blackberry, and that's what I did." Sherrod told CNN the White House was worried about more attacks from Fox conservative commentator Glenn Beck. [Link](#)

Former Agriculture Department Official Denies Racism; Secretary Vilsack Stands By Her Firing (ABC News Blog 7/20)

A former Department of Agriculture official said her termination was an unfair casualty of a larger political spat on race between the Tea Party movement and the NAACP, but Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack Tuesday afternoon stood by his decision to seek her termination based on a controversial anecdote she told earlier this year. On Monday morning, conservative blogger Andrew Breitbart posted a video of Shirley Sherrod, then the US Department of Agriculture's director of rural development for Georgia, along with an essay titled "Video Proof: The NAACP Awards Racism - 2010." [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Resigns USDA Job After Admitting Use Of Racial Preference During NAACP Banquet (VIDEO) (The Huffington Post 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod, who resigned Monday from the USDA. 756 Shirley Sherrod, a USDA official in Georgia, has resigned after publicly admitting that race played a factor in her decision to limit how much aid would be given to a white farmer. Sherrod, who is African American, made the comments during a local NAACP banquet on March 27, according to information displayed on the video. A clip of her speech first appeared Monday morning on BigGovernment.com and aired that evening on Fox News. Her resignation as the agency's state director of rural development was quickly accepted by U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. He cited a zero-tolerance policy and told CNN that he was working to "reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department." In her controversial speech, Sherrod discussed the first time she was "faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." She claimed that during the conversation, the man "was trying to show me he was superior to me." [Link](#)

Would Shirley Sherrod's Full NAACP Speech Give a Different Impression? (AOL News 7/20)

In the ongoing war over who is more racist -- the NAACP or the tea party -- the right has delivered a blow with revealing footage of a black USDA official, Shirley Sherrod, speaking at an NAACP conference and admitting to doing less than she could have to help a white farmer. On Monday, Sherrod resigned. But she also sought to clarify the record, and her version jibes with the fact that the footage released by the website Big Government was cut off at just about the point where it appeared Sherrod was beginning to disown her own prejudice. She was starting to say how class distinctions trumped racial ones, and that poor blacks and whites should feel solidarity. Just before the segment ends, Sherrod tells the audience: "That's when it was revealed to me that it's about poor, versus those who have. It's not so much about white ... it is about white and black. But it's not, you know, it opened my eyes." [Link](#)

Black USDA Official Resigns in Flap Over White Farmer (AOL News 7/20)

A black USDA official who was pressured to resign over comments she made about not helping a struggling white farmer as much as she could have says the agency didn't know the whole story and succumbed to political pressure. Shirley Sherrod resigned Monday as the USDA's rural development director for Georgia after a clip of the speech was posted online by conservative outlets, biggovernment.com and later FoxNews. [Link](#)

NAACP Slams Shirley Sherrod's Actions As 'Shameful' (My Fox New York 7/20)

The actions of a black U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) official who admitted withholding help to a white farmer facing bankruptcy were late Monday described as "shameful" by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, was exposed in a video recorded at an NAACP banquet describing "the first time I was faced

with having to help a white farmer save his farm." Sherrod claimed the farmer took a long time trying to show he was "superior" to her. "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land -- so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough," she said in the video. The Agriculture Department announced Monday, shortly after FOXNews.com published its initial report on the video, that Sherrod had resigned. [Link](#)

Ga. USDA Official Resigns Over Comments (My Fox Atlanta 7/19)

Racially charged comments have led to the abrupt resignation of an agriculture department official. Shirley Sherrod was the top official who oversaw rural development in the state of Georgia. According to FOX News, Sherrod, the director of the USDA's rural development agency, resigned over comments she made at an NAACP meeting. FOX News obtained taped comments from an NAACP meeting that took place in Douglas, Georgia in March. According to FOX News, Sherrod is seen talking about how she withheld help to a white farmer who was facing bankruptcy. "I didn't give him the full force of what I could do, I did enough," Sherrod said during the meeting. In the video, Sherrod said she was struggling with the fact so many black people have lost their farmland and she was faced with having to help a white person save their land. Sherrod said she took him to see a white lawyer. "I figured if I took him to one of them his own kind, [they] would take care of him," said Sherrod. According to FOX News, the agriculture department announced Monday that Sherrod had resigned. [Link](#)

Georgia's Rural Development Director resigns (Fox 31 7/20)

A black USDA worker has resigned after a video of her making racist remarks has surfaced. US Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced Monday he has accepted the resignation of Georgia's Rural Development Director Shirley Sherrod, who lives in Albany. Here is a comment Sherrod made about helping a white farmer during her speech at the NAACP's 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet in March. "So many black people had lost their farm land and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough" says Sherrod. National NAACP President Benjamin Todd Jealous welcomed the resignation because the group opposes racism of all kinds. Sherrod is married to a prominent Civil Rights Activist in Albany. [Link](#)

USDA big quits in bias-boast shock (The New York Post 7/20)

A black official in the US Agriculture Department resigned yesterday after a video surfaced of her bragging to the NAACP that she didn't do everything she could to help a white farmer facing bankruptcy. Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, told the audience at a March banquet in Atlanta that she claimed the man felt "superior" to her, according to FoxNews.com. "He had come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was talking all that time, trying to show me he was superior to me, was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," Sherrod said. "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land -- so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do." "I did enough," she said. [Link](#)

White House forced me to resign over fabricated racial controversy (NY Daily News 7/20)

One strike and she was out. A black employee who resigned from the Agriculture Department on Monday said the White House forced her out after remarks that she says have sparked a fabricated racial controversy. Shirley Sherrod, the former Georgia director of Rural Development, said she received a phone call from the USDA's deputy undersecretary Cheryl Cook on Monday while she was in a car. Cook told her that the White House wanted her to call it quits. "They called me twice," Sherrod told the Associated Press. "The last time they asked me to pull over the side of the road and submit my resignation on my Blackberry, and that's what I did." [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod's Disappearing Act: Not So Fast (Washington Examiner 7/20)

My oh my, that happened quickly. Perhaps too quickly. Until yesterday, Shirley Sherrod was Georgia Director of Rural Development for the USDA. Earlier in the day at Big Government, Andrew Breitbart put up a video that exposed Ms. Sherrod as someone all too willing to discriminate based on race. Within hours of the video's release, USDA Director Tom Vilsack announced Sherrod's recognition, and in the process issued an exceptionally strong condemnation ("We are appalled by her actions ... Her actions were shameful ... she gave no indication she had attempted to right the wrong she had done to this man"). The NAACP, at whose Freedom Fund Banquet Sherrod spoke of her discriminatory posture, and at which the

audience seemed to indicate approval of her outlook, followed a short time later, virtually echoing Vilsack. [Link](#)

BREAKING: Racist Obama administration member resigns (Manhattan Conservative Examiner 7/19)

Shirley Sherrod of the USDA's Georgia Rural Development office has resigned following the airing of overtly racist remarks she made in a speech before—of all organizations—the NAACP. At a local NAACP meeting in March of 2010, Sherrod boasted of withholding assistance to a farmer based on the color of his skin, which happened to be white. Sherrod (surprise!) is black. In her comments, which are captured in the video below, Sherrod freely admits to "struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land." She further confesses to abusing her position by refusing to "give him the full force of what I could do." The remarks conclude with a racist gem: "I took him to a white lawyer... I figured that if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him." [Link](#)

USDA Official Implicated in NAACP Racism Flap (Buckeye Ag Network 7/20)

Days after the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) denounced the Conservative Tea Party movement on allegations of racism, the organization was itself implicated in charges of racism involving a USDA official. In a video released at BigGovernment.com, USDA's Director of Rural Development in Georgia Shirley Sherrod was depicted acknowledging discriminating against white farmers. The video, of a speech Sherrod gave to the NAACP's Freedom Fund banquet in March of this year, stirred quite a controversy on the internet this week, forcing Sherrod's resignation from the department Monday. Sherrod's remarks in the NAACP speech indicated that she "didn't give [a white farmer] the full force of what I could do," because "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land." [Link](#)

The rest of the story (Arkansas Times Blog 7/20)

The right-wing echo chamber has been beating the drums for a couple of days now about a supposedly racist (black) USDA worker, promptly sacked by Ag Secretary Tom Vilsack on the strength of Fox reporting of her supposedly offensive remarks. The rest of the story is instructive. Hardly what Fox News or the odious Andrew Breitbart reported. The full video apparently will back up her account, in the appropriate fuller context, of what she said and did TWENTY-FOUR YEARS AGO. It is Acorn Faux reporting redux. It occurs to me that Sen. Blanche Lincoln could score some courage points here. No breath being held. [Link](#)

Breitbart's Skilled Editing (The Atlantic Blog 7/20)

The quotes that former USDA worker Shirley Sherrod gave on the edited tapes disseminated by Andrew Breitbart are indeed indefensible, but is it not fair to provide some kind of context? To wit: Sherrod said the short video clip excluded the breadth of the story about how she eventually worked with the man over a two-year period to help ward off foreclosure of his farm, and how she eventually became friends with him and his wife. "And I went on to work with many more white farmers," she said. "The story helped me realize that race is not the issue, it's about the people who have and the people who don't. When I speak to groups, I try to speak about getting beyond the issue of race." [Link](#)

White House wants it both ways on Sherrod firing (Salon 7/20)

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack issued a statement today explaining that he asked for Georgia rural development director Shirley Sherrod's resignation yesterday because "the controversy surrounding her comments would create situations where her decisions, rightly or wrongly, would be called into question making it difficult for her to bring jobs to Georgia." As Alex Pareene explained, the controversy Vilsack is referring to was whipped up when Andrew Breitbart released an edited video clip of Sherrod, it was mindlessly picked up by other media, and the Obama administration followed suit. But now that Breitbart's story of Sherrod being a racist has been exposed as bogus, the White House is trying to have it both ways: They say they support Vilsack's decision but at the same time had absolutely nothing to do with his making it. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod, scalp for the right wing (Salon 7/20)

Sweaty conservative culture warrior and Internet publisher Andrew Breitbart won yet another scalp today when Shirley Sherrod, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's rural development director for Georgia, was forced to resign for the offense of appearing in an obviously edited video clip that was posted to one of

Breitbart's websites. Sherrod was speaking to a Georgia chapter of the NAACP. In the speech, according to Breitbart's characterization, Sherrod is explaining how she refused to help a white farmer as much as she could have because she preferred to help black people. Breitbart: We are in possession of a video from in which Shirley Sherrod, USDA Georgia director of rural development, speaks at the NAACP Freedom Fund dinner in Georgia. In her meandering speech to what appears to be an all-black audience, this federally appointed executive bureaucrat lays out in stark detail that her federal duties are managed through the prism of race and class distinctions. [Link](#)

USDA worker quits over racism charge from video (Salon 7/20)

A black federal worker has resigned from a Georgia agricultural job after a video clip showed her saying she had not helped a farmer as much as she could have because he was white. U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a statement Tuesday he had accepted the resignation of Shirley Sherrod. Vilsack says the USDA has no tolerance for discrimination. Sherrod told the Atlanta-Journal Constitution she was forced out of her job as the USDA's rural development director for Georgia. She said the two-minute, 38-second video posted online Monday misconstrued her message. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod: It just hurt (WALB 7/20)

An Albany woman who fought for civil rights says she's unfairly labeled a racist. 62-year-old Shirley Sherrod is in our nation's headlines, following her resignation as Rural Development Director for the USDA. She says she was forced to quit her job Monday after video of a speech to the NAACP became public. In the video, Sherrod talks about helping a white farmer back in the 80's. Shirley Sherrod should be at her office in Athens. Instead she's in her Albany living room under fire for what's been called racial comments, upset she was forced to pull over and resign late yesterday afternoon. "You know it just hurt," she said. This land has been owned by 87-year-old Roger Spooner of Iron City and his family for decades, in part thanks to the help Shirley Sherrod gave the Spooners in the 80's. [Link](#)

State-level USDA official resigned after accused of racism (Headliner Watch 7/20)

A state-level U.S. Department of Agriculture official resigned officially after she was accused of racism. She was found speaking of not providing enough help to a white in a video. Shirley Sherrod, the former Georgia director of Rural Development, southeast Georgia, said a white farmer was "struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land." "What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was, I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," Sherrod said she said she decided to hold back the assistance, and sent the white farmer to a "white attorney", because "if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him." But Sherrod on Tuesday claimed that the video was manipulated and blamed Fox News. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Leaves USDA Over Racism Charge (News One 7/20)

A black USDA official in Georgia has resigned after publicly admitting she didn't help a white man trying to save his farm to the "full force" of her power and instead referred him to "one of his own." Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said he had accepted Shirley Sherrod's resignation, saying there was "zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA." [Link](#)

Reinstate Shirley Sherrod (Daily Kos 7/20)

This had better be a trial balloon: Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack this afternoon took responsibility for firing an official, Shirley Sherrod, whose appearance on video recalling her behavior toward a white farmer drew charges of racism, and whose immediate firing drew suggestions that the administration had over-reacted to an edited video clip. A White House official told me just now that the White House backs Vilsack's decision -- but that it was Vilsack's alone. The official said the White House -- contrary to the Sherrod's charge -- did not pressure the Department to fire her. Unfortunately, Greg Sargent is hearing similar things. Sorry, but simultaneously saying it wasn't our call' and 'we support the decision' just won't cut it. Firing Shirley Sherrod was a bad decision, motivated by the wrong reasons, and it should be reversed. She should be reinstated, and it's not a close call. [Link](#)

Point of Clarification (TPM Muckraker 7/20)

There's been some confusion today over one aspect of this Breitbart/USDA story that I want to try to clear up. Shirley Sherrod, the USDA official forced out, did an on camera interview with CNN at midday. In the interview, Sherrod described the pressure she came under yesterday from within the USDA to resign her

post in light of the Breitbart video. Shortly after that, the Washington Post had a write-up of the interview in which they quote Sherrod as saying, "I got three calls from the White House. At one point they asked me to pull over to the side of the road and do it because you are going to be on Glenn Beck tonight." Now that purported declaration -- that she got three calls from the White House demanding her resignation -- seems off to anyone who follows these things. Sherrod is a low-level official. [Link](#)

Brietbart Speaks (Talking Points Memo 7/20)

Andrew Breitbart, who published the video clip of Shirley Sherrod's speech that led to her forced resignation, tells TPM he doesn't have the entire video either and that the clip came to him from a source already edited. But he's seen enough: "I think the video speaks for itself. The way she's talking about white people ... is conveying a present tense racism in my opinion. But racism is in the eye of the beholder." [Link](#)

NAACP Now 'Conducting Investigation' Into Sherrod Video (Talking Points Memo Muckraker 7/20)

The NAACP, which originally condemned USDA appointee Shirley Sherrod, is now saying it is conducting an investigation of her story and will issue a new statement. "The NAACP is conducting an investigation into the recent revelations about the situation with Ms. Shirley Sherrod, including attempting to speak with Ms. Sherrod, the farmer in question and viewing the full video," the NAACP said in a statement to CNN. "Following a full and comprehensive process, we will issue an updated statement." Sherrod was forced to resign her position as the Georgia director of rural development for the USDA after Big Government posted a video clip of her telling a local NAACP chapter that she had once, before her time at the USDA, not helped a farmer as much as she could have because he was white. [Link](#)

Breitbart On Sherrod's NAACP Speech: 'I Did Not Edit This Thing' (Talking Points memo Muckraker 7/20)

The crux of the Shirley Sherrod controversy is what she said outside of the two-minute video clip posted by Big Government -- whether she was, as she claims, telling a story about how she overcame racial prejudice while helping poor farmers in Georgia, or whether the clip is a good encapsulation of her views. So we asked Andrew Breitbart, the founder of Big Government, why he hasn't posted the full video. "I don't have it," Breitbart told TPMmuckraker in an interview. Breitbart said his source sent him just the edited clips at first, but is in the process of sending the full video. Breitbart said he'll post the full video, if he can get permission from the video production company who filmed it for a local NAACP chapter. He also maintained that he didn't edit the clip and that it was sent to him already edited. [Link](#)

USDA Appointee Forced To Resign After Edited Speech Released By Breitbart (VIDEO) (Talking Points Memo Muckraker 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod, an appointee to the USDA, was forced to resign yesterday after *Big Government* posted a video of a speech Sherrod gave in March. In the video, Sherrod, who is black, recounts how, 24 years ago, she didn't help a white farmer as much as she could. In the speech, given to a local Georgia chapter of the NAACP, Sherrod recounts a time when, while she was working for a land assistance fund, a white farmer came and asked her for help. "What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was, I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," she said. "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough." [Link](#)

An Alleged Racist Stance From 1980s Catches Up With USDA Official (Politics Daily 7/20)

A mid-level Agriculture Department official says she was forced to resign over an allegedly racist stance she took 24 years ago before she worked for the federal government. Shirley Sherrod, USDA Georgia state director for rural development, got in trouble over a video clip, aired by a conservative website, from a speech she made on March 27 to the NAACP Freedom Forum, according to The Washington Post. In it, Sherrod, who is African-American can be heard recounting her meeting with a struggling white farmer who came to her for help in 1986. "Here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So, I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough so that when he (went to state or federal officials) he needed to go back and report that I did try to help him." That's what the video clip showed. But Sherrod told CNN on Tuesday there was more to the story. In her March speech, she said she described the decades-old incident with the white farmer because she has since come to realize her

mistake. "Working with him helped me realize the issue is not about race, it's about those who have and those who have not," she told the network in a telephone interview. She said she subsequently helped the farmer find a lawyer -- a white lawyer -- to deal with a bankruptcy proceeding, and later struck up a friendship with him and his wife. [Link](#)

NAACP 'appalled' by black USDA official's racial discrimination (Daily Caller 7/20)

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People President Benjamin Todd Jealous said late Monday he was "appalled" by the actions of U.S. Department of Agriculture official Shirley Sherrod, who resigned earlier in the day after video surfaced of her speaking at an NAACP event about discriminating against a white farmer seeking government help. Jealous also promised to look into why members of the audience at an NAACP fundraiser in Georgia this past March reacted, as shown in the video, by nodding and in some cases laughing at Sherrod's remarks. But Jealous distanced the national NAACP from the incident. Coming just days after the NAACP condemned racist elements inside the Tea Party movement, Sherrod's remarks place the storied civil rights organization in an uncomfortable position. "Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race," Jealous said. "We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers." "Her actions were shameful. While she went on to explain in the story that she ultimately realized her mistake, as well as the common predicament of working people of all races, she gave no indication she had attempted to right the wrong she had done to this man," Jealous said (read his full statement below). [Link](#)

Former USDA Employee Accused Of Racism: "I Did Not Discriminate" [Video] (IndyPosted 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod quickly lost her job with the U.S. Department of Agriculture after a 2 minute, 38 second video clip surfaced that included a description of racism during a speech. But Sherrod's defending herself, saying the video clip is just that, a clip that was taken out of context, and does not show her entire speech, which was more of a story about racial reconciliation. In the clip, Sherrod can be seen describing herself not doing as much as she could have to help a white farmer avoid foreclosure. She said the farmer acted "superior" to her, so she "did enough" for him, steering him to "one of his own kind" for help, apparently a white lawyer. Sherrod doesn't deny those comments, but told CNN she did not discriminate against the farmer. She said her comments describing the experience with the farmer were taken out of context, and represent only part of the whole story. She says she in fact helped the man, and became good friends with his family. Sherrod adds that the experience she was speaking of happened 24 years ago when she worked at a nonprofit, long before she joined the USDA, and noted she was telling the story to make a point about how everyone should make a greater effort to reach out across racial boundaries. [Link](#)

Department of Agriculture Employee Shirley Sherrod Resigns Amid Racial Controversy (Associated Content 7/20)

There are a lot of high-profile people who make controversial statements relating to possible racism, and the statements usually come with controversy. Shirley Sherrod, who was an employee of the Department of Agriculture, is just the latest high-profile person to make a controversial statement regarding racism which has led to her resignation. According to the Washington Post, Department of Agriculture employee Shirley Sherrod has resigned due to pressure from the Obama administration over controversial comments she made at an NAACP banquet. The NAACP banquet happened in March, and she talked about how, back in 1986, she did not help a white farmer as much as she could have due to his race. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Resigns (Associated Content 7/20)

Was She Treated Unfairly? Shirley Sherrod, the USDA official who was caught on tape recounting an incident in which she discriminated against a white farmer seeking government help, was obliged to resign from her position because of her remarks. In the meantime, the NAACP, which so recently condemned "racist elements" in the Tea Party, was obliged to condemn the remarks, made before a meeting of NAACP members, who cheered some of the most egregious parts of the story. Having condemned the mote in the eye of the Tea Party, the NAACP was forced to deal with the beam in its own eye. Some are already suggesting that both the Obama administration, which had obliged Shirley Sherrod to resign, and the NAACP, which condemned her remarks, may have acted in haste. Eva Rodriguez of the Washington Post is among those who think that Sherrod was railroaded: [Link](#)

Get ready for another phony race story on FOX News (Milwaukee Journal Sentinel 7/20)

I'm sure the folks at FOX News will do as much with the resignation of Shirley Sherrod as they did with the fake outrage over the New Black Panther Party. Sherrod, who worked for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, was forced to resign after being accused of discriminating against a white farmer. A video of a talk she gave to black farmers that went viral on right-wing blogs seemed to suggest she admitted not helping the white farmer as much as she could have. But it turns out, the farmer's wife told CNN Sherrod did help her husband and did the best she could to help save their farm. Sherrod thinks she was forced to resign because of the recent political backlash over an NAACP statement condemning racism in the Tea Party Movement. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod update: Shirley Sherrod, former USDA worker, says White House pressured her to resign (videos) (Health and Beauty News 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod, the former USDA Director of Rural Development for the state of Georgia, and black woman, resigned from her position after a video showing her making racist comments was posted online. Though she resigned, Sherrod now says that she received multiple phone calls saying that the White House wanted her to resign her post. Speaking with CNN news, Shirley Sherrod said, "They asked me to resign, and in fact they harassed me as I was driving back to the state office from West Point, Georgia, yesterday. The last call "asked me to pull to the side of the road and do it [resign]." "I don't feel good about it, because I know I didn't do anything wrong. During my time at USDA, I gave it all I had." [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod update: Shirley Sherrod resigns from USDA after racist statements at NAACP Banquet (Health and Beauty News 7/20)

Racism is a two way street and after the NAACP has accused the Tea Party of harboring racists and racist views, allegations have fired back. Shirley Sherrod resigned from her post at the USDA after making racist statements during an NAACP banquet. The website Big Government exposed the story and showed video from the NAACP 20th Annual Banquet. You may view the video in the player embedded below. In the video, taken from March 27, 2010, Shirley Sherrod reveals that she let race play a factor when assisting a white farm owner who was losing his land. Shirley Sherrod explains in the video that the man was trying to show he was 'superior' to her and in return, she did not give the full force of what she could do. She also pointed him in the direction of a 'white' lawyer- one of his own kind, she said. [Link](#)

Fox smears Sherrod as racist, Sherrod cancels Fox interview (Media Matters 7/20)

Late in her program today, Megyn Kelly announced that her interview with former USDA official Shirley Sherrod -- which Kelly had touted throughout the show -- was off. Kelly said that Sherrod had "changed her mind," even after Fox had "offered her a considerable amount of time" to "clear the air" and "tell her story." Boy, I wonder why that happened? Maybe it had something to do with Fox's initial coverage of "her story," in which numerous Fox figures responded to Andrew Breitbart's heavily-edited clip of Sherrod's speech by claiming it was evidence that Sherrod was a racist. FoxNews.com's first report on Sherrod reported her statements made in the clip, but gave no indication that it might have been taken out of context. It reported that Fox was "seeking a response from both the NAACP and the USDA," but not that they had attempted to find the full version of the tape or contact Sherrod herself. [Link](#)

Breitbart's Sherrod narrative unravels (Media Matters 7/20)

Based on what appears to be selectively edited footage, Andrew Breitbart falsely suggested that Shirley Sherrod said that, in her former position with the USDA, she had discriminated against a white farmer. In fact, Sherrod's statements in the video corroborate her statement that the story she was discussing is 24 years old. Moreover, Sherrod says that the video took her remarks out of context to omit that she was actually telling story about her work to get "beyond the issue of race." [Link](#)

Confirmed: Breitbart called Sherrod a racist without having the full tape (Media Matters 7/20)

This afternoon in a Hot Air blog post, Ed Morrissey wrote: [Former USDA official Shirley] Sherrod and others can complain about Fox News and the editing of the tape, but two points should be remembered. First, Andrew Breitbart made it clear to me last night that this was the entirety of the speech he had in his possession. He also wants to find the whole speech and is trying to get it. Are you kidding me? In his post yesterday -- headlined "Video Proof: The NAACP Awards Racism - 2010" -- Breitbart claimed to have "video evidence of racism" on Sherrod's part. He said it showed her describing "how she racially discriminates against a white farmer," and referred to it as her "racist tale." The piece was illustrated with a literal "race card." According to Breitbart: In the first video, Sherrod describes how she racially

discriminates against a white farmer. She describes how she is torn over how much she will choose to help him. And, she admits that she doesn't do everything she can for him, because he is white. Eventually, her basic humanity informs that this white man is poor and needs help. But she decides that he should get help from "one of his own kind". She refers him to a white lawyer. [Link](#)

The racism case of Shirley Sherrod - Complete video (allvoices 7/20)

Recently, NAACP clashed with Tea Party members over allegations of racism and racist remarks of the U.S. official Shirley Sherrod. Now, a full video tape has hit the internet in which the Agriculture Department official Shirley Sherrod entertains an NAACP audience with an awful story about how she withdrew her help to a white farmer facing bankruptcy. The video of Shirley Sherrod released on the web forced her to resign from her official post of the department's Georgia Director of Rural Development by the end of Monday. In the video clip, Shirley Sherrod elaborates the whole saga of abusing her power. The black woman Shirley Sherrod claimed that white farmer was showing his superiority over her and later on, she detailed about how she decided his destiny. The act of Shirley Sherrod has been considered as discrimination and has been strongly condemned by the U.S government. Shirley Sherrod took unfair advantage of her position and mistreated a white farmer because of his race, and therefore, don't deserve the post, said NAACP President Ben Jealous. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod: 'They Made Me Quit Because I was Going to be on Glenn Beck' (Big Government 7/20)

The video showed Ms Sherrod, USDA Georgia Director of Rural Development, speaking at an NAACP Freedom Fund dinner in Georgia. Ms Sherrod, who is a federally appointed bureaucrat lays out in shockingly lays out that how race played a part in executing her duties. Sherrod was forced to resign almost immediately after the video was posted. Incredibly, it seems however that her firing was less about what she said in the speech, and more about the story being broadcast on Fox News. In interviews today, Ms Sherrod describes what was behind her speech and how, after the video cuts off, she explains that moment was a turning point in her life where she learned to beyond race. [Link](#)

USDA official resigns over racial comments (Government Executive 7/20)

An Agriculture Department official resigned on Monday over controversial racial remarks she made at a March NAACP banquet, according to various news reports. USDA Georgia State Director of Rural Development Shirley Sherrod told CNN Tuesday that the Obama administration forced her to resign after she described during the March NAACP speech a 1986 encounter with a white farmer in Georgia, whom she said she did not help as much as she could have because of his race. Sherrod, who is African American, was the state's director for the Federation of Southern Cooperatives Land Assistance Fund at the time. Historically, the organization's mission is to provide aid to black farmers. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod: Talks Too Loud (WagerRun 7/20)

As an over all rule, people with positions of power are expected to act and speak with political correctness all the time. However, where one man's idea of being PC ends, another begins. Not always to the good folks with powerful hands agree on what is acceptable. For Shirley Sherrod, she spoke what she thought and has now resigned from her position with the USDA. The reports are that she resigned but the basic information appears that she was really fired. The USDA's only statement is regarding their no-tolerance policy when it comes to racism. The NAACP indicates that the problem was the fact that two farmers of different races were compared with a negative reflection on the black farmer. Shirley Sherrod simply stated that in the present economy, farmers are hurting and that white farmers get less help than black farmers do. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Says 'Racial' Comments Were Misinterpreted (HULIQ 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod is the former Georgia director of Rural Development at the USDA. She was forced to resign on Monday after publicly admitting she didn't help a white man some 24 years ago with the "full force" she had available, but was the punishment fit for the crime? Shirley Sherrod, 62, in an interview with CNN, said the incident, and the comment, have been misconstrued. She made the initial remarks to the NAACP. To CNN, she said: "I was speaking to that group, like I've done many groups, and I tell them about a time when I thought the issue was race and race only. I was telling the story of how working with him helped me to see the issue is not about race. It's about those who have versus those who do not have." [Link](#)

Justice Not Only Obama Department Not Equally Enforcing Law (Heritage Foundation Blog 7/20)

This morning we reviewed the still unfolding New Black Panther Party scandal at the Department of Justice where a whistle blower, testifying under oath, quoted Deputy Assistant Attorney General Julie Fernandes as saying that "the Voting Section will never or will not, at least while she is there, bring any more cases against blacks or other national minorities." In other words, Fernandes has reportedly admitted that the Obama Justice Department is not enforcing the nation's civil rights law equally and in a race-neutral manner. The Obama Justice Department has refused to confirm or deny that Fernandes made this statement. Now Andrew Breitbart has unearthed a very similar statement from another Obama political appointee, this time from the Department of Agriculture. In the video, U.S. Department of Agriculture Director of Rural Development for Georgia Shirley Sherrod tells an NAACP audience . . . First Justice. Now Agriculture. How many other Obama Department's are refusing to enforce our nation's laws equally? [Link](#)

USDA Worker Resigns Over Racism Charge (CBN 7/20)

Accusations of racism have cost federal employee Shirley Sherrod her job at the U.S. Agriculture Department. The charges stem from remarks she made 24 years ago at a meeting for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. She talked about purposely not doing enough to help a white farmer in Georgia. "The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm he took a long time talking, but he was trying to show me he was superior to me. I know what he was doing, but he had come to me for help," she said at that meeting. "But what he didn't know was that while he was talking, all that time trying to show me that he was superior to me, I was trying to decide how much help I was going to give him," she continued. [Link](#)

NAACP meeting calmly listened to racist remarks from black fed official (American Thinker 7/20)

Andrew Breitbart has scored another bullseye, revealing hypocrisy of the highest order on the part of another leftist establishment organization, the NAACP. On March 27 of this year, speaking before an NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet, Shirley Sherrod, the Department of Agriculture director for the State of Georgia -- responsible for over a billion dollars a year in spending -- boasts of denying a white farmer her full efforts because of his race. The audience does not react with shock or disapproval, but rather just sits there. So much for NAACP President Ben Jealous denouncing the tea parties for tolerating racists. Only after Breitbart gave the incriminating video national exposure did the NAACP issue the obligatory denunciation, to prevent further embarrassment. But when nobody was looking, the NAACP audience was totally cool with the racism expressed by their speaker. [Link](#)

Newt Gingrich praises NAACP (Black Redding News Review 7/20)

Former Republican House Speaker Newt Gingrich today applauded the NAACP's condemnation of a USDA official's racially insensitive remarks at its organization's event. Shirley Sherrod, USDA Rural Development Georgia State Director, was at the NAACP's 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet when she said she used race as a factor in doing her job. Sherrod has resigned because of her comments, which received strong rebuke from NAACP President Benjamin Todd Jealous. Gingrich told Sirius XM's Joe Madison her forced resignation and Jealous' strong rebuke is "exactly the right attitude," and "was an opportunity for the NAACP to prove that it was opposed to all racism," [Link](#)

Former USDA official tells her side of racial controversy (Federal Times 7/20)

CNN has an interview with Shirley Sherrod, an Agriculture Department official who stepped down yesterday after a video surfaced where she describes a 1986 incident where she didn't help a white farmer as much as she could because of his race. The NAACP applauded her resignation, but Sherrod -- who was USDA's director of rural development in Georgia -- said the comments in the video don't tell the whole story, and said the incident took place before she joined USDA. What do you think? Did Sherrod cross the line? Or is this a puffed-up controversy? [Link](#)

Another Win For Andrew Breitbart (National Review Blog 7/20)

The USDA official who admitted to discrimination against a white farmer, exposed in this video on Big Government, has resigned: Days after the NAACP clashed with Tea Party members over allegations of racism, a video has surfaced showing an Agriculture Department official regaling an NAACP audience with a story about how she withheld help to a white farmer facing bankruptcy -- video that now has forced the official to resign. Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, is shown in the

clip describing "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." Sherrod, who is black, claimed the farmer took a long time trying to show he was "superior" to her. The audience laughed as she described how she determined his fate. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Comments Results in Resignation (Lalate Blog 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod has resigned following her comments about a white farmer. Shirley Sherrod's remarks appeared in a video from BigGovernment.com, dated by the website as March 27. Shirley Sherrod has been the USDA's Georgia director of Rural Development. In the video, Sherrod addresses an NAACP banquet stating "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land — so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough". Late Monday the USDA announced Sherrod had resigned. NAACP President and CEO Benjamin Todd Jealous issued a statement against Sherrod's comments. [Link](#)

USDA's Shirley Sherrod Disputes Clip of 'Racist' NAACP Banquet Comments (Mediaite 7/20)

In the latest in a series of racially-charged summer shark-week stories, USDA official Shirley Sherrod has resigned over a Breitbart-promoted YouTube clip that shows a portion of her March 27 speech at an NAACP banquet. In the clip, Sherrod talks about resenting a white farmer's condescending attitude, and as a result, not giving him "the full force of what I could do." The NAACP and the Secretary of Agriculture have weighed in, but there may be more to this story than meets YouTube's 2-minute eye. [Link](#)

USDA Official Resigns After Racial Comments Surface; NAACP Calls Comments "Shameful" (Mediaite 7/20)

An edited two-minute clip of an African American United States Department of Agriculture official has brought about her resignation after BigGovernment.com published it yesterday. Shirley Sherrod has resigned, the NAACP has condemned her "shameful" comments about withholding help for a white farmer and Sherrod has said she was taken out of context. In the video clip, put out by Andrew Breitbart's site and a speech she gave at a March NAACP banquet, she describes an interaction with a white farmer... [Link](#)

Andrew Breitbart Perfects 'White Victimology' (Newser 7/20)

Andrew Breitbart has played on the fears of conservative whites to claim another black victim, writes Tom Scocca for Slate. The latest is Shirley Sherrod of the USDA, who had to resign over a 24-year-old video twisted completely out of context. Sherrod—who wasn't a USDA employee at the time—was actually making the case against racism, but no matter. Breitbart's "lie" stands, aided and abetted by Fox News. "Breitbart is rapidly perfecting the 21st-century mau-mau: conservative white people are so afraid of being discriminated against that if you mention the fact that sometimes black people don't like white people—even if you are telling a story about why racism is bad—you are automatically committing a hate crime, against white conservatives," Scocca writes. "After three or four decades of whining about reverse racism, America now has achieved full-blown white victimology." [Link](#)

Farmer's Wife: Fired USDA Official Saved Us (Newser 7/20)

The wife of the white farmer at the heart of the Shirley Sherrod controversy has come forward, saying she considers Sherrod her "friend for life." Backstory: Sherrod lost her job over a video clip in which she said she hadn't done all she could to help the farmer keep his farm because he spoke condescendingly to her. But the farmer's wife, 82-year-old Eloise Spooner, tells the Atlanta Journal-Constitution that in reality, Sherrod did save their farm and "kept us out of bankruptcy." Sherrod's quote was part of a story about an incident in her past—long before her USDA tenure, when she worked for a Georgia land assistance office—in which she learned to see past race. "She took probably two or three trips with us to Albany just to help us out," says Spooner, who called Sherrod this morning to console her. "She's very sad about it. She told me she was so glad we talked. I just can't believe this is happening to her." [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod of USDA resigns (Buzz Tab 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod, USDA's black employee has resigned from her post on Monday in the wake of outburst of a video at conservative media outlets in which Shirley Sherrod is shown telling one of the audience that she had not given a white farmer the full force of what I could do to help him save his family farm. Tom Vilsack, the Agriculture Secretary said that he had accepted Shirley Sherrod's resignation. Shirley Sherrod was working as USDA's State Director of Rural Development for Georgia. Agriculture Secretary Tom

Vilsack said he had accepted the resignation of Shirley Sherrod, the department's state director of rural development for Georgia. Tom Vilsack further added that in USDA, they are following a zero tolerance for discrimination. He said that being Secretary Agriculture he condemns any discriminatory act against any person. He further added that at USDA, they are working hard for past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history and they are taking fairness and equality as a serious matter at USDA. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Has Officially Resigned From Her Job Due To Racial Preference! (Moms Word Blog 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod, who is known as a USDA official in Georgia, has finally resigned after publicly admitting that race played a factor in her decision to limit how much aid would be given to a white farmer. Sherrod, who is African American, made the comments during an NAACP banquet on March 27, according to the information in the video above. In fact a clip of her speech was being aired on BigGovernment.com and also Fox News Monday morning. Sherrod said during the now famous speech about the first time she was "faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." She claims that during the conversation, the man "was trying to show me he was superior to me." "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland," Sherrod told the crowd. "And here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land." [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod (Commonwealth Magazine 7/20 2:25)

Shirley Sherrod should get her job back (though I wonder whether she even wants it at this point), and Tom Vilsack should publicly apologize to this woman. It's scandalous that anyone in this administration would push someone to resign based on a Fox News/Andrew Breitbart report without conducting a full investigation to ascertain the real facts. The NAACP should also be ashamed [for condemning Sherrod before it bothered to get her story]. As for Breitbart and Fox, we already know they have no shame. UPDATES: Vilsack doubles down on stupid. Breitbart admits he hasn't even seen the whole video. What a sorry, sordid episode. [Link](#)

*Sarah Misailidis
Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
(202) 720-4691
Sarah.Misailidis@oc.usda.gov*

DeJong, Justin

From: Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:14 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: Is there a clips compilation?

Not full clips.

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:14 PM
To: Misailidis, Sarah; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Re: Is there a clips compilation?

Ok. That is all I want to show s. Is it full clips or top clips?

From: Misailidis, Sarah
To: DeJong, Justin; Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tue Jul 20 19:12:39 2010
Subject: RE: Is there a clips compilation?
It's everything right now. I can send you just the main stories.

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:12 PM
To: Misailidis, Sarah; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Re: Is there a clips compilation?

Make sure it is mainline news stories not blogs

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Misailidis, Sarah; Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tue Jul 20 19:11:37 2010
Subject: Re: Is there a clips compilation?

Tx

From: Misailidis, Sarah
To: DeJong, Justin; Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tue Jul 20 19:10:59 2010
Subject: RE: Is there a clips compilation?
Yes - it's the so large. I'm putting it together now.

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:11 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: Is there a clips compilation?

DeJong, Justin

From: Weaver, Caleb
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:59 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris
Subject: RE: Fox News (Judson Berger): Pigford

I'll send it right now.

Caleb Weaver
Press Secretary
USDA
O: 202-720-0622
C: [REDACTED]
caleb.weaver@oc.usda.gov

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:58 PM
To: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris
Subject: RE: Fox News (Judson Berger): Pigford

[REDACTED]

He knows Chris is looking into this but he is *writing now*.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:56 PM
To: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Fox News (Judson Berger): Pigford

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Berger, Judson [<mailto:Judson.Berger@foxnews.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:49 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: foxnews.com question

DeJong, Justin

From: Harless, Angela -USDA
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:42 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: Re: Another heads up...

It's on now w/statements & video
Thanks. --Angie

Angela Harless
USDA Office of Communications

----- Original Message -----

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Harless, Angela -USDA; DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Tue Jul 20 18:40:40 2010
Subject: RE: Another heads up...

We are watching, waiting!

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED] Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: Harless, Angela -USDA
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:40 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Misailidis, Sarah; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Another heads up...

Sherrod will be the focus of the Fox all stars discussion panel on Special Report w/Bret Baier. It is starting after the commercial break...now... Coverage at the top of the hour on this show was detailed w/Cheryl Cook's pic, the CNN interview, & USDA & WH denial of WH push to force her out & Vilsack follow up about 0 tolerance.
Thanks. --Angie

Angela Harless
USDA Office of Communications

DeJong, Justin

From: ben mullin [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:14 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Give Shirly Sherod her job back!!!!

My God!! Reinstat Shiry Sherod!! You guys jumped the gun and fell for the right wing noise machine. Show some backbone.....this is truly a teaching moment. My support for President Obama will decrease if he does not weigh in on this issue and put his support behind Shirly Sherod. Thanks, Ben Mullin

Hotmail has tools for the New Busy. Search, chat and e-mail from your inbox. [Learn more.](#)

DeJong, Justin

From: Bernie [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:05 PM
To: Chris Mather; Sandretti, David; Larry Quinn; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: USDA Staffers

Attn: Director of Communications Chris Mather;

Subject: COMMENTS on Shirley Sherrod

As a long time Democrat, working hard registering voter and knocking on doors to get more Democrats elected to state and federal position, I am dismayed about the dismissal of Shirley Sherrod from the USDA. The decision was made in error without the facts or even talking to the Shirley Sherrod. My position and those Democrats who [work in] fear of [YOU] the Democrats that we send to Washington. [Fear] We will NOT be supported or maybe stabbed in the back by those we work so hard to get elected (also appointed).

I suggest that as Communication Director you need to review the full speech made by Shirley Sherrod. The Sect. of USDA deserve to get the full story (information) and context of Shirley Sherrod speech. Shirley's statement was not racist in the speech, unless taken out of context or edited [which biggovernment.com did]. See this news report from AP newservice.

I will ask you to check the news after today and see how the TRUE story is now being reported, except on FOX News.

The Sect. of USDA need not be afraid to standup and apologies for his over reaction to a falsified story about Shirley Sherrod.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Bernie Knighton
[REDACTED]

DeJong, Justin

From: Maloney, Wayne
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 5:04 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Cc: Weaver, Caleb
Subject: Wall Street Journal

The Wall Street Journal called RD LAPAS asking for Ms. Sherrod's personal contact information. The reporter was told we do not provide personal information.

Wayne

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:40 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: CNN Transcript: Reading of USDA Statement

My dork friends immediately started btxing "RICK SANCHEZ SAID YOUR NAME!!" :[Nerrdy

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:39 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Subject: Re: CNN Transcript: Reading of USDA Statement

Btw stephanie chan is now famous.

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:36:17 2010
Subject: CNN Transcript: Reading of USDA Statement
Station: CNN
Date: 07/20/2010 15:43:25 - 3:53:25 PM

shirley sherrod has said that the department of agriculture was pressured by the white house to ask her to resign. that's essentially what she told my colleague, tony harris, earlier today. we've been waiting for government to respond to her accusations and we just got that in, in the form of a statement. we expect we might get more. but here's the first statement as I read it to you, literally fresh off the press. this is from tom vilsack, agriculture secretary from the united states of america. yesterday, I asked for and accepted ms. sherrod's resignation for two reasons. first, for the past 18 months we have been working to turn a page on the sordid civil rights record at the usd and that controversy could make it more difficult to move forward. second, state directors are often called to use their discretion. the controversy surrounding her comments would create situations where her situations, rightly or wrongly, would be called into question, making it difficult for her to bring jobs to georgia. now, remember, ms. sherrod is saying here on cnn, if you took it in context, if you listen to the totality of what I actually said in this speech and not just the edited portions of it, you would understand that I was trying to make a point that says discrimination is not good. but the usda, her boss, tom vilsack, secretary of agriculture, does not appear to be buying that or even giving her reconsideration. why? let me read on. our policy is clear, he writes, there is zero tolerance for discrimination at usda and we strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. we have a duty to ensure that when we provide services to the american people, we do so in an equitable manner. but equally important is our duty to instill confidence in the american people that we are fair service providers. this comes from a stephanie chan, press secretary, press assistant office of communication, u.s. department of agriculture. says here a statement by agriculture secretary tom vilsack. just got this. it's the reaction to the accusation from shirley sherrod saying, look, I was taken out of context. if you listen to me in totality, you will understand I was trying to say something else. reconsider your decision. we just reported the naacp is apparently reconsidering. we'll hear from them soon. as far as the government goes, it doesn't look like they are. we'll be right back. granola nut clusters 100% natural nuts and granola in bite sized clusters. it's a little bit of nature... a little bit better. and nature approves. granola nut clusters from nature valley. dan malloy has helped my business expand and created a lot of jobs. green jobs and high tech jobs and I have a job because of dan malloy dan malloy has put a lot of people to work helping create jobs that was my job as mayor of stamford and I'll do the same as governor by investing in high tech and clean energy holding down property taxes and lowering electric rates so people want to live here and businesses can afford to stay here that's how we'll turn connecticut's economy around dan malloy has got the experience that money can't buy approve this message I'm dan malloy and I

we're getting a lot of people talking about this shirley sherrrod story. a lot of you saying, she's falsely accused. some of you saying, no, she should have been fired. so back and forth we go. we'll continue bringing you the details. they are still coming in, folks.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell:

Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:26 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; USDA Clips; JIC1, OC -USDA; JIC2, OC - USDA; JIC3, OC -USDA; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: FW: Top Outlets "vilsack" : Ex-Official Claims White House'Harassed' Her to Quit Over Video

From: Factiva[SMTP:EMAILEDNEWS@EMAIL.GLOBAL.FACTIVA.COM]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:25:18 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Top Outlets "vilsack" : Ex-Official Claims White House'Harassed' Her to Quit Over Video Auto forwarded by a Rule

Your topic is Top Outlets "vilsack"

Ex-Official Claims White House'Harassed' Her to Quit Over Video 20 July 2010, 19:31 GMT, FOXNews.com [1039 Words]

The Department of Agriculture official who resigned Monday over a YouTube clip said the White House forced her out of her job without bothering to hear her side of the story.

She said a deputy undersecretary "harassed" her with warnings about the attention she was going to receive after the video surfaced showing her telling a story about how she withheld help to a white farmer in trouble.

Shirley Sherrod, the department's ex-Georgia director of Rural Development, said the video omitted key context but that the administration got scared.

"They were not interested in hearing the truth. No one wanted to hear the truth," she said in a television interview Tuesday morning.

The wife of the farmer who was the subject of Sherrod's story told FoxNews.com on Tuesday that the administration should not have forced out Sherrod, who actually helped the couple save their farm.

"She'll always be my friend," Eloise Spooner said. She said the incident Sherrod was referring to happened more than two decades ago and that she and her husband Roger worked together closely to keep the farm out of foreclosure.

"I don't think they gave her a chance to tell really what happened," Eloise Spooner said. "I don't think they'll find anybody that can fill the job any better than she did. That's my opinion."

A statement by the NAACP, stripped from its website on Tuesday morning, acknowledged an apparent moral behind Sherrod's story, but said she gave "no indication" in the video that she tried to "right the wrong."

"We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers," the statement said. "Her actions were shameful."

The NAACP released a brief statement Tuesday afternoon saying it was "conducting an investigation" and trying to reach out to Sherrod -- the NAACP said an "updated statement"

would follow. A representative from DCTV, which shot the footage and would not release it without NAACP consent, said the civil rights group was reviewing the tape "in full."

The video clip that launched the controversy is two-and-a-half minutes long. In it, Sherrod describes "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm."

Sherrod, who is black, claimed the farmer took a long time trying to show he was "superior" to her. The audience laughed as she described how she handled the situation.

"He had to come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," she said. "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land -- so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough."

Sherrod explained in the video that, at the time, she assumed the state or federal Department of Agriculture had referred the white farmer to her. In order to ensure that the farmer could report back that she was indeed helpful, she said she took him to see "one of his own" -- a white lawyer.

"I figured that if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him," she said.

The ex-official first told her side of the story in an interview overnight with The Atlanta Journal-Constitution. She said that in the clip she was telling a story about events that happened 24 years ago when she was working for a local nonprofit group. She added that she worked with the farmer for two years to help save his farm from foreclosure.

But the point of her story wasn't entirely clear from the clip.

"It was revealed to me that it's about poor versus those who have," she said toward the end, suggesting she had learned that race is less important.

Spooner told FoxNews.com that Sherrod's story did not "bother" her. She explained that Sherrod did not send them directly to the white lawyer, either -- she said she initially suggested a black lawyer and a white lawyer, and that the couple saw the black lawyer first. After several months, the black lawyer had to withdraw from the case, citing too much workload, Spooner said. The couple then visited the white lawyer, with Sherrod's help, she said.

Spooner said Sherrod did not display discrimination. Asked about the claim that her husband was acting "superior" during that first conversation, Spooner said: "That's just his way."

Sherrod on Tuesday told CNN she blamed the NAACP, which put out a statement condemning her for her remarks overnight. Sherrod claimed the NAACP never contacted her and that the civil rights group's high-profile fight with the Tea Party over allegations of racism set the stage for her forced resignation.

"They are the reason why this happened," she said.

Sherrod added that Cheryl Cook, deputy undersecretary for Rural Development, called her several times on Monday to eventually demand her resignation on behalf of the White House. Sherrod was driving at the time and said Cook told her to pull over to the side of the road to resign, "because you're going to be on Glenn Beck tonight."

She said the whole video would reveal that she eventually came to work closely with the white farmer and that she was trying to impart a lesson about how important it is to get "beyond the issue of race."

"I went on to work with many more white farmers," she said. "The story helped me realize that race is not the issue."

The USDA did not have an immediate response when contacted by FoxNews.com. On Monday evening, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack released a statement announcing Sherrod's resignation.

"There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person," he said.

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DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:23 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; USDA Clips; JIC1, OC -USDA; JIC2, OC -USDA; JIC3, OC -USDA; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: FW: Top Outlets "vilsack" : USDA worker quits over racism charge from video

From: Factiva[SMTP:EMAILEDNEWS@EMAIL.GLOBAL.FACTIVA.COM]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:23:12 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Top Outlets "vilsack" : USDA worker quits over racism charge from video Auto forwarded by a Rule

Your topic is Top Outlets "vilsack"

USDA worker quits over racism charge from video 20 July 2010, 17:42 GMT, Boston Herald [497 Words]

WASHINGTON – A black employee who resigned from the Agriculture Department over comments at a Georgia NAACP meeting said today the White House forced her out of her job over a manufactured racial controversy.

Shirley Sherrod said she was on the road Monday after an event in rural Georgia when USDA deputy undersecretary Cheryl Cook called her and told her the White House wanted her to resign. "They called me twice," Sherrod told The Associated Press in an interview. "The last time they asked me to pull over the side of the road and submit my resignation on my Blackberry, and that's what I did."

The controversy began Monday when the conservative website biggovernment.com posted a two-minute, 38-second video clip of Sherrod's remarks to a local NAACP chapter.

In the video, she says the first time a white farmer came in for help, he was acting "superior" to her and that she struggled to decide how much help to provide him when so many black farmers were struggling. She said she didn't give him the full force of help she could have, but gave him enough.

The website called it proof that the NAACP – which recently accused the Tea Party of including racist elements – condones racism.

Sherrod said her comments to the local NAACP group that she withheld support some 24 years ago from a farmer because he was white are really part of a story of racial reconciliation. She said she ultimately became friends with the farmer and worked closely with him for two years to keep him from losing his farm. At the time, she worked for a nonprofit farm aid group.

"My point in telling that story is that working with him helped me to see that it wasn't just a black and white issue," she told The AP. "It was about those who have and those who do not. That's why I take the time to tell that story is to tell people we need to get beyond it and work together."

Hours after her resignation, Sherrod accused administration officials of lacking backbone. A USDA spokesman would not comment on whether the White House was involved.

Secretary Tom Vilsack issued a statement saying the agency has no tolerance for discrimination.

"We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously," the statement said.

National NAACP President Benjamin Todd Jealous issued a statement Monday night – before Sherrod's explanation – supporting the resignation. Jealous said the group opposes racism of all kinds.

"According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race," he said. "We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers."

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DeJong, Justin

From: googlealerts-noreply@google.com
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:21 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Google Alert - usda

News

2 new results for usda

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[CircleNetwork.com](#)

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DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:19 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; USDA Clips; JIC1, OC -USDA; JIC2, OC -USDA; JIC3, OC -USDA; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: FW: Top Outlets "vilsack": Georgia family defends USDA official

From: Factiva[SMTP:EMAILEDNEWS@EMAIL.GLOBAL.FACTIVA.COM]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:18:39 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Top Outlets "vilsack" : Georgia family defends USDA official Auto forwarded by a Rule

Your topic is Top Outlets "vilsack"

Georgia family defends USDA official
20 July 2010, 18:04 GMT, Politico [537 Words]

The Politico 44 / Click Story Widget Requires Adobe Flash Player.

The family involved in a 24-year-old incident that resulted in a Department of Agriculture official's resigning Monday night is speaking out on her behalf. Shirley Sherrod stepped down from her post as Georgia director of rural development two days after a video surfaced in which she explains to an audience at the NAACP Freedom Fund banquet in March that she did not do everything she could have to help a struggling farmer because he was white.

In the video, Sherrod describes the incident, which took place when she was working with the Georgia field office for the Federation of Southern Cooperative/Land Assistance Fund.

"The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking but he was trying to show me he was superior to me," Sherrod said in the video. "I know what he was doing. But he had come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time, trying to show me that he was superior to me, was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him. I was struggling with the fact that so many black people lost their farmlands, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So I didn't give him the full force of what I can do."

But Eloise Spooner, the wife of the farmer in question, told the Atlanta Journal-Constitution that in the end, Sherrod worked hard on her husband's case and kept the family out of bankruptcy. In the video, Sherrod does explain that she eventually realized her mistake in refusing to give her best effort to the case.

Late Monday night Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack released a statement saying he had accepted Sherrod's resignation. "There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously," the statement said.

Sherrod was appointed by Vilsack about a year ago.

The resignation comes amid continuing fallout between the NAACP and the tea party movement. Tea party leaders expressed outrage at a recent NAACP resolution that repudiated the "bigoted

elements" within the movement; and a prominent tea party activist, Mark Williams, was expelled from the National Tea Party Federation over a "satirical" letter he wrote in response to the NAACP that was widely condemned as racist.

NAACP President Benjamin Jealous acknowledged in a press release that Sherrod's resignation was the right course of action.

"We concur with U.S. Agriculture Secretary Vilsack in accepting the resignation of Shirley Sherrod for her remarks at a local NAACP Freedom Fund banquet," Jealous said in the statement. "We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers. Her actions were shameful."

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DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:18 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; USDA Clips; JIC1, OC -USDA; JIC2, OC -USDA; JIC3, OC -USDA; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: FW: Top Outlets "vilsack" : theGrio: USDA official's punishment doesn't fit crime

From: Factiva[SMTP:EMAILEDNEWS@EMAIL.GLOBAL.FACTIVA.COM]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:17:36 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Top Outlets "vilsack" : theGrio: USDA official's punishment doesn't fit crime Auto forwarded by a Rule

Your topic is Top Outlets "vilsack"

theGrio: USDA official's punishment doesn't fit crime 20 July 2010, 18:11 GMT, MSNBC [845 Words]

Cable news conservatives, right-wing bloggers, and various assorted Tea Party activists have been reacting at a fever pitch ever since they dug up an old tape of Shirley Sherrod, the Agriculture Department's director of rural development in Georgia, supposedly getting caught with her racism hanging down. The tape was of a speech Sherrod made at a local NAACP banquet on March 27. Her alleged racist sin was that she admitted that she did less to help a needy white farmer than she could--more than twenty years earlier.

The cause for right-wing delirium was two-fold. They could joyously shout "gotcha" at the NAACP, black Democrats and civil rights leaders that have relentlessly pounded the Tea Party and conservatives for months for saying and doing nothing about the racists in their midst. They got even greater joy and satisfaction from Sherrod's plight since this gave them a chance to rant that this is proof that there's a double standard among blacks when it comes to dealing with race. Put simply, blacks are quick on the trigger to rail at whites for any and every real or perceived racial transgression, but are stone silent, or secretly or openly condone, even revel in racial bigotry, against whites.

This is baloney any way you look at the race issue and how it plays out in black and white. Start with Sherrod and what she actually said and did. She didn't resort to the stock code words, misdirection, feints, or dodges that GOP and tea party has honed to a fine art for decades to stoke white fears and bigotry. She spoke at a public forum, and in what soundly more self-confessional, than boast, took herself to task for her own racial favoritism. "I learned about myself and how far we still have to go."

Sherrod said much more in her talk and the suspicion is that the much more was to make clear that this was a personal teaching moment, an epiphany, for her on how bigotry can corrupt and damn anyone, even someone who themselves has been the target of bigotry.

Sherrod has certainly dealt with that bigotry first hand in the blatant and shameless treatment of black farmers. The issue was partially resolved this past February when the Obama administration announced it agreed to a \$1.25 billion settlement to resolve charges by thousands of black farmers that the Agriculture Department discriminated them in loan programs for decades. The racist treatment of black farmers was not the act of one local official in one state. This was the systematic, and deliberate racial targeting of black farmers by the official government agency charged with administering loans and programs for

farmers. Thousands of black farmers lost their farms and land as a result of the officially sanctioned discriminatory lending practices. The settlement didn't end the outrage. Congress had to approve the settlement by the end of March, 2010. It cavalierly left for Spring break before approving the settlement at the time.

Now back to Sherrod. Needless to say, her full speech which might have provided more insight into why she did what she did and how she learned from her act was nowhere to be heard in the self-serving edited version that Fox News has blared all over the place. A humiliated and embarrassed Sherrod promptly offered her resignation. It was just as promptly accepted by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. NAACP president Ben Jealous quickly issued a statement applauding Sherrod's resignation, and did not equivocate in stating that the NAACP had a zero tolerance for discrimination in any form and by anyone, no matter their color.

He did not publicly disavow Sherrod and her behavior after weeks had passed of badgering, cajoling, harassing, and withering criticism about alleged black racism. Jealous did not pull a page from Sarah Palin and other Tea Party leaders when they come under fire for racism. They reflexively point the finger at blacks and civil rights groups for alleged racial bias toward whites. Jealous by contrast did not finger point the GOP and the Tea Party's endless history of racism and racist acts to cloud, obfuscate, and muddy the Sherrod issue.

Sherrod's action was indefensible, and she was the first to admit it. But it was the regrettable act of one person, one place, one time. This hardly rises to the level of an institutional racial high crime and misdemeanor. Sherrod paid a dear price for her intemperate act. Unfortunately the same can't be said that the GOP and the tea party have paid the same price for their bigotry. They've done everything possible to see to that that won't happen.

Earl Ofari Hutchinson is an author, political analyst and regular Grio contributor. He hosts a nationally broadcast political affairs radio talk show on Pacifica and KTYM Radio Los Angeles. Follow Earl Ofari Hutchinson on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/earlhutchinson>

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DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:18 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; USDA Clips; JIC1, OC -USDA; JIC2, OC -USDA; JIC3, OC -USDA; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: FW: Top Outlets "vilsack" : Wife of white farmer: Fired USDA worker saved our land

From: Factiva[SMTP:EMAILEDNEWS@EMAIL.GLOBAL.FACTIVA.COM]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:17:29 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Top Outlets "vilsack" : Wife of white farmer: Fired USDA worker saved our land Auto forwarded by a Rule

Your topic is Top Outlets "vilsack"

Wife of white farmer: Fired USDA worker saved our land 20 July 2010, 18:26 GMT, CNN [1643 Words]

Atlanta, Georgia (CNN) -- A black former Agriculture Department employee, who resigned after a video clip surfaced of her discussing a white farmer, insisted Tuesday she "went all out" to help the man keep his farm and said she resigned under pressure from the Obama administration.

Shirley Sherrod, who resigned Monday as the department's director of rural development for Georgia, told CNN she had four calls telling her the White House wanted her to resign.

"They asked me to resign, and in fact they harassed me as I was driving back to the state office from West Point, Georgia, yesterday," she said. The last call "asked me to pull to the side of the road and do it [resign]," she said.

"I don't feel good about it, because I know I didn't do anything wrong," she said. "... During my time at USDA, I gave it all I had."

Her resignation came after media outlets aired the video, in which Sherrod, speaking to an audience, said she did not give the white farmer "the full force of what I could do" to help him avoid foreclosure.

She said Tuesday that those remarks were taken out of context and that the 1986 incident, which occurred before she started work for the USDA and was working at a nonprofit, helped her learn to move beyond race. She tells the story to audiences to make that point, she said.

Meanwhile, the wife of the white farmer referenced in the clip told CNN she credits Sherrod with helping her family save their farm. Eloise Spooner remembered Sherrod as "getting in there and doing all she could do to help us."

She said that when she saw the story of the tape and Sherrod's resignation on television, "I said, 'That ain't right. They have not treated her right.' "

And the NAACP, which in a statement Monday called Sherrod's actions "shameful," said in a second statement Tuesday it was investigating "the recent revelations about the situation" and was attempting to speak with Sherrod and the farmer, as well as view the full video. The organization said it would speak further "following a full and comprehensive process."

Conservative website publisher Andrew Breitbart originally posted the video, which was quickly picked up by Fox News. The video says Sherrod's remarks were delivered March 27 to an NAACP Freedom Fund banquet, but it is not clear that is the case, nor is it clear where the event was held or how many people were in attendance.

The poor-quality video shows Sherrod telling her audience that the farmer she was working with "took a long time ... trying to show me he was superior to me." As a result, she said, she "didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough."

To prove she had done her job, she said, she took him to a white lawyer. "I figured that if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him," she said.

But that lawyer failed to help, she said. "I did not discriminate against [the farmer]. And, in fact, I went all out to frantically look for a lawyer at the last minute because the first lawyer we went to was not doing anything to really help him. In fact, that lawyer suggested they should just let the farm go." She was able to find an attorney to file Chapter 11 bankruptcy to help the family stay on the farm, she said.

Eloise Spooner said that later, "after things kind of settled down," she brought Sherrod some tomatoes out of her garden, and they "had a good visit."

Sherrod told CNN that she got four calls Monday from Cheryl Cook, USDA rural development undersecretary. In the first, she said, she was told she was being put on administrative leave. In the second, she said, she was told she needed to resign.

Asked if she felt she had an opportunity to explain, Sherrod said, "No, I didn't. The administration, they were not interested in hearing the truth. No one wanted to hear the truth."

Attempts by CNN to reach the administration for comment on the situation were not immediately successful Tuesday.

Roger Spooner was the first white farmer who had come to her for help, Sherrod told CNN's Tony Harris on Tuesday. His land was being sold, and had in fact already been rented out from under him, she recalled.

Sherrod acknowledged that at first, she felt that Roger Spooner had a superior attitude toward her, but "certainly I didn't tact upon it. You know, I'm from the South. I've lived in the South all my life, and I know how black people were treated by white people during those years. My own father was murdered by one. I didn't let that get in the way of trying to help."

"I didn't discriminate," she said. "If I had discriminated against him, I would not have given him any help at all because I wasn't obligated to do it by anyone ... I didn't have to help that farmer. I could have sent him out the door without giving him any help at all. But in the end, we became very good friends, and that friendship lasted for some years." In addition, she said, she went on to help "hundreds" more white farmers.

She explained the "full force" remark by saying that she didn't know what to do to help Spooner. With black farmers, she could rally other farmers to support them, but "I didn't know of any black farmers who would come out and try to support a white farmer at that point. ... I wasn't really sure of what I could do because at that time, I thought they [white people] had the advantages. I learned that was not the case."

Ralph Paige, executive director of the nonprofit Sherrod worked for before being appointed to the USDA job in 2009, told CNN on Tuesday that she garnered only praise and there were never any claims of discrimination against her.

"I can't praise Shirley enough," he said. "She holds no malice in her heart."

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said Monday he had accepted Sherrod's resignation.

"There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person," Vilsack said. "We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously."

Sherrod said she assumes there is, in fact, zero tolerance at the USDA for discrimination. "I know I didn't discriminate, and I made it very clear to the staff there at USDA that it wouldn't be tolerated during my tenure," she said. "I said it over and over again."

The statement that the NAACP issued late Monday backed Vilsack's decision.

"Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race," said Benjamin Todd Jealous, president and CEO of the civil rights group. "We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers."

"Her actions were shameful," Jealous continued. "While she went on to explain in the story that she ultimately realized her mistake, as well as the common predicament of working people of all races, she gave no indication she had attempted to right the wrong she had done to this man."

Sherrod said the NAACP has never contacted her. The statement, she said, "hurts. Because if you look at my history ... I've done more to advance the causes of civil rights in this area than some of them who are sitting in those positions now at the NAACP. They need to learn something about me. They need to know about my work. They need to know what I've contributed through the years."

She said she tells the story to emphasize looking beyond race. "I've said to audiences here, not just that one -- in fact, I spoke at a housing conference in a county just south of here, and I said, 'Look, we need to get beyond the Civil War.' I tell them there are good things about history from the white side and good things about history and culture from the black side. People love to come into this part of the state to see that. I tell them, 'We need to make the most of it, and if we work together, we can do that.' "

Conservative media outlets tied the video to the NAACP's recent resolution calling on the Tea Party movement to repudiate racist elements within it that have displayed such items as images of President Obama with a bone through his nose and the White House with a lawn full of watermelons. The controversy has led one Tea Party group to oust another because of a blog posting by the second group's leader.

Tea Party Express leader Mark Williams posted on his blog a faux letter from Jealous to President Abraham Lincoln in which Williams ridicules the organization's use of "colored" in its historic name and uses multiple stereotypes to bolster his point. The National Tea Party Foundation expelled Williams' organization from its coalition as a result.

Sherrod on Tuesday called the NAACP "the reason why this happened. They got into a fight with the Tea Party, and all of this came out as a result of that."

CNN's Tristan Smith contributed to this report.

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DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:17 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; USDA Clips; JIC1, OC -USDA; JIC2, OC -USDA; JIC3, OC -USDA; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: FW: Top Outlets "vilsack" : USDA worker resigns over racism charge from video

From: Factiva[SMTP:EMAILEDNEWS@EMAIL.GLOBAL.FACTIVA.COM]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:17:04 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Top Outlets "vilsack" : USDA worker resigns over racism charge from video Auto forwarded by a Rule

Your topic is Top Outlets "vilsack"

USDA worker resigns over racism charge from video 20 July 2010, 18:20 GMT, Charlotte Observer [639 Words]

WASHINGTON A black employee who resigned from the Agriculture Department over comments at a Georgia NAACP meeting said Tuesday the White House forced her out of her job over a manufactured racial controversy.

Shirley Sherrod, who until Tuesday was USDA's director of rural development in Georgia, said she was on the road Monday when USDA deputy undersecretary Cheryl Cook called her and told her the White House wanted her to resign. "They called me twice," Sherrod told The Associated Press in an interview. "The last time they asked me to pull over the side of the road and submit my resignation on my Blackberry, and that's what I did."

A USDA spokesman would not comment on whether the White House was involved, but Secretary Tom Vilsack issued a statement saying the agency has no tolerance for discrimination.

The NAACP, meanwhile, appeared to be reconsidering its response to Sherrod. The civil rights group initially condemned the employee's comments, but officials said Tuesday that it is conducting a more thorough review.

The controversy began Monday when the conservative website biggovernment.com posted a two-minute, 38-second video clip of Sherrod's remarks to a local NAACP banquet.

In the video, Sherrod talks about the first time a white farmer came to her for help when she worked for a nonprofit rural farm aid group in 1986. She said he came in acting "superior" to her and that she debated how much help to give him.

"I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland and here I was faced with helping a white person save their land," she said.

Initially, she said, "I didn't give him the full force of what I could do" and only gave him enough help to keep his case progressing.

But, she said, his situation ultimately "opened my eyes" that helping farmers wasn't so much about race but was "about the poor versus those who have."

The video ends before her speech concludes. Sherrod said Tuesday the clip appears to intentionally misconstrue the message of the story, which is that the case taught her that whites are struggling just like blacks. She says she ultimately became close friends with the farmer and helped him for two years to save his farm.

"My point in telling that story is that working with him helped me to see that it wasn't just a black and white issue," she told The AP. "That's why I take the time to tell that story is to tell people we need to get beyond it and work together."

Sherrod, who became USDA's director of rural development in Georgia last year, said the administration showed a lack of backbone in its reaction.

Biggovernment.com, which gained fame after releasing video of workers for the community organizing group ACORN counseling actors posing as a pimp and prostitute, offered the video as evidence that the NAACP condones racism.

The national NAACP, which recently accused the Tea Party of condoning racist elements, immediately responded by condemning Sherrod's comments and supporting USDA's handling of the matter.

"According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race," NAACP President Benjamin Todd Jealous said in a statement Monday night. "We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers."

After years of civil rights lawsuits against the agency, Vilsack said USDA has "been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously."

This affects comments on all stories.

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DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:20 PM
To: Weaver, Caleb; Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: ABC News / Good Morning America

We got it, thanks

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Weaver, Caleb
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:18 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Fw: ABC News / Good Morning America

See below.

From: Bosland, Katie
To: Sandretti, David; larry.quinn@usda.gov ; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 15:14:18 2010
Subject: ABC News / Good Morning America

Hi David, Larry, Caleb and Justin -

My name is Katie Bosland and I am a producer with ABC News / Good Morning America with George Stephanopoulos and Robin Roberts. I wanted to reach out to see if Secretary Vilsack would be available in the morning to come on the show to talk with George? We will be covering and talking about the Agriculture Director's resignation and would welcome the opportunity to have the Secretary on the show and hear his thoughts on the matter. Is there a number where I can best reach you. I am reachable via cell at [REDACTED]

Hope to speak soon and take care—

Katie Bosland

Katie Bosland | Deputy Producer | ABC News / Good Morning America | Mobile: (202) 720-5555

DeJong, Justin

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:45 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Harless, Angela -USDA; Weaver, Caleb
Cc: Chan, Stephanie; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: Re: heads up -

Thanks!
Chris Mather

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Harless, Angela -USDA; Weaver, Caleb
Cc: Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris; Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Tue Jul 20 14:39:19 2010
Subject: Re: heads up -

Good flag ang.

From: Harless, Angela -USDA
To: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb
Sent: Tue Jul 20 14:36:13 2010
Subject: RE: heads up -

Update – within the past hour...Sherrod declined to the interview w/FNC during America Live after having accepted it – so they've just said they've left the door open for her.

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:29 PM
To: Harless, Angela -USDA
Subject: Re: heads up -

On it. Tracking story now.

From: Harless, Angela -USDA
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 13:28:00 2010
Subject: RE: heads up -
What does "onit" mean?

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:24 PM
To: Harless, Angela -USDA; Weaver, Caleb
Subject: Re: heads up -

Onit

From: Harless, Angela -USDA
To: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb

Sent: Tue Jul 20 13:21:53 2010

Subject: heads up -

I just saw that RD person will be interviewed on FNC's American Live w/Megyn Kelly this afternoon. The reporter prefaced the interview by stating that the dep sec called her 3 x from the road and told her to pull over & forced her to resign.

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:43 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: Two more interview requests

Thanks, I have logged both down.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:38 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Subject: FW: Two more interview requests

From: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:29 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Cc: Mather, Chris
Subject: Two more interview requests

DeJong, Justin

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:06 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE:

Only those two outlets?

-----Original Message-----

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:06 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: Re:

No questions on sherrod.

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 13:55:45 2010
Subject: Re:

Need you to type what he is saying. Questions and answers. This is imp.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tue Jul 20 13:50:56 2010
Subject: Re:

The press conf is happening now. Dispatch reporter and local abc reporter. No indication they are here for anything other than event. I am recording audio.

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 13:48:09 2010

Need play by play of press interaction to share with team. Feel free to bombard us with updates.
Chris Mather

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:55 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: Requests for interviews

Thanks for the heads up

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:52 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Fw: Requests for interviews

From: Ej.Stapler@one.usda.gov
To: bobby@loudobbsradio.com
Sent: Tue Jul 20 13:49:20 2010
Subject: Requests for interviews

Bobby,

All media inquiries are being handled by Chris Mather or Justin DeJong in Washington. You can reach them at 202-720-4623.

EJ

E. J. Stapler | Public Information Coordinator
Rural Development
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Georgia State Office
355 East Hancock Ave. (Stop 310) | Athens, GA 30601
Phone: 706-546-2165, ext. 5904 | Fax: 706-546-2126
<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ga>

DeJong, Justin

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:16 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re:

We just got off phone with him.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tue Jul 20 13:14:28 2010



DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:12 PM
To: Weaver, Caleb; Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah; JIC4, OC -USDA
Subject: RE: FOX Transcript: Shirley Sharrod Preview

Wayne mentioned that there was something last night but we can't seem to track it down. That is what he is checking on for us

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Weaver, Caleb
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:12 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Chan, Stephanie; DeJong, Justin
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah; JIC4, OC -USDA
Subject: Re: FOX Transcript: Shirley Sharrod Preview

And Beck is not on in the middle of the day. If Beck discussed it, it would have been on his show yesterday evening.

From: Mather, Chris
To: Chan, Stephanie; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah; JIC4, OC -USDA
Sent: Tue Jul 20 13:10:23 2010
Subject: Re: FOX Transcript: Shirley Sharrod Preview

I think people are confused by sherrods mention of beck.
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah; JIC4, OC -USDA
Sent: Tue Jul 20 13:09:43 2010
Subject: RE: FOX Transcript: Shirley Sharrod Preview

We have been unable to find anything that has aired on Glenn Beck. Wayne Maloney is checking with state staff to help track the clip down

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:51 PM

To: Mather, Chris; Chan, Stephanie; Weaver, Caleb
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah; JIC4, OC -USDA
Subject: Re: FOX Transcript: Shirley Sharrod Preview

Local state staff said yes, around noon I think.

From: Mather, Chris
To: DeJong, Justin; Chan, Stephanie; Weaver, Caleb
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah; JIC4, OC -USDA
Sent: Tue Jul 20 12:48:23 2010
Subject: Re: FOX Transcript: Shirley Sharrod Preview

Has glenn beck done anything?
Chris Mather

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah; JIC4, OC -USDA
Sent: Tue Jul 20 12:41:57 2010
Subject: Re: FOX Transcript: Shirley Sharrod Preview

Is there a glenn beck transcript?

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah; JIC4, OC -USDA
Sent: Tue Jul 20 12:41:05 2010
Subject: FOX Transcript: Shirley Sharrod Preview
FYI- FOX previewing the upcoming interview with Shirley.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: JIC4, OC -USDA
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:34 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: this is all that's come in since cnn

From fox news: (CNN ran another little bit but it was just a repeat of the previous story, just clips of the same interview)

Station: Fox News
Date: 07/20/2010 11:56:28 - 12:12:57 PM

in the meantime, we have new reaction to shocking charges of racism at the department of agriculture, this woman, shirley sherrod, stepping down after this controversial comment to an audience about help ago white farmer. take a listen: [inaudible video]

jenna: we have new reaction from the obama administration on that controversy. we'll cover those stories and all the rest, coming up in just a few minutes.

an agriculture official resigned after racial comments at an event back in march. take a listen.

so many black people have lost their [unintelligible] white person say [unintelligible] i didn't give him the full force of what i can
jenna: james rosen is live in washington with this. the official shirley sherrod said today she was misunderstood?

reporter: why this story is still breaking and developing in a very hot way right now. shirley sherrod claims the story she was telli
in that video clip was not about the merits of reverse discrimination but really how she came to see beyond race. in interviews wil
rival network this morning and we want to emphasize shirley sherrod will be appearing on fox news less than 90 minutes from now
she says she was describing work she did in 1986 to help a white farmer stave off foreclosure when she wasn't working for the
federal government but for a nonprofit in southern, georgia. that part of the clip and the part we played in the introduction right n
to the segment to suggest a racial motive in shirley sherrod's comment. another clip appeared to corroborate her stance that she
was trying to unite them in racial tolerance.] unintelligible]

reporter: the chapter that commissioned the shooting of that tape has refused to release the speech in its entirety. we are asking t
group to reverse the decision. jenna: what was the response to this.

reporter: it was swift and it involved the termination of shirley sherrod. the reaction from the obama administration will this story.
She said she received sever telephone calls yesterday from an undersecretary at the agriculture department. while she was behind
the wheel of her c the first of which placed her on administrative leave. the second which told her she needed to resign. the third of
which said she needed to pull over her car and resign at once. the white house also wanted her to resign. she says fox news and the
tea parties are scaring the administration. governor vilsack said in his statement there is zero tolerance for discrimination at usda. i
strongly condemn any act of discrimination of any person. we have been working hard for the past 18 months to reverse the
checkered civil rights history at the department and take this very seriously. among the unanswered questions that are perk late w-
this story one of them may turn out to be did the white house railroad an innocent woman on this because they are on edge
themselves because of the van jones controversy, the black panther party case, we expect more answers from shirley sherrod who
will be appearing on fox news less than 90 minutes from now and possibly from the white house if we get the opportunity.

DeJong, Justin

From: JIC4, OC -USDA
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:10 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris; Chan, Stephanie; Weaver, Caleb
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: RE: FOX Transcript: Shirley Sharrod Preview

I haven't been able to find anything from Glenn Beck in google or TV Eyes searches.

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:51 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Chan, Stephanie; Weaver, Caleb
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah; JIC4, OC -USDA
Subject: Re: FOX Transcript: Shirley Sharrod Preview

Local state staff said yes, around noon I think.

From: Mather, Chris
To: DeJong, Justin; Chan, Stephanie; Weaver, Caleb
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah; JIC4, OC -USDA
Sent: Tue Jul 20 12:48:23 2010
Subject: Re: FOX Transcript: Shirley Sharrod Preview

Has glenn beck done anything?
Chris Mather

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah; JIC4, OC -USDA
Sent: Tue Jul 20 12:41:57 2010
Subject: Re: FOX Transcript: Shirley Sharrod Preview

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From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah; JIC4, OC -USDA
Sent: Tue Jul 20 12:41:05 2010
Subject: FOX Transcript: Shirley Sharrod Preview
FYI- FOX previewing the upcoming interview with Shirley.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: JIC4, OC -USDA
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:34 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: this is all that's come in since cnn

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Date: 07/20/2010 11:56:28 - 12:12:57 PM

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reporter: why this story is still breaking and developing in a very hot way right now. shirley sherrod claims the story she was telling in that video clip was not about the merits of reverse discrimination but really how she came to see beyond race. in interviews with a rival network this morning and we want to emphasize shirley sherrod will be appearing on fox news less than 90 minutes from now, she says she was describing work she did in 1986 to help a white farmer stave off foreclosure when she wasn't working for the federal government but for a nonprofit in southern, georgia. that part of the clip and the part we played in the introduction right now to the segment to suggest a racial motive in shirley sherrod's comment. another clip appeared to corroborate her stance that she was trying to unite them in racial tolerance.] unintelligible]

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DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:33 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: All Things Considered interview with Secretary Vilsack?

Got it, thanks

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:25 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Cc: Mather, Chris
Subject: Fw: All Things Considered interview with Secretary Vilsack?

From: CJones@npr.org
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 12:19:58 2010
Subject: All Things Considered interview with Secretary Vilsack?
Hi Justin,

Chelsea Jones here from NPR's *All Things Considered*...we're interested in an interview with the Secretary today about the Shirley Sherrod/NAACP video. Is he commenting at all on this? If so, let me know.

Thanks so much,

Chelsea

NPR | Chelsea Jones | *All Things Considered* | cjones@npr.org | 202 513 2108

DeJong, Justin

From: googlealerts-noreply@google.com
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:33 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Google Alert - usda

News

5 new results for usda

USDA worker quits over 1986 racial incident

Wiscnation Post

Shirley Sherrod, USDA state director of rural development, made the remarks on March 27 at an NAACP Freedom Fund banquet. Her videotaped remarks surfaced ...

[See all stories on this topic »](#)

Recall issued for chicken nuggets sold at Walmart

CNN (blog)

The company says no one has been hurt. Perdue says concerned consumers should call 877-727-3447 or visit the USDA website.

[See all stories on this topic »](#)

Purfresh supports USDA crop research initiative

Refrigerated Transporter

Purfresh has announced its support of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Specialty Crop Research Initiative. The company is backing the ...

[See all stories on this topic »](#)

Andrew Gunther: USDA Admits Link Between Antibiotic Use by Big Ag and Human Health

Investing Contrarian

Dr. John Clifford, Deputy Administrator for Veterinary Services for the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) read from his previously ...

[See all stories on this topic »](#)

USDA Loans, Mortgages For Rural Farmers and Low Income Farming Households

Stock Markets Review

The federal plan designed to keep borrowers in their homes is called HAMP- for Home Affordable Modification Plan. This program has been active for over a ...

[See all stories on this topic »](#)

Tip: Use a minus sign (-) in front of terms in your query that you want to exclude.. [Learn more.](#)

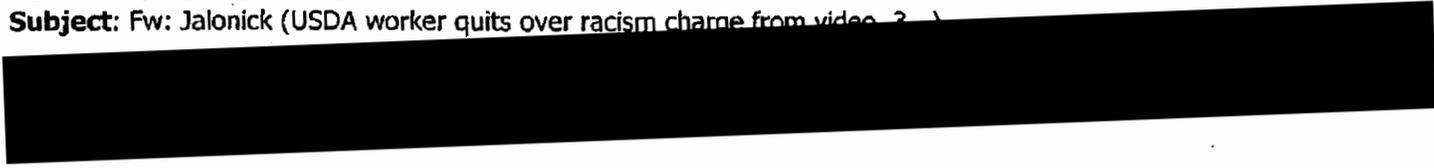
[Remove this alert.](#)
[Create another alert.](#)
[Manage your alerts.](#)

DeJong, Justin

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:21 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: Re: Jalonick (USDA worker quits over racism charge from video, 3...)

He wrote first two.
Chris Mather

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie; Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Tue Jul 20 12:19:28 2010
Subject: Fw: Jalonick (USDA worker quits over racism charge from video, 3...)



From: Jalonick, Mary Clare
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 12:14:01 2010
Subject: FW: Jalonick (USDA worker quits over racism charge from video, 3...)
Hey Justin, here is latest writethru. We are going to add background in next writethru

From: AP Exchange notification [mailto:noreply.apexchange@notification.ap.org]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:04 PM
To: Jalonick, Mary Clare
Subject: Jalonick (USDA worker quits over racism charge from video, 3...)

Date: 07/20/2010 12:02 PM

US--USDA-Racism-Resignation/490
Eds: Replaces last graf to correct reference to 'he said'.
USDA worker quits over racism charge from video
Associated Press Writers

WASHINGTON (AP) - A black employee who resigned from the Agriculture Department over comments at a Georgia NAACP meeting said Tuesday the White House forced her out of her job over a manufactured racial controversy.

Shirley Sherrod said she was on the road Monday after an event in rural Georgia when USDA deputy undersecretary Cheryl Cook called her and told her the White House wanted her to resign. "They called me twice," Sherrod told The Associated Press in an interview. "The last time they asked me to pull over the side of the road and submit my resignation on my Blackberry, and that's what I did."

The controversy began Monday when the conservative website biggovernment.com posted a two-minute, 38-second video clip of Sherrod's remarks to a local NAACP chapter.

In the video, she says the first time a white farmer came in for help, he was acting "superior" to her and that she struggled to decide how much help to provide him when so many black farmers were struggling. She said she didn't give him the full force of help she could have, but gave him enough.

The website called it proof that the NAACP - which recently accused the Tea Party of including racist elements - condones racism.

Sherrod said her comments to the local NAACP group that she withheld support some 24 years ago from a farmer because he was white are really part of a story of racial reconciliation. She said she ultimately became friends with the farmer and worked closely with him for two years to keep him from losing his farm. At the time, she worked for a nonprofit farm aid group.

"My point in telling that story is that working with him helped me to see that it wasn't just a black and white issue," she told The AP. "It was about those who have and those who do not. That's why I take the time to tell that story is to tell people we need to get beyond it and work together."

Hours after her resignation, Sherrod accused administration officials of lacking backbone. A USDA spokesman would not comment on whether the White House was involved.

Secretary Tom Vilsack issued a statement saying the agency has no tolerance for discrimination.

"We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously," the statement said.

National NAACP President Benjamin Todd Jealous issued a statement Monday night - before Sherrod's explanation - supporting the resignation. Jealous said the group opposes racism of all kinds.

"According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race," he said. "We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers."

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Summary

Date: 07/20/2010 12:02 PM
Slug: US--USDA-Racism-Resignation
Headline: USDA worker quits over racism charge from video
Byline: BEN EVANS
Byline Title: Associated Press Writers
Copyright Holder: AP
Priority: r (4)
With Photo:
Dateline: WASHINGTON
Lead
Editors' Note: Eds: Replaces last graf to correct reference to 'he said'.
Word Count: 490

DeJong, Justin

From: Deluhery, Norah
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:17 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Lavallee, Aaron
Subject: Re: CNN breaking

Got it, thanks. I was sure you were.

----- Original Message -----

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Deluhery, Norah; Lavallee, Aaron
Sent: Tue Jul 20 12:10:36 2010
Subject: Re: CNN breaking

We're all over it. Its rd.

----- Original Message -----

From: Deluhery, Norah
To: Lavallee, Aaron
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 12:03:05 2010
Subject: CNN breaking

Hey, by chance I just caught CNN in the hallway at POC. The headline was something like "ousted USDA official speaks out." And then she's quoted saying "I was driving in WV and I got calls from the WH asking me to resign." Any idea what that's all about?

DeJong, Justin

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:14 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Harden, Krysta
Subject: Updated draft employee email

Dear employee:



DeJong, Justin

From: Lavallee, Aaron
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:12 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: CNN breaking

Is it safe to assume you just saw the live interview on CNN with Shirley and the farm family in question?

Aaron Lavallee

DeJong, Justin

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:08 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re:


Chris Mather

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tue Jul 20 11:58:00 2010
Subject: Re:


From: Mather, Chris
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 11:48:08 2010
Subject:

Just you. Another statement?


Chris Mather

Director of Communications

USDA

1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 402A

Washington, DC 20250

202-690-0060

chris.mather@usda.gov

DeJong, Justin

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:53 AM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: Now seeking clarification

[REDACTED]

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:50 AM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: Re: Now seeking clarification

[REDACTED]

From: Mather, Chris
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 11:39:33 2010
Subject: RE: Now seeking clarification

[REDACTED]

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:38 AM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: Fw: Now seeking clarification

[REDACTED]

From: Ed O'Keefe
To: Cherlin, Reid H. ; Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 11:31:04 2010
Subject: Now seeking clarification
Reid:

I'm assuming y'all have seen Ms. Sherrod on CNN saying that undersecretary of Agriculture Cheryl Cook called her several times to ask for resignation and that the administration forced her out without letting her tell her side of the story.

Looking to see once again if the White House or USDA has further comment? Thanks in advance.

Ed O'Keefe
The Federal Eye
The Washington Post
ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com
202.334.5546. (o) [REDACTED] (c)
AIM: edatpost | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [GovLoop](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

DeJong, Justin

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:40 AM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: Now seeking clarification

[REDACTED]

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:38 AM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: Fw: Now seeking clarification

[REDACTED]

From: Ed O'Keefe
To: Cherlin, Reid H. ; Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 11:31:04 2010
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Reid:

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Looking to see once again if the White House or USDA has further comment? Thanks in advance.

Ed O'Keefe
The Federal Eye
The Washington Post
ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com
202.334.5546. (o) | [REDACTED] (c)
AIM: edatpost | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [GovLoop](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

DeJong, Justin

From: Palmer, Mark - Washington, DC [mark.palmer@wdc.usda.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:29 AM
To: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb
Cc: Politsch, Kent - Washington, DC; Mather, Chris
Subject: RE: information requested

Thanks Justin. While I don't think there will be any issues on our end, since it's a matter with another agency, I just want to make sure we handle this one properly for you all.

Best

MMP

=====
Mark M. Palmer
Senior Advisor
Office of External Affairs
USDA
Mark.Palmer@wdc.usda.gov
www.fsa.usda.gov

From: DeJong, Justin [mailto:Justin.DeJong@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:24 AM
To: Palmer, Mark - Washington, DC; Weaver, Caleb
Cc: Politsch, Kent - Washington, DC; Mather, Chris
Subject: Re: information requested

Looping mather.

=====
From: Mark.Palmer2@one.usda.gov
To: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Cc: Kent.Politsch@one.usda.gov
Sent: Tue Jul 20 11:17:49 2010
Subject: FW: information requested

Gentlemen – knowing your situation, this came to me this a.m. I have told folks this is not an FSA issue per se, but what else should we do in handling any mis-guided inquiries – just refer them to you I assume?

Let me know how you would like to handle this one.

Thanks

MMP

=====
Mark M. Palmer
Senior Advisor
Office of External Affairs
USDA
Mark.Palmer@wdc.usda.gov

www.fsa.usda.gov

From: Kevin Phillips [mailto: [REDACTED]]

Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:35 AM

To: Watts, Murray - Clarksville, TN; andre.kok@wdc.usda.gov; johnathan.groveman@wdc.usda.gov; Sloca, Sueellen - Washington, DC; Politsch, Kent - Washington, DC; james.meidinger@wdc.usda; Palmer, Mark - Washington, DC; Pugh, Shirley (RMA); jean.daniel@fns.usda.gov; sara.bradshaw@fns.usda.gov; debbie.haston-hillger@fns.usda.gov; Mcquinn, Mary - Athens, GA; louise.reynnells@ars.usda.gov; vbest@csrees.usda.gov; shutchison@ars.usda.gov; vherberger@ars.usda.gov; acuster@ers.usda.gov; Fletcher, Jay - Washington, DC; Dan.Campbell@usda.gov; Kasting, Dick - Washington, DC; Shunk, Joseph - Washington, DC; Morgan, Ritam (OMS)

Subject: information requested

I would like information as to the outcome of the employment status of Shirley Sherrod. This USDA employee has been taped admitting discrimination *in her job*.

From her statements, it's clear she based her decisions on the color of the applicants skin. Not just this one time, but throughout her career. This was not a one time instance.

I know if a white USDA official had bragged publicly about discriminating against a black farmer, the white USDA official would have been fired and would lose all pensions and rights obtained throughout a career of discrimination. I also know that every black organization (NAACP etc) and organizers (J Jackson, A Sharpton etc) would have called for firing, loss of pensions, AND criminal prosecution had the white USDA official been the one to make these racist statements.

This Shirley Sherrod was a Director of Rural Development for the state of Georgia? Has she been training or at least suggesting to her underlings that this is the way to treat whites?

Shirley Sherrod is a disgrace and a criminal and should be dealt with as such.

Sincerely,

Kevin Phillips

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:27 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; USDA Clips; JIC1, OC -USDA; JIC2, OC -USDA; JIC3, OC -USDA; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: FW: Top Outlets "vilsack" : USDA BIG QUILTS IN BIAS-BOAST SHOCK

From: Factiva[SMTP:EMAILEDNEWS@EMAIL.GLOBAL.FACTIVA.COM]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:27:13 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Top Outlets "vilsack" : USDA BIG QUILTS IN BIAS-BOAST SHOCK Auto forwarded by a Rule

Your topic is Top Outlets "vilsack"

USDA BIG QUILTS IN BIAS-BOAST SHOCK
20 July 2010, New York Post [232 Words]

A black official in the US Agriculture Department resigned yesterday after a video surfaced of her bragging to the NAACP that she didn't do everything she could to help a white farmer facing bankruptcy.

Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, told the audience at a March banquet in Atlanta that she claimed the man felt "superior" to her, according to FoxNews.com.

"He had come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was talking all that time, trying to show me he was superior to me, was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," Sherrod said.

"I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land - so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do.

"I did enough," she said.

Sherrod said she passed him off to "one of his own - a white lawyer," so she could claim she was helpful.

Sherrod, who was appointed to her position in July 2009, didn't say what ultimately happened to the farmer's case.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack accepted her resignation yesterday and said, "There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA."

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DeJong, Justin

From: Weaver, Caleb
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:24 AM
To: McNeilly, Timothy -RD
Cc: Maloney, Wayne; DeJong, Justin
Subject: CNN

Tim – just want to make sure you are watching the interviews on CNN right now, and they are going after Cheryl Cook pretty hard.

Caleb Weaver
Press Secretary
USDA
O: 202-720-0622
C: [REDACTED]
caleb.weaver@oc.usda.gov

DeJong, Justin

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:24 AM
To: DeJong, Justin; Chan, Stephanie; Misailidis, Sarah; Weaver, Caleb
Subject: RE: Cnn

Yes, we are watching.

-----Original Message-----

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:22 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris; Misailidis, Sarah; Weaver, Caleb
Subject: Cnn

Just heard sherrrod was on cnn for like 10 min interview.

DeJong, Justin

From: Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:23 AM
To: DeJong, Justin; Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb
Subject: RE: Cnn

She's still on.

-----Original Message-----

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:22 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris; Misailidis, Sarah; Weaver, Caleb
Subject: Cnn

Just heard sherrod was on cnn for like 10 min interview.

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:23 AM
To: DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris; Misailidis, Sarah; Weaver, Caleb
Subject: RE: Cnn

We will have transcript over shortly.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED] Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:22 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris; Misailidis, Sarah; Weaver, Caleb
Subject: Cnn

Just heard sherrod was on cnn for like 10 min interview.

DeJong, Justin

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:09 AM
To: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: RE: Morning Joe: Shirley Sherrod Story

Don't apologize, I was just sharing that S knows about it, in the event that was why you were asking.

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:48 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: Re: Morning Joe: Shirley Sherrod Story

Sorry, I recall after seeing the story but needed a refresher.

From: Mather, Chris
To: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Chan, Stephanie
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Tue Jul 20 10:38:02 2010
Subject: Re: Morning Joe: Shirley Sherrod Story

S knows all about this. he brought it up to me two weeks ago.
Chris Mather

From: Weaver, Caleb
To: DeJong, Justin; Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Tue Jul 20 10:06:55 2010
Subject: Re: Morning Joe: Shirley Sherrod Story

Sorry - I can generally answer this one. Fox News has been continuing to hammer on DOJ for failing to pursue an incident where some representatives of the new black panther party were filmed outside a polling location. The allegation is that this was an incident of voter intimidation that is not being pursued.

Hope that helps.

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Tue Jul 20 09:50:18 2010
Subject: Re: Morning Joe: Shirley Sherrod Story

Really would be good to have this context? Sara, steph?

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah

Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:50:49 2010

Subject: Re: Morning Joe: Shirley Sherrod Story

What is the story behind the black panthers tape? What is this?

From: Chan, Stephanie

To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb

Cc: Misailidis, Sarah

Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:32:42 2010

Subject: Morning Joe: Shirley Sherrod Story

Please see below for transcripts from Morning Joe from 6:44 this morning and 8:11 a few minutes ago. They mention the Secretary's statement and briefly discuss why it wasn't 'covered by mainstream media' earlier.

Station: MSNBC

Date: 07/20/2010 06:44:36 - 6:54:36 AM

Well, another story of reverse discrimination comes out today.

this one is really interesting. i'm thinking that this woman regrets this comment. a usda official in georgia has resigned after i youtube clip shows her admitting that race helped determine how much aid would be given to a white farmer.

you're not supposed to do that, are you? i mean, i'm not --

it's probably not a good idea.

for being so stupid.

it's not even -- well, how about you just don't do it. anyway, the state's director of rural development apparently made the comments during an naacp banquet in march. take a listen.

the first time i was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking, but he was trying to show me he was superior to me. what he didn't know while he was taking all that time to show me he was superior to me was i was trying to decide just how much help i was going to give him. i was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland, and here i was faced with having to help a white person save their land. so, i didn't give him the full force of what i could do.

wow.

how about if shirley and mark williamson, tea party guy, are locked in a room together as their punishment.

wow.

that was something, huh?

so she -- so this guy was trying to save his land, and she decided she didn't like the white farmer acting the way the white farmer acted but she decided not to do.

agriculture secretary tom vilsack has accepted her resignation. ben jealous, the president of the naacp, called their communities shameful.

a narrative is going to emerge, margaret, though, certainly on the right, with this tape that's just come out. you'll be hearing this the next couple days. i think its relevance relates back to a new black panthers tape that had been out there. there are a lot of conservatives that think the mainstream media is not following these type of stories to protect barack obama. actually, ""the washington post"" came out this past weekend, and said we haven't been following this story. is that a fair critique?

absolutely. it's every bit as hateful. i mean, look at that woman. i mean, aren't you ashamed?

yes. and you know, the agriculture secretary went on to say that they have zero tolerance for this type of thing.

yeah.

i mean, there's more on one side than the other, but that doesn't --

that doesn't make either way right.

which side would that be?

pat, you're not going to be talking this segment. norah, what do you think?

do you want me --

but, norah, every day, though, we've been hearing conservatives complain, you guys aren't running this story. you're not running this story. it's clear voter intimidation. and it started under bush. but the obama administration decided to brush it aside. is it a fair critique of the press to say, because you'll have a lot of people say, you guys didn't talk enough about the van jones story.

mm-hmm.

until it already exploded. you guys didn't talk enough about a.c.o.r.n. until it had already exploded. you guys didn't talk enough about the new black panther story until it exploded. are these fair critiques? and if so, where is our blind spot?

well, i do think there's some fair critiques out there. certainly with the new black panther story. ""the washington post"" ombudsman weighed in saying they should have done the story earlier. one of the editors said they didn't have enough resources to cover the story. on this particular case, while this is egregious in my mind, though, it is an isolated, we believe, incident. there's no suggestion that 9 usda is doing this, you know, a.

right.

so i just worry that in a climate that there have now been -- there is an effort to pile up a lot of these racially charged stories that concern me about things. that we're, you know, setting up these black versus white stories in this country, that these instances are -- are trying to create some sort of narrative about where we are in this country. and that makes me nervous. do you know what i'm trying to say?

mike barnicle, it's also these sort of stories obviously make the white house nervous. if you go back to last summer, last july, a year ago, remember the beer summit.

mm-hmm.

you can look at barack obama's numbers. the first time his numbers took a bit of a jag down was after that blowup in cambridge over police officer crowley and professor gates.

joe, all of us here and everyone out in the country knows if you lead any sort of a normal life that race remains the thir rail of american culture and american life. always has been that way. probably, unfortunately, always will be that way. would submit to you that the news media probably is a little guilty for not covering some of these stories. for ignoring them for too long. but i would also suggest that out there in this big, large universe beyond television, that people are more obsessed with other issues, like their jobs and their incomes, than they are with what someone said in march, from working for the department of agriculture.

i would guess, though, mike on this black panther story which we reported when it came out but didn't cover it daily, i would guess mike, that a lot of people would be asking, why is it that you've got two guys who are clearly engaging in voter intimidation, and if they were whites doing that to black voters passing by, carrying billy clubs, that we would have had a hand wringing 28-part series on the front page of every major newspaper for a month.

well, i don't know if it would have been on the front page. they would have been arrested immediately if they were white. i don't think there's any doubt about that. the story would have been covered immediately had they been white. don't think there's any doubt about that. but i think at this point the incessant coverage of it with all of the questions, it's like scratching a sore. that's all it's doing.

but who's covered it? fox has covered it. but, even ""the washington post"" said nobody else has covered it. the boston globe covered it? has ""the new york times"" covered it incessantly?

they now make minor mention of it in light of fox's coverage of it. bob schieffer this past weekend was asked why he didn't cover it and he gave an honest answer. he said, i didn't even know about it. now he didn't know about it because it wasn't covered by the mainstream media. there's no doubt about that. but now this whipping this thing up into a near frenzy. why didn't we cover it? we would have done it if they were white. it's just pulling a scab at a time when people are worried about their jobs.

what stories do we decide to ignore, though? i guess i don't understand.

maybe not ignore it. i mean there's so many stories that slip by and go through the cracks that you don't know. because i've seen this -- i now know all the facts of the story. i think this story is out there and being covered. the minute you know something like this, you go to it. but mike makes this good point. you know, it's a tender subject. we have a black president, which makes it, i think, even more delicate. why that agriculture person had to be fired immediately.

doesn't that make it relevant, though, when the justice department passes on this new black panther case?

well, we did prosecute the guy who was holdage the billy club. at an almost all-black precinct. intimidating white voters at an all-black precinct, would you go to another precinct where there might be more -- help you mo.

Station: MSNBC

Date: 07/20/2010 08:01:56 - 8:11:56 AM

okay. welcome back to ""morning joe."" we are at the nbc news washington bureau. changed up the conversation a little bit with deede meijers and eugene robinson. p> what's the back story?

u.s.d.a. official in georgia after she admitted that race determined how much aid given to a white farmer. shirley sharad apparently made the comments during a naacp banquet in march. the agriculture secretary tom vilsack said today i have accepted the resignation. there is zero tolerance for discrimination at usda and i strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. we have been working hard to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously. ben jealous is also chimed in calling the comments shameful.

gene, we seem to be getting to this july where we were last july. it was a year ago.

interesting.

that we were talking about officer crowley in austin and also professor gates and talked about that throughout most of july. but race is bubbling up again in the heat of the summer. you have a column about it today. a lot of people talking about the tea parties. are they racist or not? tea partiers calling the naacp racist. it is just sort of ugly all around.

it is our yearly race seminar. you know? we keep saying we went to have a national conversation about race. my theory is that we don't want to sit around and sing and have a nation at conversation about race but when things happen we talk about race. and you know, in this case, now it's the whole naacp and tea party thing. this latest incident with the official who resigned and many --

talk about your column today.

well, it was about the tea party and, you know, i think the naacp's point was proven by mark williams, the california -- the sacramento former radio host who was the head of something called tea party express.

right.

which got booted out of the tea party federation. good for federation.

in so doing --

the --

the tea party federation, i didn't know there was a federation.

right, right.

kicked him out. did what ben jealous told them to do which is call out --

yeah. i mean, it is an interesting -- this will be an interesting process of maturation, i think, for the tea party movement as it sorts out. you know, how can you be a movement without a leadership? and so, this federation group has emerged as a leadership. clearly, there were racial issues there. i mean, if you read what this guy mark williams wrote, it is disgusting. and it is --

absolutely.

way over the line. and he was, you know, a substantial thinker --

you condemn that.

exactly.

they did it.

Stephanie C. Chan
Press Assistant
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1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
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Email: Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:07 AM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: RE: Ap on sherrod

I haven't heard or seen anything from their camp.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED] Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:05 AM
To: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: RE: Ap on sherrod

Thanks. No inquiries from Glenn Beck right Chan?

-----Original Message-----

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:02 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: Ap on sherrod

Ap mary clare spoke to sherrod. She has sherrod on the record saying she was on the road traveling when cheryl cook called twice saying that wh was asking for her resignation that she needed to pull over and send the email with resignation. Also went on to say that wh asked for resignation because of a pending story from glenn beck, although mary clare was sure she wanted to include that in story. I had [REDACTED] knowledge [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:43 AM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: Question on Vilsack's decision to fire Sherrod

Just heads up that I have this down. Thanks

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:27 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Fw: Question on Vilsack's decision to fire Sherrod

From: Ed O'Keefe
To: DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris
Sent: Tue Jul 20 09:58:13 2010
Subject: Question on Vilsack's decision to fire Sherrod
Justin and Chris:

Disregard my previous question about Sherrod's statement, I found that she spoke to CNN this morning.

Which raises an important question: If the incident she describes occurred in 1986, as she said it did, then why did Sec. Vilsack accept her resignation? Was she forced to leave? Was she given the opportunity to explain herself to USDA and Vilsack before she resigned?

And should other USDA officials now expect to be fired for incidents that occurred more than two decades ago before they were hired by USDA?

Ed O'Keefe
The Federal Eye
The Washington Post
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AIM: edatpost | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [GovLoop](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

From: DeJong, Justin [mailto:Justin.DeJong@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:32 AM
To: Ed O'Keefe; Mather, Chris
Subject: Re: Vilsack statement on resignation of Georgia usda employee?

Hi ed,

Please see below for statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack regarding Shirley Sherrod's resignation yesterday:

Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of

discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights hist
at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.

----- Original Message -----

From: ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com <ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com>

To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin

Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:25:54 2010

Subject: Vilsack statement on resignation of Georgia usda employee?

Hey guys:

Do you have the statement from Second Vilsack regarding the resignation of the USDA employee after her statements about a white
farmer surfaced on video? Thanks in advance.

Ed O'Keefe

The Federal Eye, The Washington Post

ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:39 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; USDA Clips; JIC1, OC -USDA; JIC2, OC -USDA; JIC3, OC -USDA; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: FW: Top Outlets "vilsack" : Official Quits After 'Full Force' Race Admission

From: Factiva[SMTP:EMAILEDNEWS@EMAIL.GLOBAL.FACTIVA.COM]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:39:16 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Top Outlets "vilsack" : Official Quits After 'Full Force' Race Admission Auto forwarded by a Rule

Your topic is Top Outlets "vilsack"

Official Quits After 'Full Force' Race Admission 20 July 2010, 14:05 GMT, FOXNews.com [659 Words]

Days after the NAACP clashed with Tea Party members over allegations of racism, a video has surfaced showing an Agriculture Department official regaling an NAACP audience with a story about how she withheld help to a white farmer facing bankruptcy -- video that now has forced the official to resign.

Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, is shown in the clip describing "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." Sherrod, who is black, claimed the farmer took a long time trying to show he was "superior" to her. The audience laughed as she described how she determined his fate.

"He had to come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," she said. "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land -- so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough."

The Agriculture Department announced Monday, shortly after FoxNews.com published its initial report on the video, that Sherrod had resigned.

"There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person," Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a written statement. "We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously."

The NAACP released a statement late Monday condemning Sherrod's admission.

"We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers," the statement said.

"Her actions were shameful," it continued. "While she went on to explain in the story that she ultimately realized her mistake, as well as the common predicament of working people of all races, she gave no indication she had attempted to right the wrong she had done to this man."

Sherrod explained in the video that, at the time, she assumed the state or national Department of Agriculture had referred the white farmer to her. In order to ensure that the farmer could report back that she was indeed helpful, she said she took him to see "one of his own" -- a white lawyer.

"I figured that if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him," she said.

The point of the story wasn't entirely clear; only an excerpt of the speech is included in the video clip.

"It was revealed to me that it's about poor versus those who have," she said, suggesting she had learned that race is less important.

The video clip was first posted by BigGovernment.com. The clip is dated March 27 from an NAACP Freedom Fund banquet.

The clip adds to the firestorm of debate over the NAACP's decision to approve a resolution at its convention last week accusing some Tea Party activists of racism -- a charge Tea Party leaders deny.

In a second clip from the same event posted online, Sherrod appeared to urge black job seekers to find work at the Department of Agriculture because the federal government won't lay people off.

"There are jobs at USDA and many times there are no people of color to fill those jobs because we shy away from agriculture. We hear the word agriculture and think, why are we working in the fields?" she said. "You've heard of a lot of layoffs. Have you heard of anybody in the federal government losing their job? That's all I need to say."

<http://global.factiva.com/redirect/default.aspx?p=sta&ep=AE&an=WC42085020100720e67k00003&fid=300612057&cat=w&aid=9USD0009000&ns=18&fn=Top%20Outlets%20%22vilsack%22&ft=g&OD=V2AUBjNaqd6b5Ap%2b90PrU4iu6h%2fp8T%2byJNGtxGUDhq6zQxl8yztzkP07A%3d%3d%7c2>

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DeJong, Justin

From: Scott, Denise
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:17 AM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Just heard you are my man

....when it comes to Sherrod. Just wanted to say thank you, and I'm sorry. ...and it's good to know I still get to work with you a bit... if from afar.

Warm Regards

Denise

Denise N. Scott
Confidential Assistant/ Scheduler
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"Committed to the future of rural communities"
"Estamos dedicados al futuro de las comunidades rurales"

DeJong, Justin

From: ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:05 AM
Subject: Resending with updates: Federal Eye: USDA worker quits over 1986 racial incident

<http://voices.washingtonpost.com/federal-eye/2010/07/usda-worker-quits-over-racism.html>

USDA worker quits over 1986 racial incident

[VIDEO EMBEDDED]

Updated 10:02 a.m. ET

By Ed O'Keefe and Krissah Thompson

A U.S. Agriculture Department official from Georgia resigned late Monday after she was caught on tape admitting that 24 years ago she did not help a white farmer as much as she could have because of his race.

Shirley Sherrod, USDA state director of rural development, made the remarks on March 27 at an NAACP Freedom Fund banquet. Her videotaped remarks surfaced online on Monday.

Sherrod reminded the crowd that Black farmers have faced years of discrimination and difficulty saving their farmland. She recounted the story of a white farmer who visited her asking for assistance keeping his farm.

"Here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land," she said (see above). "So, I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough so that when he, I assumed the Department of Agriculture had sent him to me. Either that or the Georgia Department of Agriculture. He needed to go back and report that I did try to help him."

As Sherrod tells the story of denying aid to the white farmer, she explains that she ultimately realized her mistake, but did not give any indication that she had rectified the situation.

The incident took place in 1986 when she was working for a nonprofit group and long before she joined USDA, Sherrod said Tuesday.

"I was speaking to that group, like I've done many groups, and I tell them about a time when I thought the issue was race and race only," she said in an interview on CNN. "I was telling the story of how working with him helped me to see the issue is not about race. It's about those who have versus those who do not have."

The white farmer, his wife and Sherrod later wound up as friends, she said.

Agriculture Secretary **Tom Vilsack** appointed Sherrod to her post in July 2009 and accepted her resignation on Monday.

"There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person," Vilsack said in a statement. "We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously."

It was not immediately clear if Sherrod was given an opportunity to explain her remarks to USDA officials or Vilsack before she resigned. A USDA spokesman did not immediately return requests for further clarification.

NAACP President and **Benjamin Jealous** issued a strongly worded statement condemning Sherrod Monday night, before she told CNN that the incident occurred before she worked for USDA.

"Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race," Jealous said.

"We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers," he added.

Jealous said Sherrod's behavior "is even more intolerable in light of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's well documented history of denying opportunities to African American, Latino, Asian American, and Native American farmers, as well as female farmers of all races."

The NAACP's comments come days after it denounced what it called "racist elements" of the Tea Party movement.

Black, Hispanic, Native American and female farmers have large discrimination lawsuits pending against USDA. Black farmers have been awarded a settlement worth \$1 billion for similar claims of discrimination.

Sherrod previously served as Georgia director of the Southern Cooperative/Land Assistance Fund and has worked with other rural and women's groups. Her office is part of USDA's Rural Development program, which administers more than \$114 billion in loans and loan guarantees. It is part of a larger network that manages more than 40 housing, business and community infrastructure programs at about 500 state, local and federal offices nationwide.

Ed O'Keefe

The Federal Eye

The Washington Post

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AIM: edatpost | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [GovLoop](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:58 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; USDA Clips; JIC1, OC -USDA; JIC2, OC -USDA; JIC3, OC -USDA; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: FW: Top Outlets "vilsack" : Eating Nutritiously A Struggle When Money Is Scarce

From: Factiva[SMTP:EMAILEDNEWS@EMAIL.GLOBAL.FACTIVA.COM]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:57:57 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Top Outlets "vilsack" : Eating Nutritiously A Struggle When Money Is Scarce Auto forwarded by a Rule

Your topic is Top Outlets "vilsack"

Eating Nutritiously A Struggle When Money Is Scarce 20 July 2010, 04:00 GMT, National Public Radio [1257 Words]

Alex Williamson, 8, is one of 17 million children who live in U.S. households where getting enough food is a challenge. Sometimes it's hard for the poor to eat healthy because it costs more.

Alex Williamson, 8, doesn't look very hungry – in fact, he's a little chubby. But Alex, who lives in Carlisle, Pa., is one of 17 million children who live in U.S. households where getting enough food is a challenge.

The Obama administration has pledged to end childhood hunger in America by 2015. A key element of that challenge is to make sure the food hungry children eat is nutritious. They're lofty goals that will be difficult to achieve.

Alex's mom, Connie Williamson, says she tries to give her son healthy food but doesn't always succeed.

"When he gets up on his own, he'll go find what he wants," she says. "He'll get a hot dog bun, or get a piece of bread. He'll get an ice pop or something."

And that's exactly what he did early one morning, before his family headed out to the local food pantry. Alex ate a blue ice pop for breakfast.

A Struggle To Eat The 'Right' Food

Hunger in America is complicated. It's not just getting enough food, but getting the right food – and making the right choices.

Connie Williamson says it's not easy on a tight budget. She spends hours driving around each month looking for deals. She has to stretch \$600 in food stamps for herself, her husband, Alex and two teenage girls.

You can get leaner cuts of meat, but then they're more expensive. You can get fresh fruit every couple of days and blow half of your budget on fresh fruits and vegetables in a week's time, easy.

- Connie Williamson

"You can get leaner cuts of meat, but then they're more expensive," she says. "You can get fresh fruit every couple of days and blow half of your budget on fresh fruits and vegetables in a week's time, easy."

The Williamsons live well below the poverty line. And in the family's struggle to obtain enough food, nutrition sometimes takes a back seat to necessity. There's often a tug of war between the best intentions and some not-so-good eating.

For example, the Williamsons have a garden behind their apartment in downtown Carlisle. They grow lots of healthy food - zucchini, peppers and Brussels sprouts. But when Alex was thirsty after a walk, his mother gave him a plastic water bottle filled with orange soda.

Elaine Livas, who runs Project SHARE, the local food pantry, says she sees it all time.

"A gallon of milk is \$3-something. A bottle of orange soda is 89 cents," she says. "Do the math."

Livas says low-income families might know milk is better for their kids, but when it comes to filling a hungry stomach, a cheaper high-calorie option can look pretty good.

Project SHARE, like many food pantries and soup kitchens, is increasingly offering cooking and nutrition classes to help their clients get the most out of what they eat. And Alex Williamson is taking some of those classes.

"Because really, that's what we need, a transformation in how people view their relationship with food," Livas says.

A Third Of U.S. Children Are Overweight

The White House agrees. First lady Michelle Obama recently welcomed hundreds of chefs on the White House lawn. She was encouraging them to volunteer at schools to help cafeteria workers, students and their parents learn how to prepare more nutritious meals.

She noted that almost a third of U.S. children are overweight.

"Good nutrition at school is more important than ever," she told the chefs. "A major key to giving our children a healthy future will be to pass a strong child nutrition bill."

Children Living In Households Facing Food Shortages

In 1998, 14 million children lived in households where getting enough food was a challenge. While that number has risen and fallen, it took a dramatic jump in 2008 to 17 million children, according to the USDA's most recent data. Below, NPR calculated the percent change per year of children in households facing this challenge.

That's a big part of the administration's plan to end childhood hunger. President Obama has asked Congress for a billion dollars more a year to do things like make school lunches healthier and to expand access to subsidized meals for low-income children. Advocates say it will help kids learn better, and reduce health care costs.

There's a lot of support on Capitol Hill, but lawmakers are also increasingly nervous about new spending. Committees in both chambers have passed scaled-back versions, and it's unclear whether a bill can be enacted before year's end.

In an exchange at a House hearing this month with Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, Rep. Bill Cassidy (R-LA) raised other concerns.

"I have no doubt there are kids that go to school hungry," he said. "But I have to admit, every time I hear that we have an obesity problem and everybody's going hungry, how do you reconcile the two?"

Vilsack said they're not all that different. He said there's a similarity between low-income families trying to stretch scarce food dollars with high-calorie processed foods, "and youngsters who are just flat out not getting fed because their parents don't have the resources to feed them."

Cassidy said he wasn't sure he followed that reasoning. And he might still be confused if he took a trip to the Williamsons' kitchen in Carlisle, where contradictions swirl about like stew. The refrigerator and pantry are often filled with food – but the family sometimes has to go to the local soup kitchen to make ends meet.

Hard To Make Good Decisions When You're Hungry

When asked, Alex says he worries about food all the time, and that he's always hungry. But later, he admits he has enough to eat. It's just not always what he wants. He says he especially doesn't like it when his mother makes Brussels sprouts for dinner.

His 14-year-old sister, Beanna, tries to explain.

"He more or less just worries about if there's going to be enough food that he likes or if we have something that he likes," she says. "He's really picky about what he wants."

As Beanna talks, Alex goes to the refrigerator for some chocolate. He gets upset when his sister tells him he can only have one piece.

It's not that uncommon for an 8-year-old to prefer chocolate over Brussels sprouts. But Livas, of the local food pantry, says a good diet is especially important for the poor, as a first step toward addressing their other problems, with things like work, health care and education. She says it's hard to make good decisions when you're hungry.

Livas says there's something else to consider. As the nation becomes more health conscious, she's noticing less healthy food coming to her pantry. She's getting more sugar-coated cereals, for example, than the high-fiber ones she used to receive.

"We can't really complain that the poor are heavier, when what we're donating is our kind of castaways," she says.

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DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:57 AM
To: DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: RE: Morning Joe: Shirley Sherrod Story

I'm researching information on this right now

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:50 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: Re: Morning Joe: Shirley Sherrod Story

Really would be good to have this context? Sara, steph?

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:50:49 2010
Subject: Re: Morning Joe: Shirley Sherrod Story

What is the story behind the black panthers tape? What is this?

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:32:42 2010
Subject: Morning Joe: Shirley Sherrod Story

Please see below for transcripts from Morning Joe from 6:44 this morning and 8:11 a few minutes ago. They mention the Secretary's statement and briefly discuss why it wasn't 'covered by mainstream media' earlier.

Station: MSNBC
Date: 07/20/2010 06:44:36 - 6:54:36 AM

Well, another story of reverse discrimination comes out today.

this one is really interesting. i'm thinking that this woman regrets this comment. a usda official in georgia has resigned after i youtube clip shows her admitting that race helped determine how much aid would be given to a white farmer.

you're not supposed to do that, are you? i mean, i'm not --

it's probably not a good idea.

for being so stupid.

it's not even -- well, how about you just don't do it. anyway, the state's director of rural development apparently made the comments during an naacp banquet in march. take a listen.

the first time i was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking, but he was trying to show me he was superior to me. what he didn't know while he was taking all that time to show me he was superior to me was i was trying to decide just how much help i was going to give him. i was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland, and here i was faced with having to help a white person save their land. so, i didn't give him the full force of what i could do.

wow.

how about if shirley and mark williamson, tea party guy, are locked in a room together as their punishment.

wow.

that was something, huh?

so she -- so this guy was trying to save his land, and she decided she didn't like the white farmer acting the way the white farmer acted but she decided not to do.

agriculture secretary tom vilsack has accepted her resignation. ben jealous, the president of the naacp, called their communities shameful.

a narrative is going to emerge, margaret, though, certainly on the right, with this tape that's just come out. you'll be hearing this the next couple days. i think its relevance relates back to a new black panthers tape that had been out there. there are a lot of conservatives that think the mainstream media is not following these type of stories to protect barack obama. actually, ""the washington post"" came out this past weekend, and said we haven't been following this story. is that a fair critique?

absolutely. it's every bit as hateful. i mean, look at that woman. i mean, aren't you ashamed?

yes. and you know, the agriculture secretary went on to say that they have zero tolerance for this type of thing.

yeah.

i mean, there's more on one side than the other, but that doesn't --

that doesn't make either way right.

which side would that be?

pat, you're not going to be talking this segment. norah, what do you think?

do you want me --

but, norah, every day, though, we've been hearing conservatives complain, you guys aren't running this story. you're not running this story. it's clear voter intimidation. and it started under bush. but the obama administration decided to

brush it aside. is it a fair critique of the press to say, because you'll have a lot of people say, you guys didn't talk enough about the van jones story.

mm-hmm.

until it already exploded. you guys didn't talk enough about a.c.o.r.n. until it had already exploded. you guys didn't talk enough about the new black panther story until it exploded. are these fair critiques? and if so, where is our blind spot?

well, i do think there's some fair critiques out there. certainly with the new black panther story. ""the washington post"" ombudsman weighed in saying they should have done the story earlier. one of the editors said they didn't have enough resources to cover the story. on this particular case, while this is egregious in my mind, though, it is an isolated, we believe, incident. there's no suggestion that 9 usda is doing this, you know, a.

right.

so i just worry that in a climate that there have now been -- there is an effort to pile up a lot of these racially charged stories that concern me about things. that we're, you know, setting up these black versus white stories in this country, that these instances are -- are trying to create some sort of narrative about where we are in this country. and that makes me nervous. do you know what i'm trying to say?

mike barnicle, it's also these sort of stories obviously make the white house nervous. if you go back to last summer, last july, a year ago, remember the beer summit.

mm-hmm.

you can look at barack obama's numbers. the first time his numbers took a bit of a jag down was after that blowup in cambridge over police officer crowley and professor gates.

joe, all of us here and everyone out in the country knows if you lead any sort of a normal life that race remains the third rail of american culture and american life. always has been that way. probably, unfortunately, always will be that way. i would submit to you that the news media probably is a little guilty for not covering some of these stories. for ignoring them for too long. but i would also suggest that out there in this big, large universe beyond television, that people are more obsessed with other issues, like their jobs and their incomes, than they are with what someone said in march, from working for the department of agriculture.

i would guess, though, mike on this black panther story which we reported when it came out but didn't cover it daily, i would guess mike, that a lot of people would be asking, why is it that you've got two guys who are clearly engaging in voter intimidation, and if they were whites doing that to black voters passing by, carrying billy clubs, that we would have had a hand wringing 28-part series on the front page of every major newspaper for a month.

well, i don't know if it would have been on the front page. they would have been arrested immediately if they were white. i don't think there's any doubt about that. the story would have been covered immediately had they been white. i don't think there's any doubt about that. but i think at this point the incessant coverage of it with all of the questions, it's like scratching a sore. that's all it's doing.

but who's covered it? fox has covered it. but, even ""the washington post"" said nobody else has covered it. the boston globe covered it? has ""the new york times"" covered it incessantly?

they now make minor mention of it in light of fox's coverage of it. bob schieffer this past weekend was asked why he didn't cover it and he gave an honest answer. he said, i didn't even know about it. now he didn't know about it because it wasn't covered by the mainstream media. there's no doubt about that. but now this whipping this thing up into a near

frenzy. why didn't we cover it? we would have done it if they were white. it's just pulling a scab at a time when people are worried about their jobs.

what stories do we decide to ignore, though? i guess i don't understand.

maybe not ignore it. i mean there's so many stories that slip by and go through the cracks that you don't know. because i've seen this -- i now know all the facts of the story. i think this story is out there and being covered. the minute you know something like this, you go to it. but mike makes this good point. you know, it's a tender subject. we have a black president, which makes it, i think, even more delicate. why that agriculture person had to be fired immediately.

doesn't that make it relevant, though, when the justice department passes on this new black panther case?

well, we did prosecute the guy who was holdage the billy club. at an almost all-black precinct. intimidating white voters at an all-black precinct, would you go to another precinct where there might be more -- help you mo.

Station: MSNBC

Date: 07/20/2010 08:01:56 - 8:11:56 AM

okay. welcome back to ""morning joe."" we are at the nbc news washington bureau. changed up the conversation a little bit with deedee meijers and eugene robinson. p> what's the back story?

u.s.d.a. official in georgia after she admitted that race determined how much aid given to a white farmer. shirley sharad apparently made the comments during a naacp banquet in march. the agriculture secretary tom vilsack said today i have accepted the resignation. there is zero tolerance for discrimination at usda and i strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. we have been working hard to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously. ben jealous is also chimed in calling the comments shameful.

gene, we seem to be getting to this july where we were last july. it was a year ago.

interesting.

that we were talking about officer crowley in austin and also professor gates and talked about that throughout most of july. but race is bubbling up again in the heat of the summer. you have a column about it today. a lot of people talking about the tea parties. are they racist or not? tea partiers calling the naacp racist. it is just sort of ugly all around.

it is our yearly race seminar. you know? we keep saying we went to have a national conversation about race. my theory is that we don't want to sit around and sing and have a nation at conversation about race but when things happen we talk about race. and you know, in this case, now it's the whole naacp and tea party thing. this latest incident with the official who resigned and many --

talk about your column today.

well, it was about the tea party and, you know, i think the naacp's point was proven by mark williams, the california -- the sacramento former radio host who was the head of something called tea party express.

right.

which got booted out of the tea party federation. good for federation.

in so doing --

the --

the tea party federation, i didn't know there was a federation.

right, right.

kicked him out. did what ben jealous told them to do which is call out --

yeah. i mean, it is an interesting -- this will be an interesting process of maturation, i think, for the tea party movement as it sorts out. you know, how can you be a movement without a leadership? and so, this federation group has emerged as a leadership. clearly, there were racial issues there. i mean, if you read what this guy mark williams wrote, it is disgusting. and it is --

absolutely.

way over the line. and he was, you know, a substantial thinker --

you condemn that.

exactly.

they did it.

Stephanie C. Chan
Press Assistant
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1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 2050

Office: (202) 720-5555
Cell: [REDACTED]
Email: Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:54 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; USDA Clips; JIC1, OC -USDA; JIC2, OC -USDA; JIC3, OC -USDA; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: FW: Top Outlets "vilsack" : USDA worker quits over racism charge from video

From: Factiva[SMTP:EMAILEDNEWS@EMAIL.GLOBAL.FACTIVA.COM]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:53:32 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Top Outlets "vilsack" : USDA worker quits over racism charge from video Auto forwarded by a Rule

Your topic is Top Outlets "vilsack".

USDA worker quits over racism charge from video 20 July 2010, 10:10 GMT, The Sacramento Bee [150 Words]

ATLANTA -- A black federal worker has resigned from a Georgia agricultural job after a video clip showed her saying she had not helped a farmer as much as she could have because he was white.

U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a statement Tuesday he had accepted the resignation of Shirley Sherrod. Vilsack says the USDA has no tolerance for discrimination.

Sherrod told the Atlanta-Journal Constitution she was forced out of her job as the USDA's rural development director for Georgia. She said the two-minute, 38-second video posted online Monday misconstrued her message.

Sherrod's taped remarks were from a local meeting of the civil rights group NAACP.

National NAACP President Benjamin Todd Jealous welcomed the resignation because the group opposes racism of all kinds.

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DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:42 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; USDA Clips; JIC1, OC -USDA; JIC2, OC -USDA; JIC3, OC -USDA; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: FW: Top Outlets "vilsack" : Resigned USDA official says racial story misconstrued

From: Factiva[SMTP:EMAILEDNEWS@EMAIL.GLOBAL.FACTIVA.COM]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:41:28 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Top Outlets "vilsack" : Resigned USDA official says racial story misconstrued Auto forwarded by a Rule

Your topic is Top Outlets "vilsack"

Resigned USDA official says racial story misconstrued 20 July 2010, 12:49 GMT, The Atlanta Journal - Constitution [855 Words]

The USDA's rural development director for Georgia says she was forced out of her federally appointed job after a "snippet" of a speech she gave in March appeared to show her admission to only half-heartedly aiding a struggling white farmer because of his race.

But in a phone interview from her home in Albany early Tuesday morning, Shirley Sherrod told the Atlanta-Journal Constitution that the two-minute, 38-second video posted online Monday by biggovernment.com and reported on by FoxNews.com and the AJC completely misconstrued the message she was trying to convey.

Sherrod, 62, insisted her statements in the video were not racist.

"For Fox to take a spin on this like they have done, and know it's not the truth ... it's very upsetting," she said.

In the video Sherrod, who is black, admits to the crowd at the NAACP banquet she didn't do everything she could to help a white farmer whom she said was condescending when he came to her for aid.

"What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was, I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," Sherrod said in the video recorded March 27 in Douglas in southeast Georgia.

"I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough."

But Tuesday morning, Sherrod said what online viewers weren't told in reports posted throughout the day Monday was that the tale she told at the banquet happened 24 years ago -- before she got the USDA job -- when she worked with the Georgia field office for the Federation of Southern Cooperative/Land Assistance Fund.

Sherrod said the short video clip excluded the breadth of the story about how she eventually worked with the man over a two-year period to help ward off foreclosure of his farm, and how she eventually became friends with him and his wife.

"And I went on to work with many more white farmers," she said. "The story helped me realize that race is not the issue, it's about the people who have and the people who don't. When I speak to groups, I try to speak about getting beyond the issue of race."

Sherrod said the farmer, Roger Spooner of Iron City, Ga., has since died.

Responding to what he knew of the video Monday evening, Atlanta NAACP chapter president R.L. White recalled many years of unfair treatment against minority farmers when he told the AJC that the footage, at face value, "does suggest unfair treatment."

"The playing table should be leveled," said White, who wasn't at the March event. "Everyone, regardless of race, creed or color, should be treated same way, regardless of the race of the administrator."

And in a statement released to Fox News, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced Sherrod's resignation.

"There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person," Vilsack said in the statement.

An AJC reporter called Sherrod's Albany home Monday evening but was unable to contact her until she reached out shortly after midnight.

"They were just looking at what the Tea Party and what Fox said, and thought it was too (politically) dangerous for them," she said of the agriculture department.

The revelation of Sherrod's statements came a week after the NAACP issued a resolution calling the National Tea Party racist for comments made against President Barack Obama and African-American congressmen during the health care debate.

Sherrod, 62, was appointed to her position in by Obama's administration in July 2009 to manage more than 40 housing, business and community infrastructure and facility programs, and more than \$114 billion in federal loans.

The AJC is trying to recover the full video footage of Sherrod's speech to the Douglas NAACP.

She said the circumstances made it absurd for her to have made any racist comment.

"There were some white people there. The mayor (of Douglas) was there," Sherrod recalled. "Why would I do something racist if they were there?"

Mayor Jackie Wilson told the AJC she did introductions at the banquet but had to leave for another event before Sherrod's speech.

Wilson said she did not hear of any controversy in the weeks following the banquet, and she was shocked to learn of Sherrod's resignation Tuesday morning.

"She's not someone I know extremely well, but I respected her and thought she was doing a good job. And she seemed to be a fair person," said Wilson, who was city manager before becoming mayor 2 1/2 years ago. "I just hate that this kind of thing happened in Douglas."

--Staff writer Larry Hartstein contributed to this report.

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DeJong, Justin

From: Ed O'Keefe [ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:29 AM
To: DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris
Subject: RE: Vilsack statement on resignation of Georgia usda employee?

Goodness – apologies (I'm confusing her with Sherrod Brown, so bad.)

Has Ms. Sherrod put out a statement clarifying her remarks?

Ed O'Keefe

The Federal Eye

The Washington Post

ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com

202.334.5546. (o) [REDACTED] (c)

AIM: edatpost | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [GovLoop](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

From: DeJong, Justin [mailto:Justin.DeJong@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:32 AM
To: Ed O'Keefe; Mather, Chris
Subject: Re: Vilsack statement on resignation of Georgia usda employee?

Hi ed,

Please see below for statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack regarding Shirley Sherrod's resignation yesterday:

Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.

----- Original Message -----

From: ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com <ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com>
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:25:54 2010
Subject: Vilsack statement on resignation of Georgia usda employee?

Hey guys:

Do you have the statement from Second Vilsack regarding the resignation of the USDA employee after her statements about a white farmer surfaced on video? Thanks in advance.

Ed O'Keefe
The Federal Eye, The Washington Post
ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com

DeJong, Justin

From: ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:27 AM

http://voices.washingtonpost.com/federal-eye/2010/07/usda_worker_quits_over_racism.html

USDA worker quits over racism charge

[VIDEO EMBEDDED]

By Ed O'Keefe and Krissah Thompson:

A U.S. Agriculture Department official from Georgia resigned late Monday after she was caught on tape admitting that she had not helped a farmer as much as she could have because he was white.

Shirley Sherrod, USDA state director of rural development, made the remarks on March 27 at an NAACP Freedom Fund banquet. Her videotaped remarks surfaced on YouTube on Monday.

Agriculture Secretary **Tom Vilsack** accepted Sherrod's resignation, saying, "There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously."

NAACP President and **Benjamin Jealous** called Sherrod's actions shameful and agreed with the decision to fire her.

"Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race," Jealous said in a statement Monday night.

"We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers," he added.

As Sherrod tells the story of denying aid to the white farmer, she explains that she ultimately realized her mistake, but did not give any indication that she had rectified the situation.

Jealous said Sherrod's behavior "is even more intolerable in light of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's well documented history of denying opportunities to African American, Latino, Asian American, and Native American farmers, as well as female farmers of all races."

The NAACP's comments come days after it denounced what it called "racist elements" of the Tea Party movement.

Black, Hispanic, Native American and female farmers have large discrimination lawsuits pending against the Agriculture department. Black farmers have previously been awarded a settlement worth \$1 billion for similar claims of discrimination.

Ed O'Keefe

The Federal Eye

The Washington Post

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AIM: edatpost | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [GovLoop](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

DeJong, Justin

From: Purchia, Liz
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:27 AM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: RE:

Actually there is. Sending soon.

-----Original Message-----

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:24 AM
To: DeJong, Justin; Chan, Stephanie
Cc: Purchia, Liz
Subject: Re:

Liz?
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Mather, Chris; Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:27:23 2010

Do pearlie or joe leonard have public events? Need to get them up to speed.

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:25 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; USDA Clips; JIC1, OC -USDA; JIC2, OC -USDA; JIC3, OC -USDA; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: FW: Top Outlets "vilsack" : USDA worker quits over racism charge from video

From: Factiva[SMTP:EMAILEDNEWS@EMAIL.GLOBAL.FACTIVA.COM]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:24:38 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Top Outlets "vilsack" : USDA worker quits over racism charge from video Auto forwarded by a Rule

Your topic is Top Outlets "vilsack"

USDA worker quits over racism charge from video 20 July 2010, 12:00 GMT, St. Petersburg Times [176 Words]

ATLANTA (AP) -- A black federal worker has resigned from a Georgia agricultural job after a video clip showed her saying she had not helped a farmer as much as she could have because he was white.

U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a statement Tuesday he had accepted the resignation of Shirley Sherrod. Vilsack says the USDA has no tolerance for discrimination.

Sherrod told the Atlanta-Journal Constitution she was forced out of her job as the USDA's rural development director for Georgia. She said the two-minute, 38-second video posted online Monday misconstrued her message.

Sherrod's taped remarks were from a local meeting of the civil rights group NAACP.

National NAACP President Benjamin Todd Jealous welcomed the resignation because the group opposes racism of all kinds.

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DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:23 AM
To: DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb
Subject: RE: Vilsack statement on resignation of Georgia usda employee?

Thanks for the heads up

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED] Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:15 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Re: Vilsack statement on resignation of Georgia usda employee?

Ten-four. Fyi mary clare called with follow up saying "cnn is blowing this story up". Said we are sticking w statement and said further inquiries should go to chan. Chan, the only other inquiry I've responded to is sara wyant at agripulse.

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:57:43 2010
Subject: Re: Vilsack statement on resignation of Georgia usda employee?

[REDACTED]

----- Original Message -----

From: DeJong, Justin
To: 'ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com' <ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com>; Mather, Chris
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:31:55 2010
Subject: Re: Vilsack statement on resignation of Georgia usda employee?

Hi ed,

Please see below for statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack regarding Shirley Sherrod's resignation yesterday:

Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.

----- Original Message -----

From: ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com <ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com>

To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:25:54 2010
Subject: Vilsack statement on resignation of Georgia usda employee?

Hey guys:

Do you have the statement from Second Vilsack regarding the resignation of the USDA employee after her statements about a white farmer surfaced on video? Thanks in advance.

Ed O'Keefe
The Federal Eye, The Washington Post
ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:23 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; USDA Clips; JIC1, OC -USDA; JIC2, OC -USDA; JIC3, OC -USDA; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: FW: Top Outlets "vilsack" : Black USDA official resigns amid racism claims

From: Factiva[SMTP:EMAILEDNEWS@EMAIL.GLOBAL.FACTIVA.COM]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:22:50 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Top Outlets "vilsack" : Black USDA official resigns amid racism claims Auto forwarded by a Rule

Your topic is Top Outlets "vilsack"

Black USDA official resigns amid racism claims 20 July 2010, 12:51 GMT, MSNBC [606 Words]

A black USDA official in Georgia has resigned after publicly admitting she didn't help a white man trying to save his farm to the "full force" of her power and instead referred him to "own of his own."

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said he had accepted Shirley Sherrod's resignation, saying there was "zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA."

The NAACP, which recently condemned racism in tea party groups, also issued a statement Monday night saying: "Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race."

The Huffington Post said a YouTube video clip of her speech was first posted on the biggovernment.com blog and a report was then aired by Fox News.

Sherrod, who resigned late Monday from her job as USDA's Georgia director of rural development, is shown talking about "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." Her remarks came at a local NAACP Freedom Fund banquet, which the video says took place in March this year.

She says in the clip that the farmer had tried to show he was "superior" to her.

"He had to come to me for help. What he didn't know, while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me, was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," she says in the film.

"I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land - so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough," she adds.

'His own kind'

Some of her remarks appear to be greeted with laughter by some of the crowd.

Sherrod says she took the farmer to see "one of his own," referring to a white lawyer. "I figured that if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him," she says.

In his statement, NAACP President Benjamin Todd Jealous said the organization was "appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers."

"Her actions were shameful. While she went on to explain in the story that she ultimately realized her mistake, as well as the common predicament of working people of all races, she gave no indication she had attempted to right the wrong she had done to this man," he said.

"The reaction from many in the audience is disturbing. We will be looking into the behavior of NAACP representatives at this local event and take any appropriate action," Jealous said.

He thanked the people who had brought Sherrod's remarks to the attention of the NAACP's national office.

"Sherrod's behavior is even more intolerable in light of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's well documented history of denying opportunities to African American, Latino, Asian American, and Native American farmers, as well as female farmers of all races," Jealous said. "Currently, justice for many of these farmers is being held up by Congress."

Vilsack's statement said he "strongly" condemned discrimination against anyone.

"We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously," he said.

<http://global.factiva.com/redirect/default.aspx?p=sta&ep=AE&an=WC42100020100720e67k00007&fid=300612057&cat=w&aid=9USD000900&ns=18&fn=Top%20Outlets%20%22vilsack%22&ft=g&OD=V2AUBjNaqd6b5Ap%2b90PrU4iu6h%2fp8T%2byJNGtxGUDhq6zQx18ytkPQ7A%3d%3d%7c2>

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DeJong, Justin

From: googlealerts-noreply@google.com
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:22 AM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Google Alert - "tom vilsack"

News

1 new result for "tom vilsack"

USDA worker quits over racism charge from video

The Associated Press

US Agriculture Secretary **Tom Vilsack** said in a statement Tuesday he had accepted the resignation of Shirley Sherrod. Vilsack says the USDA has no tolerance ...

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DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:20 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; USDA Clips; JIC1, OC -USDA; JIC2, OC -USDA; JIC3, OC -USDA; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: FW: Top Outlets "vilsack" : USDA worker quits over racism charge from video

From: Factiva[SMTP:EMAILEDNEWS@EMAIL.GLOBAL.FACTIVA.COM]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:19:23 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Top Outlets "vilsack" : USDA worker quits over racism charge from video Auto forwarded by a Rule

Your topic is Top Outlets "vilsack"

USDA worker quits over racism charge from video 20 July 2010, 12:10 GMT, Charlotte Observer [196 Words]

ATLANTA A black federal worker has resigned from a Georgia agricultural job after a video clip showed her saying she had not helped a farmer as much as she could have because he was white.

U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a statement Tuesday he had accepted the resignation of Shirley Sherrod. Vilsack says the USDA has no tolerance for discrimination.

Sherrod told the Atlanta-Journal Constitution she was forced out of her job as the USDA's rural development director for Georgia. She said the two-minute, 38-second video posted online Monday misconstrued her message.

Sherrod's taped remarks were from a local meeting of the civil rights group NAACP.

National NAACP President Benjamin Todd Jealous welcomed the resignation because the group opposes racism of all kinds.

This affects comments on all stories.

The Charlotte Observer welcomes your comments on news of the day. The more voices engaged in conversation, the better for us all, but do keep it civil. Please refrain from profanity, obscenity, spam, name-calling or attacking others for their views. Read moreRead less

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DeJong, Justin

From: AgriPulse@aol.com
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:05 AM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: Sherrod

Thanks!

In a message dated 7/20/2010 8:04:18 A.M. Central Daylight Time, Justin.DeJong@oc.usda.gov writes:

Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.

DeJong, Justin

From: Zaina, Lisa
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:58 AM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: Hate to bug u

Say hi to my fellow Ohioans.
Lisa Zaina

----- Original Message -----
From: DeJong, Justin
To: Zaina, Lisa
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:44:45 2010
Subject: Re: Hate to bug u

On road with s. We'll see what sort of fireworks we have today.

----- Original Message -----
From: Zaina, Lisa
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:33:56 2010
Subject: Re: Hate to bug u

Thanks J...how are things?
Lisa Zaina

----- Original Message -----
From: DeJong, Justin
To: Zaina, Lisa
Cc: Chan, Stephanie; Weaver, Caleb
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:31:45 2010
Subject: Re: Hate to bug u

Yes, please forward to main office of communications. 202-720-4623. Steph chan is managing intake. Btw our statement is below. I understand caleb is staffing dallas on hill today.

Please see below for statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack regarding Shirley Sherrod's resignation yesterday:

Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.

----- Original Message -----
From: Zaina, Lisa
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:28:58 2010
Subject: Hate to bug u

In case we get calls about Georgia, to whom should they be referred. I think we need one point of contact and thought your shop would want to manage. Thx.

Lisa Zaina

DeJong, Justin

From: AgriPulse@aol.com
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:53 AM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Sherrod

Hi Justin,

Did you guys release a statement on Shirley Sherrod's resignation and if so, can you please share?

Thanks,

Sara

Sara R. Wyant
Editor
Agri-Pulse

[REDACTED] (cell)
573-873-0802 (Camdenton, MO. office)
202-547-5588 (Washington, DC office)
www.Agri-Pulse.com

DeJong, Justin

From: Weaver, Caleb
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:35 AM
To: DeJong, Justin; Zaina, Lisa
Cc: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Re: Hate to bug u

Nevermind - just saw that I will be going to the Hill with Dallas.

Sorry about that.

----- Original Message -----

From: Weaver, Caleb
To: DeJong, Justin; Zaina, Lisa
Cc: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:34:36 2010
Subject: Re: Hate to bug u

Actually - Chris is staffing Dallas today on the Hill.

----- Original Message -----

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Zaina, Lisa
Cc: Chan, Stephanie; Weaver, Caleb
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:31:45 2010
Subject: Re: Hate to bug u

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----- Original Message -----

From: Zaina, Lisa
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:28:58 2010
Subject: Hate to bug u

In case we get calls about Georgia, to whom should they be referred. I think we need one point of contact and thought your shop would want to manage. Thx.

Lisa Zaina

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:13 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: NBC (Jay Blackman): Interview on Shirley Sherrod Resignation

[REDACTED]

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

From: Mather, Chris
To: Chan, Stephanie; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:12:02 2010
Subject: Re: NBC (Jay Blackman): Interview on Shirley Sherrod Resignation

[REDACTED]

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 06:39:55 2010
Subject: NBC (Jay Blackman): Interview on Shirley Sherrod Resignation

[REDACTED]

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

From: Blackman, Jay (NBC Universal)
To: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tue Jul 20 06:34:33 2010
Subject: RE: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod
thank you Stephanie..if this becomes more of a story as the day goes on..is there any chance of an on camera interview?

From: Chan, Stephanie [mailto:Stephanie.Chan@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:33 AM
To: Blackman, Jay (NBC Universal)
Subject: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod

Thank you for your call this morning. Please see below for statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack regarding Shirley Sherrod's resignation:

Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

DeJong, Justin

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:07 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb
Subject: Re: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

Can you send the full transcript so I can send around?
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:46:21 2010
Subject: Fw: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

Rest of the transcript.

I'm trying to see if I can find the clip online. Esp interested in hearing the full response from this response-

Shirley Sherrod: IF I TRIED TO FIGHT IT AND DIDN'T HAVE ANY SUPPORT FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, WHAT -- WHAT.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

From: Kaplan, Karrah
To: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:37:13 2010
Subject: FW: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

updated

From: McCandless, Brittany
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:37 AM
To: Kraft, James; Dalberto, Emily; Manning, Reglna; Kaplan, Karrah
Subject: FULL TRANSCRIPT: SHIRLEY SHERROD

MISSING PART BELOW IN RED:

American Morning transcript

Kiran Chetry and **John Roberts** interview **Shirley Sherrod**, a black Agriculture Department employee, who resigned Monday after conservative media outlets aired a video of her telling an audience she had not given a white farmer "the full force of what I could do" to help him save the family farm. She says the charges of racism are wrong

MISSING PART BELOW IN RED:

Kiran Chetry: THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ACCEPTS THE RESIGNATION OF AN EMPLOYEE AFTER A VIDEO SURFACED SHOWING HER TELLING AN AUDIENCE THAT SHE WITHHELD ASSISTANCE TO A WHITE FARMER BECAUSE OF HIS RACE. LET'S LISTEN TO WHAT SHE TOLD THE NAACP DOES THAT VIDEO

TELL THE WHOLE STORY? JOINING US NOW ON THE PHONE FROM ALBANY, GEORGIA, SHERRI SHERROD HERSELF. THANKS FOR BEING WITH US THIS MORNING, SHIRLEY.

Shirley Sherrod: THANK YOU.

Kiran Chetry: YOU SAY THIS WAS PART OF THE STORY AND THAT IT WAS PART THAT WAS SPLICED ENOUGH TO SHOW YOU IN A BAD LIGHT, THAT THIS ISN'T THE WHOLE STORY. WILL YOU FINISH FOR US HOW THIS ENDED?

Shirley Sherrod: OKAY. I WAS SPEAKING TO THAT GROUP LIKE I'VE DONE MANY GROUPS AND I TELL THEM ABOUT A TIME WHEN I THOUGHT THE ISSUE WAS RACE AND RACE ONLY. AND I TELL THEM THE STORY OF HOW I WORKED WITH A WHITE FARMER BACK IN 1986. I WAS NOT WORKING FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE. I WAS WORKING WITH AND NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION ASSISTING FARMERS THROUGHOUT SOUTH GEORGIA AND THE SOUTHEAST. AND THIS FARMER CAME TO ME FOR HELP. I WAS TELLING THE STORY ABOUT HOW WORKING WITH HIM HELPED ME TO SEE THAT THE ISSUE IS NOT ABOUT RACE, IT'S ABOUT THOSE WHO HAVE VERSUS THOSE WHO DO NOT HAVE. AND I TELL HOW I TOOK HIM TO A LAWYER WHO I THOUGHT WOULD HELP HIM. IN THE END, THAT LAWYER DIDN'T. IN THE END, I HAD TO FRANTICLY LOOK FOR A LAWYER BECAUSE WHEN USDA LIFTED -- I'M SORRY. WHEN THE COURTS LIFTED THE INJUNCTION AGAINST USDA IN MAY OF 1987, THIS WHITE FARMER WAS 1 OF 13 THAT WAS FORECLOSED ON BY THE STATE OF GEORGIA. I HAD TO FRANTICLY FIND A LAWYER WHO WOULD FILE A CHAPTER 11 TO STOP THE FORECLOSURE. HE COULDN'T -- AT THAT TIME WE HAD UP TO 12 --

Kiran Chetry: BUT LET ME SAID -- YOU SAID YOU DIDN'T KNOW ENOUGH, DIDN'T GIVE HIM THE FULL FORCE OF WHAT YOU COULD DO. YOU SAID YOU REFERRED HIM TO THE LAWYER WHO WAS WHITE AND PERHAPS HE COULD HELP HIM. WHAT DID YOU MEAN BY THAT?

Shirley Sherrod: WHAT I MEANT WAS, I DIDN'T KNOW ANYONE ELSE, I DIDN'T KNOW ANOTHER LAWYER AT THAT TIME WHO WAS LOCAL, WHO KNEW SOMETHING ABOUT CHAPTER 12. BUT I THOUGHT IF I TOOK HIM TO A WHITE LAWYER, HE WOULD DEFINITELY DO ALL THAT HE COULD TO HELP SAVE HIS FARM.

John Roberts: MS. SHERROD LET'S MAKE IT CLEAR THOUGH, THIS HAPPENED 24 YEARS AGO. YOU EVENTUALLY WORKED WITH THIS WHITE FARMER, YOU EVENTUALLY BECAME FRIENDS, YOU SAY, WITH THE FARMER AND HIS WIFE. SO THE QUESTION I HAVE IS, WHEN THE US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE CAME TO YOU AND SAID YOU HAVE TO STEP DOWN, WHY DIDN'T YOU JUST SAY WAIT A MINUTE, YOU DON'T KNOW THE FULL STORY, HERE'S THE FULL STORY, WHY SHOULD I STEP DOWN?

Shirley Sherrod: I DID SAY THAT. BUT THEY FOR SOME REASON, THE STUFF THAT FOX AND THE TEA PARTY DOES IS SCARING THE ADMINISTRATION. I TOLD... I TOLD THEM GET THE WHOLE TAPE AND LOOK AT HOW I TELL PEOPLE WE HAVE TO GET BEYOND RACE AND START WORKING TOGETHER.

John Roberts: I THINK THAT MANY PEOPLE AT HOME MIGHT BE THINKING, IF YOU'RE RECOUNTING AN OLD STORY, WHY DID YOU SUCCUMB TO PRESSURE TO STEP DOWN, WHY DIDN'T YOU TRY TO FIGHT THIS?

Shirley Sherrod: IF I TRIED TO FIGHT IT AND DIDN'T HAVE ANY SUPPORT FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, WHAT -- WHAT.

Kiran Chetry: BEN JEALOUS REFERRED TO YOU AND THIS SURFACING OF THE TAPE, "HER ACTIONS WERE SHAMEFUL. WHILE SHE WENT ON TO EXPLAIN IN THE STORY, SHE ULTIMATELY REALIZED HER MISTAKE AS WELL AS THE COMMON PREDICAMENT OF WORKING PEOPLE OF ALL RACES. SHE GAVE NO INDICATION SHE HAD ATTEMPTED TO RIGHT THE WRONG SHE HAD DONE TO THIS MAN." AND THE REACTION FROM MANY IN THE AUDIENCE IS DISTURBING. THIS IS FROM BEN JEALOUS. DID YOU TRY TO CLARIFY WITH THE NAACP YOUR STORY?

Shirley Sherrod: NO, I HAVEN'T HAD A CHANCE TO TALK TO ANYONE. ALL OF THIS WAS HAPPENING SO FAST. AND IT'S UNFORTUNATE THAT THE NAACP WOULD MAKE A STATEMENT WITHOUT EVEN CHECKING TO SEE WHAT HAPPENED. THIS WAS 24 YEARS AGO AND I'M TELLING A STORY TO TRY TO UNITE PEOPLE WITH THAT NOW.

John Roberts: CERTAINLY YOU'RE COMING OUT AND TELLING YOUR STORY NOW TAKES IT TO A DIFFERENT LEVEL AND OBVIOUSLY WE'RE GOING TO KEEP FOLLOWING THIS. IT IS GOOD TO GET YOUR SIDE OF IT. SHERRI SHERROD, FORMER DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE OFFICIAL. PERHAPS WE CAN GET

YOU BACK ON AGAIN, GET YOUR FACE ON TV AS WELL AND TALK TO YOU MORE ABOUT THIS AS THIS STOR'
CONTINUES TO DEVELOP.

Shirley Sherrod: I DON'T MIND.

DeJong, Justin

From: Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:06 AM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Fw: Ap on sherrod

Do you want this in clips?

----- Original Message -----
From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:18:21 2010
Subject: Fw: Ap on sherrod

Fyi

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED] Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

----- Original Message -----
From: DeJong, Justin
To: Mather, Chris; Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:12:05 2010
Subject: Ap on sherrod

Mary clare just asked for the statement, sending her way shortly.

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:35 AM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; DeJong, Justin
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: Msnbc requested Shirley Sherrod statement

Fyi- MSNBC just called requesting the statement. I just sent it over and confirmed receipt

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED] Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

DeJong, Justin

From: Cetta, Cate (NBC Universal) [Cate.Cetta@nbcuni.com]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:34 AM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: Statement from Secretary Vilsack

thank you!

From: DeJong, Justin [mailto:Justin.DeJong@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:32 AM
To: Cetta, Cate (NBC Universal)
Subject: Fw: Statement from Secretary Vilsack

----- Original Message -----

From: DeJong, Justin
To: 'cate.cetta@nbc.uni.com' <cate.cetta@nbc.uni.com>
Sent: Tue Jul 20 06:29:26 2010
Subject: Statement from Secretary Vilsack

Please see below for statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack regarding Shirley Sherrod's resignation:

Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.

DeJong, Justin

From: Cate.Cetta@nbcuni.com
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:31 AM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: not sure if email went through -- got yours from your vmail

Cate Cetta
MSNBC's *Morning Joe*
Cate.cetta@nbcuni.com
212.664.1390
917.842.4968

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 2:58 PM
To: O'Brien, Doug
Subject: Fw: Associated Content: USDA Official Shirley Sherrod Boasts of Discriminating Against a White Farmer (Video)

Flagging.

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: DeJong, Justin; Maloney, Wayne
Sent: Mon Jul 19 14:42:01 2010
Subject: Associated Content: USDA Official Shirley Sherrod Boasts of Discriminating Against a White Farmer (Video)
Sarah just found this, thought we should flag it-

Associated Content: USDA Official Shirley Sherrod Boasts of Discriminating Against a White Farmer (Video)

Following through on his threat, Andrew Breitbart releases the following video of a USDA official named Shirley Sherrod boasting to an appreciative NAACP audience how she "deliberately withheld information

from a white farmer in Georgia trying to save his land and his business. To appreciate the pure shock value of the video, imagine that Sherrod was white bragging about how she stuck it to same black guy and then hearing the audience cheer. It just goes to show what can happen when the NAACP hurtles phony charges of racism against the Tea Party.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 2:59 PM
To: Misailidis, Sarah; Maloney, Wayne; Chan, Stephanie
Cc: Weaver, Caleb
Subject: Re: Associated Content: USDA Official Shirley Sherrod Boasts of Discriminating Against a White Farmer (Video)

Please do not include. We will flag for necessary folks.

From: Misailidis, Sarah
To: Maloney, Wayne; Chan, Stephanie; DeJong, Justin
Cc: Weaver, Caleb
Sent: Mon Jul 19 14:49:16 2010
Subject: RE: Associated Content: USDA Official Shirley Sherrod Boasts of Discriminating Against a White Farmer (Video)
Do you want this in clips, Justin? I'm assuming in the first version, but not in top clips.

From: Maloney, Wayne
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 2:43 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; DeJong, Justin
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: RE: Associated Content: USDA Official Shirley Sherrod Boasts of Discriminating Against a White Farmer (Video)

Steph,

Thanks, we are aware of it and have viewed the video.

Wayne

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 2:42 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Maloney, Wayne
Subject: Associated Content: USDA Official Shirley Sherrod Boasts of Discriminating Against a White Farmer (Video)

Sarah just found this, thought we should flag it-

Associated Content: USDA Official Shirley Sherrod Boasts of Discriminating Against a White Farmer (Video)

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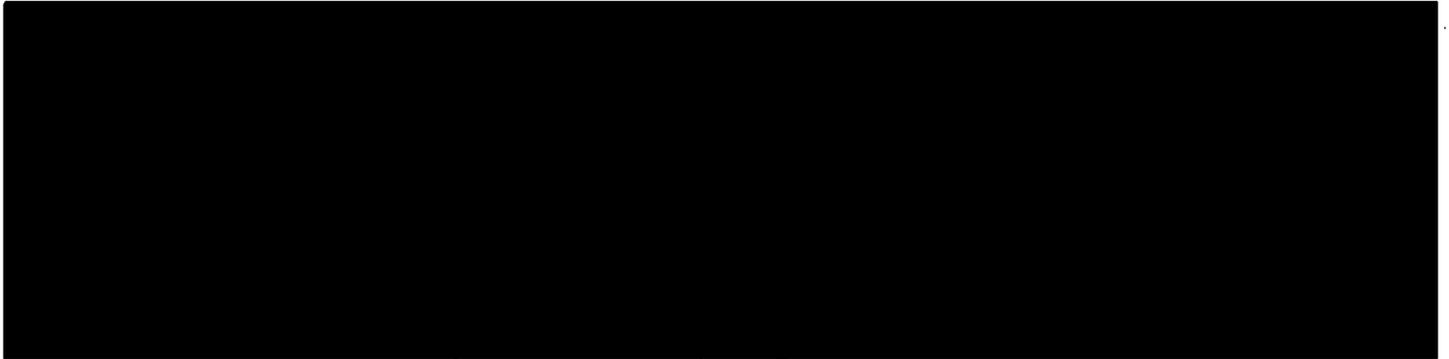
from a white farmer in Georgia trying to save his land and his business. To appreciate the pure shock value of the video, imagine that Sherrod was white bragging about how she stuck it to same black guy and then hearing the audience cheer. It just goes to show what can happen when the NAACP hurtles phony charges of racism against the Tea Party.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:40 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: Harden, Krysta; O'Brien, Doug
Subject: Statement on civil rights



DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:11 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: Fw: Statement on civil rights

----- Original Message -----

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: Harden, Krysta; O'Brien, Doug
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:40:00 2010
Subject: Statement on civil rights

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:12 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: Fw: Google Alert - usda

Georgia.

From: googlealerts-noreply@google.com
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:03:39 2010
Subject: Google Alert - usda

News

1 new result for usda

USDA Official Shirley Sherrod Boasts of Discriminating Against a White Farmer ...

Associated Content

from a white farmer in Georgia trying to save his land and his business. To appreciate the pure shock value of the video, imagine that Sherrod was white ...

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Tip: Use a plus sign (+) to match a term in your query exactly as is.. [Learn more.](#)

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DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:13 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Maloney, Wayne
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: Re: Associated Content: USDA Official Shirley Sherrod Boasts of Discriminating Against a White Farmer (Video)

Good flag. We are on it.

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: DeJong, Justin; Maloney, Wayne
Sent: Mon Jul 19 14:42:01 2010
Subject: Associated Content: USDA Official Shirley Sherrod Boasts of Discriminating Against a White Farmer (Video)
Sarah just found this, thought we should flag it-

Associated Content: USDA Official Shirley Sherrod Boasts of Discriminating Against a White Farmer (Video)

Following through on his threat, Andrew Breitbart releases the following video of a USDA official named Shirley Sherrod boasting to an appreciative NAACP audience how she "deliberately withheld information

from a white farmer in Georgia trying to save his land and his business. To appreciate the pure shock value of the video, imagine that Sherrod was white bragging about how she stuck it to same black guy and then hearing the audience cheer. It just goes to show what can happen when the NAACP hurls phony charges of racism against the Tea Party.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:59 PM
To: Mather, Chris



DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:26 PM
To: Mather, Chris

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:29 AM
To: 'cate.celta@nbc.uni.com'
Subject: Statement from Secretary Vilsack

Please see below for statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack regarding Shirley Sherrod's resignation:

Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:32 AM
To: 'cate.cetta@nbcuni.com'
Subject: Fw: Statement from Secretary Vilsack

----- Original Message -----

From: DeJong, Justin
To: 'cate.cetta@nbc.uni.com' <cate.cetta@nbc.uni.com>
Sent: Tue Jul 20 06:29:26 2010
Subject: Statement from Secretary Vilsack

Please see below for statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack regarding Shirley Sherrod's resignation:

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DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:04 AM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Mather, Chris
Subject: Fw: Google Alert - usda

Flagging ajc article re sherrod.

From: googlealerts-noreply@google.com
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 06:58:11 2010
Subject: Google Alert - usda

News

3 new results for usda

Resigned USDA official says racial story misconstrued

Atlanta Journal Constitution

By Marcus K. Garner The USDA's rural development director for Georgia says she was forced out of her federally appointed job after a "snippet" of a speech ...

[See all stories on this topic »](#)

Nationwide Recall Issued On Frozen Chicken Nuggets

WPMY News 2

National-- Monday, the USDA announced that Perdue Farms, Inc. out of Perry, GA announced it is recalling about 91872 pounds of frozen chicken nugget ...

[See all stories on this topic »](#)

Look! Black People Are Totally Racist Too!

Feministe (blog)

Apparently someone was able to dig up a video of a black USDA worker telling an audience of other black people about having to help a white farmer keep his ...

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[Manage your alerts.](#)

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:12 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Ap on sherrod

Mary clare just asked for the statement, sending her way shortly.

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:25 AM
To: 'mjalonick@ap.org'
Subject: Statement

Please see below for statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack regarding Shirley Sherrod's resignation:

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DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:34 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fw: URGENT REQUEST -- CNN AMERICAN MORNING STATEMENT

Importance: High

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:32:41 2010
Subject: Fw: URGENT REQUEST -- CNN AMERICAN MORNING STATEMENT

Transcript from interview-

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

From: Kaplan, Karrah
To: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:30:03 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT REQUEST -- CNN AMERICAN MORNING STATEMENT
HERE IS THE TRANSCRIPT:

American Morning transcript

Kiran Chetry and John Roberts interview **Shirley Sherrod**, a black Agriculture Department employee, who resigned Monday after conservative media outlets aired a video of her telling an audience she had not given a white farmer "the full force of what I could do" to help him save the family farm. She says the charges of racism are wrong

Kiran Chetry: THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ACCEPTS THE RESIGNATION OF AN EMPLOYEE AFTER A VIDEO SURFACED SHOWING HER TELLING AN AUDIENCE THAT SHE WITHHELD ASSISTANCE TO A WHITE FARMER BECAUSE OF HIS RACE. LET'S LISTEN TO WHAT SHE TOLD THE NAACP. DOES THAT VIDEO TELL THE WHOLE STORY? JOINING US NOW ON THE PHONE FROM ALBANY, GEORGIA, SHERRI SHERROD HERSELF. THANKS FOR BEING WITH US THIS MORNING, SHIRLEY.

Shirley Sherrod: THANK YOU.

Kiran Chetry: YOU SAY THIS WAS PART OF THE STORY AND THAT IT WAS PART THAT WAS SPLICED ENOUGH TO SHOW YOU IN A BAD LIGHT, THAT THIS ISN'T THE WHOLE STORY. WILL YOU FINISH FOR US HOW THIS ENED?

Shirley Sherrod: OKAY. I WAS SPEAKING TO THAT GROUP LIKE I'VE DONE MANY GROUPS AND I TELL THEM ABOUT A TIME WHEN I THOUGHT THE ISSUE WAS RACE AND RACE ONLY. AND I TELL THEM THE STORY OF HOW I WORKED WITH A WHITE FARMER BACK IN 1986. I WAS NOT WORKING FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE. I WAS WORKING WITH AND NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION ASSISTING FARMERS THROUGHOUT SOUTH GEORGIA AND THE SOUTHEAST. AND THIS FARMER CAME TO ME FOR HELP. I WAS TELLING THE STORY ABOUT HOW WORKING WITH HIM HELPED ME TO SEE THAT THE ISSUE IS NOT ABOUT RACE, IT'S

ABOUT THOSE WHO HAVE VERSUS THOSE WHO DO NOT HAVE. AND I TELL HOW I TOOK HIM TO A LAWYER WHO I THOUGHT WOULD HELP HIM. IN THE END, THAT LAWYER DIDN'T. IN THE END, I HAD TO FRANTICLY LOOK FOR A LAWYER BECAUSE WHEN USDA LIFTED -- I'M SORRY. WHEN THE COURTS LIFTED THE INJUNCTION AGAINST USDA IN MAY OF 1987, THIS WHITE FARMER WAS 1 OF 13 THAT WAS FORECLOSED ON BY THE STATE OF GEORGIA. I HAD TO FRANTICLY FIND A LAWYER WHO WOULD FILE A CHAPTER 11 TO STOP THE FORECLOSURE. HE COULDN'T -- AT THAT TIME WE HAD UP TO 12 --

Kiran Chetry: BUT LET ME SAID -- YOU SAID YOU DIDN'T KNOW ENOUGH, DIDN'T GIVE HIM THE FULL FORCE OF WHAT YOU COULD DO. YOU SAID YOU REFERRED HIM TO THE LAWYER WHO WAS WHITE AND PERHAPS HE COULD HELP HIM. WHAT DID YOU MEAN BY THAT?

Shirley Sherrod: WHAT I MEANT WAS, I DIDN'T KNOW ANYONE ELSE, I DIDN'T KNOW ANOTHER LAWYER AT THAT TIME WHO WAS LOCAL, WHO KNEW SOMETHING ABOUT CHAPTER 12. BUT I THOUGHT IF I TOOK HIM TO A WHITE LAWYER, HE WOULD DEFINITELY DO ALL THAT HE COULD TO HELP SAVE HIS FARM.

John Roberts: MS. SHERROD LET'S MAKE IT CLEAR THOUGH. THIS HAPPENED 24 YEARS AGO. YOU EVENTUALLY WORKED WITH THIS WHITE FARMER, YOU EVENTUALL BECAME FRIENDS.

[The rest of John's question is cut of from the closed captioning and the aircheck, as is her response]

John Roberts:[cut off] THINKING IF YOU'RE RECOUNTING AN OLD STORY, WHY DID YOU SUCCUMB TO PRESSURE TO STEP DOWN, WHY DIDN'T YOU TRY TO FIGHT THIS?

Shirley Sherrod: IF I TRIED TO FIGHT IT AND DIDN'T HAVE ANY SUPPORT FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, WHAT -- WHAT.

Kiran Chetry: BEN JEALOUS REFERRED TO YOU AND THIS SURFACING OF THE TAPE, "HER ACTIONS WERE SHAMEFUL. WHILE SHE WENT ON TO EXPLAIN IN THE STORY, SHE ULTIMATELY REALIZED HER MISTAKE AS WELL AS THE COMMON PREDICAMENT OF WORKING PEOPLE OF ALL RACES. SHE GAVE NO INDICATION SHE HAD ATTEMPTED TO RIGHT THE WRONG SHE HAD DONE TO THIS MAN." AND THE REACTION FROM MANY IN THE AUDIENCE IS DISTURBING. THIS IS FROM BEN JEALOUS. DID YOU TRY TO CLARIFY WITH THE NAACP YOUR STORY?

Shirley Sherrod: NO, I HAVEN'T HAD HAD A CHANCE TO TALK TO ANYONE. ALL OF THIS WAS HAPPENING SO FAST. AND IT'S UNFORTUNATE THAT THE NAACP WOULD MAKE A STATEMENT WITHOUT EVEN CHECKING TO SEE WHAT HAPPENED. THIS WAS 24 YEARS AGO AND I'M TELLING A STORY TO TRY TO UNITE PEOPLE WITH THAT NOW.

John Roberts: CERTAINLY YOU'RE COMING OUT AND TELLING YOUR STORY NOW TAKES IT TO A DIFFERENT LEVEL AND OBVIOUSLY WE'RE GOING TO KEEP FOLLOWING THIS. IT IS GOOD TO GET YOUR SIDE OF IT. SHERRI SH SHERLY SHERROD, FORMER DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE OFFICIAL. PERHAPS WE CAN GET YOU BACK ON AGAIN, GET YOUR FACE ON TV AS WELL AND TALK TO YOU MORE ABOUT THIS AS THIS STORY CONTINUES TO DEVELOP.

Shirley Sherrod: I DON'T MIND.

From: Chan, Stephanie [mailto:Stephanie.Chan@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:21 AM
To: Kaplan, Karrah
Subject: Re: URGENT REQUEST -- CNN AMERICAN MORNING STATEMENT

Karrah, thanks for sending this over. I am checking on this but please refer to our statement in the meantime.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

From: Kaplan, Karrah
To: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:19:38 2010
Subject: URGENT REQUEST -- CNN AMERICAN MORNING STATEMENT
Thanks for taking my call just now Stephanie!

As mentioned we had Shirley Sherrod on this morning and she said that the video was of her recounting an old story of her and a farmer she befriended in 1986.

Our anchor, John Roberts, wants to know why she was asked to resign for recounting an old story.

I will send the transcript of the interview shortly.

In the meantime, what is your official USDA response?

Thank you very much,
Karrah Kaplan
Producer, CNN American Morning
[REDACTED] cell
212-275-7850 main

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:34 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fw: Google Alert - usda

From: googlealerts-noreply@google.com
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 06:58:11 2010
Subject: Google Alert - usda

News

3 new results for usda

Resigned USDA official says racial story misconstrued

Atlanta Journal-Constitution

By Marcus K. Garner The USDA's rural development director for Georgia says she was forced out of her federally appointed job after a "snippet" of a speech ...

[See all stories on this topic »](#)

Nationwide Recall Issued On Frozen Chicken Nuggets

WJZY News 17

National-- Monday, the USDA announced that Perdue Farms, Inc. out of Perry, GA announced it is recalling about 91872 pounds of frozen chicken nugget ...

[See all stories on this topic »](#)

Look! Black People Are Totally Racist Too!

Forum 50 (blog)

Apparently someone was able to dig up a video of a black USDA worker telling an audience of other black people about having to help a white farmer keep his ...

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DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:15 AM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: Statement from Monday

Please see below for statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack regarding Shirley Sherrod's resignation:

Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:27 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Chan, Stephanie

Do pearlie or joe leonard have public events? Need to get them up to speed.

DeJong, Justin

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 1:58 PM
To: Maloney, Wayne
Cc: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Zaina, Lisa
Subject: Re: Georgia

In meeting. If its bad needs to be pulled down right away.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Maloney, Wayne
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Zaina, Lisa
Sent: Mon Jul 19 13:55:40 2010
Subject: FW: Georgia

Chris,

I was just informed of a video of the Georgia State Director that was posted on the Internet earlier this afternoon. It speaks for itself and you need to watch it right away.

I have discussed this with Tim McNeilly. He has instructed the PIC and the State Director not to respond to media without checking with us first. We have not been contacted by any media outlet but expect that we will.

Tim has been asked by me to draft a statement for our review to be issued if necessary.

Wayne
###

Georgia PIC just called to alert us to a campaign underway involving Shirley Sherrod vs. the Tea Party people. I understand that this may have been brought to your attention already, but in case it hasn't..... The PIC is looking for guidance if (and I think there will be) media contact regarding the below video.

<http://hotair.com/archives/2010/07/19/breitbart-hits-naacp-with-promised-video-of-racism/>

Looking for guidance on how you would like to prepare and handle any inquiries that result.

Thanks.

Timothy J. McNeilly | Director, Legislative and Public Affairs Rural Development U.S.
Department of Agriculture 1400 Independence Ave., S.W. | Washington, D.C. 20250
Phone: 202.720.1019 | Fax: 202.690.4083

www.rurdev.usda.gov

"Committed to the future of rural communities"

"Estamos dedicados al futuro de las comunidades rurales"

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 2:42 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Maloney, Wayne
Subject: Associated Content: USDA Official Shirley Sherrod Boasts of Discriminating Against a White Farmer (Video)

Sarah just found this, thought we should flag it-

Associated Content: USDA Official Shirley Sherrod Boasts of Discriminating Against a White Farmer (Video)

Following through on his threat, Andrew Breitbart releases the following video of a USDA official named Shirley Sherrod boasting to an appreciative NAACP audience how she "deliberately withheld information

from a white farmer in Georgia trying to save his land and his business. To appreciate the pure shock value of the video, imagine that Sherrod was white bragging about how she stuck it to same black guy and then hearing the audience cheer. It just goes to show what can happen when the NAACP hurtles phony charges of racism against the Tea Party.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]

Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 2:43 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Maloney, Wayne
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: RE: Associated Content: USDA Official Shirley Sherrod Boasts of Discriminating Against a White Farmer (Video)

The video has had 319 views on youtube (was posted yesterday)

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 2:42 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Maloney, Wayne
Subject: Associated Content: USDA Official Shirley Sherrod Boasts of Discriminating Against a White Farmer (Video)

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Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

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To: Chan, Stephanie; DeJong, Justin
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: RE: Associated Content: USDA Official Shirley Sherrod Boasts of Discriminating Against a White Farmer (Video)

Steph,

Thanks, we are aware of it and have viewed the video.

Wayne

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Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 2:42 PM
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Subject: Associated Content: USDA Official Shirley Sherrod Boasts of Discriminating Against a White Farmer (Video)

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*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

DeJong, Justin

From: Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 2:49 PM
To: Maloney, Wayne; Chan, Stephanie; DeJong, Justin
Cc: Weaver, Caleb
Subject: RE: Associated Content: USDA Official Shirley Sherrod Boasts of Discriminating Against a White Farmer (Video)

Do you want this in clips, Justin? I'm assuming in the first version, but not in top clips.

From: Maloney, Wayne
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 2:43 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; DeJong, Justin
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: RE: Associated Content: USDA Official Shirley Sherrod Boasts of Discriminating Against a White Farmer (Video)

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Subject: Associated Content: USDA Official Shirley Sherrod Boasts of Discriminating Against a White Farmer (Video)

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U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

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Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:04 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Google Alert - usda

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1 new result for usda

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Associated Content

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DeJong, Justin

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:21 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Fw: Georgia

Importance: High

We told Krysta to tell S about this FYI.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Maloney, Wayne
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Zaina, Lisa
Sent: Mon Jul 19 13:55:40 2010
Subject: FW: Georgia

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Looking for guidance on how you would like to prepare and handle any inquiries that result.

Thanks.

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Department of Agriculture 1400 Independence Ave., S.W. | Washington, D.C. 20250
Phone: 202.720.1019 | Fax: 202.690.4083

www.rurdev.usda.gov

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"Estamos dedicados al futuro de las comunidades rurales"

DeJong, Justin

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:33 PM
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff, Jett, Carole; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Fw: Georgia

Importance: High

Sarah just checked nexus. It aired yesterday on FOX - Geraldo. TV Eyes did not pick it up. CBS News in NY just ran a story.

Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Maloney, Wayne
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Zaina, Lisa
Sent: Mon Jul 19 13:55:40 2010
Subject: FW: Georgia

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DeJong, Justin

From: Maloney, Wayne
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:31 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: Zaina, Lisa; Cook, Cheryl; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Subject: WCBS story on Sherrod
Attachments: image001.jpg

SHOCK: Video Suggests Racism At NAACP Event

NEW YORK (CBS) —



[Click to enlarge](#)

1 of 1

Shirley Sherrod, USDA Rural Development Georgia State Director

Last Tuesday, the NAACP passed a resolution condemning racism in the Tea Party movement. The organization's delegates called on Tea Party leaders to "repudiate those in their ranks who use racist language in their signs and speeches."

Tea Party members and supporters saw the resolution as a condemnation of the group itself, which calls for fiscal responsibility, restrictions on governmental power, and backs political candidates who claim the same.

The NAACP's action caught the attention of Andrew Breitbart of BigGovernment.com, who said the controversy was "absolutely manufactured for political gain," in a summer "in which the economy is the number one issue affecting blacks and whites in this country. This country can ill afford the schism of race to be exploited the way [he is] based upon the false premise of the Tea Party being racist."

He also claimed to possess recorded evidence of racism from the NAACP.

On Monday, Breitbart posted a video of a speech by Shirley Sherrod, USDA Rural Development Georgia State Director, delivered at the NAACP's 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet.

The video shows Sherrod speaking of racial considerations being a factor for how much help she would give.

"The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking but he was trying to show me he was superior to me. I know what he was doing, but he had come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was, I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," Sherrod said.

"I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough," Sherrod said. "So that when he, I assumed the Department of Agriculture had sent him to me, either that or the Georgia Department of Agriculture, and he needed to go back and report that I did try to help him."

In the video, Sherrod also spoke of referring the white farmer to a white lawyer, thinking the latter would be more sympathetic because of race. "So I took him to a white lawyer that had attended some of training that we had provided because Chapter 12 bankruptcy had just been enacted for the family farm. So I figured if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him."

DeJong, Justin

From: Weaver, Caleb
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:49 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Fw: WCBS story on Sherod
Attachments: image001.jpg

Just you - do you need me to engage on this one?

Still in hearing prep, but can leave.

From: Maloney, Wayne
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: Zaina, Lisa; Cook, Cheryl; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:31:29 2010
Subject: WCBS story on Sherod

SHOCK: Video Suggests Racism At NAACP Event

NEW YORK (CBS) —



[to enlarge](#)

1 of 1

Shirley Sherrod, USDA Rural Development Georgia State Director

Last Tuesday, the NAACP passed a resolution condemning racism in the Tea Party movement. The organization's delegates called on Tea Party leaders to "repudiate those in their ranks who use racist language in their signs and speeches."

Tea Party members and supporters saw the resolution as a condemnation of the group itself, which calls for fiscal responsibility, restrictions on governmental power, and backs political candidates who claim the same.

The NAACP's action caught the attention of Andrew Breitbart of BigGovernment.com, who said the controversy was "absolutely manufactured for political gain," in a summer "in which the economy is the number one issue affecting blacks and whites in this country. This country can ill afford the schism of race to be exploited the way [he is] based upon the false premise of the Tea Party being racist."

He also claimed to possess recorded evidence of racism from the NAACP.

On Monday, Breitbart posted a video of a speech by Shirley Sherrod, USDA Rural Development Georgia State Director, delivered at the NAACP's 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet.

The video shows Sherrod speaking of racial considerations being a factor for how much help she would give.

"The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking but he was trying to show me he was superior to me. I know what he was doing, but he had come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was, I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," Sherrod said.

"I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough," Sherrod said. "So that when he, I assumed the Department of Agriculture had sent him to me, either that or the Georgia Department of Agriculture, and he needed to go back and report that I did try to help him."

In the video, Sherrod also spoke of referring the white farmer to a white lawyer, thinking the latter would be more sympathetic because of race.

"So I took him to a white lawyer that had attended some of training that we had provided because Chapter 12 bankruptcy had just been enacted for the family farm. So I figured if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him."

DeJong, Justin

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:49 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Harden, Krysta
Subject: Fw: Hey

feel free to pass on my thoughts below to S. I feel strongly about it.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Jett, Carole
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:40:02 2010
Subject: Re: Hey

Our hands may be tied but given tea party press coverage and FOX and CBS pick up, and potential for this to get super blown up, admin leave might not be strong enough.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Jett, Carole
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:32:25 2010
Subject: Hey

The S is absolutely sick and mad over the S Sherrod issue. He wants her immediately on Adm leave, Justin is working on a strong statement and I need to call Rep Bishop as soon as ya'll give me the go ahead.

DeJong, Justin

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:53 PM
To: Weaver, Caleb
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: WCBS story on Sherod
Attachments: image001.jpg

Justin drafted statement. Until that is done, we are sitting ducks.

From: Weaver, Caleb
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:49 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Fw: WCBS story on Sherod

Just you - do you need me to engage on this one?

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Cc: Zaina, Lisa; Cook, Cheryl; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
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NEW YORK (CBS) ---



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"I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough," Sherrod said. "So that when he, I assumed the Department of Agriculture had sent him to me, either that or the Georgia Department of Agriculture, and he needed to go back and report that I did try to help him."

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DeJong, Justin

From: O'Brien, Doug
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:55 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris
Cc: Harden, Krysta
Subject: Re: Statement on civil rights

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Thx

Doug
[REDACTED]

----- Original Message -----

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: Harden, Krysta; O'Brien, Doug
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:40:00 2010
Subject: Statement on civil rights

[REDACTED]

DeJong, Justin

From: Maloney, Wayne
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:06 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb
Subject: Fox news on Sherrod

Importance: High

Chris,

RD just got a call from Fox News asking us "to provide context to the Sherrod story". Working with Tim McNeilly, I drafted a statement for your review. It is in your red folder.

Judd Berger


Wayne

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:13 PM
To: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris
Subject: Fox News (Ron Mitchell): Shirley Sherrod Video

Bill O'Reilly show will be mentioning this tonight. They would like USDA statement on the video. Who else should I be looping in on these inquiries?

Fox News- Ron Mitchell
NY 212-301-3697
Ron.mitchell@foxnews.com

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:14 PM
To: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Subject: RE: Fox News (Ron Mitchell): Shirley Sherrod Video

Looping in John and Krysta-

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:13 PM
To: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris
Subject: Fox News (Ron Mitchell): Shirley Sherrod Video

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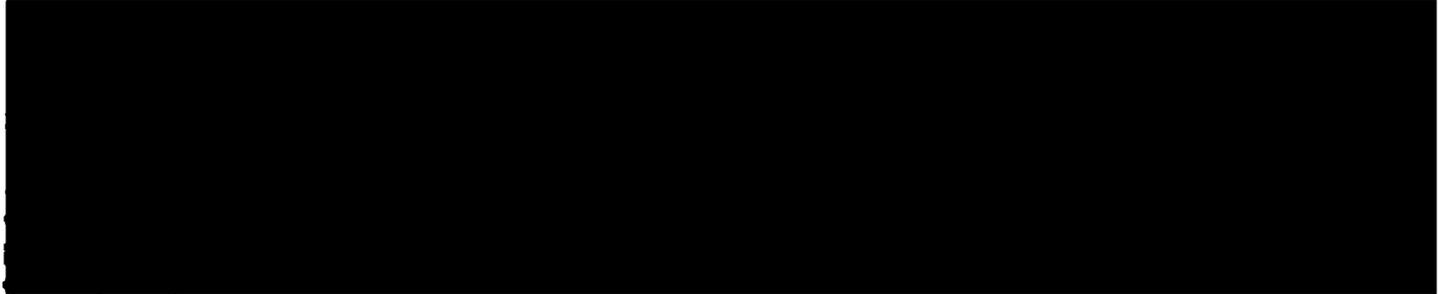
Fox News- Ron Mitchell
NY 212-301-3697
Ron.mitchell@foxnews.com

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

DeJong, Justin

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:16 PM
To: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: URGENT



-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:13 PM
To: Berge, John; Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: URGENT

Please go ahead if you will

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:41:29 2010
Subject: Re: URGENT

Krysta - do you want to call Kingston too?

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John; Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:38:39 2010
Subject: Re: URGENT

Justin is drafting per Secy and sending now

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; Jett, Carole
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:37:24 2010
Subject: Re: URGENT

J Berge or J Dejong? I'm not drafting.

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris

To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Jett, Carole
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:36:40 2010
Subject: Re: URGENT

J, are you drafting because S gave you guidance and if not, we should do here to save time.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----
From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:34:58 2010
Subject: Re: URGENT

We need talkers as soon as the statement is ready so that we can reach out to the rest of the delegation.

----- Original Message -----
From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John; Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:33:51 2010
Subject: Re: URGENT

Just sent email....I have never seen him so angry. He said it is the worse thing that has happened while he has been S

----- Original Message -----
From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:28:52 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT

Please keep us posted on his reaction. We need to know when to reach out to the GA delegation.

-----Original Message-----
From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:16 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John
Subject: Re: URGENT

Doug and I will talk to the Secy right after this stop. Should I share with Justin.

----- Original Message -----
From: Mather, Chris
To: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
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Subject: Re: URGENT

I have.
Chris Mather

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To: Berge, John; Mather, Chris

Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:06:33 2010
Subject: Re: URGENT

We need to make sure someone has seen the video. I am quick to jump to conclusions but want to be certain it is what is said to be before I tell the Secy.

----- Original Message -----
From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:03:05 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT

Just showed it to Carole - she is meeting with Kevin.

-----Original Message-----
From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:02 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John
Subject: Re: URGENT

Good

----- Original Message -----
From: Mather, Chris
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:00:42 2010
Subject: Re: URGENT

I sent to Ross and Jett
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----
From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 14:51:24 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT

Is WH or Kevin aware of this?

-----Original Message-----
From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 2:44 PM
To: Berge, John; Mather, Chris
Subject: Re: URGENT

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From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 14:42:27 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT

-----Original Message-----
From: Harden, Krysta

Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 2:39 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John
Subject: Re: URGENT

Terrible. What can I do to help?

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From: Mather, Chris
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 14:34:25 2010
Subject: URGENT

This is horrible. Video just posted on Hotair.com.

The NAACP is about to learn one of the most basic of all lessons in life – those who live in glass houses should avoid provoking a stone-throwing war. After the civil-rights organization threatened to issue a condemnation of Tea Party activism by equating it with racism (a position from which they ultimately retreated), Andrew Breitbart announced that he would publish at least one video of the NAACP itself cheering racism. Breitbart delivers on that promise today at Big Government, showing USDA official Shirley Sherrod explain to an appreciative NAACP audience in July 2009 how she deliberately withheld information from a white farmer in Georgia trying to save his land and his business:

-----Original Message-----

From: Maloney, Wayne
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 1:56 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Zaina, Lisa
Subject: FW: Georgia
Importance: High

Chris,

I was just informed of a video of the Georgia State Director that was posted on the Internet earlier this afternoon. It speaks for itself and you need to watch it right away.

I have discussed this with Tim McNeilly. He has instructed the PIC and the State Director not to respond to media without checking with us first. We have not been contacted by any media outlet but expect that we will.

Tim has been asked by me to draft a statement for our review to be issued if necessary.

Wayne
###

Georgia PIC just called to alert us to a campaign underway involving Shirley Sherrod vs. the Tea Party people. I understand that this may have been brought to your attention already, but in case it hasn't..... The PIC is looking for guidance if (and I think there will be) media contact regarding the below video.

<http://hotair.com/archives/2010/07/19/breitbart-hits-naacp-with-promised-video-of-racism/>

Looking for guidance on how you would like to prepare and handle any inquiries that result.

Thanks.

Timothy J. McNeilly | Director, Legislative and Public Affairs Rural Development U.S.
Department of Agriculture 1400 Independence Ave., S.W. | Washington, D.C. 20250
Phone: 202.720.1019 | Fax: 202.690.4083

www.rurdev.usda.gov

"Committed to the future of rural communities"

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DeJong, Justin

From: Maloney, Wayne
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:30 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Second request from a second Fox News reporter

Importance: High

Fox News reporter Joy Lynn called the Georgia RD state office and then LAPAS, asking for an on-camera interview and a statement. She said they will be "covering this story today and tomorrow."

Contact info: Joy Lynn [REDACTED]

Wayne

DeJong, Justin

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:40 PM
To: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: URGENT

[REDACTED]
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA
202-409-7911

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Jett, Carole; Berge, John; Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:29:29 2010
Subject: Re: URGENT

That is why we have been general and explained the matter was under review. We are on hold.

----- Original Message -----

From: Jett, Carole
To: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:13:56 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT

Stop calling until you see the rest of the story.

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:13 PM
To: Berge, John; Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: URGENT

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Is WH or Kevin aware of this?

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Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 2:44 PM
To: Berge, John; Mather, Chris

Subject: Re: URGENT

I agree

----- Original Message -----

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To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 14:42:27 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT

She needs to resign immediately.

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Subject: Re: URGENT

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Timothy J. McNeilly | Director, Legislative and Public Affairs Rural Development U.S.
Department of Agriculture 1400 Independence Ave., S.W. | Washington, D.C. 20250
Phone: 202.720.1019 | Fax: 202.690.4083

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DeJong, Justin

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:41 PM
To: Maloney, Wayne
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: Re: Second request from a second Fox News reporter

What show is she from? Sarah need help asap. Is she with O'Reilly.
Chris Mather

From: Maloney, Wayne
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:30:27 2010
Subject: Second request from a second Fox News reporter
Fox News reporter Joy Lynn called the Georgia RD state office and then LAPAS, asking for an on-camera interview and a statement. She said they will be "covering this story today and tomorrow."

Contact info: Joy Lynn [REDACTED]

Wayne

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:43 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Transcript

Chris, please see below for transcript

Video: [Link](#)

On July 25, 2009 Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack appointed Shirley Sherrod as Georgia Director of Rural Development. USDA Rural Development spends over \$1.2 Billion in the state of Georgia each year. On March 27, 2010, while speaking at the NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet, Ms. Sherrod admits that in her federally appointed position, overseeing over a billion dollars, she discriminates against people due to their race.

Shirley Sherrod: The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking but he was trying to show me he was superior to me, I know what he was doing. But he had to come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me, was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him. I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land. And here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So, I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough. So that when he, I assumed the Department of Agriculture had sent him to me, either that or the Georgia Department of Agriculture. And he needed to go back and report that I did try and help him. So I took him to a white lawyer that had attended some of the training that we had provided because of Chapter 12 bankruptcy had just been enacted for the family farm. So I figured if I take him to one of them that his own kind would take care of him. That's when it was revealed to me that its about poor versus those who have. It's not so much about white...it is about white and black. It is about white and black but its not you know...it opened my eyes because I took him to one of his own.

Fox News Clip:

Geraldo Rivera: Do you denounce in the way that you ask the Tea Parties denounce racists within your ranks?

Hilary Shelton: Yes we do, we repudiate racists within our ranks.

Back to Shirley Sherrod Clip:

I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farm land and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

DeJong, Justin

From: Maloney, Wayne
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:45 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: RE: Second request from a second Fox News reporter

Chris,

She is with the Fox News Channel. The actual news network. She says she will make her studio at 400 North Capitol available to anyone we choose to send.

She said she is not with any of the opinion shows including the one you mention below. She says this will be part of their cycle today into tomorrow and would like to interview someone from here as soon as possible.

Wayne

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:41 PM
To: Maloney, Wayne
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: Re: Second request from a second Fox News reporter

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Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:30:27 2010
Subject: Second request from a second Fox News reporter
Fox News reporter Joy Lynn called the Georgia RD state office and then LAPAS, asking for an on-camera interview and a statement. She said they will be "covering this story today and tomorrow."

Contact info: Joy Lynn [REDACTED]

Wayne

DeJong, Justin

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:06 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re:


Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:59:26 2010

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:08 PM
To: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Maloney, Wayne
Subject: RE: Fox News (Ron Mitchell): Shirley Sherrod Video

Looping Wayne-

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:14 PM
To: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Subject: RE: Fox News (Ron Mitchell): Shirley Sherrod Video

Looping in John and Krysta-

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:13 PM
To: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris
Subject: Fox News (Ron Mitchell): Shirley Sherrod Video

Bill O'Reilly show will be mentioning this tonight. They would like USDA statement on the video. Who else should I be looping in on these inquiries?

Fox News- Ron Mitchell
NY [REDACTED]
Ron.mitchell@foxnews.com

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:05 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; [REDACTED] Weaver, Caleb
Subject: Sherrod Story Update

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Remember recently when the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Liberal Colored People) decided they needed to pass a resolution condemning the nonexistent racism in the Tea Party movement? These folks who get upset at greeting cards which talk about astronomy don't seem to mind a little racism against white people.

Shirley Sherrod of the USDA's Georgia Rural Development office spoke to the NAACP in March 2010, telling them how she had withheld assistance to a farmer because he was white.

The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm. He took a long time talking but he was trying to show me he was superior to me. I know what he was doing. But he had to come to me for help. What he didn't know, while he was talking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me, was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him. I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land.

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Now, in case the impact of this hasn't settled on you yet, imagine Sherrod is a white woman and she is talking about refusing to help a black man. "Took him to one of his own kind?" "I didn't give him the full force of what I could do?"

She admits that she deliberately withheld assistance (which is her job) from a member of "we the people" based on the color of their skin.

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First Justice. Now Agriculture. How many other Obama Department's are refusing to enforce our nation's laws equally?

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

DeJong, Justin

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:16 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb
Subject: Re: Sherrod Story Update

Berge said AP TV has this, and FOX online. Who is point on staying on top of this?

Sent from my Verizon Wireless BlackBerry

From: "Chan, Stephanie" <Stephanie.Chan@oc.usda.gov>
Date: Mon, 19 Jul 2010 18:05:29 -0400
To: Mather, Chris<Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov>; DeJong, Justin<Justin.DeJong@oc.usda.gov>;
<[REDACTED]>; Weaver, Caleb<Caleb.Weaver@oc.usda.gov>
Subject: Sherrod Story Update

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Shirley Sherrod of the USDA's Georgia Rural Development office spoke to the NAACP in March 2010, telling them how she had withheld assistance to a farmer because he was white.

The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm. He took a long time talking but he was trying to show me he was superior to me. I know what he was doing. But he had to come to me for help. What he didn't know, while he was talking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me, was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him. I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land.

So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough so that when he, I assumed the Department of Agriculture had sent him to me, either that or the Georgia Department of Agriculture. And, uh, he needed to go back and report that I did try to help him. So I took him to a white lawyer....so I figured that if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him.

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She admits that she deliberately withheld assistance (which is her job) from a member of "we the people" based on the color of their skin.

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Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.charn@oc.usda.gov

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:17 PM
To: Mather, Chris; [REDACTED] Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Misailidis, Sarah; Maloney, Wayne; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Subject: FOX News: Video Shows USDA Official Saying She Didn't Give 'Full Force' of Help to White Farmer

Fox: Video Shows USDA Official Saying She Didn't Give 'Full Force' of Help to White Farmer

Days after the NAACP clashed with Tea Party members over allegations of racism, a video has surfaced showing an Agriculture Department official regaling an NAACP audience with a story about how she withheld help to a white farmer facing bankruptcy.

Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, is shown in the clip describing "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." Sherrod, who is black, claimed the farmer took a long time trying to show he was "superior" to her. The audience laughed as she described how she determined his fate. "He had to come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," she said. "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land -- so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough."

Sherrod explained that at the time, she assumed the state or national Department of Agriculture referred him to her. In order to ensure that the farmer could report back that she was indeed helpful, she said she took him to see "one of his own" -- a white lawyer.

"I figured that if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him," she said.

The video clip was first posted by BigGovernment.com. The clip is dated March 27 from an NAACP Freedom Fund banquet.

FoxNews.com is seeking a response from both the NAACP and the USDA. The clip adds to the firestorm of debate over the NAACP's decision to approve a resolution at its convention last week accusing some Tea Party activists of racism -- a charge Tea Party leaders deny.

In a second clip from the same event posted online, Sherrod appeared to urge black job seekers to find work at the Department of Agriculture because the federal government won't lay people off.

"There are jobs at USDA and many times there are no people of color to fill those jobs because we shy away from agriculture. We hear the word agriculture and think, why are we working in the fields?" she said. "You've heard of a lot of layoffs. Have you heard of anybody in the federal government losing their job? That's all I need to say."

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:18 PM
To: [REDACTED] Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb
Subject: RE: Sherrod Story Update

I am sending clips as I see them. Im not seeing an AP but just set fox around

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:16 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb
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From: "Chan, Stephanie" <Stephanie.Chan@oc.usda.gov>
Date: Mon, 19 Jul 2010 18:05:29 -0400
To: Mather, Chris<Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov>; DeJong, Justin<Justin.DeJong@oc.usda.gov>;
<[REDACTED]>; Weaver, Caleb<Caleb.Weaver@oc.usda.gov>
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Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
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Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

DeJong, Justin

From: Maloney, Wayne
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:43 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Fox News called again-Read this

Chris,

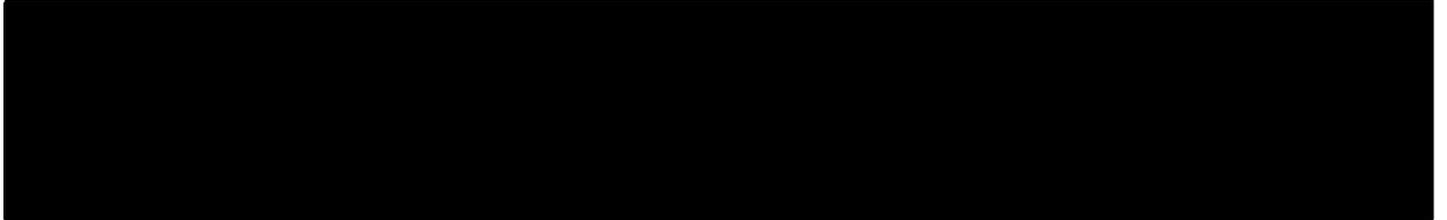
Joy Lin from Fox News called me and asked me to confirm that Ms. Sherrod had resigned. I told her that I had no knowledge and could not confirm. She asked me to "pass it up the food chain". I asked her where she had heard what she told me and she said it "was a rumor from the NAACP."

Wayne

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:45 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Subject: DRAFT: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod

Good evening,



Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

DeJong, Justin

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:46 PM
To: Maloney, Wayne
Cc: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Re: Fox News called again-Read this

Thanks Wayne. We have statement. Chan, you want to be main point on these press calls?
Chris Mather

From: Maloney, Wayne
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:43:11 2010
Subject: Fox News called again-Read this
Chris,

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Wayne

DeJong, Justin

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:47 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: DRAFT: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod

Great. Will tell you when to send.
Chris Mather.

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:44:40 2010
Subject: DRAFT: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod
Good evening,

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
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From: Chan, Stephanie
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To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: DRAFT: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod

Got it

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
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Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:44:40 2010
Subject: DRAFT: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod
Good evening,

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To: Chan, Stephanie; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: DRAFT: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod

Good to send.
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:46:53 2010
Subject: RE: DRAFT: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod
Got it

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
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Subject: Re: DRAFT: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod

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Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
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DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:48 PM
Subject: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod

Good evening,

Please see below for statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack regarding Shirley Sherrod's resignation:

Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

DeJong, Justin

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:49 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Washo, Kevin
Subject: Fw: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod

Its out.
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:48:05 2010
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Good evening,

Please see below for statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack regarding Shirley Sherrod's resignation:

Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

DeJong, Justin

From: googlealerts-noreply@google.com
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:55 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Google Alert - usda

Blogs

5 new results for usda

USDA Official Tells NAACP Audience Federal Employees Don't Get ...

By Lonely Conservative

USDA Official Tells NAACP Audience Federal Employees Don't Get Fired, and How She Treated a White Farmer. By Lonely Conservative. Here's video of Shirley Sherrod – who was appointed by the US Department of Agriculture Director Tom ...
[The Lonely Conservative - http://lonelyconservative.com/](http://lonelyconservative.com/)

A Time For Choosing: Racist NAACP Tape Released: USDA Worker Tells ...

By vlog

We are in possession of a video from in which Shirley Sherrod, USDA Georgia Director of Rural Development, speaks at the NAACP Freedom Fund dinner in Georgia. In her meandering speech to what appears to be an all-black audience, ...
[A Time For Choosing - http://thespeechatimeforchoosing.blogspot.com/](http://thespeechatimeforchoosing.blogspot.com/)

DJ USDA Meat Daily Estimated Hide And Offal Value Jul 19 ...

By admin

DJ USDA Meat Daily Estimated Hide And Offal Value - Jul 19 Mon Jul 19 16:10:04 2010 EDT NW_LS441 Des Moines, IA Mon, Jul 19, 2010 USDA Market News USDA BY-PRODUCT DROP VALUE (STEER) FOB CENTRAL U.S. The hide and offal value from a ...
[Cmemarkets.com - Business News... - http://www.cmemarkets.com/v3/](http://www.cmemarkets.com/v3/)

The United States Agricultural & Food Law and Policy Blog: USDA ...

By Leahy

Today, USDA announced a wetland restoration project in part of the Northern Everglades which will "create one of the largest contiguous easement acquisitions in the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)" according to the press release. ...
[The United States Agricultural... - http://www.agandfoodlaw.com/](http://www.agandfoodlaw.com/)

Office of Farmland Preservation » Blog Archive » USDA Funding ...

By jgimora

Outreach with the specific purpose of identification of root causes of failure to achieve equitable participation in USDA agricultural programs by Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers, as well as development of recommended ...
[Office of Farmland Preservation - http://ofp.scc.wa.gov/](http://ofp.scc.wa.gov/)

Tip: Use quotes ("like this") around a set of words in your query to match them exactly.. [Learn more.](#)

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[Manage](#) your alerts.

DeJong, Justin

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 7:28 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Berge, John; Washo, Kevin
Subject: Re: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod

Ok thanks

From: Mather, Chris
To: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Washo, Kevin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:49:25 2010
Subject: Fw: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod

Its out.
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:48:05 2010
Subject: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod
Good evening,

Please see below for statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack regarding Shirley Sherrod's resignation:

Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 9:20 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Cnn requested statement

Just flagging and making sure I can send the statement to whoever calls this evening.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED] Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

----- Original Message -----

From: Stephanie Chan <[REDACTED]>
To: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Mon Jul 19 21:15:53 2010

Scott Spoerry- cnn
Dc breau
[REDACTED]

Scott.spoerry@turner.com

Sent from my Verizon Wireless BlackBerry

DeJong, Justin

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 9:26 PM
To: Lavallee, Aaron
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re:

No but thanks for asking. I may need you to staff Dallas at hearing in am because of this GA State Director issue. Stay tuned. You would have to be on hill at 945.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Lavallee, Aaron
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 21:20:19 2010
Subject: Re:

Landed about 45 minutes ago. Do you need me to call?

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Lavallee, Aaron
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 21:15:27 2010
Subject:

When are you back?
Chris Mather

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 9:33 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: Cnn requested statement

Just noticed Fox posted the entire statement already so I'm going hit send as it's already online.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED] Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

----- Original Message -----

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 21:19:48 2010
Subject: Cnn requested statement

Just flagging and making sure I can send the statement to whoever calls this evening.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED] Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

----- Original Message -----

From: Stephanie Chan <[REDACTED]>
To: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Mon Jul 19 21:15:53 2010

Scott Spoerry- cnn
Dc breau
[REDACTED]
Scott.spoerry@turner.com

Sent from my Verizon Wireless BlackBerry

DeJong, Justin

From: Stephanie Chan [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 9:37 PM
To: Mather, Chris; [REDACTED] Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Misailidis, Sarah
Cc: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: FOX: Politics Video Shows USDA Official Saying She Didn't Give 'Full Force' of Help to White Farmer

Updated story from FOX with our statement:

FOX: Politics Video Shows USDA Official Saying She Didn't Give 'Full Force' of Help to White Farmer

Days after the NAACP clashed with Tea Party members over allegations of racism, a video has surfaced showing an Agriculture Department official regaling an NAACP audience with a story about how she withheld help to a white farmer facing bankruptcy -- video that now has forced the official to resign.

Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, is shown in the clip describing "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." Sherrod, who is black, claimed the farmer took a long time trying to show he was "superior" to her. The audience laughed as she described how she determined his fate.

"He had to come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," she said. "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land -- so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough."

The Agriculture Department announced Monday, shortly after FoxNews.com published its initial report on the video, that Sherrod had resigned.

"There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person," Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a written statement. "We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously."

Sherrod explained in the video that, at the time, she assumed the state or national Department of Agriculture had referred the white farmer to her. In order to ensure that the farmer could report back that she was indeed helpful, she said she took him to see "one of his own" -- a white lawyer.

"I figured that if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him," she said.

The point of the story wasn't entirely clear; only an excerpt of the speech is included in the video clip.

"It was revealed to me that it's about poor versus those who have," she said, suggesting she had learned that race is less important.

The video clip was first posted by BigGovernment.com. The clip is dated March 27 from an NAACP Freedom Fund banquet.

The clip adds to the firestorm of debate over the NAACP's decision to approve a resolution at its convention last week accusing some Tea Party activists of racism -- a charge Tea Party leaders deny. FoxNews.com was unable to get a response to this story from the NAACP.

In a second clip from the same event posted online, Sherrod appeared to urge black job seekers to find work at the Department of Agriculture because the federal government won't lay people off.

"There are jobs at USDA and many times there are no people of color to fill those jobs because we shy away from agriculture. We hear the word agriculture and think, why are we working in the fields?" she said. "You've heard of a lot of layoffs. Have you heard of anybody in the federal government losing their job? That's all I need to say."

--
Stephanie Chan



DeJong, Justin

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 9:46 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: Cnn requested statement

Yes you can. Good catch.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----
From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 21:32:32 2010
Subject: Re: Cnn requested statement

Just noticed Fox posted the entire statement already so I'm going hit send as it's already online.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED] Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

----- Original Message -----
From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 21:19:48 2010
Subject: Cnn requested statement

Just flagging and making sure I can send the statement to whoever calls this evening.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED] Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

----- Original Message -----
From: Stephanie Chan <[REDACTED]>
To: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Mon Jul 19 21:15:53 2010

Scott Spoerry- cnn
Dc breau
[REDACTED]
Scott.spoerry@turner.com

Sent from my Verizon Wireless BlackBerry

DeJong, Justin

From: googlealerts-noreply@google.com
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 11:42 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Google Alert - usda

News

1 new result for usda

Tea party unfairly charged with racism

Baltimore Sun

The BS and the lame media has dodged a bullet on this racist at the **USDA** and those racists in the NAACP audience agreeing and cheering this woman and not ...

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DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 2:58 PM
To: O'Brien, Doug
Subject: Fw: Associated Content: USDA Official Shirley Sherrod Boasts of Discriminating Against a White Farmer (Video)

Flagging.

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: DeJong, Justin; Maloney, Wayne
Sent: Mon Jul 19 14:42:01 2010
Subject: Associated Content: USDA Official Shirley Sherrod Boasts of Discriminating Against a White Farmer (Video)
Sarah just found this, thought we should flag it-

Associated Content: USDA Official Shirley Sherrod Boasts of Discriminating Against a White Farmer (Video)

Following through on his threat, Andrew Breitbart releases the following video of a USDA official named Shirley Sherrod boasting to an appreciative NAACP audience how she "deliberately withheld information

from a white farmer in Georgia trying to save his land and his business. To appreciate the pure shock value of the video, imagine that Sherrod was white bragging about how she stuck it to same black guy and then hearing the audience cheer. It just goes to show what can happen when the NAACP hurles phony charges of racism against the Tea Party.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 2:59 PM
To: Misailidis, Sarah; Maloney, Wayne; Chan, Stephanie
Cc: Weaver, Caleb
Subject: Re: Associated Content: USDA Official Shirley Sherrod Boasts of Discriminating Against a White Farmer (Video)

[REDACTED]

From: Misailidis, Sarah
To: Maloney, Wayne; Chan, Stephanie; DeJong, Justin
Cc: Weaver, Caleb
Sent: Mon Jul 19 14:49:16 2010
Subject: RE: Associated Content: USDA Official Shirley Sherrod Boasts of Discriminating Against a White Farmer (Video)

[REDACTED]

From: Maloney, Wayne
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 2:43 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; DeJong, Justin
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: RE: Associated Content: USDA Official Shirley Sherrod Boasts of Discriminating Against a White Farmer (Video)

Steph,

Thanks, we are aware of it and have viewed the video.

Wayne

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 2:42 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Maloney, Wayne
Subject: Associated Content: USDA Official Shirley Sherrod Boasts of Discriminating Against a White Farmer (Video)

Sarah just found this, thought we should flag it-

Associated Content: USDA Official Shirley Sherrod Boasts of Discriminating Against a White Farmer (Video)

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Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:11 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: Fw: Statement on civil rights

We are near columbus tv market tonight, if we have anyone we want to connect with?

----- Original Message -----

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: Harden, Krysta; O'Brien, Doug
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:40:00 2010
Subject: Statement on civil rights

There is absolutely no tolerance for discrimination at usda and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and we will be carefully reviewing this situation. This individual will be placed on administrative leave immediately.

A couple other notes:

Need to make sure that "administrative leave" is correct terminology.

S said he would be available for any interviews on this topic.

S asked that we find name of person who did/didnt get loan so he could personally apologize.

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:12 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: Fw: Google Alert - usda

Georgia.

From: googlealerts-noreply@google.com
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:03:39 2010
Subject: Google Alert - usda

News

1 new result for usda

USDA Official Shirley Sherrod Boasts of Discriminating Against a White Farmer ...

Associated Content

from a white farmer in Georgia trying to save his land and his business. To appreciate the pure shock value of the video, imagine that Sherrod was white ...

[See all stories on this topic »](#)

Tip: Use a plus sign (+) to match a term in your query exactly as is. [Learn more.](#)

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DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:13 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Maloney, Wayne
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: Re: Associated Content: USDA Official Shirley Sherrod Boasts of Discriminating Against a White Farmer (Video)

Good flag. We are on it.

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: DeJong, Justin; Maloney, Wayne
Sent: Mon Jul 19 14:42:01 2010
Subject: Associated Content: USDA Official Shirley Sherrod Boasts of Discriminating Against a White Farmer (Video)
Sarah just found this, thought we should flag it-

Associated Content: USDA Official Shirley Sherrod Boasts of Discriminating Against a White Farmer (Video)

Following through on his threat, Andrew Breitbart releases the following video of a USDA official named Shirley Sherrod boasting to an appreciative NAACP audience how she "deliberately withheld information

from a white farmer in Georgia trying to save his land and his business. To appreciate the pure shock value of the video, imagine that Sherrod was white bragging about how she stuck it to same black guy and then hearing the audience cheer. It just goes to show what can happen when the NAACP hurtles phony charges of racism against the Tea Party.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:26 PM
To: Mather, Chris

Do you want me to show him statement or do you have stronger one?

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:32 AM
To: 'cate.cetta@nbcuni.com'
Subject: Fw: Statement from Secretary Vilsack

----- Original Message -----

From: DeJong, Justin
To: 'cate.cetta@nbc.uni.com' <cate.cetta@nbc.uni.com>
Sent: Tue Jul 20 06:29:26 2010
Subject: Statement from Secretary Vilsack

Please see below for statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack regarding Shirley Sherrod's resignation:

Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:12 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Ap on sherrod

Mary clare just asked for the statement, sending her way shortly.

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:25 AM
To: 'mjalonick@ap.org'
Subject: Statement

Please see below for statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack regarding Shirley Sherrod's resignation:

Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:34 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fw: URGENT REQUEST – CNN AMERICAN MORNING STATEMENT

Importance: High

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:32:41 2010
Subject: Fw: URGENT REQUEST -- CNN AMERICAN MORNING STATEMENT

Transcript from interview-

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

From: Kaplan, Karrah
To: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:30:03 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT REQUEST -- CNN AMERICAN MORNING STATEMENT
HERE IS THE TRANSCRIPT:

American Morning transcript

Kiran Chetry and **John Roberts** interview **Shirley Sherrod**, a black Agriculture Department employee, who resigned Monday after conservative media outlets aired a video of her telling an audience she had not given a white farmer "the full force of what I could do" to help him save the family farm. She says the charges of racism are wrong

Kiran Chetry: THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ACCEPTS THE RESIGNATION OF AN EMPLOYEE AFTER A VIDEO SURFACED SHOWING HER TELLING AN AUDIENCE THAT SHE WITHHELD ASSISTANCE TO A WHITE FARMER BECAUSE OF HIS RACE. LET'S LISTEN TO WHAT SHE TOLD THE NAACP. DOES THAT VIDEO TELL THE WHOLE STORY? JOINING US NOW ON THE PHONE FROM ALBANY, GEORGIA, SHERRI SHERROD HERSELF. THANKS FOR BEING WITH US THIS MORNING, SHIRLEY.

Shirley Sherrod: THANK YOU.

Kiran Chetry: YOU SAY THIS WAS PART OF THE STORY AND THAT IT WAS PART THAT WAS SPLICED ENOUGH TO SHOW YOU IN A BAD LIGHT, THAT THIS ISN'T THE WHOLE STORY. WILL YOU FINISH FOR US HOW THIS ENED?

Shirley Sherrod: OKAY. I WAS SPEAKING TO THAT GROUP LIKE I'VE DONE MANY GROUPS AND I TELL THEM ABOUT A TIME WHEN I THOUGHT THE ISSUE WAS RACE AND RACE ONLY. AND I TELL THEM THE STORY OF HOW I WORKED WITH A WHITE FARMER BACK IN 1986. I WAS NOT WORKING FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE. I WAS WORKING WITH AND NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION ASSISTING FARMERS THROUGHOUT SOUTH GEORGIA AND THE SOUTHEAST. AND THIS FARMER CAME TO ME FOR HELP. I WAS TELLING THE STORY ABOUT HOW WORKING WITH HIM HELPED ME TO SEE THAT THE ISSUE IS NOT ABOUT RACE, IT'S

ABOUT THOSE WHO HAVE VERSUS THOSE WHO DO NOT HAVE. AND I TELL HOW I TOOK HIM TO A LAWYER WHO I THOUGHT WOULD HELP HIM. IN THE END, THAT LAWYER DIDN'T. IN THE END, I HAD TO FRANTICLY LOOK FOR A LAWYER BECAUSE WHEN USDA LIFTED -- I'M SORRY. WHEN THE COURTS LIFTED THE INJUNCTION AGAINST USDA IN MAY OF 1987, THIS WHITE FARMER WAS 1 OF 13 THAT WAS FORECLOSED ON BY THE STATE OF GEORGIA. I HAD TO FRANTICLY FIND A LAWYER WHO WOULD FILE A CHAPTER 11 TO STOP THE FORECLOSURE. HE COULDN'T -- AT THAT TIME WE HAD UP TO 12 --

Kiran Chetry: BUT LET ME SAID -- YOU SAID YOU DIDN'T KNOW ENOUGH, DIDN'T GIVE HIM THE FULL FORCE OF WHAT YOU COULD DO. YOU SAID YOU REFERRED HIM TO THE LAWYER WHO WAS WHITE AND PERHAPS HE COULD HELP HIM. WHAT DID YOU MEAN BY THAT?

Shirley Sherrod: WHAT I MEANT WAS, I DIDN'T KNOW ANYONE ELSE, I DIDN'T KNOW ANOTHER LAWYER AT THAT TIME WHO WAS LOCAL, WHO KNEW SOMETHING ABOUT CHAPTER 12. BUT I THOUGHT IF I TOOK HIM TO A WHITE LAWYER, HE WOULD DEFINITELY DO ALL THAT HE COULD TO HELP SAVE HIS FARM.

John Roberts: MS. SHERROD LET'S MAKE IT CLEAR THOUGH. THIS HAPPENED 24 YEARS AGO. YOU EVENTUALLY WORKED WITH THIS WHITE FARMER, YOU EVENTUALL BECAME FRIENDS.

[The rest of John's question is cut of from the closed captioning and the aircheck, as is her response]

John Roberts:[cut off] THINKING IF YOU'RE RECOUNTING AN OLD STORY, WHY DID YOU SUCCUMB TO PRESSURE TO STEP DOWN, WHY DIDN'T YOU TRY TO FIGHT THIS?

Shirley Sherrod: IF I TRIED TO FIGHT IT AND DIDN'T HAVE ANY SUPPORT FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, WHAT -- WHAT.

Kiran Chetry: BEN JEALOUS REFERRED TO YOU AND THIS SURFACING OF THE TAPE, "HER ACTIONS WERE SHAMEFUL. WHILE SHE WENT ON TO EXPLAIN IN THE STORY, SHE ULTIMATELY REALIZED HER MISTAKE AS WELL AS THE COMMON PREDICAMENT OF WORKING PEOPLE OF ALL RACES. SHE GAVE NO INDICATION SHE HAD ATTEMPTED TO RIGHT THE WRONG SHE HAD DONE TO THIS MAN." AND THE REACTION FROM MANY IN THE AUDIENCE IS DISTURBING. THIS IS FROM BEN JEALOUS. DID YOU TRY TO CLARIFY WITH THE NAACP YOUR STORY?

Shirley Sherrod: NO, I HAVEN'T HAD HAD A CHANCE TO TALK TO ANYONE. ALL OF THIS WAS HAPPENING SO FAST. AND IT'S UNFORTUNATE THAT THE NAACP WOULD MAKE A STATEMENT WITHOUT EVEN CHECKING TO SEE WHAT HAPPENED. THIS WAS 24 YEARS AGO AND I'M TELLING A STORY TO TRY TO UNITE PEOPLE WITH THAT NOW.

John Roberts: CERTAINLY YOU'RE COMING OUT AND TELLING YOUR STORY NOW TAKES IT TO A DIFFERENT LEVEL AND OBVIOUSLY WE'RE GOING TO KEEP FOLLOWING THIS. IT IS GOOD TO GET YOUR SIDE OF IT. SHERRI SH SHERLY SHERROD, FORMER DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE OFFICIAL. PERHAPS WE CAN GET YOU BACK ON AGAIN, GET YOUR FACE ON TV AS WELL AND TALK TO YOU MORE ABOUT THIS AS THIS STORY CONTINUES TO DEVELOP.

Shirley Sherrod: I DON'T MIND.

From: Chan, Stephanie [mailto:Stephanie.Chan@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:21 AM
To: Kaplan, Karrah
Subject: Re: URGENT REQUEST -- CNN AMERICAN MORNING STATEMENT

Karrah, thanks for sending this over. I am checking on this but please refer to our statement in the meantime.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

From: Kaplan, Karrah
To: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:19:38 2010
Subject: URGENT REQUEST -- CNN AMERICAN MORNING STATEMENT
Thanks for taking my call just now Stephanie!

As mentioned we had Shirley Sherrod on this morning and she said that the video was of her recounting an old story of her and a farmer she befriended in 1986.

Our anchor, John Roberts, wants to know why she was asked to resign for recounting an old story.

I will send the transcript of the interview shortly.

In the meantime, what is your official USDA response?

Thank you very much,
Karrah Kaplan
Producer, CNN American Morning
[REDACTED] cell
212-275-7850 main

DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:34 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fw: Google Alert - usda

From: googlealerts-noreply@google.com
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 06:58:11 2010
Subject: Google Alert - usda

News

3 new results for usda

Resigned USDA official says racial story misconstrued

Atlanta Journal-Constitution

By Marcus K. Garner The USDA's rural development director for Georgia says she was forced out of her federally appointed job after a "snippet" of a speech ...

[See all stories on this topic »](#)

Nationwide Recall Issued On Frozen Chicken Nuggets

WMTV News 17

National-- Monday, the USDA announced that Perdue Farms, Inc. out of Perry, GA announced it is recalling about 91872 pounds of frozen chicken nugget ...

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Look! Black People Are Totally Racist Too!

Peranews (blog)

Apparently someone was able to dig up a video of a black USDA worker telling an audience of other black people about having to help a white farmer keep his ...

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DeJong, Justin

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:15 AM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: Statement from Monday

Please see below for statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack regarding Shirley Sherrod's resignation:

Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.

DeJong, Justin

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 1:58 PM
To: Maloney, Wayne
Cc: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Zaina, Lisa
Subject: Re: Georgia

In meeting. If its bad needs to be pulled down right away.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Maloney, Wayne
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Zaina, Lisa
Sent: Mon Jul 19 13:55:40 2010
Subject: FW: Georgia

Chris,

I was just informed of a video of the Georgia State Director that was posted on the Internet earlier this afternoon. It speaks for itself and you need to watch it right away.

I have discussed this with Tim McNeilly. He has instructed the PIC and the State Director not to respond to media without checking with us first. We have not been contacted by any media outlet but expect that we will.

Tim has been asked by me to draft a statement for our review to be issued if necessary.

Wayne
###

Georgia PIC just called to alert us to a campaign underway involving Shirley Sherrod vs. the Tea Party people. I understand that this may have been brought to your attention already, but in case it hasn't..... The PIC is looking for guidance if (and I think there will be) media contact regarding the below video.

<http://hotair.com/archives/2010/07/19/breitbart-hits-naacp-with-promised-video-of-racism/>

Looking for guidance on how you would like to prepare and handle any inquiries that result.

Thanks.

Timothy J. McNeilly | Director, Legislative and Public Affairs Rural Development U.S.
Department of Agriculture 1400 Independence Ave., S.W. | Washington, D.C. 20250
Phone: 202.720.1019 | Fax: 202.690.4083

www.rurdev.usda.gov

"Committed to the future of rural communities"

"Estamos dedicados al futuro de las comunidades rurales"

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 2:43 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Maloney, Wayne
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: RE: Associated Content: USDA Official Shirley Sherrod Boasts of Discriminating Against a White Farmer (Video)

The video has had 319 views on youtube (was posted yesterday)

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 2:42 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Maloney, Wayne
Subject: Associated Content: USDA Official Shirley Sherrod Boasts of Discriminating Against a White Farmer (Video)

Sarah just found this, thought we should flag it-

Associated Content: USDA Official Shirley Sherrod Boasts of Discriminating Against a White Farmer (Video)

Following through on his threat, Andrew Breitbart releases the following video of a USDA official named Shirley Sherrod boasting to an appreciative NAACP audience how she "deliberately withheld information

from a white farmer in Georgia trying to save his land and his business. To appreciate the pure shock value of the video, imagine that Sherrod was white bragging about how she stuck it to same black guy and then hearing the audience cheer. It just goes to show what can happen when the NAACP hurtles phony charges of racism against the Tea Party.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
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DeJong, Justin

From: Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 2:49 PM
To: Maloney, Wayne; Chan, Stephanie; DeJong, Justin
Cc: Weaver, Caleb
Subject: RE: Associated Content: USDA Official Shirley Sherrod Boasts of Discriminating Against a White Farmer (Video)

[REDACTED]

From: Maloney, Wayne
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 2:43 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; DeJong, Justin
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: RE: Associated Content: USDA Official Shirley Sherrod Boasts of Discriminating Against a White Farmer (Video)

Steph,

Thanks, we are aware of it and have viewed the video.

Wayne

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 2:42 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Maloney, Wayne
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Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

DeJong, Justin

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:21 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Fw: Georgia

Importance: High

We told Krysta to tell S about this FYI.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Maloney, Wayne
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Zaina, Lisa
Sent: Mon Jul 19 13:55:40 2010
Subject: FW: Georgia

Chris,

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DeJong, Justin

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:49 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Harden, Krysta
Subject: Fw: Hey

feel free to pass on my thoughts below to S. I feel strongly about it.
Chris Mather

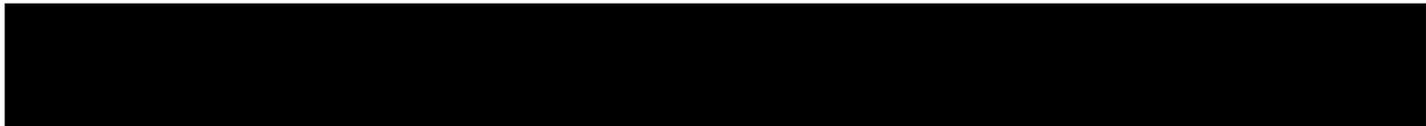
----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Jett, Carole
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:40:02 2010
Subject: Re: Hey

Our hands may be tied but given tea party press coverage and FOX and CBS pick up, and potential for this to get super blown up, admin leave might not be strong enough.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Jett, Carole
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:32:25 2010
Subject: Hey



DeJong, Justin

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:53 PM
To: Weaver, Caleb
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: WCBS story on Sherod
Attachments: image001.jpg

Justin drafted statement. Until that is done, we are sitting ducks.

From: Weaver, Caleb
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:49 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Fw: WCBS story on Sherod

Just you - do you need me to engage on this one?

Still in hearing prep, but can leave.

From: Maloney, Wayne
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: Zaina, Lisa; Cook, Cheryl; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:31:29 2010
Subject: WCBS story on Sherod

SHOCK: Video Suggests Racism At NAACP Event

NEW YORK (CBS) ---



Shirley Sherrod, USDA Rural Development Georgia State Director

Last Tuesday, the NAACP passed a resolution condemning racism in the Tea Party movement. The organization's delegates called on Tea Party leaders to "repudiate those in their ranks who use racist language in their signs and speeches."

Tea Party members and supporters saw the resolution as a condemnation of the group itself, which calls for fiscal responsibility, restrictions on governmental power, and backs political candidates who claim the same.

The NAACP's action caught the attention of Andrew Breitbart of BigGovernment.com, who said the controversy was "absolutely manufactured for political gain," in a summer "in which the economy is the number one issue affecting blacks and whites in this country. This country can ill afford the schism of race to be exploited the way [he is] based upon the false premise of the Tea Party being racist."

He also claimed to possess recorded evidence of racism from the NAACP.

On Monday, Breitbart posted a video of a speech by Shirley Sherrod, USDA Rural Development Georgia State Director, delivered at the NAACP's 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet.

The video shows Sherrod speaking of racial considerations being a factor for how much help she would give.

"The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking but he was trying to show me he was superior to me. I know what he was doing, but he had come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was, I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," Sherrod said.

"I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough," Sherrod said. "So that when he, I assumed the Department of Agriculture had sent him to me, either that or the Georgia Department of Agriculture, and he needed to go back and report that I did try to help him."

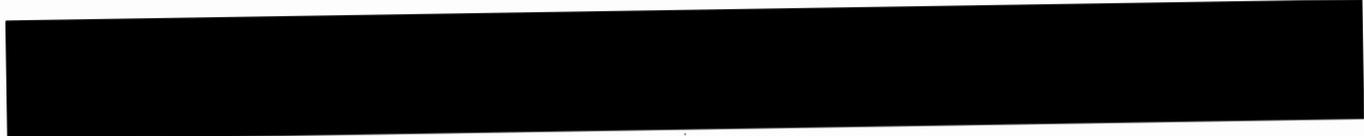
In the video, Sherrod also spoke of referring the white farmer to a white lawyer, thinking the latter would be more sympathetic because of race. "So I took him to a white lawyer that had attended some of training that we had provided because Chapter 12 bankruptcy had just been enacted for the family farm. So I figured if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him."

DeJong, Justin

From: O'Brien, Doug
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:55 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris
Cc: Harden, Krysta
Subject: Re: Statement on civil rights

Looping Jett.

Here is statement.



Thx

Doug

----- Original Message -----

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: Harden, Krysta; O'Brien, Doug
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:40:00 2010
Subject: Statement on civil rights

There is absolutely no tolerance for discrimination at usda and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and we will be carefully reviewing this situation. This individual will be placed on administrative leave immediately.

A couple other notes:

Need to make sure that "administrative leave" is correct terminology.

S said he would be available for any interviews on this topic.

S asked that we find name of person who did/didnt get loan so he could personally apologize.

DeJong, Justin

From: Maloney, Wayne
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:06 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb
Subject: Fox news on Sherrod

Importance: High

Chris,

RD just got a call from Fox News asking us "to provide context to the Sherrod story". Working with Tim McNeilly, I drafted a statement for your review. It is in your red folder.

Judd Berger
[REDACTED]

Wayne

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:13 PM
To: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris
Subject: Fox News (Ron Mitchell): Shirley Sherrod Video

Bill O'Reilly show will be mentioning this tonight. They would like USDA statement on the video. Who else should I be looping in on these inquiries?

Fox News- Ron Mitchell
NY 212-301-3697
Ron.mitchell@foxnews.com

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:43 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Transcript

Chris, please see below for transcript

Video: [Link](#)

On July 25, 2009 Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack appointed Shirley Sherrod as Georgia Director of Rural Development. USDA Rural Development spends over \$1.2 Billion in the state of Georgia each year. On March 27, 2010, while speaking at the NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet, Ms. Sherrod admits that in her federally appointed position, overseeing over a billion dollars, she discriminates against people due to their race.

Shirley Sherrod: The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking but he was trying to show me he was superior to me, I know what he was doing. But he had to come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me, was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him. I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land. And here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So, I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough. So that when he, I assumed the Department of Agriculture had sent him to me, either that or the Georgia Department of Agriculture. And he needed to go back and report that I did try and help him. So I took him to a white lawyer that had attended some of the training that we had provided because of Chapter 12 bankruptcy had just been enacted for the family farm. So I figured if I take him to one of them that his own kind would take care of him. That's when it was revealed to me that its about poor versus those who have. It's not so much about white...it is about white and black. It is about white and black but its not you know...it opened my eyes because I took him to one of his own.

Fox News Clip:

Geraldo Rivera: Do you denounce in the way that you ask the Tea Parties denounce racists within your ranks?

Hilary Shelton: Yes we do, we repudiate racists within our ranks.

Back to Shirley Sherrod Clip:

I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farm land and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]

Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

DeJong, Justin

From: Maloney, Wayne
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:45 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: RE: Second request from a second Fox News reporter

Chris,

She is with the Fox News Channel. The actual news network. She says she will make her studio at 400 North Capitol available to anyone we choose to send.

She said she is not with any of the opinion shows including the one you mention below. She says this will be part of their cycle today into tomorrow and would like to interview someone from here as soon as possible.

Wayne

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:41 PM
To: Maloney, Wayne
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: Re: Second request from a second Fox News reporter

What show is she from? Sarah need help asap. Is she with O'Reilly.
Chris Mather

From: Maloney, Wayne
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:30:27 2010
Subject: Second request from a second Fox News reporter
Fox News reporter Joy Lynn called the Georgia RD state office and then LAPAS, asking for an on-camera interview and a statement. She said they will be "covering this story today and tomorrow."

Contact info: Joy Lynn [REDACTED]

Wayne

DeJong, Justin

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:06 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re:

[REDACTED]
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:59:26 2010

[REDACTED]

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:05 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; [REDACTED] Weaver, Caleb
Subject: Sherrod Story Update

FYI- I haven't seen any major stories come up other than the Wonkette mention. See below for the 3 online stories that have come out since the NY CBS story-

Woknette: Breitbart Has PROOF the NAACP Is Racist

Andrew Breitbart is here once again to save the day, this time to show us that the NAACP is racist, NOT Teabaggers. "The NAACP and the Congressional Black Caucus do not want racial harmony. They want political victory, and the race card is their Strativarius [sic]," he writes, hilariously. The NAACP wants to take out their main political opponents, the Teabaggers, by playing classical music on rare, expensive violins. But SORRY BLACK PEOPLE, Breitbart has stopped the NAACP once and for all, as he has his hands on the AMAZING racism video that will destroy their association for the advancement of colored people.

OKAY, OKAY, YOU GUYS, ANDREW BREITBART IS SO EXCITED AND NERVOUS, BUT HE NEEDS TO SET THIS UP FIRST. There is a woman named Shirley Sherrod who is a member of the NAACP and is also the Georgia Director of Rural Development for the USDA. So she is important! And one time she told a story about how a poor white farmer talked down to her when he needed her help. YET she did not do every single thing in her power to help him. She only *averagely* helped him. Thus, she and the NAACP are bigots because Breitbart has this video.

The end. Oh, yeah, don't bother watching the video. BORING.

(Whoops, forgot to center some random images of movie posters and such that have little to do with the story between the paragraphs of this post.) [Big Government]

Read more at Wonkette: <http://wonkette.com/416754/breitbart-has-proof-the-naacp-is-racist#ixzz0uAVrI6KZ>

Dakota Voice: Shirley Sherrod Confesses Her Racism to NAACP

Remember recently when the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Liberal Colored People) decided they needed to pass a resolution condemning the nonexistent racism in the Tea Party movement? These folks who get upset at greeting cards which talk about astronomy don't seem to mind a little racism against white people.

Shirley Sherrod of the USDA's Georgia Rural Development office spoke to the NAACP in March 2010, telling them how she had withheld assistance to a farmer because he was white.

The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm. He took a long time talking but he was trying to show me he was superior to me. I know what he was doing. But he had to come to me for help. What he didn't know, while he was talking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me, was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him. I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land.

So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough so that when he, I assumed the Department of Agriculture had sent him to me, either that or the Georgia Department of Agriculture. And, uh, he needed to go back and report that I did try to help him. So I took him to a white lawyer....so I figured that if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him.

Now, in case the impact of this hasn't settled on you yet, imagine Sherrod is a white woman and she is talking about refusing to help a black man. "Took him to one of his own kind?" "I didn't give him the full force of what I could do?"

She admits that she deliberately withheld assistance (which is her job) from a member of "we the people" based on the color of their skin.

If you look for it, you could probably find racists in any group in the country: the Knights of Columbus, Kiwanis, the Chamber of Commerce, a sports team, a carpenter's union, the Tea Party movement, and obviously even the NAACP.

A key difference is that in the Tea Party movement, you won't find people condoning it as this friendly crowd condoned Sherrod's racism.

If the NAACP is looking for racism, they need only go look in the mirror.

The Foundry: Justice Not Only Obama Department Not Equally Enforcing Law

This morning we reviewed the still unfolding New Black Panther Party scandal at the Department of Justice where a whistle blower, testifying under oath, quoted Deputy Assistant Attorney General Julie Fernandes as saying that "the Voting Section will never or will not, at least while she is there, bring any more cases against blacks or other national minorities." In other words, Fernandes has reportedly admitted that the Obama Justice Department is not enforcing the nation's civil rights law equally and in a race-neutral manner. The Obama Justice Department has refused to confirm or deny that Fernandes made this statement.

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First Justice. Now Agriculture. How many other Obama Department's are refusing to enforce our nation's laws equally?

Stephanie Chan

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Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:18 PM
To: [REDACTED] Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb
Subject: RE: Sherrod Story Update

I am sending clips as I see them. I'm not seeing an AP but just set fox around

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: [REDACTED] [mailto:[REDACTED]]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:16 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb
Subject: Re: Sherrod Story Update

Berge said AP TV has this, and FOX online. Who is point on staying on top of this?

Sent from my Verizon Wireless BlackBerry

From: "Chan, Stephanie" <Stephanie.Chan@oc.usda.gov>
Date: Mon, 19 Jul 2010 18:05:29 -0400
To: Mather, Chris<Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov>; DeJong, Justin<Justin.DeJong@oc.usda.gov>;
[REDACTED]; Weaver, Caleb<Caleb.Weaver@oc.usda.gov>
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Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

DeJong, Justin

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:47 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: DRAFT: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod

Good to send.
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:46:53 2010
Subject: RE: DRAFT: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod
Got it

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:47 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: DRAFT: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod

Great. Will tell you when to send.
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:44:40 2010
Subject: DRAFT: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod
Good evening,

Please see below for statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack regarding Shirley Sherrod's resignation:



Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:48 PM
Subject: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod

Good evening,

Please see below for statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack regarding Shirley Sherrod's resignation:

Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

DeJong, Justin

From: Stephanie Chan [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 9:37 PM
To: Mather, Chris; [REDACTED] Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Misailidis, Sarah
Cc: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: FOX: Politics Video Shows USDA Official Saying She Didn't Give 'Full Force' of Help to White Farmer

Updated story from FOX with our statement:

FOX: Politics Video Shows USDA Official Saying She Didn't Give 'Full Force' of Help to White Farmer

Days after the NAACP clashed with Tea Party members over allegations of racism, a video has surfaced showing an Agriculture Department official regaling an NAACP audience with a story about how she withheld help to a white farmer facing bankruptcy -- video that now has forced the official to resign.

Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, is shown in the clip describing "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." Sherrod, who is black, claimed the farmer took a long time trying to show he was "superior" to her. The audience laughed as she described how she determined his fate.

"He had to come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," she said. "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land -- so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough."

The Agriculture Department announced Monday, shortly after FoxNews.com published its initial report on the video, that Sherrod had resigned.

"There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person," Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a written statement. "We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously."

Sherrod explained in the video that, at the time, she assumed the state or national Department of Agriculture had referred the white farmer to her. In order to ensure that the farmer could report back that she was indeed helpful, she said she took him to see "one of his own" -- a white lawyer.

"I figured that if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him," she said.

The point of the story wasn't entirely clear; only an excerpt of the speech is included in the video clip.

"It was revealed to me that it's about poor versus those who have," she said, suggesting she had learned that race is less important.

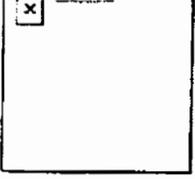
The video clip was first posted by BigGovernment.com. The clip is dated March 27 from an NAACP Freedom Fund banquet.

The clip adds to the firestorm of debate over the NAACP's decision to approve a resolution at its convention last week accusing some Tea Party activists of racism -- a charge Tea Party leaders deny. FoxNews.com was unable to get a response to this story from the NAACP.

In a second clip from the same event posted online, Sherrod appeared to urge black job seekers to find work at the Department of Agriculture because the federal government won't lay people off.

"There are jobs at USDA and many times there are no people of color to fill those jobs because we shy away from agriculture. We hear the word agriculture and think, why are we working in the fields?" she said. "You've heard of a lot of layoffs. Have you heard of anybody in the federal government losing their job? That's all I need to say."

--
Stephanie Chan



DeJong, Justin

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 9:46 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: Cnn requested statement

Yes you can. Good catch.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 21:32:32 2010
Subject: Re: Cnn requested statement

Just noticed Fox posted the entire statement already so I'm going hit send as it's already online.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED] Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

----- Original Message -----

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 21:19:48 2010
Subject: Cnn requested statement

Just flagging and making sure I can send the statement to whoever calls this evening.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED] Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

----- Original Message -----

From: Stephanie Chan <[REDACTED]>
To: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Mon Jul 19 21:15:53 2010

Scott Spoerry- cnn
Dc breau
202-8987911
Scott.spoerry@turner.com

Sent from my Verizon Wireless BlackBerry

DeJong, Justin

From: googlealerts-noreply@google.com
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 11:42 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Google Alert - usda

News

1 new result for usda

Tea party unfairly charged with racism

Gaiterore Sen

The BS and the lame media has dodged a bullet on this racist at the **USDA** and those racists in the NAACP audience agreeing and cheering this woman and not ...

[See all stories on this topic »](#)

Tip: Use a plus sign (+) to match a term in your query exactly as is.. [Learn more.](#)

[Remove](#) this alert.
[Create](#) another alert.
[Manage](#) your alerts.

O'Brien, Doug

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:52 PM
To: O'Brien, Doug
Subject: Re: Jesse Jackson

He will call now

----- Original Message -----

From: O'Brien, Doug
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 19:49:19 2010
Subject: Jesse Jackson

John Mitchell with rev jackson just called my number.

He can connect the secr to rev jackson anytime. I think he expects it tonight.



Williams, Tysan

From: Knishkowy, Jeff
Sent: Tuesday, July 27, 2010 12:52 PM
To: Cain, Barrett; Knishkowy, Jeff; Levi, Leila; Quincy, Carla; Spencer, Kecia; Strong, William; Velasquez, Pilar; West-Wiggins, Millie -USDA; Williams, Tysan
Subject: Last Week at USDA
Importance: High

In an OASCR management meeting yesterday, all OASCR managers were asked to share with their staff that we are not to speak with anyone from the press about last week's events involving USDA, Shirley Sherrod, etc. All press contacts are handled by USDA's Office of Communications. Should any of you be approached by a member of the press seeking to discuss the topic, please refer them to USDA's Office of Communications, and please let me know of the contact (I believe there's interest in tracking the number of requests).

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks.

Jeff

Jeff Knishkowy
Special Counsel for Civil Rights
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights


Cain, Barrett

From: Cain, Barrett
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 12:35 PM
To: CRES HelpDesk
Subject: RE: Do Not Restore Shirley Sherrod

Is there a way to block this person from sending emails to us? They cannot be contacted by return email.

From: Patten, Corliss **On Behalf Of** CRES HelpDesk
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 11:11 AM
To: Cain, Barrett
Subject: RE: Do Not Restore Shirley Sherrod

I am not sure but we are the one that sent this e-mail maybe you need to ask the person that sent this to you to remove your name

From: Cain, Barrett
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 11:10 AM
To: CRES HelpDesk
Subject: RE: Do Not Restore Shirley Sherrod

Who is Mr. Asu?

From: Patten, Corliss **On Behalf Of** CRES HelpDesk
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 11:09 AM
To: Cain, Barrett
Subject: RE: Do Not Restore Shirley Sherrod

Please send this to Mr. Asu

From: Cain, Barrett
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 11:00 AM
To: Charles-Shannon, Velma; [REDACTED]; Kim, SaeMi; Kiessling, Jenniffer; Jones, Tracy; Jones, Elaine; Johnson-Osborne, Fonshelle; Jaskille, Yamil; Jackman, Pat; Hunter, Pat; Hugh, Fred; Holt, Teresa; Holmes, Joseph; Holmes, Carl - ASCR; Ho, Elaine; Hines, Marsheela; Herring, Geraldine; Henry, William; Hawkins, Channing; Adams, Generosa; Ahmed, Tonya; Ahmed, Vaqar; Albert, Lawrence; Alexander, Tamara; Allen, Deborah; Anderson, Sequana; Asu, Aloysius; August, Sterling; Baisden, Kenneth; Banks, Gypsy; Belardo, Tlambe; Bogan, Arlita; Branham, Michael; Brock, Jacqueline; Brown, DarrellR; Brown, Moses; Bruce, Casimir; Bryant, Sheila; Butler, Carl; Butler, Cinnamon; 'Anita.Byrd@ascr.usda.gov'; Carr, Jeffery; Carroll, Maurice; casefile, Cr; Chan, Wai-Ping; Cleaver-Bascombe, Karen; Coleman, Lisa; Coleman, Oliver L; Connelly, Claire; Contreras, Roberto; Council, Diversity; Daniels, Robert; Davis, Deborah; Davis, Malsha; Davis, Rhonda; Davis, Rosetta; Davis-Wright, Dianne; DeBose, Barbara; Do, Sonny; Edmonson, Gwen; Ellis, Lolita -USDA; Evans, Tavonna; Fox, Shawntey; Frazier, Jacqueline; Gaskins, DonnaM; 'Shirley.Glover@ascr.usda.gov'; Golden, Daruss; Goode, Corlice; Goodwill, Rosanne; Gordon, Ebony; Graham, Paula; Green, Yolanda; Griffin, Alpha; Hall, Violet; Hamilton, Deb; Harrington-Watson, Shirley; Harris, Keela; Harris, Lynette; Harrison, Michael; Hatchett, Robert; Chisholm, Mark; Dinzey, Raul; Banks, Denise; Alexander, Reginald; Cox, Doretha - USDA; Davis, Steve; Johnson, Loretha; Hammond, Rondl; Dillahunt, Hezekiah; CRES HelpDesk; Ferrelra, Michele; Anderson, Erin; Daughtridge, James; Dean, Telora; Fields, Sederis; 'Valeria.Best@ascr.usda.gov'; Gunn, Joshua; Gray, Lisa
Subject: RE: Do Not Restore Shirley Sherrod

This is an official Government site, please remove My name from your mailing list.
Thank you,

Rev. Barrett R. Cain, M-Div., M.A. CDP
 Certified Diversity professional

From: Charles-Shannon, Velma

Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 10:53 AM

To: [REDACTED] Kim, SaeMi; Klessling, Jenniffer; Jones, Tracy; Jones, Elaine; Johnson-Osborne, Fonshelle; Jaskille, Yamil; Jackman, Pat; Hunter, Pat; Hugh, Fred; Holt, Teresa; Holmes, Joseph; Holmes, Carl - ASCR; Ho, Elaine; Hines, Marsheela; Herring, Geraldine; Henry, William; Hawkins, Channing; Adams, Generosa; Ahmed, Tonya; Ahmed, Vaqar; Albert, Lawrence; Alexander, Tamara; Allen, Deborah; Anderson, Sequana; Asu, Aloysius; August, Sterling; Baisden, Kenneth; Banks, Gypsy; Belardo, Tiambe; Bogan, Arlita; Branham, Michael; Brock, Jacqueline; Brown, DarrellR; Brown, Moses; Bruce, Casimir; Bryant, Shella; Butler, Carl; Butler, Cinnamon; Anita.Byrd@ascr.usda.gov; Cain, Barrett; Carr, Jeffery; Carroll, Maurice; casefile, Cr; Chan, Wal-Ping; Cleaver-Bascombe, Karen; Coleman, Lisa; Coleman, Oliver L; Connelly, Claire; Contreras, Roberto; Council, Diversity; Daniels, Robert; Davis, Deborah; Davis, Maisha; Davis, Rhonda; Davis, Rosetta; Davis-Wright, Dianne; DeBose, Barbara; Do, Sonny; Edmonson, Gwen; Ellis, Lolita -USDA; Evans, Tavonna; Fox, Shawntey; Frazier, Jacqueline; Gaskins, DonnaM; Shirley.Glover@ascr.usda.gov; Golden, Daruss; Goode, Corlice; Goodwill, Rosanne; Gordon, Ebony; Graham, Paula; Green, Yolanda; Griffin, Alpha; Hall, Violet; Hamilton, Deb; Harrington-Watson, Shirley; Harris, Keela; Harris, Lynette; Harrison, Michael; Hatchett, Robert; Chisholm, Mark; Dinzey, Raul; Banks, Denise; Alexander, Reginald; Cox, Doretha -USDA; Davis, Steve; Johnson, Loretha; Hammond, Rondl; Dillahunt, Hezekiah; CRES HelpDesk; Ferreira, Michele; Anderson, Erin; Daughtridge, James; Dean, Telora; Fields, Sederis; Valeria.Best@ascr.usda.gov; Gunn, Joshua; Gray, Lisa

Subject: RE: Do Not Restore Shirley Sherrod

Please take me off your e-mail list. Thank you Dr. Velma Charles-Shannon

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 8:44 AM

To: Kim, SaeMi; Klessling, Jenniffer; Jones, Tracy; Jones, Elaine; Johnson-Osborne, Fonshelle; Jaskille, Yamil; Jackman, Pat; Hunter, Pat; Hugh, Fred; Holt, Teresa; Holmes, Joseph; Holmes, Carl - ASCR; Ho, Elaine; Hines, Marsheela; Herring, Geraldine; Henry, William; Hawkins, Channing; Adams, Generosa; Ahmed, Tonya; Ahmed, Vaqar; Albert, Lawrence; Alexander, Tamara; Allen, Deborah; Anderson, Sequana; Asu, Aloysius; August, Sterling; Baisden, Kenneth; Banks, Gypsy; Belardo, Tiambe; Bogan, Arlita; Branham, Michael; Brock, Jacqueline; Brown, DarrellR; Brown, Moses; Bruce, Casimir; Bryant, Shella; Butler, Carl; Butler, Cinnamon; Anita.Byrd@ascr.usda.gov; Cain, Barrett; Carr, Jeffery; Carroll, Maurice; casefile, Cr; Chan, Wal-Ping; Cleaver-Bascombe, Karen; Coleman, Lisa; Coleman, Oliver L; Connelly, Claire; Contreras, Roberto; Council, Diversity; Daniels, Robert; Davis, Deborah; Davis, Maisha; Davis, Rhonda; Davis, Rosetta; Davis-Wright, Dianne; DeBose, Barbara; Do, Sonny; Edmonson, Gwen; Ellis, Lolita -USDA; Evans, Tavonna; Fox, Shawntey; Frazier, Jacqueline; Gaskins, DonnaM; Shirley.Glover@ascr.usda.gov; Golden, Daruss; Goode, Corlice; Goodwill, Rosanne; Gordon, Ebony; Graham, Paula; Green, Yolanda; Griffin, Alpha; Hall, Violet; Hamilton, Deb; Harrington-Watson, Shirley; Harris, Keela; Harris, Lynette; Harrison, Michael; Hatchett, Robert; Chisholm, Mark; Dinzey, Raul; Banks, Denise; Alexander, Reginald; Cox, Doretha -USDA; Davis, Steve; Johnson, Loretha; Hammond, Rondl; Dillahunt, Hezekiah; CRES HelpDesk; Ferreira, Michele; Anderson, Erin; Daughtridge, James; Dean, Telora; Fields, Sederis; Charles-Shannon, Velma; Valeria.Best@ascr.usda.gov; Gunn, Joshua; Gray, Lisa

Subject: Do Not Restore Shirley Sherrod

The Department of Agriculture is critically important to the citizens of the United States and I applaud your work. I urge however that Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack not reconsider returning Shirley Sherrod to her position within your department.

While Shirley states that her actions occurred some 24 years ago there is no evidence that she does not still hold and harbor the same racist beliefs and practices as claimed in her speech to the NAACP. It is absolutely mission critical that all Americans regardless of race be treated equally and she has proven that she cannot be trusted to uphold this mission. To accept this racist attitude within your Department will compromise the values of your organization.

What proof is there that she has not continued these deplorable actions?
 What safeguards are in place to ensure it does not happen again?

Do we simply trust her words?

Certainly, we must hold both our Elected Officials and our Government Employees to a high standard to ensure they are working diligently in the behalf of all citizens regardless of race. Shirley has failed both the citizens and the Department and to reinstate her would be an admission of the Department of Agriculture that they accept these deplorable actions.

Denny Barnes

07-21-10:10:05AM;

202-225-9817

1 / 1



ASCR # 19711
7/21/2010

Contact Us

Congressional Black Caucus
244 Rayburn Building
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 226-9776 (T)
(202) 225-9817 (F)
[click here to email us](#)

**CBC Statement on the
Resignation of Shirley Sherrod**

Wednesday, July 21, 2010

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact : J. Joni Palmer

(Washington, D.C.) - Congressional Black Caucus Chairwoman Barbara Lee and members of the CBC released the following statement today on the firing of USDA employee Shirley Sherrod:

"It is troubling that Shirley Sherrod was asked for her resignation as Georgia State Director for Rural Development at the U.S. Department of Agriculture because of an edited video clip. A full review of the clip demonstrates Ms. Sherrod's personal transformation. She was clearly educating the public about the power of redemption. It is now apparent that Secretary Vilsack did not have all of the facts available to him and overreacted.

"The Congressional Black Caucus continues to believe that Ms. Sherrod was unfairly asked to resign, without due process and should be reinstated immediately. There are many individuals still serving in the Department of Agriculture who were responsible for years of discrimination against African American farmers.

"We also believe that a national dialogue on race must be held. Last November, we held a forum on race in Washington DC to begin the discussion. The basis for Ms. Sherrod's resignation is another example of why we must not sweep race under the rug. Rather, we must come together as a nation and recognize that we do not live in a post-racial era and that, while difficult, we must confront these issues head on with clarity and without fear.

"Ms. Sherrod has been an effective public servant and it would be tragic to lose a person of such caliber, competence and commitment to fairness and equality and one who has dedicated her life to working for a more perfect union."

Patterson, Veda

From: Asu, Aloysius
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:21 AM
To: Patterson, Veda
Cc: Banks, Denise
Subject: FW: Shirley Sherrod

...more complaint emails on Shirley Sherrod's comments

From: Webmaster -USDA
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:18 AM
To: Asu, Aloysius
Cc: Priestly, Karen -RD
Subject: FW: Shirley Sherrod

Please see the item below.

Thanks.

Vic

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:07 PM
To: Webmaster -USDA
Subject: Shirley Sherrod

I was wondering if you are aware of Georgia Secretary of Rural Development head Shirley Sherrod and her speech before the NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet?

She openly admits to NOT helping a farmer because the farmer is white.

She should be removed from office immediately.

Michael Gray



Scott, Winona

From: McNeil, Mary
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 5:28 PM
To: Scott, Winona
Subject: FW: Help

Can you help with this tonight? See email exchange. Thanks.

-----Original Message-----

From: Jeanquart, Bobbi
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 5:25 PM
To: McNeil, Mary
Subject: Fw: Help

Can you help get this info or follow up with dr leonard

----- Original Message -----

From: Jett, Carole
To: Heard, Robin; Jeanquart, Bobbi; Leonard, Joe
Cc: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tue Jul 20 17:23:42 2010
Subject: Help

I need to get the facts around the [REDACTED] go last year.

Mather needs for press inquiries tonight.

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA
[REDACTED]

Scott, Winona

From: Vaughn, Gladys
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 6:53 AM
To: Scott, Winona
Subject: Re: Shirley Sherrod

Will try again today...her cell mailbox is full. Might try her home # this morning.
Ggv

From: Scott, Winona
To: Vaughn, Gladys
Sent: Wed Jul 21 17:21:29 2010
Subject: Shirley Sherrod



Winona Lake Scott
Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
202.401.3648 voice
202.690.1782 fax

Scott, Winona

From: mgagarin@naacpldf.org
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 8:46 PM
To: Scott, Winona
Subject: NAACP Legal Defense Fund Statement on Shirley Sherrod

You're receiving this email because of your relationship with NAACP Legal Defense Fund. Please confirm your continued interest in receiving email from us.

You may unsubscribe if you no longer wish to receive our emails.



July 21st, 2010

NAACP Legal Defense Fund Statement on Shirley Sherrod

(New York) – The ordeal that Shirley Sherrod has endured this week with such strength and grace should never have happened. No one should be so unfairly accused. And no one should lose their job without a fair chance to respond to the allegations against them. Of course, Shirley Sherrod should be reinstated to an appropriate position. Of course, she should receive an apology from those government officials who contributed to her ordeal.



###

ABOUT LDF

The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.(LDF) is America's premier legal organization fighting for racial justice. Through litigation, advocacy, and public education, LDF seeks structural changes to expand democracy, eliminate disparities, and achieve racial justice in a society that fulfills the promise of equality for all Americans. LDF also defends the gains and protections won over the past 70 years of civil rights struggle and works to improve the quality and diversity of judicial and executive appointments.

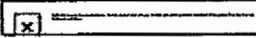


Mel Gagarin, Media Manager (212) 965-2783 or mgagarin@naacpldf.org

ABOUT LDF

The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund (LDF) is America's legal counsel on issues of race. Through advocacy and litigation, LDF focuses on issues of education, voter protection, economic justice and criminal justice. We encourage students to embark on careers in the public interest through scholarships and internship programs. LDF pursues racial justice to move our

nation toward a society that fulfills the promise of equality for all Americans.



Send to A Friend



This email was sent to winona.scott@usda.gov by mgagarin@naacpldf.org.
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NAACP Legal Defense Fund | 99 Hudson Street, Suite 1600 | New York | NY | 10013

Email Marketing by



Scott, Winona

From: Banks, Denise
Sent: Tuesday, July 27, 2010 3:12 PM
To: Leonard, Joe
Cc: Scott, Winona; Edmonson, Gwen
Subject: FW: Question from USDA.gov-- QAW - 1279610053690

Dr. Leonard,

We are in receipt of this request from the USDA Webmaster. Shall we respond or has someone in the Department been designated to answer correspondence related to Shirley Sherrod. Please advise.

Denise A. Banks
Director
Data and Records Management Division
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
Tel: (202) 401-7654 or 720-5212
Fax: (202) 401-4571 or 720-8376

-----Original Message-----

From: Patterson, Veda
Sent: Tuesday, July 27, 2010 3:08 PM
To: Banks, Denise
Subject: FW: Question from USDA.gov-- QAW - 1279610053690

-----Original Message-----

From: Asu, Aloysius
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:17 AM
To: Patterson, Veda
Cc: Banks, Denise
Subject: FW: Question from USDA.gov-- QAW - 1279610053690

Hi Veda,
Please see item below from "Ask the Expert" that seems to be catching on fire.

Thanks
Aloysius

-----Original Message-----

From: Webmaster -USDA
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:11 AM
To: Asu, Aloysius
Subject: FW: Question from USDA.gov-- QAW - 1279610053690

Aloysius:

Please see the item below. I have also sent it to Rural Development.

Vic

-----Original Message-----



coalición
RURAL
coalition

1012 14th Street NW Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20005
phone 202/628-7160, fax 202/393-1816
www.ruralco.org

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**Darnella Burkett Winston,
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Starry Krueger
Rural Development Leadership Network,
New York, NY

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Council, Moiese, MT**

Carlos Marentes
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Columbia, MO

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Minneapolis, MN

Marge Townsend, Emeritus
North American Farm Alliance
Windsor, OH

John Bloch, Emeritus
Marlham Center, Montpelier, VT

For further information, contact Lorette Picciano at 202-628-7160 or 703-624-8869 or lpicciano@ruralco.org or John Zippert at 205-652-9676 or 205-372-3373.

July 20, 2010

What our Members and Allies are saying about our friend and Colleague, Shirley Sherrod and her forced resignation from USDA.

John Zippert, Chairperson, Rural Coalition

We urge the President and the Secretary of Agriculture to reinstate Ms. Sherrod with apologies. If the Obama administration is going to let Glenn Beck tell them who they can appoint to positions, they might as well go home. This makes no sense. Ms Sherrod was doing exactly what President Obama and Attorney General Holder have urged us to do: have the courage to talk about race and in this case how she learned that it was not the only thing that excludes people from the benefits of our society.

Georgia Good, Executive Director, Rural Advancement Fund and Vice Chairperson, Rural Coalition

"All the years I have known her, Shirley Sherrod has always been a positive force in the rural communities for economic change, policy change and social change. We regret that President Obama, the USDA and the NAACP did not investigate the facts and allowed this tragedy to happen to such an important leader. We hope they will rectify this error and that Ms. Sherrod will not allow this injustice to stop her in any way from doing this important work."

Ross Racine, Executive Director, Intertribal Agriculture Council, Billings, MT

"Shirley Sherrod helped out of the goodness of her heart and is being chastised for helping someone out side of her scope of work, helping someone of a different color. Sounds to me like someone in the local democratic party did not agree with her appointment thus had to go back 24 years in history to find some thing to discredit this loving, giving lady....The administration and career staff at USDA have allowed 70 years of preferential treatment of "traditional partners" which in turn gave rise to court cases founded on their exclusionary practices. The court cases are yet to be resolved nor has been lasting correction to "administration supported practices." Yet someone who has made a career of truly helping others is being held up as the example. This just stinks of political manipulation!"

Rudy Arredondo, President, National Latino Farmers and Ranchers Trade Association, Washington, DC

"For years, numerous administrations could find no way to even reprimand the former director of loan servicing for USDA, who had a

noose in his desk and by failing to take action on civil rights complaints, allowed thousands of families to loose their land. How could USDA finally allow him to quietly retire a few months back, while forcing Shirley out on the basis of a 'you tube' video without apparently giving her an opportunity to come to Washington, DC and state her case?"

Marge Townsend, Rural Coalition Board member and retired family farmer, Windsor, Ohio

"Shirley has been helping farmers for a very long time. There is no way she would do anything wrong. I am sorry what they are using against her is taken so badly out of context."

Mily Trevino-Sauceda, Board member, Rural Coalition

"Shirley has had an exemplary life in helping and supporting many, including the farmworker women in Lideres Campesinas when we were just a group struggling to survive and sought her support in the late 90s. She was there to listen and mentor us to continue our struggle strong and we will never forget and we are here now to be with and support her as well."

Chukou Thao, Executive Director, National Hmong American Farmers, Inc.

"We, NHAF and the Hmong community in Fresno and throughout this United States have a very deep and honest respect for Mrs. Shirley Sherrod. This respect has been earned because of her commitment and years of service for small minority farmers. This is a very sad day when a person who has earned her place in this move for equal justice is not judged by her life long achievement but rather by what other choose to present. Mrs. Shirley is a friend, family and a mentor for us all. If there is anything we can do, please let us know. The Hmong farming family is behind Mrs. Sherrod 100%."

Lorette Picciano, Executive Director, Rural Coalition

"Shirley Sherrod has been our close colleague, mentor and dear friend who has taken the tragedies and struggles of her own life and turned them into a indefatigable commitment to protect others from injustices. It has been a continuing honor to work with her in the shared efforts of our many diverse organizations to transform the unjust systems of the US Department of Agriculture. We cannot but stand with her at this time, as she has done for so many others on so many occasions, and call on USDA to do what is hard, and what is right. What Ms. Sherrod, together with the Spooner family, is courageously teaching us opens a new door to solving, resolving and healing what has long plagued USDA and our society. We will be a richer nation and better society if we continue this discussion together."



coalición
RURAL
coalition

1012 14th Street NW Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20005
phone 202/628-7160, fax 202/393-1816
www.ruralco.org

Board of Directors

John Zippert, Chair*
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Maria Moreira
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Gary R. Redding
Concerned Citizens of Tillery, Tillery, NC

Willard Tillman
Oklahoma Black Historical Research
Project Oklahoma City, OK

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American Farmer, Fresno, CA**

Russel Zepher, Pine Ridge, SD

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Patricia Bellanger, Emeritus
American Indian Movement
Minneapolis, MN

Marge Townsend, Emeritus
North American Farm Alliance
Windsor, OH

John Bloch, Emeritus
Markham Center, Montpelier, VT

For further information, contact Lorette Picciano at 202-628-7160 or 703-624-8869 or lpicciano@ruralco.org or John Zippert at 205-652-9676 or 205-372-3373.

July 20, 2010

Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

On behalf of the Rural Coalition and all the undersigned groups, we express our full support for our friend and colleague, Ms. Shirley Sherrod who was hastily forced from her position as the USDA Georgia State Rural Development Director yesterday.

We deeply admire Ms. Sherrod for the work she has done for a lifetime to help thousands of families stay on the land and develop their communities. Her integrity and vision have helped keep our diverse leaders from the many organizations, who have worked with her for many years, unified and focused on making life better for rural communities and people across this nation.

We call on President Obama and Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack to reinstate Ms. Sherrod and apologize for the pressure they applied to force her resignation before a full inquiry into the matter.

Ms. Sherrod in her speech to an NAACP group courageously and honestly used her own experience to make the very point that race is not the only problem, and that all in society deserve to be treated fairly. We call on the President and Attorney General Eric Holder, who say they want to have an honest discussion of race in America, to step in at this moment to assure fairness to her as well.

Outraged by the treatment a white farm family received so many years ago, Ms. Sherrod, an African American woman in the rural south, took action when she didn't have to do so. We have observed Ms. Sherrod acting from the same outrage on many occasions in the years since for farmers of all races.

As leader of the 5-year USDA Community Based Organization Partners process, Ms. Sherrod was the one a few years ago who passionately insisted that the injustices experienced by Hmong immigrant producers in Arkansas be addressed by USDA. Moreover, it was her leadership of shared efforts that set the stage for the Civil Rights Initiative of the current Secretary.

We are distressed and deeply disappointed that instead of seeking the facts and using a teachable moment to invoke a conversation our society desperately needs to have, the Obama administration allowed Glenn Beck and other commentators to dictate who works for them and for us, the American people. They have in the process denied the people of Georgia a state official who was accomplishing important investment in their rural communities.

We the undersigned also raise our deepest concern about the hasty actions of the USDA and the statements of the NAACP, made before a full inquiry into the matter. We compliment CNN and others in the press for digging deeper and correcting their errors and are glad to see that NAACP has retracted their earlier denouncements and apologized to Ms. Sherrod.

We find it deeply ironic that after 100 years of discrimination precipitating the loss of thousands of acres of land from family farmers and Indian tribes, that USDA, which has never dismissed anyone for discriminating, now forces the resignation of a talented African American woman on unfounded claims that she will be unable to do her job based on her practicing discrimination in which she helps a white family save their farm.

Most of all we thank Roger Spooner and his wife and family for coming forward to share the full story, and Ms. Sherrod herself, for her eloquence and courage in the face of these outrageous and undeserved attacks. If USDA has no toleration for discrimination, there is no choice but to reinstate Ms. Sherrod with apologies. We stand with her, and urge President Obama and Secretary Vilsack to set this matter right. Doing only that much is justice; using this experience to demonstrate, as Attorney General Holder has suggested, that we can learn together to become one society, would be leadership.

Rural Coalition/Coalición Rural
Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund
Rural Advancement Fund
Intertribal Agriculture Council
Farmworker Association of Florida
Flats Mentor Farm
Mississippi Association of Cooperatives
National Family Farm Coalition
National Latino Farmers and Ranchers Trade Association
National Immigrant Farmers Initiative
National Hmong American Farmers
North Carolina Association of Black Lawyers Land Loss Prevention Project
North American Farm Alliance
League of Rural Voters
Oklahoma Black Historical Research Project
Organización en California de Líderes Campesinas
Rural Development Leadership Network

**Twenty First Century Youth
Border Agricultural Workers Union
Agriculture Missions, Inc.
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
Concerned Citizens of Tillery
Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association**

Knishkowy, Jeff

From: Knishkowy, Jeff
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:40 AM
To: Leonard, Joe; McNeil, Mary
Subject: Shirley Sherrod

Please let me know if there is any way I can be helpful.

This seems like a natural place for Special Counsel for Civil Rights to contribute in some way. On the other hand, I know there's a lot going on with program adjudication, so I'm not looking to over-commit myself. Just wanting to provide options in a sensitive situation.

Jeff

Jeff Knishkowy
Special Counsel for Civil Rights
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights

[REDACTED]
(202) 205-3579
[REDACTED]

Knishkowy, Jeff

From: Knishkowy, Jeff
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 12:10 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Sherrod

As much as I would like to have been involved, I was not (other than following developments very closely in the media). Fascinating, indeed!

From: [REDACTED] **On Behalf Of** Judith Greiman
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 11:03 AM
To: Knishkowy, Jeff
Subject: Sherrod

Yikrs. What a story! Are you involved in this by virtue of your position? Must be crazy time at your agency.

Non-responsive

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 6:19 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Purchia, Liz
Subject: WaPo (Karl Lydersen): Keepseagle

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: kari lydersen [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 6:16 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: washington post interview request

Hello Stephanie

I'm a Chicago-based freelancer for the Washington Post doing a story related to the Shirley Sherrod situation and the Keepseagle class action lawsuit.

I'm hoping to speak with someone by 10am Friday, or as soon as possible, we're planning to do something on a quick turnaround.

[REDACTED]

Basically Native Americans in the area and attorneys in the Keepseagle case are asking why [REDACTED] has not been

investigated, disciplined or fired given these complaints, and they think the situation with Sherrod makes this more prominent. So I'm hoping to speak with someone from the USDA about this situation in general and I'm wondering if you can tell me if any investigation or action has been taken regarding complaints against [REDACTED] or his arrest (which resulted in a stay of prosecution in federal court). Thanks and hope to talk with you soon

Sincerely,

Kari Lydersen
[REDACTED]

Kari Lydersen
[REDACTED]

www.karilydersen.com

Non-responsive

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 6:19 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Purchia, Liz
Subject: WaPo (Kari Lydersen): Keepseagle

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: kari lydersen [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 6:16 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: washington post interview request

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and the Keepseagle class action lawsuit.

I'm hoping to speak with someone by 10am Friday, or as soon as possible, we're planning to do something on a quick turnaround.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Native Americans in and around the [REDACTED] reservation. Basically Native Americans in the area and attorneys in the Keepseagle case are asking why [REDACTED] has not been investigated, disciplined or fired given these complaints, and they think the situation with Sherrod makes this more prominent. So I'm hoping to speak with someone from the USDA about this situation in general and I'm wondering if you can tell me if any investigation or action has been taken regarding complaints against [REDACTED] or his arrest (which resulted in a stay of prosecution in federal court). Thanks and hope to talk with you soon.

Sincerely,

Kari Lydersen

[REDACTED]

Kari Lydersen

[REDACTED]

www.kari.lydersen.com

Branham, Michael

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 8:44 AM
To: Kim, SaeMi; Kiessling, Jenniffer; Jones, Elaine; Johnson-Osborne, Fonshelle; Johnson, Loretha; Jaskilla, Yamil; Jackman, Pat; Hunter, Pat; Holt, Teresa; Holmes, Joseph; Holmes, Carl - ASCR; Hines, Marsheela; Herring, Geraldine; Henry, William; Hawkins, Channing; Adams, Generosa; Ahmed, Tonya; Ahmed, Vaqar; Alexander, Reginald; Alexander, Tamara; Anderson, Erin; Asu, Aloysius; August, Sterling; Baisden, Kenneth; Banks, Denise; Belardo, Tlamba; Valeria.Best@ascr.usda.gov; Bogan, Arlita; Brock, Jacqueline; Butler, Cinnamon; Anita.Byrd@ascr.usda.gov; Cain, Barrett; Carr, Jeffery; casefile, Cr; Chan, Wai-Ping; Charles-Shannon, Velma; Chisholm, Mark; Cleaver-Bascombe, Karen; Coleman, Lisa; Coleman, Oliver L; Connelly, Claire; Contreras, Roberto; Cox, Doretha -USDA; CRES HelpDesk; Daniels, Robert; Daughtridge, James; Davis, Deborah; Davis, Maisha; Davis, Rhonda; Davis, Rosetta; Davis, Steve; Davis-Wright, Dianne; Dean, Telora; DeBose, Barbara; Dillahunt, Hezekiah; Dinzey, Raul; Ellis, Lolita -USDA; Evans, Tavonna; Ferreira, Michele; Fields, Sederis; Fox, Shawntey; Frazier, Jacqueline; Gaskins, DonnaM; Golden, Daruss; Goode, Corlice; Gordon, Ebony; Graham, Paula; Gray, Lisa; Green, Yolanda; Griffin, Alpha; Gunn, Joshua; Hall, Violet; Hamilton, Deb; Hammond, Rondi; Harrington-Watson, Shirley; Harris, Keela; Harris, Lynette; Hatchett, Robert; Bruce, Casimir; Hugh, Fred; Branham, Michael; Edmonson, Gwen; Banks, Gypsy; Ho, Elaine; Goodwill, Rosanne; Bryant, Sheila; Butler, Carl; Anderson, Sequana; Council, Diversity; Brown, Moses; Carroll, Maurice; Jones, Tracy; Harrison, Michael; Allen, Deborah; Do, Sonny; Brown, DarrellR; Shirley.Glover@ascr.usda.gov; Albert, Lawrence

Subject: Do Not Restore Shirley Sherrod
Attachments: image001.gif

The Department of Agriculture is critically important to the citizens of the United States and I applaud your work. I urge however that Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack not reconsider returning Shirley Sherrod to her position within your department.

While Shirley states that her actions occurred some 24 years ago there is no evidence that she does not still hold and harbor the same racist beliefs and practices as claimed in her speech to the NAACP. It is absolutely mission critical that all Americans regardless of race be treated equally and she has proven that she cannot be trusted to uphold this mission. To accept this racist attitude within your Department will compromise the values of your organization.

What proof is there that she has not continued these deplorable actions?
 What safeguards are in place to ensure it does not happen again?
 Do we simply trust her words?

Certainly, we must hold both our Elected Officials and our Government Employees to a high standard to ensure they are working diligently in the behalf of all citizens regardless of race. Shirley has failed both the citizens and the Department and to reinstate her would be an admission of the Department of Agriculture that they accept these deplorable actions.

Denny Barnes

Branham, Michael

From: The Office of the Secretary
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 3:45 PM
To: ALL-USDA-2K
Subject: Message from Secretary Vilsack

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250**

Many of you have contacted me to offer your support, and for those comments, I am appreciative. This has been a very difficult week for many of us at USDA because of a decision I made regarding the employment of Shirley Sherrod. For that, I want to apologize to all of you.

I reacted too quickly. I should have taken the time to listen and learn.

I apologized to Mrs. Sherrod on Wednesday and told her I was sorry for any pain this caused her and her family. Thankfully, she graciously accepted my apology. I also offered her a unique opportunity to continue her service in federal government at USDA and I am hopeful that she accepts.

As we all have learned, Mrs. Sherrod has a compelling story to tell. She and her family endured discrimination and overcame adversity. Fighting to advance justice and equality, she has helped farmers who were struggling to keep their land, fought for women in need of social and economic justice, and also for African-American men and women who faced discrimination. With all that she has seen, endured and accomplished, it would be invaluable to have her experience, commitment and record of service at USDA.

We continue to make important progress correcting USDA's record on civil rights, but obviously, there is still a lot more work to do. You have heard me talk about my commitment to fairness and equality through the last 18 months, and I ask that you continue working with me to correct injustices of the past.

Thank you for your commitment to USDA and your continued service to the American people.

Tom Vilsack

Secretary of Agriculture

Branham, Michael

From: Asu, Aloysius
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 4:08 PM
To: #ASCR-ALL
Subject: CBS Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

CBS Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod: Please do not ignore the attached message!



Shirley_Sherrod.pdf



ASCR # 19711
7/21/2010

Contact Us

Congressional Black Caucus
244 Rayburn Building
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 226-9776 (T)
(202) 225-9817 (F)
[click here to email us](#)

**CBC Statement on the
Resignation of Shirley Sherrod**

Wednesday, July 21, 2010

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact : J. Joni Palmer

(Washington, D.C.) - Congressional Black Caucus Chairwoman Barbara Lee and members of the CBC released the following statement today on the firing of USDA employee Shirley Sherrod:

"It is troubling that Shirley Sherrod was asked for her resignation as Georgia State Director for Rural Development at the U.S. Department of Agriculture because of an edited video clip. A full review of the clip demonstrates Ms. Sherrod's personal transformation. She was clearly educating the public about the power of redemption. It is now apparent that Secretary Vilsack did not have all of the facts available to him and overreacted.

"The Congressional Black Caucus continues to believe that Ms. Sherrod was unfairly asked to resign, without due process and should be reinstated immediately. There are many individuals still serving in the Department of Agriculture who were responsible for years of discrimination against African American farmers.

"We also believe that a national dialogue on race must be held. Last November, we held a forum on race in Washington DC to begin the discussion. The basis for Ms. Sherrod's resignation is another example of why we must not sweep race under the rug. Rather, we must come together as a nation and recognize that we do not live in a post-racial era and that, while difficult, we must confront these issues head on with clarity and without fear.

"Ms. Sherrod has been an effective public servant and it would be tragic to lose a person of such caliber, competence and commitment to fairness and equality and one who has dedicated her life to working for a more perfect union."

Jaskille, Yamil

From: Cain, Barrett
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 11:00 AM
To: Charles-Shannon, Velma; [REDACTED] Kim, SaeMi; Kiessling, Jenniffer; Jones, Tracy; Jones, Elaine; Johnson-Osborne, Fonshelle; Jaskille, Yamil; Jackman, Pat; Hunter, Pat; Hugh, Fred; Holt, Teresa; Holmes, Joseph; Holmes, Carl - ASCR; Ho, Elaine; Hines, Marsheela; Herring, Geraldine; Henry, William; Hawkins, Channing; Adams, Generosa; Ahmed, Tonya; Ahmed, Vaqar; Albert, Lawrence; Alexander, Tamara; Allen, Deborah; Anderson, Sequana; Asu, Aloysius; August, Sterling; Baisden, Kenneth; Banks, Gypsy; Belardo, Tiambe; Bogan, Arlita; Branham, Michael; Brock, Jacqueline; Brown, DarrellR; Brown, Moses; Bruce, Casimir; Bryant, Sheila; Butler, Carl; Butler, Cinnamon; 'Anita.Byrd@ascr.usda.gov'; Carr, Jeffery; Carroll, Maurice; casefile, Cr; Chan, Wai-Ping; Cleaver-Bascombe, Karen; Coleman, Lisa; Coleman, Oliver L; Connelly, Claire; Contreras, Roberto; Council, Diversity; Daniels, Robert; Davis, Deborah; Davis, Maisha; Davis, Rhonda; Davis, Rosetta; Davis-Wright, Dianne; DeBose, Barbara; Do, Sonny; Edmonson, Gwen; Ellis, Lolita -USDA; Evans, Tavonna; Fox, Shawntey; Frazier, Jacqueline; Gaskins, DonnaM; 'Shirley.Glover@ascr.usda.gov'; Golden, Daruss; Goode, Corlice; Goodwill, Rosanne; Gordon, Ebony; Graham, Paula; Green, Yolanda; Griffin, Alpha; Hall, Violet; Hamilton, Deb; Harrington-Watson, Shirley; Harris, Keela; Harris, Lynette; Harrison, Michael; Hatchett, Robert; Chisholm, Mark; Dinzey, Raul; Banks, Denise; Alexander, Reginald; Cox, Doretha - USDA; Davis, Steve; Johnson, Loretha; Hammond, Rondi; Dillahunt, Hezekiah; CRES HelpDesk; Ferreira, Michele; Anderson, Erin; Daughtridge, James; Dean, Telora; Fields, Sederis; 'Valeria.Best@ascr.usda.gov'; Gunn, Joshua; Gray, Lisa
Subject: RE: Do Not Restore Shirley Sherrod

This is an official Government site, please remove My name from your mailing list.

Thank you,

Rev. Barrett R. Cain, M-Div., M.A. CDP
 Certified Diversity professional

From: Charles-Shannon, Velma
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 10:53 AM
To: [REDACTED] Kim, SaeMi; Kiessling, Jenniffer; Jones, Tracy; Jones, Elaine; Johnson-Osborne, Fonshelle; Jaskille, Yamil; Jackman, Pat; Hunter, Pat; Hugh, Fred; Holt, Teresa; Holmes, Joseph; Holmes, Carl - ASCR; Ho, Elaine; Hines, Marsheela; Herring, Geraldine; Henry, William; Hawkins, Channing; Adams, Generosa; Ahmed, Tonya; Ahmed, Vaqar; Albert, Lawrence; Alexander, Tamara; Allen, Deborah; Anderson, Sequana; Asu, Aloysius; August, Sterling; Baisden, Kenneth; Banks, Gypsy; Belardo, Tiambe; Bogan, Arlita; Branham, Michael; Brock, Jacqueline; Brown, DarrellR; Brown, Moses; Bruce, Casimir; Bryant, Sheila; Butler, Carl; Butler, Cinnamon; Anita.Byrd@ascr.usda.gov; Cain, Barrett; Carr, Jeffery; Carroll, Maurice; casefile, Cr; Chan, Wai-Ping; Cleaver-Bascombe, Karen; Coleman, Lisa; Coleman, Oliver L; Connelly, Claire; Contreras, Roberto; Council, Diversity; Daniels, Robert; Davis, Deborah; Davis, Maisha; Davis, Rhonda; Davis, Rosetta; Davis-Wright, Dianne; DeBose, Barbara; Do, Sonny; Edmonson, Gwen; Ellis, Lolita -USDA; Evans, Tavonna; Fox, Shawntey; Frazier, Jacqueline; Gaskins, DonnaM; Shirley.Glover@ascr.usda.gov; Golden, Daruss; Goode, Corlice; Goodwill, Rosanne; Gordon, Ebony; Graham, Paula; Green, Yolanda; Griffin, Alpha; Hall, Violet; Hamilton, Deb; Harrington-Watson, Shirley; Harris, Keela; Harris, Lynette; Harrison, Michael; Hatchett, Robert; Chisholm, Mark; Dinzey, Raul; Banks, Denise; Alexander, Reginald; Cox, Doretha -USDA; Davis, Steve; Johnson, Loretha; Hammond, Rondi; Dillahunt, Hezekiah; CRES HelpDesk; Ferreira, Michele; Anderson, Erin; Daughtridge, James; Dean, Telora; Fields, Sederis; Valeria.Best@ascr.usda.gov; Gunn, Joshua; Gray, Lisa
Subject: RE: Do Not Restore Shirley Sherrod

Please take me off your e-mail list. Thank you Dr. Velma Charles-Shannon

From: denny.barnes@fbinsmi.com [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 8:44 AM
To: Kim, SaeMi; Kiessling, Jenniffer; Jones, Tracy; Jones, Elaine; Johnson-Osborne, Fonshelle; Jaskille, Yamil; Jackman, Pat; Hunter, Pat; Hugh, Fred; Holt, Teresa; Holmes, Joseph; Holmes, Carl - ASCR; Ho, Elaine; Hines, Marsheela; Herring, Geraldine; Henry, William; Hawkins, Channing; Adams, Generosa; Ahmed, Tonya; Ahmed, Vaqar; Albert, Lawrence;

Alexander, Tamara; Allen, Deborah; Anderson, Sequana; Asu, Aloysius; August, Sterling; Baisden, Kenneth; Banks, Gypsy; Belardo, Tiambe; Bogan, Ariita; Branham, Michael; Brock, Jacqueline; Brown, DarrellR; Brown, Moses; Bruce, Casimir; Bryant, Sheila; Butler, Carl; Butler, Cinnamon; Anita.Byrd@ascr.usda.gov; Cain, Barrett; Carr, Jeffery; Carroll, Maurice; casefile, Cr; Chan, Wai-Ping; Cleaver-Bascombe, Karen; Coleman, Lisa; Coleman, Oliver L; Connelly, Claire; Contreras, Roberto; Council, Diversity; Daniels, Robert; Davis, Deborah; Davis, Maisha; Davis, Rhonda; Davis, Rosetta; Davis-Wright, Dianne; DeBose, Barbara; Do, Sonny; Edmonson, Gwen; Ellis, Lolita -USDA; Evans, Tavonna; Fox, Shawntey; Frazier, Jacqueline; Gaskins, DonnaM; Shirley.Glover@ascr.usda.gov; Golden, Daruss; Goode, Corlice; Goodwill, Rosanne; Gordon, Ebony; Graham, Paula; Green, Yolanda; Griffin, Alpha; Hall, Violet; Hamilton, Deb; Harrington-Watson, Shirley; Harris, Keela; Harris, Lynette; Harrison, Michael; Hatchett, Robert; Chisholm, Mark; Dinzey, Raul; Banks, Denise; Alexander, Reginald; Cox, Doretha -USDA; Davis, Steve; Johnson, Loretha; Hammond, Rondi; Dillahunt, Hezekiah; CRES HelpDesk; Ferreira, Michele; Anderson, Erin; Daughtridge, James; Dean, Telora; Fields, Sederis; Charles-Shannon, Velma; Valeria.Best@ascr.usda.gov; Gunn, Joshua; Gray, Lisa

Subject: Do Not Restore Shirley Sherrod

The Department of Agriculture is critically important to the citizens of the United States and I applaud your work. I urge however that Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack not reconsider returning Shirley Sherrod to her position within your department.

While Shirley states that her actions occurred some 24 years ago there is no evidence that she does not still hold and harbor the same racist beliefs and practices as claimed in her speech to the NAACP. It is absolutely mission critical that all Americans regardless of race be treated equally and she has proven that she cannot be trusted to uphold this mission. To accept this racist attitude within your Department will compromise the values of your organization.

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What safeguards are in place to ensure it does not happen again?

Do we simply trust her words?

Certainly, we must hold both our Elected Officials and our Government Employees to a high standard to ensure they are working diligently in the behalf of all citizens regardless of race. Shirley has failed both the citizens and the Department and to reinstate her would be an admission of the Department of Agriculture that they accept these deplorable actions.

Denny Barnes

Jaskille, Yamil

From: Jaskille, Yamil
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:50 AM
To: Perry, Kirk
Subject: FW: Do Not Restore Shirley Sherrod

Yesterday you asked me to forward you the emails related to the Shirley Sherrod case. Did you receive these two, today? This is the second, at 10:49 a.m.

From: Chisholm, Mark
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:49 AM
To: Kim, SaeMI; Klessling, Jennifer; Jones, Tracy; Jones, Elaine; Johnson-Osborne, Fonshelle; Jaskille, Yamil; Jackman, Patricia -FS; Hunter, Pat; Hugh, Fred; Holt, Teresa; Holmes, Joseph; Holmes, Carl - ASCR; Ho, Elaine; Hines, Marsheela; Herring, Geraldine; Henry, William; Hawkins, Channing; Adams, Generosa; Ahmed, Tonya; Ahmed, Vaqar; Albert, Lawrence; Alexander, Tamara; Allen, Deborah; Anderson, Sequana; Asu, Aloysius; August, Sterling; Baisden, Kenneth; Banks, Gypsy; Belardo, Tlambe; Bogan, Arlita; Branham, Michael; Brock, Jacqueline; Brown, DarrellR; Brown, Moses; Bruce, Casimir; Bryant, Sheila; Butler, Carl; Butler, Cinnamon; 'Anita.Byrd@ascr.usda.gov'; Cain, Barrett; Carr, Jeffery; Carroll, Maurice; casefile, Cr; Chan, Wai-Ping; Cleaver-Bascombe, Karen; Coleman, Lisa; Coleman, Oliver L; Connelly, Claire; Contreras, Roberto; Council, Diversity; Daniels, Robert; Davis, Deborah; Davis, Maisha; Davis, Rhonda; Davis, Rosetta; Davis-Wright, Dianne; DeBose, Barbara; Do, Sonny; Edmonson, Gwen; Ellis, Lolita -USDA; Evans, Tavonna; Fox, Shawntey; Frazier, Jacqueline; Gaskins, DonnaM; 'Shirley.Glover@ascr.usda.gov'; Golden, Daruss; Goode, Corlice; Goodwill, Rosanne; Gordon, Ebony; Graham, Paula; Green, Yolanda; Griffin, Alpha; Hall, Violet; Hamilton, Deb; Harrington-Watson, Shirley; Harris, Keela; Harris, Lynette; Harrison, Michael; Hatchett, Robert; Chisholm, Mark; Dinzey, Raul; Banks, Denise; Alexander, Reginald; Cox, Doretha -USDA; Davis, Steve; Johnson, Loretha; Hammond, Rondi; Dillahunt, Hezekiah; CRES HelpDesk; Ferreira, Michele; Anderson, Erin; Daughtridge, James; Dean, Telora; Fields, Sederis; Charles-Shannon, Velma; 'Valeria.Best@ascr.usda.gov'; Gunn, Joshua; Gray, Lisa
Subject: RE: Do Not Restore Shirley Sherrod

Why should I harbor any ill feeling towards Shirley Sherrod... The farmer that she assisted said that she helped her without reservations and his wife considers her a family friend. Denny if you want to alleviate racism at the USDA, why not establish a forum where all the information comes out at one time. Furthermore, who knows how racist you were 24 years ago. I am sure you harbor the same racist beliefs and practices that you claim Shirley holds. Yesterday, I supported your position without knowing all the facts and reviewing the tape in its entire content. Now I want to know? Can you be trusted? You say what proof is there that Shirley has not continued her deplorable actions? Well, Denny if you know something despicable about Shirley come out and say it! Stop denigrating her with your rumors and innuendo. If you can't take a person at their word, you have to look at their record. Show me the deplorable Shirley... Where is your proof of her racist practices and actions. Former Senator Byrd was an admitted klan-man, and his metamorphosis into a champion of human and civil rights are well documented. What have you done Denny to now carry the cross and champion the rights of the weak and under-served. When did you become the arbiter of all that's right in government? Brother Denny, he who is without sin cast the first stone! And somehow, you believe that you are an admirable person. Well, Denny you threw the first and second stone! Let's see what happens when the stone are tossed your way.

Jaskille, Yamil

From: Jaskille, Yamil
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:50 AM
To: Perry, Kirk
Subject: FW: Do Not Restore Shirley Sherrod
Attachments: image001.gif

Yesterday you asked me to forward you the emails related to the Shirley Sherrod case. Did you receive these two, today? This is the first one, at 8:44 a.m.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 8:44 AM
To: Kim, SaeMi; Kiessling, Jennifer; Jones, Tracy; Jones, Elaine; Johnson, Loretha; Hugh, Fred; Holmes, Joseph; Holmes, Carl - ASCR; Ho, Elaine; Hines, Marsheela; Henry, William; Hawkins, Channing; Adams, Generosa; Ahmed, Vaqar; Albert, Lawrence; Alexander, Reginald; Alexander, Tamara; Allen, Deborah; Anderson, Erin; Anderson, Sequana; Asu, Aloysius; Banks, Denise; Banks, Gypsy; Belardo, Tlamba; Valeria.Best@ascr.usda.gov; Bogan, Arlita; Branham, Michael; Brock, Jacqueline; Brown, DarrellR; Brown, Moses; Bruce, Casimir; Bryant, Sheila; Butler, Carl; Anita.Byrd@ascr.usda.gov; Cain, Barrett; Carr, Jeffery; Carroll, Maurice; casefile, Cr; Charles-Shannon, Velma; Chisholm, Mark; Cleaver-Bascombe, Karen; Contreras, Roberto; Council, Diversity; Cox, Doretha -USDA; CRES HelpDesk; Daughtridge, James; Davis, Deborah; Davis, Maisha; Davis, Rhonda; Davis, Rosetta; Davis, Steve; Davis-Wright, Dianne; Dean, Telora; DeBose, Barbara; Dillahunt, Hezekiah; Dinzey, Raul; Do, Sonny; Edmonson, Gwen; Ellis, Lolita -USDA; Evans, Tavonna; Ferreira, Michele; Fields, Sederis; Fox, Shawntey; Gaskins, DonnaM; Shirley.Glover@ascr.usda.gov; Golden, Daruss; Goode, Corlice; Goodwill, Rosanne; Gordon, Ebony; Graham, Paula; Gray, Lisa; Green, Yolanda; Gunn, Joshua; Hamilton, Deb; Hammond, Rondi; Harris, Keela; Harris, Lynette; Harrison, Michael; Hatchett, Robert; Hunter, Pat; Connelly, Claire; Hall, Violet; Jaskille, Yamil; Harrington-Watson, Shirley; Jackman, Pat; August, Sterling; Frazier, Jacqueline; Chan, Wai-Ping; Griffin, Alpha; Ahmed, Tonya; Butler, Cinnamon; Balsden, Kenneth; Coleman, Lisa; Coleman, Oliver L; Daniels, Robert; Johnson-Osborne, Fonshelle; Holt, Teresa; Herring, Geraldine
Subject: Do Not Restore Shirley Sherrod

The Department of Agriculture is critically important to the citizens of the United States and I applaud your work. I urge however that Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack not reconsider returning Shirley Sherrod to her position within your department.

While Shirley states that her actions occurred some 24 years ago there is no evidence that she does not still hold and harbor the same racist beliefs and practices as claimed in her speech to the NAACP. It is absolutely mission critical that all Americans regardless of race be treated equally and she has proven that she cannot be trusted to uphold this mission. To accept this racist attitude within your Department will compromise the values of your organization.

What proof is there that she has not continued these deplorable actions?
 What safeguards are in place to ensure it does not happen again?
 Do we simply trust her words?

Certainly, we must hold both our Elected Officials and our Government Employees to a high standard to ensure they are working diligently in the behalf of all citizens regardless of race. Shirley has failed both the citizens and the Department and to reinstate her would be an admission of the Department of Agriculture that they accept these deplorable actions.

Denny Barnes

Branham, Michael

From: Kiessling, Jennifer
Sent: Thursday, July 29, 2010 4:30 PM
To: Branham, Michael
Subject: FW:



From: [Redacted]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:54 PM
To: Harrington-Watson, Shirley; Harris, Keela; Hatchett, Robert; Hines, Marsheela; Hunter, Pat; Jackman, Pat; Kim, SaeMi; Kiessling, Jennifer; Jaskille, Yamil; Harris, Lynette; Kavanaugh, Queen; Hugh, Fred; Holmes, Joseph; Johnson-Osborne, Fonshelle; Holmes, Carl - ASCR; Hawkins, Channing; Harrison, Michael; Holt, Teresa; Jones, Tracy; Herring, Geraldine; Jones, Elaine; Hammond, Rondl; Henry, William; Johnson, Loretha; Ho, Elaine; Jones, Tiffany
Subject:

This is a major lawsuit in the making...justice is but one voice...stand up and be heard!!

News: USDA



CNN

- **USDA reconsiders employee ouster over race remarks**

WASHINGTON (AP) - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack says he will reconsider the department's...
NBC 2 · 6 hours ago

- **USDA official's resignation stirs racial tempest**

Los Angeles Times

- **USDA worker pressured to resign over race comments**

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Branham, Michael

From: Kiessling, Jennifer
Sent: Thursday, July 29, 2010 4:31 PM
To: Branham, Michael
Subject: FW: Shirley Sherrod

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:25 AM
To: washingtonbureau@naacpnet.org; Kim, SaeMi; Kiessling, Jennifer
Subject: Shirley Sherrod

Hello USDA folk and NAACP folk,

to the USDA people, I picked 3 of you quickly, hopefully you are the right people to contact.

I wanted to drop a quick note to both groups about the Shirley Sherrod situation that has come up in the news. I'm saddened by what I see. I saw the clip. What I saw was a woman who basically admitted that she had not helped a man who was white because he was white. She owned up to her mistake. She attempted to fix it. And most importantly she learned from it. She was brave enough to admit her mistake and own it. She used it as a learning point for others. And, your two groups condemned her for it. I agree completely that racism in any form is wrong. However, I have a great deal of respect and admiration for Ms Shirley Sherrod for standing up and learning from her mistake.

Isn't this the example we want to show the world? Look how we learn from our mistakes and grow. That's the example I want for my children. I am disappointed that we have become a disposable society. This is the most honestly I have seen from a government official in a long time. We should encourage that.

I am hoping any of you can explain to me why she is worthy of firing and why she is worthy of condemnation. If she had told this story as a punch line, absolutely fire her. If she had used racial epithets, kick her butt out of office. However, she told this story as a teaching example. It was clear that her intent was for others to learn from her mistakes. And it is an example we can all take to heart no matter our race, religion, gender, etc.

I teach my children who are 5 and 9 that you own up to your mistakes and learn from them. It is clear that Ms Shirley Sherrod has. My religion says that we must love one another and forgive. I am a Christian. I'm also white.

I appreciate your time in reading my e-mail.

Susan Vanderford

Manasseh, Shari

From: Graham, Paula
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:42 PM
To: Manasseh, Shari

<http://ac360.blogs.cnn.com/2010/07/20/ex-worker-usda-wasnt-interested-in-hearing-the-truth/>

Manasseh, Shari

From: Graham, Paula
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:11 AM
To: Hugh, Fred; Manasseh, Shari
Subject: a response.....

From: Chisholm, Mark
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:49 AM
To: Kim, SaeMI; Kiessling, Jenniffer; Jones, Tracy; Jones, Elaine; Johnson-Osborne, Fonshelle; Jaskille, Yamil; Jackman, Patricia -FS; Hunter, Pat; Hugh, Fred; Holt, Teresa; Holmes, Joseph; Holmes, Carl - ASCR; Ho, Elaine; Hines, Marsheela; Herring, Geraldine; Henry, William; Hawkins, Channing; Adams, Generosa; Ahmed, Tonya; Ahmed, Vaqar; Albert, Lawrence; Alexander, Tamara; Allen, Deborah; Anderson, Sequana; Asu, Aloysius; August, Sterling; Balsden, Kenneth; Banks, Gypsy; Belardo, Tlamba; Bogan, Arlita; Branham, Michael; Brock, Jacqueline; Brown, DarrellR; Brown, Moses; Bruce, Casimir; Bryant, Sheila; Butler, Carl; Butler, Cinnamon; 'Anita.Byrd@ascr.usda.gov'; Cain, Barrett; Carr, Jeffery; Carroll, Maurice; casefile, Cr; Chan, Wai-Ping; Cleaver-Bascombe, Karen; Coleman, Lisa; Coleman, Oliver L; Connelly, Claire; Contreras, Roberto; Council, Diversity; Daniels, Robert; Davis, Deborah; Davis, Maisha; Davis, Rhonda; Davis, Rosetta; Davis-Wright, Dianne; DeBose, Barbara; Do, Sonny; Edmonson, Gwen; Ellis, Lolita -USDA; Evans, Tavonna; Fox, Shawntey; Frazier, Jacqueline; Gaskins, DonnaM; 'Shirley.Glover@ascr.usda.gov'; Golden, Daruss; Goode, Corlice; Goodwill, Rosanne; Gordon, Ebony; Green, Yolanda; Griffin, Alpha; Hall, Violet; Hamilton, Deb; Harrington-Watson, Shirley; Harris, Keela; Harris, Lynette; Harrison, Michael; Hatchett, Robert; Chisholm, Mark; Dinzey, Raul; Banks, Denise; Alexander, Reginald; Cox, Doretha -USDA; Davis, Steve; Johnson, Loretha; Hammond, Rondi; Dillahunt, Hezekiah; CRES HelpDesk; Ferreira, Michele; Anderson, Erin; Daughtridge, James; Dean, Telora; Fields, Sederis; Charles-Shannon, Velma; 'Valeria.Best@ascr.usda.gov'; Gunn, Joshua; Gray, Lisa

Why should I harbor any ill feeling towards Shirley Sherrod... The farmer that she assisted said that she helped her without reservations and his wife considers her a family friend. Denny if you want to alleviate racism at the USDA, why not establish a forum where all the information comes out at one time. Furthermore, who knows how racist you were 24 years ago. I am sure you harbor the same racist beliefs and practices that you claim Shirley holds. Yesterday, I supported your position without knowing all the facts and reviewing the tape in its entire content. Now I want to know? Can you be trusted? You say what proof is there that Shirley has not continued her deplorable actions? Well, Denny if you know something despicable about Shirley come out and say it! Stop denigrating her with your rumors and innuendo. If you can't take a person at their word, you have to look at their record. Show me the deplorable Shirley... Where is your proof of her racist practices and actions. Former Senator Byrd was an admitted klans-man, and his metamorphosis into a champion of human and civil rights are well documented. What have you done Denny to now carry the cross and champion the rights of the weak and under-served. When did you become the arbiter of all that's right in government? Brother Denny, he who is without sin cast the first stone! And somehow, you believe that you are an admirable person. Well, Denny you threw the first and second stone! Let's see what happens when the stone are tossed your way.

Manasseh, Shari

From: Graham, Paula
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:12 PM
To: Hugh, Fred; Manasseh, Shari
Subject: update

<http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/shirley-sherrod-shell-back-usda-secretary-tom-vilsack/story?id=11215446>

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack to Reconsider Shirley Sherrod's Ouster

NAACP Posts Complete Video of USDA Employee, Shows Her Comments on Racism Were Taken out of Context



67 comments

By JAKE TAPPER and HUMA KHAN

July 21, 2010

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Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack took responsibility for seeking the resignation of USDA official Shirley Sherrod and said in a statement late last night that he will reconsider her ouster in what has become a national debate over the politics of race.

USDA official puts the comments she made 24 years ago into context.

The Agriculture Department official, based in Georgia, grabbed national headlines after conservative blogger Andrew Breitbart posted a video clip of her from a March NAACP event talking about her dilemma in helping a white farmer 24 years ago.

Vilsack, who said Tuesday that "there is zero tolerance for discrimination" at his agency, flipped from his initial decision after the NAACP released the full video of Sherrod's remarks, which augmented her argument that her speech had been taken out of context and in fact she'd been preaching against racism.

Senior White House officials held a conference call a phone call with Vilsack Tuesday night to discuss the issue, leading the Agriculture Secretary to release a statement this morning saying he is "of course willing and will conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts to ensure to the American people we are providing services in a fair and equitable manner."

Related



George: Shirley Sherrod 'Not Sure' She Wants Her Job Back



WATCH: When Viral Videos Cost Careers



WATCH: Jake Tapper on Shirley Sherrod's Resignation

Sherrod told "Good Morning America's" George Stephanopoulos today that her comments were taken out of context and that she was using the story as an illustration of how she grew and learned to move beyond race.

"I used my life where I grew up in a segregated society to show how I could move beyond that," said Sherrod.

Sherrod, who worked for a non-profit organization when she made those comments, said she hasn't yet been contacted by anyone at the Department of Agriculture or the White House regarding her job.

"I'm a bit disappointed that things happened in the way that they happened," she said on "GMA," adding that "It doesn't take away my support for the administration."

Sherrod, who worked at the USDA as the director of rural development for Georgia, said she's not sure if she will want to return to her former workplace.

"I don't know how I will be treated. I'm just not sure," she said. "I'd have to be reassured on that."

Breitbart, the conservative guru who posted the video with the headline, "Video Proof: The NAACP Awards Racism - - 2010," said it was not meant to be an attack on Sherrod but rather a lesson to the NAACP that they use accusations of racism to stifle dissent.

"What this video clearly shows is a standard that Tea Party has not been held to, is that the NAACP shows people in the audience there applauding her when she discriminates against a white farmer. That was the point I was trying to make," Breitbart said on "GMA" today. "This was not about Shirley Sherrod. This was about the smears that have gone on against the Tea Party."

The NAACP and the Tea Party have been embroiled in a heated battle since last week, when the nation's largest civil rights group passed a resolution condemning what it called racist elements in the conservative movement, and urged its leaders to denounce racism.

Many Tea Party leaders such as Breitbart deny there are racial overtones in the movement, arguing that charges of racist remarks have never been proven.

Norwood, Vincent

From: Hugh, Fred
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 9:11 AM
To: Scott, Judy A; Daughtridge, James; Norwood, Vincent; Graham, Paula

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dvn/content/video/2010/07/21/VI2010072105235.html?hpid=artslot>

Fred A Hugh

Reporters Building
ECD, Suite 640
300 7th Street S.W.
Washington, DC 20024
202-690-5418

Norwood, Vincent

From: Hugh, Fred
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:55 AM
To: Norwood, Vincent
Subject: FW: Investigation Requested and Appropriate Action to Follow

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 7:47 PM
To: Adams, Generosa; Ahmed, Vaqar; Albert, Lawrence; Alexander, Reginald; Alexander, Tamara; Allen, Deborah; Anderson, Erin; Anderson, Sequana; Asu, Aloysius; Banks, Denise; Banks, Gypsy; Belardo, Tlambe; Valeria.Best@ascr.usda.gov; Bogan, Arlita; Branham, Michael; Brock, Jacqueline; Brown, DarrellR; Brown, Moses; Bruce, Casimir; Bryant, Shelia; Butler, Carl; Anita.Byrd@ascr.usda.gov; Cain, Barrett; Carr, Jeffery; Carroll, Maurice; casefile, Cr; Charles-Shannon, Velma; Cleaver-Bascombe, Karen; Coleman, Lisa; Connelly, Claire; Contreras, Roberto; Council, Diversity; Cox, Doretha -USDA; Daughtridge, James; Davis, Deborah; Davis, Malsha; Davis, Rhonda; Davis, Rosetta; Davis, Steve; Davis-Wright, Dianne; Dean, Telora; DeBose, Barbara; Dillahunt, Hezekiah; Dinzey, Raul; Do, Sonny; Edmonson, Gwen; Ellis, Lolita -USDA; Evans, Tavonna; Ferreira, Michele; Fields, Sederis; Fox, Shawntey; Gaskins, DonnaM; Golden, Daruss; Goode, Corlice; Goodwill, Rosanne; Gordon, Ebony; Graham, Paula; Gray, Lisa; Green, Yolanda; Griffin, Alpha; Gunn, Joshua; Hall, Violet; Hammond, Rondi; Harris, Keela; Harris, Lynette; Harrison, Michael; Hatchett, Robert; Hawkins, Channing; Henry, William; Hines, Marsheela; Ho, Elaine; Holmes, Carl - ASCR; Holmes, Joseph; Hunter, Pat; Johnson, Loretha; Johnson-Osborne, Fonshelle; Jones, Tiffany; Jones, Tracy; Kiessling, Jennifer; Kim, SaeMi; Frazier, Jacqueline; Jaskilie, Yamil; Shirley.Glover@ascr.usda.gov; Kavanaugh, Queen; Jackman, Pat; Hamilton, Deb; August, Sterling; Chan, Wai-Ping; Hugh, Fred; Harrington-Watson, Shirley; Jones, Elaine; Butler, Clinnamon; Balsden, Kenneth; Chisholm, Mark; Coleman, Oliver L; Daniels, Robert; Ahmed, Tonya; Holt, Teresa; Herring, Geraldine
Subject: Investigation Requested and Appropriate Action to Follow

To whomever has the authority to investigate or to request and investigation of racial discrimination based on color and or race:

It has come to my attention that Shirley Sherrod, Director of USDA Rural Development for the State of Georgia, recently made racist statements at the NAACP's 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet. I am sure you are well aware that for over 50 years, our nation has held it to be unlawful for people to be discriminated against based on race, religion, nationality, creed or color – so what in the heck is a high-ranking government official doing making the following comments on record (yes, it was video taped).

Quote: "The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking but he was trying to show me he was superior to me. I know what he was doing, but he had come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was, I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him."

"I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough," Sherrod said. "So that when he, I assumed the Department of Agriculture had sent him to me, either that or the Georgia Department of Agriculture, and he needed to go back and report that I did try to help him."

As you will see in the video Shirley Sherrod also spoke of referring the white farmer to a white lawyer, thinking the latter would be more sympathetic because of race. On the video you will hear her say "So I took him to a white lawyer that had attended some of training that we had provided because Chapter 12 bankruptcy had just been enacted for the family farm. So I figured if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him."

Here is the video - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t_xCeItxbQY

Please don't pass the buck and say this isn't your problem. If you don't have the authority to investigate, please pass it on to those that do.

Warm regards,

Don Cochran

Hall, Violet

From: Gray, Lisa
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:26 AM
To: Hall, Violet
Subject: RE: Investigation Requested and Appropriate Action to Follow

Good Morning Ms. Hall!

This man had my name and I was included on the email list below. This is crazy!

Lisa

From: Hall, Violet
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:02 AM
To: Gray, Lisa
Subject: FW: Investigation Requested and Appropriate Action to Follow

Hey Lisa,
 On second thought this is going to be a program complaint.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 7:47 PM
To: Adams, Generosa; Ahmed, Tonya; Ahmed, Vaqar; Alexander, Reginald; Alexander, Tamara; Anderson, Erin; Asu, Aloysius; August, Sterling; Baisden, Kenneth; Banks, Denise; Banks, Gypsy; Belardo, Tlamba; Valeria.Best@ascr.usda.gov; Bogan, Arlita; Branham, Michael; Brock, Jacqueline; Bryant, Sheila; Butler, Cinnamon; Anita.Byrd@ascr.usda.gov; Cain, Barrett; Carr, Jeffery; casefile, Cr; Chan, Wai-Ping; Charles-Shannon, Velma; Chisholm, Mark; Cleaver-Bascombe, Karen; Coleman, Lisa; Coleman, Oliver L; Connelly, Claire; Cox, Doretha -USDA; Daniels, Robert; Daughtridge, James; Davis, Deborah; Davis, Maisha; Davis, Rhonda; Davis, Rosetta; Davis, Steve; Davis-Wright, Dianne; Dean, Telora; DeBose, Barbara; Dillahunt, Hezekiah; Dinzey, Raul; Edmonson, Gwen; Ellis, Lolita -USDA; Evans, Tavonna; Ferreira, Michele; Fields, Sederis; Fox, Shawntey; Frazier, Jacqueline; Shirley.Glover@ascr.usda.gov; Golden, Daruss; Goode, Corlce; Gordon, Ebony; Gray, Lisa; Green, Yolanda; Gunn, Joshua; Hamilton, Deb; Hammond, Rondi; Harrington-Watson, Shirley; Harris, Keela; Harris, Lynette; Hatchett, Robert; Hawkins, Channing; Henry, William; Herring, Geraldine; Hines, Marsheela; Ho, Elaine; Holmes, Carl - ASCR; Holmes, Joseph; Holt, Teresa; Hugh, Fred; Jackman, Pat; Jaskille, Yamil; Johnson, Loretha; Johnson-Osborne, Fonshelle; Jones, Elaine; Jones, Tiffany; Kavanaugh, Queen; Klessling, Jennifer; Kim, SaeMi; Gaskins, DonnaM; Graham, Paula; Bruce, Casimir; Griffin, Alpha; Hall, Violet; Goodwill, Rosanne; Contreras, Roberto; Butler, Carl; Anderson, Sequana; Council, Diversity; Brown, Moses; Carroll, Maurice; Jones, Tracy; Harrison, Michael; Allen, Deborah; Do, Sonny; Brown, DarrellR; Albert, Lawrence; Hunter, Pat
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Agriculture had sent him to me, either that or the Georgia Department of Agriculture, and he needed to go back and report that I did try to help him."

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Warm regards,

Don Cochran

Hall, Violet

From: Graham, Paula
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:55 PM
To: Hall, Violet
Subject: CNN

July 20, 2010

Ex-worker: USDA 'wasn't interested in hearing the truth'

Posted: 01:16 PM ET

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CNN Wire Staff



Sherrod says her remarks were taken out of context

A former USDA employee who resigned after a video surfaced of her talking about a white farmer told CNN on Tuesday that the administration "wasn't interested in hearing the truth."

Shirley Sherrod, who resigned Monday as the department's state director of rural development for Georgia, told CNN she had four calls telling her the White House wanted her to resign. She said she was driving at the time, and the last call asked her to pull to the side of the road and offer her resignation.

Sherrod's resignation came after media outlets aired the video, in which she tells an audience she did not give the white farmer "the full force of what I could do" to help him avoid foreclosure.

Keep Reading...

Hall, Violet

From: [REDACTED]
 Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:58 PM
 To: Graham, Paula; Scott, Judy A; Hall, Violet
 Subject: Agriculture secretary on Sherrod

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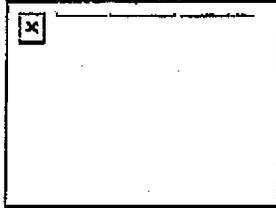
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Government apologizes, offers ousted official new job

Agriculture secretary on Sherrod: 'She's been put through hell'

1. Video



TODAY

Quoted USDA official: 'Look at the whole thing'

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WASHINGTON — Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said Wednesday he has apologized to an employee he ousted over remarks about race and offered her a "unique" new position at the agency.

"She's been put through hell and I could have done, and should have done, a better job," Vilsack said of Shirley Sherrod.

Vilsack told reporters that Sherrod accepted his apology. He said, "She was extraordinarily gracious."

Sherrod said she is considering Vilsack's offer of a new job working on civil rights. "They did make an offer," she told The Associated Press. "I just told him I need to think about it."

Earlier Wednesday, an embarrassed White House also apologized to Sherrod, who was forced to resign over her remarks about race to an NAACP banquet in Georgia earlier this year. White House spokesman Robert Gibbs said the administration did not know all the facts when it acted.

White House spokesman Robert Gibbs called the dismissal of Sherrod an injustice and a mistake and said he was apologizing for the "entire administration." He also said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack was trying to reach her to extend an apology.

"I accept the apology," Sherrod said on CNN after watching Gibbs talk to reporters at a televised briefing.

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Gibbs said Obama has been briefed as the situation developed. Earlier, a White House official said Obama hadn't spoken with Sherrod about the controversy. Sherrod was asked by department officials to resign on Monday after conservative bloggers posted an edited video of her saying she didn't initially give a white farmer as much help as she could have 24 years ago, when she was working for a farmers' aid group. Sherrod says she used the story in her speech to promote racial reconciliation and that the edited video distorted her remarks.

After a video of her full speech was posted online by the NAACP, the White House called the Agriculture Department about the case Tuesday night and it was agreed that her ouster should be reviewed because of the new evidence. Gibbs said people in the administration and outside of it acted without all the facts.

Earlier Wednesday, Sherrod said on NBC's TODAY show that she might not want her job back.

"I am just not sure how I would be treated there," she said, adding that she couldn't get coworkers to listen to her side of the story about [a speech she made in March](#).

Sherrod said her comments were part of a larger story about learning from her mistakes and racial reconciliation. They were not racist, she said, and were taken out of context.

"That's not my message. That's not me," she said on TODAY. "If you look at my life's work, you would know that that's not me."

[Story: Blogger: It's about NAACP, not fired worker](#)

NAACP was 'snookered'

On Tuesday, NAACP President Benjamin Todd Jealous said that the group was "snookered" into believing that Sherrod expressed racist sentiments at a local

NAACP meeting in Georgia earlier this year. After initially supporting her ouster, Jealous changed his mind and said she should keep her job. The Obama administration's move to reconsider her employment was a reversal on the position just hours earlier, when a White House official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Obama had been briefed on Sherrod's resignation after the fact and stood by the Agriculture Department's handling of it.

However, the white farming family that was the subject of the story came to Sherrod's defense and said she should stay in her job.

"We probably wouldn't have (our farm) today if it hadn't been for her leading us in the right direction," said Eloise Spooner, 82, the wife of farmer Roger Spooner of Iron City, Ga. "I wish she could get her job back because she was good to us, I tell you."

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She told The Atlanta Journal-Constitution that she considered Sherrod a "friend for life," saying that "the federal official worked tirelessly to help" them hold onto their farm as they faced bankruptcy in 1986.

"Her husband told her, 'You're spending more time with the Spooners than you are with me,'" Spooner told the Journal-Constitution. "She took probably two or three trips with us to Albany just to help us out."

As people came to her defense and Sherrod reached out to media to plead her case, the administration faced criticism that officials, nervous about racial perceptions, had overreacted to her comments and made her a political sacrifice amid dueling allegations of racism between the NAACP and the "Tea Party" movement.

Black leaders piled on Wednesday in criticizing Sherrod's ouster. The Rev. Jesse Jackson called on the administration to apologize and give Sherrod her job back, if she wants it. The Congressional Black Caucus, an influential bloc that represents 42 members of Congress, called for Sherrod to be reinstated immediately, saying Vilsack overreacted.

Soon after, the Rev. Al Sharpton said black leaders should refrain from calling for an apology from the Obama administration, saying that creates the impression that black leadership is fractured. "We are only greasing the rails for the right wing to run a train through our ambitions and goals for having civil and human rights in this country," Sharpton said.

In the clip posted on BigGovernment.com, Sherrod described the first time a white farmer came to her for help. It was 1986, and she worked for a nonprofit rural farm aid group. She said the farmer came in acting "superior" to her and she debated how much help to give him.

"I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland, and here I was faced with helping a white person save their land," Sherrod said.

Initially, she said, "I didn't give him the full force of what I could do" and only gave him enough help to keep his case progressing. But eventually, she said, his situation "opened my eyes" that whites were struggling just like blacks, and helping farmers wasn't so much about race but was "about the poor versus those who have."

The full video of Sherrod's speech showed that while she took some shots at conservatives and spoke of continued racial inequities, she focused on encouraging blacks, particularly the younger generation, to do more to help themselves.

"We have to overcome the divisions that we have," she told the audience. "Change has to start with us. ... Our young people, I'm not picking on you, but y'all gotta step up to the plate. ... You are capable of being those doctors and lawyers."

ACORN prostitute video

The two-minute, 38-second video clip posted Monday by BigGovernment.com was presented as evidence that the NAACP was hypocritical in its recent resolution condemning what it calls racist elements of the Tea Party movement.

The website's owner, Andrew Breitbart, said the video shows the civil rights group condoning the same kind of racism it says it wants to erase.

Newsvine: Was USDA official unfairly forced out?

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BigGovernment.com is the same outfit that gained fame last year after airing video of workers at the community group ACORN counseling actors posing as a prostitute and her boyfriend.

The Huffington Post said after Breitbart posted the YouTube video of the speech, it was then aired on Fox News and Sherrod's resignation came shortly after.

Jealous said Breitbart deceived millions of people by releasing only partial clips. He said the full video makes clear that Sherrod was telling a story of racial unity.

"The tape of Ms. Sherrod's speech at an NAACP banquet was deliberately edited to create a false impression of racial bias, and to create a controversy where none existed," Jealous said Tuesday afternoon. "This just shows the lengths to which extremist elements will go to discredit legitimate opposition."

msnbc.com and The Associated Press contributed to this report.

Show more text

The New Busy think 9 to 5 is a cute idea. Combine multiple calendars with Hotmail. Get busy.

Hall, Violet

From: Bogan, Arlita
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 11:48 AM
To: Davis, Rosetta; Charles-Shannon, Velma; [REDACTED] Kim, SaeMi; Klessling, Jenniffer; Jones, Tracy; Jones, Elaine; Johnson-Osborne, Fonshelle; Jaskille, Yamil; Jackman, Pat; Hunter, Pat; Hugh, Fred; Holt, Teresa; Holmes, Joseph; Holmes, Carl - ASCR; Ho, Elaine; Hines, Marsheela; Herring, Geraldine; Henry, William; Hawkins, Channing; Adams, Generosa; Ahmed, Tonya; Ahmed, Vaqar; Albert, Lawrence; Alexander, Tamara; Allen, Deborah; Anderson, Sequana; Asu, Aloysius; August, Sterling; Baisden, Kenneth; Banks, Gypsy; Belardo, Tiambe; Branham, Michael; Brock, Jacqueline; Brown, DarrellR; Brown, Moses; Bruce, Casimir; Bryant, Sheila; Butler, Carl; Butler, Cinnamon; 'Anita.Byrd@ascr.usda.gov'; Cain, Barrett; Carr, Jeffery; Carroll, Maurice; casefile, Cr; Chan, Wai-Ping; Cleaver-Bascombe, Karen; Coleman, Lisa; Coleman, Oliver L; Connelly, Claire; Contreras, Roberto; Council, Diversity; Daniels, Robert; Davis, Deborah; Davis, Maisha; Davis, Rhonda; Davis-Wright, Dianne; DeBose, Barbara; Do, Sonny; Edmonson, Gwen; Ellis, Lolita -USDA; Evans, Tavonna; Fox, Shawntey; Frazier, Jacqueline; Gaskins, DonnaM; 'Shirley.Glover@ascr.usda.gov'; Golden, Daruss; Goode, Corlice; Goodwill, Rosanne; Gordon, Ebony; Graham, Paula; Green, Yolanda; Griffin, Alpha; Hall, Violet; Hamilton, Deb; Harrington-Watson, Shirley; Harris, Keela; Harris, Lynette; Harrison, Michael; Hatchett, Robert; Chisholm, Mark; Dinzey, Raul; Banks, Denise; Alexander, Reginald; Cox, Doretha - USDA; Davis, Steve; Johnson, Loretha; Hammond, Rondi; Dillahunt, Hezekiah; CRES HelpDesk; Ferreira, Michele; Anderson, Erin; Daughtridge, James; Dean, Telora; Fields, Sederis; 'Valeria.Best@ascr.usda.gov'; Gunn, Joshua; Gray, Lisa
Subject: RE: Do Not Restore Shirley Sherrod

To all of you that want to be taken of this mailing list, when you reply can you please due a **REPLY** and not a **REPLY TO ALL**, because every time you do you send me and everyone else this message. THANKS

From: Davis, Rosetta
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 11:42 AM
To: Charles-Shannon, Velma; [REDACTED] Kim, SaeMi; Klessling, Jenniffer; Jones, Tracy; Jones, Elaine; Johnson-Osborne, Fonshelle; Jaskille, Yamil; Jackman, Pat; Hunter, Pat; Hugh, Fred; Holt, Teresa; Holmes, Joseph; Holmes, Carl - ASCR; Ho, Elaine; Hines, Marsheela; Herring, Geraldine; Henry, William; Hawkins, Channing; Adams, Generosa; Ahmed, Tonya; Ahmed, Vaqar; Albert, Lawrence; Alexander, Tamara; Allen, Deborah; Anderson, Sequana; Asu, Aloysius; August, Sterling; Baisden, Kenneth; Banks, Gypsy; Belardo, Tiambe; Bogan, Arlita; Branham, Michael; Brock, Jacqueline; Brown, DarrellR; Brown, Moses; Bruce, Casimir; Bryant, Sheila; Butler, Carl; Butler, Cinnamon; 'Anita.Byrd@ascr.usda.gov'; Cain, Barrett; Carr, Jeffery; Carroll, Maurice; casefile, Cr; Chan, Wai-Ping; Cleaver-Bascombe, Karen; Coleman, Lisa; Coleman, Oliver L; Connelly, Claire; Contreras, Roberto; Council, Diversity; Daniels, Robert; Davis, Deborah; Davis, Maisha; Davis, Rhonda; Davis-Wright, Dianne; DeBose, Barbara; Do, Sonny; Edmonson, Gwen; Ellis, Lolita -USDA; Evans, Tavonna; Fox, Shawntey; Frazier, Jacqueline; Gaskins, DonnaM; 'Shirley.Glover@ascr.usda.gov'; Golden, Daruss; Goode, Corlice; Goodwill, Rosanne; Gordon, Ebony; Graham, Paula; Green, Yolanda; Griffin, Alpha; Hall, Violet; Hamilton, Deb; Harrington-Watson, Shirley; Harris, Keela; Harris, Lynette; Harrison, Michael; Hatchett, Robert; Chisholm, Mark; Dinzey, Raul; Banks, Denise; Alexander, Reginald; Cox, Doretha -USDA; Davis, Steve; Johnson, Loretha; Hammond, Rondi; Dillahunt, Hezekiah; CRES HelpDesk; Ferreira, Michele; Anderson, Erin; Daughtridge, James; Dean, Telora; Fields, Sederis; 'Valeria.Best@ascr.usda.gov'; Gunn, Joshua; Gray, Lisa
Subject: RE: Do Not Restore Shirley Sherrod

I too would like to be removed from this listing.

Rosetta Davis

From: Charles-Shannon, Velma

Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 10:53 AM

To: [REDACTED] Kim, SaeMi; Kiessling, Jenniffer; Jones, Tracy; Jones, Elaine; Johnson-Osborne, Fonshelle; Jaskille, Yamil; Jackman, Pat; Hunter, Pat; Hugh, Fred; Holt, Teresa; Holmes, Joseph; Holmes, Carl - ASCR; Ho, Elaine; Hines, Marsheela; Herring, Geraldine; Henry, William; Hawkins, Channing; Adams, Generosa; Ahmed, Tonya; Ahmed, Vaqar; Albert, Lawrence; Alexander, Tamara; Allen, Deborah; Anderson, Sequana; Asu, Aloysius; August, Sterling; Baisden, Kenneth; Banks, Gypsy; Belardo, Tiambe; Bogan, Arlita; Branham, Michael; Brock, Jacqueline; Brown, DarrellR; Brown, Moses; Bruce, Casimir; Bryant, Sheila; Butler, Carl; Butler, Cinnamon; Anita.Byrd@ascr.usda.gov; Cain, Barrett; Carr, Jeffery; Carroll, Maurice; casefile, Cr; Chan, Wai-Ping; Cleaver-Bascombe, Karen; Coleman, Lisa; Coleman, Oliver L; Connelly, Claire; Contreras, Roberto; Council, Diversity; Daniels, Robert; Davis, Deborah; Davis, Maisha; Davis, Rhonda; Davis, Rosetta; Davis-Wright, Dianne; DeBose, Barbara; Do, Sonny; Edmonson, Gwen; Ellis, Lolita -USDA; Evans, Tavonna; Fox, Shawntey; Frazier, Jacqueline; Gaskins, DonnaM; Shirley.Glover@ascr.usda.gov; Golden, Daruss; Goode, Corlice; Goodwill, Rosanne; Gordon, Ebony; Graham, Paula; Green, Yolanda; Griffin, Alpha; Hall, Violet; Hamilton, Deb; Harrington-Watson, Shirley; Harris, Keela; Harris, Lynette; Harrison, Michael; Hatchett, Robert; Chisholm, Mark; Dinzey, Raul; Banks, Denise; Alexander, Reginald; Cox, Doretha -USDA; Davis, Steve; Johnson, Loretha; Hammond, Rondi; Dillahunt, Hezekiah; CRES HelpDesk; Ferreira, Michele; Anderson, Erin; Daughtridge, James; Dean, Telora; Fields, Sederis; Valeria.Best@ascr.usda.gov; Gunn, Joshua; Gray, Lisa

Subject: RE: Do Not Restore Shirley Sherrod

Please take me off your e-mail list. Thank you Dr. Velma Charles-Shannon

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 8:44 AM

To: Kim, SaeMi; Kiessling, Jenniffer; Jones, Tracy; Jones, Elaine; Johnson-Osborne, Fonshelle; Jaskille, Yamil; Jackman, Pat; Hunter, Pat; Hugh, Fred; Holt, Teresa; Holmes, Joseph; Holmes, Carl - ASCR; Ho, Elaine; Hines, Marsheela; Herring, Geraldine; Henry, William; Hawkins, Channing; Adams, Generosa; Ahmed, Tonya; Ahmed, Vaqar; Albert, Lawrence; Alexander, Tamara; Allen, Deborah; Anderson, Sequana; Asu, Aloysius; August, Sterling; Baisden, Kenneth; Banks, Gypsy; Belardo, Tiambe; Bogan, Arlita; Branham, Michael; Brock, Jacqueline; Brown, DarrellR; Brown, Moses; Bruce, Casimir; Bryant, Sheila; Butler, Carl; Butler, Cinnamon; Anita.Byrd@ascr.usda.gov; Cain, Barrett; Carr, Jeffery; Carroll, Maurice; casefile, Cr; Chan, Wai-Ping; Cleaver-Bascombe, Karen; Coleman, Lisa; Coleman, Oliver L; Connelly, Claire; Contreras, Roberto; Council, Diversity; Daniels, Robert; Davis, Deborah; Davis, Maisha; Davis, Rhonda; Davis, Rosetta; Davis-Wright, Dianne; DeBose, Barbara; Do, Sonny; Edmonson, Gwen; Ellis, Lolita -USDA; Evans, Tavonna; Fox, Shawntey; Frazier, Jacqueline; Gaskins, DonnaM; Shirley.Glover@ascr.usda.gov; Golden, Daruss; Goode, Corlice; Goodwill, Rosanne; Gordon, Ebony; Graham, Paula; Green, Yolanda; Griffin, Alpha; Hall, Violet; Hamilton, Deb; Harrington-Watson, Shirley; Harris, Keela; Harris, Lynette; Harrison, Michael; Hatchett, Robert; Chisholm, Mark; Dinzey, Raul; Banks, Denise; Alexander, Reginald; Cox, Doretha -USDA; Davis, Steve; Johnson, Loretha; Hammond, Rondi; Dillahunt, Hezekiah; CRES HelpDesk; Ferreira, Michele; Anderson, Erin; Daughtridge, James; Dean, Telora; Fields, Sederis; Charles-Shannon, Velma; Valeria.Best@ascr.usda.gov; Gunn, Joshua; Gray, Lisa

Subject: Do Not Restore Shirley Sherrod

The Department of Agriculture is critically important to the citizens of the United States and I applaud your work. I urge however that Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack not reconsider returning Shirley Sherrod to her position within your department.

While Shirley states that her actions occurred some 24 years ago there is no evidence that she does not still hold and harbor the same racist beliefs and practices as claimed in her speech to the NAACP. It is absolutely mission critical that all Americans regardless of race be treated equally and she has proven that she cannot be trusted to uphold this mission. To accept this racist attitude within your Department will compromise the values of your organization.

What proof is there that she has not continued these deplorable actions?

What safeguards are in place to ensure it does not happen again?

Do we simply trust her words?

Certainly, we must hold both our Elected Officials and our Government Employees to a high standard to ensure they are working diligently in the behalf of all citizens regardless of race. Shirley has failed both the citizens and the Department and to reinstate her would be an admission of the Department of Agriculture that they accept these deplorable actions.

Denny Barnes

Hall, Violet

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 10:48 PM
Subject: Keith Obermann's & Dr Harris Lacewell's Comments re Ms. Sherrod

Dr. Harris-Lacewell comments

http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/3036677/ns/msnbc_tv-countdown_with_keith_obermann/#38353188

Keith Obermann's comments

http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/3036677/ns/msnbc_tv-countdown_with_keith_obermann/#38353508

There's plenty of blame to go around, from the NAACP to USDA Secy to POTUS & his misguided advisors. Instead of doing the simple five minutes of research to consider the source where this story originated and weigh the stellar career of that of both Mr. & Mrs. Sherrod, even Stevie Wonder could have seen something was not right about this story when it first hit the airwaves. No, but instead they instantly vilified her to appease the right wing idilog. And who gets off without a scratch, the idiot tea party member breitbart without even an apology to Ms. Sherrod to this day. I hope she sue both him & USDA, & refuse whatever position it is they're trying to give her over in that failing cesspool in OCR because I know that's where they're trying stick her and make it appear she'll make the difference when we all know otherwise.

Hall, Violet

From: Ferguson, Lauren
Sent: Monday, July 26, 2010 4:47 PM
To: Hall, Violet
Subject: RE: Media Inquiries

Oh wow. I will definitely direct them to the Office of Communications.

From: Hall, Violet
Sent: Monday, July 26, 2010 3:40 PM
To: Carr, Jeffery; Crocker, Lee; Daughtridge, James; Ferguson, Lauren; Graham, Paula; Gunn, Joshua; Hall, Violet; Hugh, Fred; Irick, John; Lindsay, Shani; Lopez, Debbie; Norwood, Vincent; Scott, Judy A; Smith, Abraham; Wright, Pamela
Subject: Media Inquiries

Good Afternoon Team,

In our staff meeting with Dr. Leonard this morning, we were informed that the media maybe visiting our building seeking information regarding the incident surrounding Ms. Sherrod last week. If this occurs, please do not discuss this matter, but direct them to the Office of Communication located at 402-A, Whitten building, or (202) 720-4623. Please exercise our practice of confidentiality.

If you have concerns, please raise them with me directly.

*V. Hall
Acting Chief, Employment Complaints Division
Office of Adjudication
Room 635, Reporters Building
(202) 401-1148 office
(202) 205-8206 fax*

Ruiz, Carl-Martin

From: Hamilton, Deb
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 8:50 AM
To: Ruiz, Carl-Martin
Subject: FW: Do Not Restore Shirley Sherrod
Flag Status: Blue
Attachments: image001.gif

FYI

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 8:44 AM
To: Kiessling, Jenniffer; Jones, Tracy; Jones, Elaine; Johnson-Osborne, Fonshelle; Johnson, Loretha; Jaskille, Yamil; Jackman, Pat; Hunter, Pat; Hugh, Fred; Holt, Teresa; Ho, Elaine; Hines, Marsheela; Herring, Geraldine; Henry, William; Hawkins, Channing; Adams, Generosa; Ahmed, Tonya; Albert, Lawrence; Alexander, Reginald; Allen, Deborah; Anderson, Erin; Anderson, Sequana; Asu, Aloysius; August, Sterling; Balsden, Kenneth; Banks, Denise; Banks, Gypsy; Valeria.Best@ascr.usda.gov; Branham, Michael; Brown, DarrellR; Brown, Moses; Bruce, Casimir; Bryant, Sheila; Butler, Carl; Butler, Cinnamon; Anita.Byrd@ascr.usda.gov; Cain, Barrett; Carroll, Maurice; Chan, Wai-Ping; Charles-Shannon, Velma; Chisholm, Mark; Cleaver-Bascombe, Karen; Coleman, Lisa; Coleman, Oliver L; Connelly, Claire; Contreras, Roberto; Council, Diversity; Cox, Doretha -USDA; CRES HelpDesk; Daniels, Robert; Daughtridge, James; Davis, Steve; Dean, Telora; DeBose, Barbara; Dillahunt, Hezekiah; Dinzey, Raul; Do, Sonny; Edmonson, Gwen; Ellis, Lolita -USDA; Ferreira, Michele; Fields, Sederis; Frazier, Jacqueline; Gaskins, DonnaM; Shirley.Glover@ascr.usda.gov; Golden, Daruss; Goodwill, Rosanne; Gordon, Ebony; Graham, Paula; Gray, Lisa; Green, Yolanda; Griffin, Alpha; Gunn, Joshua; Hall, Violet; Hammond, Rondl; Harrington-Watson, Shirley; Harris, Lynette; Harrison, Michael; Hatchett, Robert; Davis, Deborah; Carr, Jeffery; Ahmed, Vaqar; Evans, Tavonna; Davis, Rhonda; Holmes, Joseph; Hamilton, Deb; Davis-Wright, Dianne; Holmes, Carl - ASCR; Bogan, Arlita; Goode, Corlice; Fox, Shawntey; Davis, Maisha; casefile, Cr; Alexander, Tamara; Harris, Keela; Davis, Rosetta; Kim, SaeMi; Belardo, Tiambe; Brock, Jacqueline
Subject: Do Not Restore Shirley Sherrod

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 What safeguards are in place to ensure it does not happen again?
 Do we simply trust her words?

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Denny Barnes

7/30/2010

Ruiz, Carl-Martin

From: Hamilton, Deb
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:25 AM
To: Ruiz, Carl-Martin
Subject: FW: Do Not Restore Shirley Sherrod
Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Blue

FYI

From: Chisholm, Mark
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:49 AM
To: Kim, SaeMi; Kiessling, Jenniffer; Jones, Tracy; Jones, Elaine; Johnson-Osborne, Fonshelle; Jaskille, Yamil; Jackman, Patricia -FS; Hunter, Pat; Hugh, Fred; Holt, Teresa; Holmes, Joseph; Holmes, Carl - ASCR; Ho, Elaine; Hines, Marsheela; Herring, Geraldine; Henry, William; Hawkins, Channing; Adams, Generosa; Ahmed, Tonya; Ahmed, Vaqar; Albert, Lawrence; Alexander, Tamara; Allen, Deborah; Anderson, Sequana; Asu, Aloysius; August, Sterling; Baisden, Kenneth; Banks, Gypsy; Belardo, Tiambe; Bogan, Arlita; Branham, Michael; Brock, Jacqueline; Brown, DarrellR; Brown, Moses; Bruce, Casimir; Bryant, Sheila; Butler, Carl; Butler, Cinnamon; 'Anita.Byrd@ascr.usda.gov'; Cain, Barrett; Carr, Jeffery; Carroll, Maurice; casefile, Cr; Chan, Wai-Ping; Cleaver-Bascombe, Karen; Coleman, Lisa; Coleman, Oliver L; Connelly, Claire; Contreras, Roberto; Council, Diversity; Daniels, Robert; Davis, Deborah; Davis, Malsha; Davis, Rhonda; Davis, Rosetta; Davis-Wright, Dianne; DeBose, Barbara; Do, Sonny; Edmonson, Gwen; Ellis, Lolita -USDA; Evans, Tavonna; Fox, Shawntey; Frazier, Jacqueline; Gaskins, DonnaM; 'Shirley.Glover@ascr.usda.gov'; Golden, Daruss; Goode, Corlice; Goodwill, Rosanne; Gordon, Ebony; Graham, Paula; Green, Yolanda; Griffin, Alpha; Hall, Violet; Hamilton, Deb; Harrington-Watson, Shirley; Harris, Keela; Harris, Lynette; Harrison, Michael; Hatchett, Robert; Chisholm, Mark; Dinzey, Rai; Banks, Denise; Alexander, Reginald; Cox, Doretha -USDA; Davis, Steve; Johnson, Loretha; Hammond, Rondi; Dillahunt, Hezekiah; CRES HelpDesk; Ferreira, Michele; Anderson, Erin; Daughtridge, James; Dean, Telora; Fields, Sederis; Charles-Shannon, Velma; 'Valeria.Best@ascr.usda.gov'; Gunn, Joshua; Gray, Lisa
Subject: RE: Do Not Restore Shirley Sherrod

Why should I harbor any ill feeling towards Shirley Sherrod... The farmer that she assisted said that she helped her without reservations and his wife considers her a family friend. Denny if you want to alleviate racism at the USDA, why not establish a forum where all the information comes out at one time. Furthermore, who knows how racist you were 24 years ago. I am sure you harbor the same racist beliefs and practices that you claim Shirley holds. Yesterday, I supported your position without knowing all the facts and reviewing the tape in its entire content. Now I want to know? Can you be trusted? You say what proof is there that Shirley has not continued her deplorable actions? Well, Denny if you know something despicable about Shirley come out and say it! Stop denigrating her with your rumors and innuendo. If you can't take a person at their word, you have to look at their record. Show me the deplorable Shirley... Where is your proof of her racist practices and actions. Former Senator Byrd was an admitted klans-man, and his metamorphosis into a champion of human and civil rights are well documented. What have you done Denny to now carry the cross and champion the rights of the weak and under-served. When did you become the arbiter of all that's right in government? Brother Denny, he who is without sin cast the first stone! And somehow, you believe that you are an admirable person. Well, Denny you threw the first and second stone! Let's see what happens when the stone are tossed your way.

7/30/2010

Leonard, Joe

From: McNeil, Mary
Sent: Thursday, July 29, 2010 4:55 PM
To: Leonard, Joe
Subject: FW: Sherrod

FYI

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 29, 2010 4:45 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Jeanquart, Bobbi; McNeil, Mary
Subject: Re: Sherrod

Need to add budget number.
Chris Mather

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Jeanquart, Bobbi; McNeil, Mary
Cc: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thu Jul 29 16:42:22 2010
Subject: RE: Sherrod

Looping Bobbi as Carole said she can provide some guidance.

And Berge and Washo... Carole wondered whether we need to be careful about providing race or noting ethnic/racial background? If no, can you help provide a more exhaustive list of subcabinet.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548

(cell)

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thursday, July 29, 2010 3:12 PM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Cc: Mather, Chris
Subject: FW: Sherrod

Hi all,

Questions from WaPo below re: Sherrod comments today. I also have similar inquiries from AP. I have taken a crack at answers below, but hoping for your comments feedback. I'm not sure who else should be looped on this.

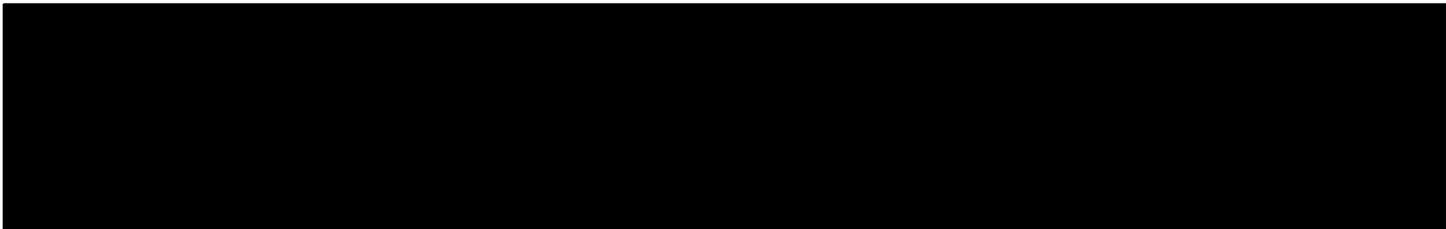
1) She said the new position she was offered is deputy director of advocacy and outreach. Is that for the whole department or an agency within the department?

2) Has a director been chosen and if so, who?

3) Is this a new office in the department?



4) What are its duties and responsibilities?



5) Would the deputy director be based in Washington?

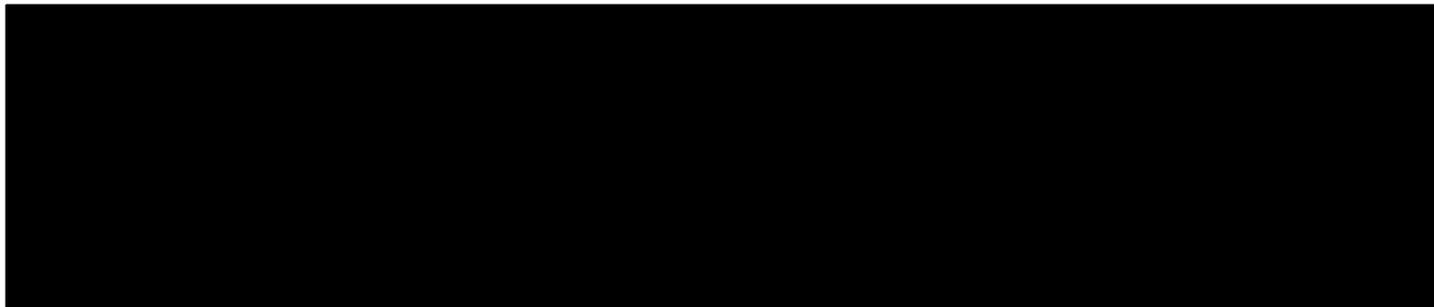
6) How many staffers will/does the office have and what is its budget?

7) Are there any black people or other people of color within the Secretary's inner circle or among his top advisors? If so, I'd like to list their names and positions



8) Were any consulted as part of his decision making process to initially fire Sherrod?

9) Do you know if any departmental staffers have been fired because of the discrimination against black farmers in Ag programs?



Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548



(cell)

Leonard, Joe

From: Leonard, Joe
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 8:58 AM
To: 'Leland, Arlean'
Subject: RE: Help [Sherrod Track B Decision]

Thank you for asking. I'm fine. Give me a call, I want to convey to you my concerns about the earlier email chain.

Joe Leonard Jr., Ph.D
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Suite 212-A
Washington, DC 20250

O: (202) 720-3808
F: (202) 690-1782

From: Leland, Arlean [mailto:ARLEAN.LELAND@OGC.USDA.GOV]
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 8:27 AM
To: Leonard, Joe
Subject: RE: Help [Sherrod Track B Decision]

Are you OK? Is there anything that you need from us? Remember we are here to assist you. Take care,

Arlean Leland
Inga Bumbary-Langston
Tami Trost

From: Leonard, Joe [mailto:Joe.Leonard@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 6:37 AM
To: Jett, Carole; Leland, Arlean; Pfaeffle, Frederick; McNeil, Mary
Cc: Silverman, Steve; BUMBARY-LANGSTON, INGA
Subject: Re: Help [Sherrod Track B Decision]

----- Original Message -----

From: Jett, Carole
To: 'ARLEAN.LELAND@OGC.USDA.GOV' <ARLEAN.LELAND@OGC.USDA.GOV>; Leonard, Joe; 'Frederick.Pfaeffle@OGC.USDA.GOV' <Frederick.Pfaeffle@OGC.USDA.GOV>; McNeil, Mary
Cc: Silverman, Steve; 'INGA.BUMBARY-LANGSTON@OGC.USDA.GOV' <INGA.BUMBARY-LANGSTON@OGC.USDA.GOV>
Sent: Wed Jul 21 09:54:05 2010
Subject: Re: Help [Sherrod Track B Decision]

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

----- Original Message -----

From: Leland, Arlean <ARLEAN.LELAND@OGC.USDA.GOV>
To: Leonard, Joe; Jett, Carole; Pfaeffle, Frederick <Frederick.Pfaeffle@OGC.USDA.GOV>; McNeil, Mary
Cc: Silverman, Steve; BUMBARY-LANGSTON, INGA <INGA.BUMBARY-LANGSTON@OGC.USDA.GOV>
Sent: Wed Jul 21 09:45:55 2010
Subject: RE: Help [Sherrod Track B Decision]

Dr. Leonard,

Arlean Leland
AGC-CRD

-----Original Message-----

From: Leonard, Joe []
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:51 AM
To: Jett, Carole; Pfaeffle, Frederick; McNeil, Mary
Cc: Silverman, Steve; BUMBARY-LANGSTON, INGA; Leland, Arlean
Subject: RE: Help [Sherrod Track B Decision]

Joe Leonard Jr., Ph.D
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Suite 212-A
Washington, DC 20250

O: (202) 720-3808
F: (202) 690-1782

-----Original Message-----

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:34 PM
To: 'Frederick.Pfaeffle@OGC.USDA.GOV'; McNeil, Mary; Leonard, Joe
Cc: Silverman, Steve; 'INGA.BUMBARY-LANGSTON@OGC.USDA.GOV'; 'ARLEAN.LELAND@OGC.USDA.GOV'
Subject: Re: Help [Sherrod Track B Decision]

Thx!
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

----- Original Message -----

From: Frederick.Pfaeffle@OGC.USDA.GOV <Frederick.Pfaeffle@OGC.USDA.GOV>
To: Jett, Carole; McNeil, Mary; Leonard, Joe
Cc: Silverman, Steve; INGA.BUMBARY-LANGSTON@OGC.USDA.GOV <INGA.BUMBARY-LANGSTON@OGC.USDA.GOV>; ARLEAN.LELAND@OGC.USDA.GOV <ARLEAN.LELAND@OGC.USDA.GOV>
Sent: Tue Jul 20 19:50:01 2010
Subject: RE: Help [Sherrod Track B Decision]

Confidential Attorney-Client Communication

I will provide further info when we hear back from the

Department of Justice tomorrow.

Leonard, Joe

From: Lorette Picciano [lpicciano@ruralco.org]
Sent: Tuesday, July 27, 2010 2:52 PM
To: Leonard, Joe; McNeil, Mary
Subject: Updated
Attachments: Shirley Sherrod Statement FINAL 7-25-10.pdf

Here is the update of our release, FYI.

More to come.

L

Lorette Picciano
Executive Director
Rural Coalition/Coalición Rural
1012 14th Street NW suite 1100
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: 202-628-7160
Fax: 202-393-1816
About us at
SHOP AT:
direct email:

Leonard, Joe

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 26, 2010 11:05 AM
To: [REDACTED]; Leonard, Joe; McNeil, Mary; Knishkowsy, Jeff; Womack, Melvin
Subject: Fwd: Check out Charles J. Ogletree Jr. and Johanna Wald - After Shirley Sherrod, w

Dear All:

I find this article by Charles Ogletree and Johanna Wald to offer excellent insights. I hope we can find a way to use it in helping our personnel in Program Complaints think about the work they are doing for the Office of Civil Rights. At least, I think we should try. Your thoughts?
Take care, H.R.

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sat, Jul 24, 2010 3:06 am
Subject: Fw: Check out Charles J. Ogletree Jr. and Johanna Wald - After Shirley Sherrod, w

Sent from my Verizon Wireless BlackBerry

From:
Date: Fri, 23 Jul 2010 22:26:05 EDT
To: < >; < >
Cc: < >
Subject: Check out Charles J. Ogletree Jr. and Johanna Wald - After Shirley Sherrod, w

Leonard, Joe

From: Dr John Boyd [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 8:01 AM
To: Leonard, Joe
Subject: CBS NEWS Black Farmers Waiting on Senate to Act

CBS EVENING NEWS WITH KATIE COURIC: Black Farmers Await Discrimination Settlement

Text:
Video:

CNN: Black farmers' settlement is at the mercy of the Senate

NPR: Sherrod Debacle Frustrates Black Farmers

THE HILL: Sherrod firing conjures up USDA's history of civil rights struggles

BLOOMBERG: Obama Calls Sherrod to Express 'Regret' Over Ouster From USDA

CNN: Black Farmers Still Waiting

This message was sent from Dr John Boyd to [REDACTED]. It was sent from: Dr John Boyd, 68
wind road, baskerville, VA 23915. You can modify/update your subscription via the link below.

Contact

Leonard, Joe

From: tclayhouse@lawyerscommittee.org
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 5:00 PM
To: Leonard, Joe
Subject: FW: NCBCP BWR Request to Meet with Secretary Vilsack
Attachments: image001.jpg; image002.jpg; image003.jpg

fyi

Tanya Clay House
Director of Public Policy

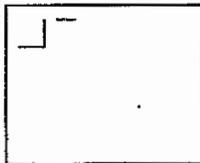
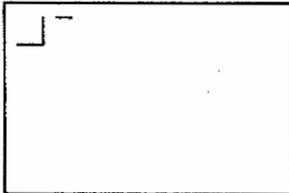


1401 New York Avenue, NW., Suite 400
Washington, DC 20005

office - (202) 662-8330
fax - (202) 783-0857

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From: Melanie Campbell [mailto:melaniec@ncbcp.org]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 4:49 PM
To: sally.cluthe@osec.usda.gov
Cc: gwen.edmonson@usda.gov; Barbara Arnwine; Barbara Williams-Skinner; Avis Jones-DeWeever
Subject: NCBCP BWR Request to Meet with Secretary Vilsack



1050 Connecticut Avenue, NW
10th Floor, Suite 1000
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 659-4929; (202) 659-5025 (fax)

July 22, 2010

The Honorable Thomas J. Vilsack
United States Department of Agriculture
Administration Building
1400 Independence Ave. SW

Room 200A
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

On behalf of our organizations, the civil rights community, faith and Black women's leaders, we would like to schedule a meeting with you at your earliest convenience to discuss ways we can work with the Department of Agriculture to address diversity concerns in light of the recent incidents involving Ms. Shirley Sherrod. As Black women leaders, we are particularly interested in improving the relationship between the Department and the civil rights community.

We appreciate your taking responsibility for the unfortunate actions surrounding Ms. Sherrod. We feel that in your promise to do a better job that it would be helpful to talk to Black women's, faith-based and other civil rights leaders. It is in those discussions that we can hope to begin to strategically and effectively reverse the course of discriminatory treatment at the Department and "turn the page on our civil rights chapter," as you pledged.

We appreciate your commitment to this endeavor and hope that you're willing to work with us to see that it is achieved responsibly.

Thank you,

Melanie L. Campbell
President & CEO
Convener, Black Women's Roundtable
National Coalition on Black Civic Participation

Barbara R. Arnwine
Executive Director
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law

Dr. Barbara Williams Skinner
Co-Chair
National African American Clergy Network

Dr. Barbara Shaw
Chair, National Council of Negro Women

Dr. Avis Jones-DeWeever
Executive Director
National Council of Negro Women

cc: Dr. Joe Leonard, Jr., Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, USDA

Melanie L. Campbell
President & CEO
Convener, Black Women's Roundtable
National Coalition on Black Civic Participation
1050 Connecticut Avenue, NW
10th Floor - Suite #1000
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 659-4929 (office)

(202) 659-5025 (FAX)

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Leonard, Joe

From: Willoughby, Patrice [Patrice.Willoughby@mail.house.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 8:42 PM
To: Harden, Krysta; Leonard, Joe
Subject: CBC NEWS: Chairwoman Lee Releases Statement Following Meeting with Agriculture Secretary Vilsack

Trouble viewing this press release? [Click here.](#)

CBC

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Congressional Black Caucus
2444 Rayburn Building
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 226-9776 (T)
(202) 225-9817 (F)

[click here to email us](#)

Chairwoman Lee Releases Statement Following Meeting with Agriculture Secretary Vilsack

Wednesday, July 21, 2010

Contact : Nicole Y. Williams or J. Jioni Palmer

Washington D.C. – Today Congresswoman Barbara Lee (D-CA), Chairwoman of the Congressional Black Caucus, released the following statement following a meeting of the Congressional Black Caucus with Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack regarding the handling of matter resulting in the resignation of Shirley Sherrod.

"We want to thank Secretary Tom Vilsack for meeting with the Congressional Black Caucus today regarding the issues surrounding the resignation of Shirley Sherrod. During the meeting we expressed our concern regarding the handling of the situation. Secretary Vilsack assured us that there would be a full review of the process which led to this unfortunate situation.

"We appreciate the apology issued today by the Administration and Secretary Vilsack personally. He reiterated those same sentiments during our meeting.

"We expressed to Secretary Vilsack that as the Administration and Department of Agriculture begins the process of repairing the damage from this situation, we are willing to work with them to ensure an equitable and fair outcome for Ms. Sherrod. The meeting also provided an opportunity to openly discuss longstanding issues of equity within the U.S. Department of Agriculture such as funding for land grant colleges and the Black and Native American Farmers settlement to address decades-long discrimination.

"Shirley Sherrod's story – the true story she told as evidenced in the full tape of her remarks that has now been released – is one that we can use as the starting point for a real dialogue on race.

"As Americans, we need to build a shared understanding of our country's history as we work to build a more perfect union. We look forward to continued dialogue with Secretary Vilsack and the U.S. Department of Agriculture."

###

www.thecongressionalblackcaucus.com
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J. Jioni Palmer
Communications Director
Congressional Black Caucus
(202) 226-1912 - office
[REDACTED] - cell

Leonard, Joe

From: patricia.engel@rma.usda.gov
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:07 PM
To: Leonard, Joe
Subject: media coverage of GA rural development employee

Hi Joe,

I just had a very brief conversation with Bill Buchanan (RMA Civil Rights and Outreach)

It has crossed my mind more than once in these past 12 hours or so that the woman in question in GA (Shirley Sherrod?) needs to be reinstated.

It is also my belief that you and your office are empowered to investigate the matter and help the Secretary to make his decision.

If I am restating an already understood fact, then I apologize for using up precious time.

I just firmly believe that your office and your wisdom and experience are what the Secretary needs at this time.

All the best,

Pat

Pat Engel

Senior Advisor to the Administrator

Director, External Affairs

Risk Management Agency

work (202) 720-8812

Leonard, Joe

From: Willoughby, Patrice [Patrice.Willoughby@mail.house.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:39 AM
To: Leonard, Joe
Subject: Shirley Sherrod
Attachments: img-721093900-0001.pdf

Joe, we're sending the following statement on Ms. Sherrod.

(Washington, D.C.)- The Congressional Black Caucus released the following statement today on the firing of USDA employee Shirley Sherrod:

“It is troubling that Shirley Sherrod was asked for her resignation as Georgia State Director for Rural Development at the U.S. Department of Agriculture because of an edited video clip. A full review of the clip demonstrates Ms. Sherrod’s personal transformation. She was clearly educating the public about the power of redemption. It is now apparent that Secretary Vilsack did not have all of the facts available to him and overreacted.

“The Congressional Black Caucus continues to believe that Ms. Sherrod was unfairly asked to resign, without due process and should be reinstated immediately. There are many individuals still serving in the Department of Agriculture who were responsible for years of discrimination against African American farmers.

“We also believe that a national dialogue on race must be held. Last November, we held a forum on race in Washington DC to begin the discussion. The basis for Ms. Sherrod’s resignation is another example of why we must not sweep race under the rug. Rather, we must come together as a nation and recognize that we do not live in a post-racial era and that while difficult, we must confront these issues head on with clarity and without fear.

“Ms. Sherrod has been an effective public servant and it would be tragic to lose a person of such caliber, competence and commitment to fairness and equality and one who has dedicated her life to working for a more perfect union.”

**The Federation of Southern Cooperatives
Land Assistance Fund**



**Public Relations and Fundraising Office
2769 Church Street
East Point, GA 30344**

**RALPH PAIGE
EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR**

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[404] 765-0991**

**Facsimile
[404] 765-9178**

**E-mail
fsc@mindspring.com**

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**Norwood Davis
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**Rural Training and
Research Center
P. O. Box 95
Epes, AL 35460
(205) 652-9676**

July 21, 2010

The Honorable Thomas Vilsack
Secretary of Agriculture
Washington DC

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

We at the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund are writing regarding your decision to force Shirley Sherrod to resign. We think you must reconsider and immediately reinstate her as Georgia USDA State Director of Rural Development.

Your decision to force Ms. Sherrod to resign was taken in haste without a thorough and complete review of the facts, context and circumstances of her actions. We feel you were unduly influenced by distorted and edited videotape that completely misrepresented a speech Ms. Sherrod made to the NAACP in Georgia.

It is a sign of leadership to admit to mistakes and quickly correct them. We feel you as Secretary of Agriculture must quickly correct this injustice committed against Ms. Shirley Sherrod and the people she has struggled for years to serve. This is the transformative awareness and enlightened judgment we are expecting from you.

We note with interest that your concern is to move forward to solve the problems that USDA has had in the past in terms of its sad record on civil rights. Yet your decision to fire one of the few persons in the country who could likely do the most to help achieve that goal stubbornly negates your stated interest of moving forward toward equal access and equality of opportunity at USDA.

At the NAACP gathering in March this year, Shirley was sharing with the group her experience in the 1980's of assisting the white farmer Roger Spooner. She, in fact, was instrumental in helping to save his farm. She describes the process of getting beyond her assumption that whites didn't need services and assistance. She realized that being white did not make anyone immune to the problem of and to the lack of access to services. She realized rather that it was a matter of who has and who does not. This was a life changing experience for her. Her message was that all of us need to get beyond race and assist each other whether black or white.

Another of your interests we know is to finally resolve the lawsuits against USDA. Lack of access to services at USDA is the basis for the Pigford lawsuit. In addition to securing the necessary funding from Congress for settling Pigford to finally resolve this injustice to individual farmers, we know that another essential step in moving forward is to assist and assure farmers have access to the USDA programs; programs, in fact, that are supposed to be available on an equitable basis to all farmers.

Shirley Sherrod in her remarkable career has been one of the most active practitioners in assisting untold numbers of black and white farmers to access the credit, conservation and other programs at USDA. Shirley has essentially been an ambassador for the USDA in her work at the Federation of Southern Cooperatives and as Georgia State Director of Rural Development. If anything, she deserves to be honored for this work and not falsely condemned and forced to resign in disgrace.

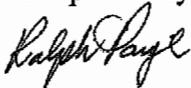
We find it ironic that in the one hundred years of USDA's history of discrimination, not a single white person has been dismissed for discrimination, however, a Black woman who is doing her job well is falsely accused of discrimination in an altered video and you decide that she can no longer do a credible and nondiscriminatory job of dispensing USDA Rural Development programs.

Once Shirley is restored to her position, we feel it would enhance USDA's goals by utilizing her as an ambassador for USDA. She could offer USDA staff throughout the country training and teaching about transformation on the issue of race and what it means to offer service to all farmers with justice and integrity regardless of race.

In summary, the inference that Shirley Sherrod is a racist is beyond comprehension. For you to make a decision without consideration of Shirley's long and impressive work in civil rights is uncalled for. It is not only an insult to her, but also to the communities she has worked for and with all these many years as well as our organization that has for decades fought against racism and injustice in the rural South.

We ask that you immediately reconsider your decision to fire Shirley Sherrod, apologize to her and consider instead the tremendous asset she has been and could continue to be for the USDA and rural America. We urge you to learn from this disagreeable incident and make it a shining example of a true change of heart and direction at USDA toward a brighter day of racial reconciliation and justice for all.

Cooperatively yours,



Ralph Paige
Executive Director

Leonard, Joe

From: Willoughby, Patrice [Patrice.Willoughby@mail.house.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:45 AM
To: Harden, Krysta; Leonard, Joe
Subject: CBC NEWS: CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

We wanted to share this statement with you.

Patrice Willoughby

(202) 225-2398 desk

From: Palmer, Jioni
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:36 AM
Subject: CBC NEWS: CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

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(202) 226-9776 (T)
(202) 225-9817 (F)

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**CBC Statement on the
Resignation of Shirley Sherrod**

Wednesday, July 21, 2010

Contact : J. Jioni Palmer

(Washington, D.C.)- Congressional Black Caucus Chairwoman Barbara Lee and members of the CBC released the following statement today on the firing of USDA employee Shirley Sherrod:

“It is troubling that Shirley Sherrod was asked for her resignation as Georgia State Director for Rural Development at the U.S. Department of Agriculture because of an edited video clip. A full review of the clip demonstrates Ms. Sherrod’s personal transformation. She was clearly educating the public about the power of redemption. It is now apparent that Secretary Vilsack did not have all of the facts available to him and overreacted.

“The Congressional Black Caucus continues to believe that Ms. Sherrod was unfairly asked to resign, without due process and should be reinstated immediately. There are many individuals still serving in the Department of Agriculture who were responsible for years of discrimination against African American farmers.

“We also believe that a national dialogue on race must be held. Last November, we held a forum on race in Washington DC to begin the discussion. The basis for Ms. Sherrod’s resignation is another example of why we must not sweep race under the rug. Rather, we must come together as a nation and recognize that we do not live in a post-racial era and that, while difficult, we must confront these issues head on with clarity and without fear.

“Ms. Sherrod has been an effective public servant and it would be tragic to lose a person of such caliber, competence and commitment to fairness and equality and one who has dedicated her life to working for a more perfect union.”

- 30 -

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J. Jioni Palmer
Communications Director
Congressional Black Caucus
(202) 226-1912 - office
[REDACTED] - cell

Leonard, Joe

From: Knishkowsky, Jeff
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:40 AM
To: Leonard, Joe; McNeil, Mary
Subject: Shirley Sherrod

Please let me know if there is any way I can be helpful.

This seems like a natural place for Special Counsel for Civil Rights to contribute in some way. On the other hand, I know there's a lot going on with program adjudication, so I'm not looking to over-commit myself. Just wanting to provide options in a sensitive situation.

Jeff

Jeff Knishkowsky
Special Counsel for Civil Rights
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights

[REDACTED]
(202) 205-3579
[REDACTED]

Leonard, Joe

From: Kinder, Charmion [CKinder@doc.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:55 PM
To: Wade, Rick
Subject: CNN (SS)

Rick:

Per our conversation, in case you think this info is helpful. I've Bcc'd here.

Thanks,
CNK

CNN COVERAGE - DONNA BRAZILE:

CNN COVERAGE - SHIRLEY SHERROD:

SECRETARY VILSACK:

PRINT NEWS - SHIRLEY SHERROD:

*Print - *Note sort by date for the latest news**

VILSACK'S STATEMENT: "Yesterday, I asked for and accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation for two reasons. First, for the past 18 months, we have been working to turn the page on the sordid civil rights record at USDA and this controversy could make it more difficult to move forward on correcting injustices. Second, state rural development directors make many decisions and are often called to use their discretion. The controversy surrounding her comments would create situations where her decisions, rightly or wrongly, would be called into question making it difficult for her to bring jobs to Georgia."

"Our policy is clear. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA and we strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have a duty to ensure that when we provide services to the American people we do so in an equitable manner. But equally important is our duty to instill confidence in the American people that we are fair service providers."

NAACP STATEMENT (From Politico): The NAACP on Tuesday said "we were snookered" by Fox News and conservative Internet entrepreneur Andrew Breitbart into criticizing former USDA official Shirley Sherrod, who was captured on videotape saying she once withheld assistance to a white farmer. "The tape of Ms. Sherrod's speech at an NAACP banquet was deliberately edited to create a false impression of racial bias, and to create a controversy where none existed," the group said in a statement. For more information...

Leonard, Joe

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:53 AM
To: Leonard, Joe
Subject: Fw: Did you know this woman?

Read this. She said the comments 241 years ago and they were taken out of context. but she also says she resigned because she felt she had no support at USDA

When she said she didn't have any support at USDA and felt she had to resign

USDA employee resigns over statements about white farmer

Allen, Julie -USDA

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 12:07 PM
To: Allen, Julie -USDA
Subject: FW: CBC NEWS: CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod
Attachments: image001.png; image002.png; image003.png

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:56 AM
To: Berge, John; 'Wilson, Denise R.'
Subject: RE: CBC NEWS: CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

Thank you. I shared with S.

He has talked with at least 10 Members of the CBC and will continue to do so. KH

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:40 AM
To: Wilson, Denise R.; Harden, Krysta
Subject: RE: CBC NEWS: CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

Got it.

From: Wilson, Denise R. [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:39 AM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Fw: CBC NEWS: CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

FYI
Denise Wilson
Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

From: Schwoeffermann, Irene (CBC) <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wed Jul 21 10:46:38 2010
Subject: CBC NEWS: CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

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CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

Wednesday, July 21, 2010

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact : J. Jioni Palmer

(Washington, D.C.)- Congressional Black Caucus Chairwoman Barbara Lee and members of the CBC released the following statement today on the firing of USDA employee Shirley Sherrod:

“It is troubling that Shirley Sherrod was asked for her resignation as Georgia State Director for Rural Development at the U.S. Department of Agriculture because of an edited video clip. A full review of the clip demonstrates Ms. Sherrod’s personal transformation. She was clearly educating the public about the power of redemption. It is now apparent that Secretary Vilsack did not have all of the facts available to him and overreacted.

“The Congressional Black Caucus continues to believe that Ms. Sherrod was unfairly asked to resign, without due process and should be reinstated immediately. There are many individuals still serving in the Department of Agriculture who were responsible for years of discrimination against African American farmers.

“We also believe that a national dialogue on race must be held. Last November, we held a forum on race in Washington DC to begin the discussion. The basis for Ms. Sherrod’s resignation is another example of why we must not sweep race under the rug. Rather, we must come together as a nation and recognize that we do not live in a post-racial era and that, while difficult, we must confront these issues head on with clarity and without fear.

“Ms. Sherrod has been an effective public servant and it would be tragic to lose a person of such caliber, competence and commitment to fairness and equality and one who has dedicated her life to working for a more perfect union.”

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J. Jioni Palmer
Communications Director
Congressional Black Caucus
(202) 226-1912 - office
[REDACTED] - cell

Allen, Julie -USDA

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 12:01 PM
To: Allen, Julie -USDA
Subject: FW: Chairman Towns

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 5:13 PM
To: Berge, John; Cluthe, Sally
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns

Ok

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Cluthe, Sally
Sent: Tue Jul 20 17:10:33 2010
Subject: Fw: Chairman Towns

WH would like Secretary to reach out to towns directly. Numbers below.

From: Wilson, Denise R.
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 17:07:00 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns
[REDACTED] Towns mobile
[REDACTED] Ron mobile
Denise Wilson
Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

From: Berge, John <John.Berge@osec.usda.gov>
To: Wilson, Denise R.
Sent: Tue Jul 20 17:03:09 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns

Concur, and that is what I offered on voicemail, but need best number for later tonight. S is in OH travelling and won't be available to call until after 6 or 630 EDT. Do you have a good number?

From: Wilson, Denise R.
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:58:25 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns
Maybe the secretary should just put in a call to Towns. Maybe Towns/ Ron feel left out on the calls.
Denise Wilson
Special Assistant to the President

Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

From: Wilson, Denise R.
To: 'John.Berge@osec.usda.gov' <John.Berge@osec.usda.gov>
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:48:12 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns

Good. Not sure why Ron wants to make an issue of this without the facts
Denise Wilson
Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

From: Berge, John <John.Berge@osec.usda.gov>
To: Wilson, Denise R.
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:37:37 2010
Subject: RE: Chairman Towns

They are speaking at 515.

From: Wilson, Denise R. [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:31 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns

Did he speak with Barbara Lee
Denise Wilson
Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

From: Berge, John <John.Berge@osec.usda.gov>
To: Wilson, Denise R.
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:29:27 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns

The opposite. The Secretary spoke with several members of the CBC today who were all supportive.

From: Wilson, Denise R.
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:28:00 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns
Ron is way too wound up on this. He's saying the CBC will be all over this. What have you heard?
Denise Wilson
Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

From: Berge, John <John.Berge@osec.usda.gov>
To: Wilson, Denise R.
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:26:03 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns

Got it and will follow up.

----- Original Message -----

From: Wilson, Denise R. <[REDACTED]>
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:21:22 2010
Subject: Chairman Towns

His staff director, Ron Stroman just called. Towns wants to be briefed on Shirley Sherrod.

Ron's number is [REDACTED]

Denise Wilson

Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

Allen, Julie -USDA

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 12:07 PM
To: Allen, Julie -USDA
Subject: FW: CBC NEWS: CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod
Attachments: image001.png; image002.png; image003.png

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:55 AM
To: Berge, John; Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: RE: CBC NEWS: CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

Yes, I share with the S.

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:41 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: FW: CBC NEWS: CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

I'm sure you've seen this.

From: Wilson, Denise R. [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:39 AM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Fw: CBC NEWS: CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

FYI
Denise Wilson
Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

From: Schwoeffermann, Irene (CBC) <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wed Jul 21 10:46:38 2010
Subject: CBC NEWS: CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

Trouble viewing this press release? [Click here.](#)



CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS

Contact Us

Congressional Black Caucus
2444 Rayburn Building
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 226-9776 (T)
(202) 225-9817 (F)

[click here to email us](#)

CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

Wednesday, July 21, 2010

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact : J. Jioni Palmer

(Washington, D.C.)- Congressional Black Caucus Chairwoman Barbara Lee and members of the CBC released the following statement today on the firing of USDA employee Shirley Sherrod:

“It is troubling that Shirley Sherrod was asked for her resignation as Georgia State Director for Rural Development at the U.S. Department of Agriculture because of an edited video clip. A full review of the clip demonstrates Ms. Sherrod’s personal transformation. She was clearly educating the public about the power of redemption. It is now apparent that Secretary Vilsack did not have all of the facts available to him and overreacted.

“The Congressional Black Caucus continues to believe that Ms. Sherrod was unfairly asked to resign, without due process and should be reinstated immediately. There are many individuals still serving in the Department of Agriculture who were responsible for years of discrimination against African American farmers.

“We also believe that a national dialogue on race must be held. Last November, we held a forum on race in Washington DC to begin the discussion. The basis for Ms. Sherrod’s resignation is another example of why we must not sweep race under the rug. Rather, we must come together as a nation and recognize that we do not live in a post-racial era and that, while difficult, we must confront these issues head on with clarity and without fear.

“Ms. Sherrod has been an effective public servant and it would be tragic to lose a person of such caliber, competence and commitment to fairness and equality and one who has dedicated her life to working for a more perfect union.”

- 30 -

J. Jioni Palmer
Communications Director
Congressional Black Caucus
(202) 226-1912 - office
[REDACTED] - cell

Allen, Julie -USDA

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 12:07 PM
To: Allen, Julie -USDA
Subject: FW: CBC NEWS: CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod
Attachments: image001.png; image002.png; image003.png

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:56 AM
To: Berge, John; 'Wilson, Denise R.'
Subject: RE: CBC NEWS: CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

Thank you. I shared with S.

He has talked with at least 10 Members of the CBC and will continue to do so. KH

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:40 AM
To: Wilson, Denise R.; Harden, Krysta
Subject: RE: CBC NEWS: CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

Got it.

From: Wilson, Denise R. [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:39 AM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Fw: CBC NEWS: CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

FYI
Denise Wilson
Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

From: Schwoeffermann, Irene (CBC) [REDACTED]
Sent: Wed Jul 21 10:46:38 2010
Subject: CBC NEWS: CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

Trouble viewing this press release? [Click here.](#)



CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS

CHANGE COURSE, CONFRONT CRISES, CONTINUE THE LEGACY

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Washington, DC 20515
(202) 226-9776 (T)
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[click here to email us](#)

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“The Congressional Black Caucus continues to believe that Ms. Sherrod was unfairly asked to resign, without due process and should be reinstated immediately. There are many individuals still serving in the Department of Agriculture who were responsible for years of discrimination against African American farmers.

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“Ms. Sherrod has been an effective public servant and it would be tragic to lose a person of such caliber, competence and commitment to fairness and equality and one who has dedicated her life to working for a more perfect union.”

www.thecongressionalblackcaucus.com

To unsubscribe, [click here](#).

J. Jioni Palmer
Communications Director
Congressional Black Caucus
(202) 226-1912 - office
[REDACTED] - cell

O'Brien, Doug

From: Green, Jason G. [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 7:13 PM
To: O'Brien, Doug
Subject: FW:

If you didn't already see this....

From: Washo, Kevin [mailto:Kevin.Washo@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:57 PM
To: Green, Valerie E.
Subject: Fw:

----- Original Message -----

From: Cook, Cheryl
To: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:56:14 2010
Subject: FW:

-----Original Message-----

From: Sherrod, Shirley - Athens, GA [mailto:[REDACTED]]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:55 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject:

Cheryl

I feel so disappointed that the Secretary and President let a misrepresentation of my words on the part of th Tea Party be the reason to ask me to resign

Please look at the tape and see that I use the story from 1986 to show people that the issue is not about race but about those who have v ersus those who do not

I used everything and everyone I could to help me to save that white farmers land. That family has the land because of what I did. He became a very good friend. I went on to help save many other white land owners thru the years

I submit my resignation but in doing so want to put the administration on notice that I will get the whole story out.

My whole life speaks for my commitment to fairness whether white or black.

Shirley sherrod

Sent using BlackBerry

O'Brien, Doug

From: Blake, Michael A. [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:57 PM
To: Leonard, Joe; O'Brien, Doug
Subject: Can we talk?

O'Brien, Doug

From: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:17 PM
To: Jett, Carole; O'Brien, Doug
Subject: RE: Urgent. Fw: Can we talk?

thanks

Karen Ross
Chief of Staff
Office of the Secretary
(202) 720-3631
karen.ross@osec.usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:15 PM
To: O'Brien, Doug; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: Re: Urgent. Fw: Can we talk?

We talked. Doug will call Michael and then we ill talk agin.

Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA
[REDACTED]

----- Original Message -----

From: O'Brien, Doug
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:05:50 2010
Subject: Re: Urgent. Fw: Can we talk?

I will try to get his number and send it on to you or three way.

----- Original Message -----

From: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
To: O'Brien, Doug; Jett, Carole
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:02:02 2010
Subject: RE: Urgent. Fw: Can we talk?

Now - what number? I think I could figure out how to do a three-way. But since I've been gone, it is best for you to talk with Carole who is in the midst of everything.

Karen Ross
Chief of Staff
Office of the Secretary
(202) 720-3631
karen.ross@osec.usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: O'Brien, Doug
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:59 PM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole

Subject: Urgent. Fw: Can we talk?
Importance: High

I will wait for your direction before responding. Not sure what Joe will do.

----- Original Message -----

From: Blake, Michael A. <[REDACTED]>
To: Leonard, Joe; O'Brien, Doug
Sent: Tue Jul 20 19:56:39 2010
Subject: Can we talk?

Harden, Krysta

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:12 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re:

Thanks. He will be done shortly and has a 2:30 call with Rep Clyburn

From: Lu, Christopher P.
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 14:07:54 2010
Subject: FW:

In case he doesn't see this immediately.

From: Lu, Christopher P.
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:08 PM
To: TJV
Subject:

We missed grabbing you before your press avail, but I can fill you in on further conversations. I'm back at my desk –

[REDACTED]

Berge, John

From: Stephanie Chan [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:18 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: NAACP Posted Entire Video

FYI - NAACP posted this video about 40 min ago. It is basically the story of her life and struggle with issues relating to race. She goes on to say that we all need to 'work together' and that it's sad the room isn't 'filled with white and blacks together' as we have to 'overcome divisions.' She quotes Tony Morrison, 'Race exists but it doesn't matter.'

From the NAACP-

The video of Shirley Sherrod released by Andrew Brietbart's Big Government Blog on July 19 didn't tell the full story. It was selectively edited to cast her in a negative light. Here is the video, shot by the local NAACP unit that hosted Ms. Sherrod. Watch the video, and judge for yourself.

Link: http://www.naacp.org/news/entry/video_sherrod/

--
Stephanie Chan
[REDACTED]



Berge, John

From: Stephanie Chan [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:00 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: FOX Harity Transcript

Guest on this show was the person who posted the video, Andrew from BigGovernment.com. He states that the problem isn't about Shirley, the WH made it about her by 'throwing her under the bus.' He posted this for the tea party who 'should not be throwing stones in glass houses' when it comes to issues of race.

Station: Fox News

Date: 07/20/2010 21:00:30 - 9:10:30 PM

sean: it was one week ago when the naacp passed a resolution condemning members of the tea party movement as racist. now video has surfaced of a speaker making what appears to be racially charged remarks at an event hosted by the naacp. the woman in the video shirley sherrod abruptly last night. let's look at a longer portion of the speech. this video was just posted on the naacp's website.

first time i was faced with a white farmer to help him save his farm. i knew what he wa doing but he had come to me for help. what he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me, was i was trying to decide how much help i was going to give him. i was struggleing with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland and here i was faced with having to help a white person save their land. so, i didn't give him the full force of what i could do. i did enough so that -- to a white lawyer that attended some of the training that we provided. chapter 12 bankruptcy had just been enacted for the family farmer. i figured if i take him to one of them that his own kind would take care of him. that's when it was revealed to me that it is about -- not so much about -- it is about white and black, but it opened my eyes. i took him to one of his own.

sean: sherrod claim she was taken out of context and had harsh words for the obama white house saying her resignation was forced and came only after several harrassing phone calls from an administration officials. tom vilsack secretary of agriculture is not backing down. he leased another statement today: there is zero tolerance for discrimination: we are getting word from the white house official the president was briefed on the circumstances behind sherrod's removal and he fully supports the secretary's decision. the naacp initially released a statement in which they sided with the administration saying, according to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race. we are appalled by her actions. her actions were shameful. now the naa is changing its tune and blaming all of this on who else, fox news. a statement released a short time ago says, we have come to the conclusion we were snook erred into believing she had harmed white farmers because of racial bias. they go on to say this shows the lens to which extremists elements will go however, it is important to note that the fox news channel did not make any mention of this story yesterday on air until after shirley sherrod had already lost her job after secretary vilsack had drawn his own conclusions that the president apparently agrees with. joining me with reaction the founder of big government.com the one and only infamous andrew breitbart. welcome back.

thank you sean.

sean: why don't we start at the beginning. how did you get in contact with this video and the posting?

an individual in georgia worried about being exposed and attacked like joe the plumber reached out to me. now i figured out where the e-mail was in early april of this year to tell me about this video. it was something that i thought was somewhat news worthy that didn't pursue. when i saw that the naacp last week was going to

reassert the proveable falsehood that the n-word was hurled by tea party people as part of a resolution to condemn the tea party. the tea party sent a letter saying they want to investigate they do not want to talk about the exculpatory evidence shows that the n-word did not happen. i told ben jealous, you want to divide this country on race? you want to keep negatively branding the tea party constantly asking are they racist? are they racist? that is an act of sending a message negative branding to e american people and black people these are people to be feared. it is a technique of propaganda.

sean: hang on. i want get some facts on the table. i want your opinion and everything else associated with it. you have this tape since april?

i didn't have the tape, i had regular that it existed and the man told me about it. he tried to send me ain't came on a disc and it didn't show. i said this is annoying. when the naacp thing happened, i found his number, i called him and he sent me to -- me two excerpts of the video.

sean: allegation of the left -- hang on a second, she said she harbored these views in this tape. she described how she racially discriminated against the white farmer. she not distributing that.

she sees the white man as your kind.

sean: she decides he will get help from one of his own kind and referred him to a white lawyer. she also said on the tape admits she didn't do everything she could for him because he's white. what critics are saying is that was edited. she is claiming that was edited she left out the part she learned from this at the end of the tape.

the reason why shirley sherrod is the story not the naacp because the white house which stands by the forced resignation, harrassment as she said. they made the story about shirley. they threw her under the bus. i have not asked she get fired. i've not asked for an investigation. the whole point was to show for the naacp to spend five days on national tv saying the tea party is racist, without any evidence, when we can prove that the centralment didn't happen and the mainstream medi won't play it for them to talk about racism they should not be throwing stones in glass houses. what this video shows and what the naacp affirms, in their official rebuke is not just that shirley sherrod, what she said was wrong that the audience wasaughing and applauding as she described how she maltreated the white farmer.

sean: before she gets to the end of the story which she is claiming puts context.

did the people in the audience know there was going to be a point of redemption?

sean: no.

the point is the naacp at a dinner honoring the person is cheering on a person describing a white person as the other is far worse than anything that has ever been alleged against the tea party certainly not proved.

sean: the history of you and this tea party and this allegation of racism, offered 100 41 pocket if there were any tapes that would prove racial epithets were hurled at african-american congressmen and women, correct?

yes. but enough about me. i'm going to get to the heart of the issue. mary francis berry the former chair of the u.s. commission on civil rights appointed president carter and clinton, this is not a conservative, okay. this is what she said that has to do with what is going on now and why this is not about shirley and andrew and why this is about the naacp and the congressional black caucus and the democratic party. tainting the tea party movement with the charge of racism is proving to be effective strategy for democrats. there's no evidence that the tea party is any more racist than other republicans and indeed many other americans. but getting them to spend their time purging the ranks and having candidates distance themselves should helphwy96 democrats

november, having one's opponent rebut charges of racism is better than discussing joblessness this is about politics. this is about tarring the american people in the tea party movement with the false charge of racism.

sean: last question. how do you feel about the white house's firing of her in light of everything that we know and what we've learned, do you think it was the right decision? do you think -- how do you feel in total about what she said on that tape, do you think it was racist? do you want her fired?

i have to be honest i'm agnostic on they issu i'm invested in getting the naacp and the democratic party and the congressional black caucus to stop constantly calling the tea party racist, that's my job. i could care less about shirley sherrod. to be honest this is not about shirley sherrod.

--
Stephanie Chan



Berge, John

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:33 AM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Fw: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod
Attachments: image001.jpg

Please share as we discussed

From: Mather, Chris
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wed Jul 21 05:17:54 2010
Subject: Fw: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

This went at 2
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wed Jul 21 02:07:06 2010
Subject: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod



Release No. PENDING

Contact:
USDA Office of Communications
(202) 720-4623

Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

WASHINGTON, July 21, 2010 - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack tonight released the following statement in response to the release of remarks in video from Shirley Sherrod:

"I am of course willing and will conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts to ensure to the American people we are providing services in a fair and equitable manner."

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice), or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).

Berge, John

From: Yezak, Jennifer
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 8:28 AM
To: Berge, John; Gonzales, Oscar
Subject: Re: GA
Attachments: image001.jpg

John, we'll email it to Gov and Ag Commissioner.

Jennifer

From: Berge, John
To: Yezak, Jennifer; Gonzales, Oscar
Sent: Wed Jul 21 08:17:25 2010
Subject: Fw: GA

Please send to GA Gov and GA State Ag Commision.

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wed Jul 21 08:08:26 2010
Subject: GA

Good Morning -

Secretary Vilsack issued the following statement late last evening in reference to the situation in Georgia.



Release No. PENDING

Contact:
USDA Office of Communications
(202) 720-4623

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From Shirley Sherrod**

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John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:02 AM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Re:

Thank you

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Wed Jul 21 07:49:42 2010
Subject:

Notifications went out a few mins ago. GA delegation, authorizers, appropriators, CBC members he talked with or was to talk with.

John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:30 AM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Subject: Newscore (Anna Brech): Will USDA make additional comments on Sherrod? Interview request

FYI- I have already told her that the secretary has no public events today

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED] Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: Brech, Anna [mailto:anna.brech@newscore.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:03 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: RE: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

Yes - thanks a lot for this. I appreciate it was probably the middle of the night for you. I work for NewsCore, which is the breaking news wire service for News Corporation publications -- including Fox, Wall Street Journal, New York Post and publications in the UK and Australia.

Re: questions, I just wondered whether Tom Vilsack was expected to make any comment about Shirley Sherrod at the education event he's currently attending, or later today? would it be possible to forward me any press releases from him if/when they transpire? and I know this is a long shot and you may not be in a position to sort it - but if he is doing any interviews, we would obviously be interested in speaking with him.

Many thanks
Anna

From: Chan, Stephanie [mailto:Stephanie.Chan@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:50 PM
To: Brech, Anna
Subject: RE: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

Anna, just following up to make sure that you received everything and check to see if you had questions. Also, what outlet are you with again? Regards

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: Chan, Stephanie

Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 3:54 AM

To: 'anna.brech@newscore.com'

Subject: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

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Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]

Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

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Berge, John

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:31 AM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Subject: RE: Rachel Maddow Show (Andrew Dallos): Interview with Secretary Tonight

Adding in Krysta and John-

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED] Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:28 AM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Rachel Maddow Show (Andrew Dallos): Interview with Secretary Tonight

FYI-

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: Dallos, Andrew (NBC Universal, MSNBC) [<mailto:andrew.dallos@msnbc.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:17 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Fw: Rachel Maddow Show

----- Original Message -----

From: Dallos, Andrew (NBC Universal, MSNBC)
To: 'stephanie.chan@oc.usa.gov' <stephanie.chan@oc.usa.gov>
Sent: Wed Jul 21 09:13:48 2010
Subject: Rachel Maddow Show

Ms. Chan,

Good morning. This is Andrew Dallos with the Rachel Maddow show at MSNBC. Would it be possible for me to call you please? If so, the number to reach you on? It's regarding our show tonight and a possible interview with Secretary Vilsack.

Thank you,

Andrew Dallos

Berge, John

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:46 AM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Subject: CBS Early Show (Gina Garcia): Interview with Secretary

FYI- Reporter would like an interview with the Secretary to hear info 'straight from the horse's mouth,' and would like a layout of everything that has unfolded in the last 24 hours. Would also be interested in hearing what other interviews he is doing and chatting about USDA initiatives .

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Ross, Lori -USDA
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:40 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: media inquiry

Gina Garcia
CBS News

[REDACTED] garciag@cbsnews.com

Re: would like to interview the Secretary tomorrow morning

Berge, John

From: Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:02 AM
To: Berge, John
Subject: RE: Jackson

Jesse Jackson wants apology for Sherrod's ouster

By MARY CLARE JALONICK
The Associated Press
Wednesday, July 21, 2010; 9:49 AM

WASHINGTON -- The Rev. Jesse Jackson is calling for an apology from the Obama administration for ousting an Agriculture Department employee now at the center of a racially tinged firestorm.

Jackson said he talked to Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack late Tuesday night before Vilsack said that he would reconsider his department's decision to ask Shirley Sherrod to leave her job.

Vilsack issued a short statement early Wednesday morning after Sherrod said she was pressured to resign because of her comments that she didn't give a white farmer as much help as she could have 24 years ago. Until Tuesday, Sherrod was the department's director of rural development in Georgia.

Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:02 AM
To: Hannigan, Erin
Subject: Re: Jackson

Can you paste words in email?

From: Berge, John
To: Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Wed Jul 21 09:55:41 2010
Subject: Re: Jackson

Not til now.

From: Hannigan, Erin
To: Berge, John
Sent: Wed Jul 21 09:54:36 2010
Subject: Jackson

Have you seen this?

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/07/21/AR2010072102398.html>

Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

Berge, John

From: Poindexter, Martha Scott (Agriculture) [MarthaScott_Poindexter@agriculture.senate.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:03 AM
To: Berge, John; 'Krysta.Harden@usda.gov'
Subject: Re: GA
Attachments: image001.jpg

Thanks - the Chairman and Saxby spoke with Tonsanger privately and asked him to get them an explanation of everything asap. They will not comment publically until the Secretary's investigation is concluded and a decision is made by him.

From: Berge, John <John.Berge@osec.usda.gov>
To: Berge, John <John.Berge@osec.usda.gov>; Harden, Krysta <Krysta.Harden@osec.usda.gov>
Sent: Wed Jul 21 07:48:26 2010
Subject: GA

Good Morning -

Secretary Vilsack issued the following statement late last evening in reference to the situation in Georgia.



Release No. PENDING

Contact:
USDA Office of Communications
(202) 720-4623

Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

WASHINGTON, July 21, 2010 - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack tonight released the following statement in response to the release of remarks in video from Shirley Sherrod:

"I am of course willing and will conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts to ensure to the American people we are providing services in a fair and equitable manner."

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John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:07 AM
To: Berge, John
Subject: RE: Jackson

Also, fyi- the hearing is going into the second hour and the issue has not come up.

Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:02 AM
To: Hannigan, Erin
Subject: Re: Jackson

Can you paste words in email?

From: Berge, John
To: Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Wed Jul 21 09:55:41 2010
Subject: Re: Jackson

Not til now.

From: Hannigan, Erin
To: Berge, John
Sent: Wed Jul 21 09:54:36 2010
Subject: Jackson
Have you seen this?

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/07/21/AR2010072102398.html>

Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

Berge, John

From: McFarland, Lilia
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:59 AM
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Cc: Church, Chris; Williamson, Todd
Subject: RE: Bishop

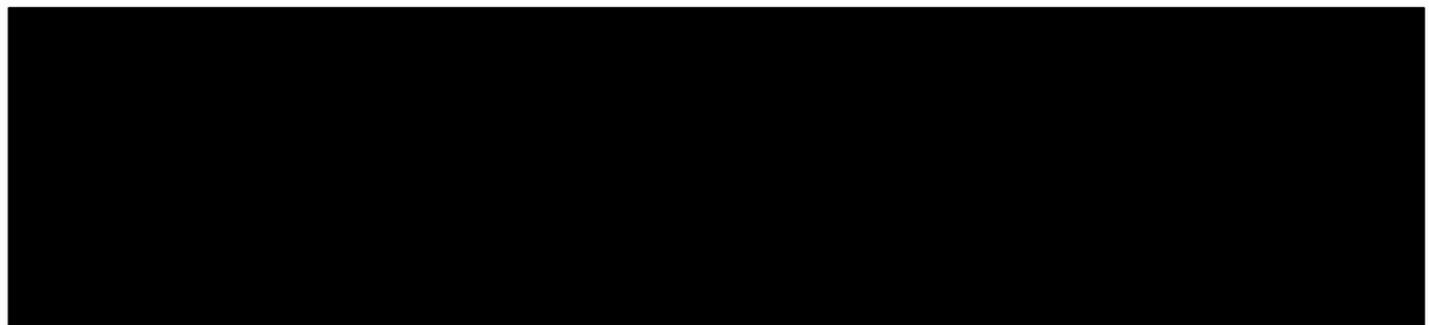
Thanks. I'll ask Erin/Tina for the latest TPS on the issue, just in case.

Lilia McFarland
Office of Congressional Relations
U.S. Department of Agriculture
(202) 720-9259
lilia.mcfarland@osec.usda.gov

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:58 AM
To: McFarland, Lilia; Harden, Krysta
Cc: Church, Chris; Williamson, Todd
Subject: Re: Bishop

You and Chris should go.

From: McFarland, Lilia
To: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Cc: Church, Chris; Williamson, Todd
Sent: Wed Jul 21 10:29:14 2010
Subject: Bishop
Dear Krysta and John,



Lilia McFarland
Office of Congressional Relations
U.S. Department of Agriculture
(202) 720-9259
lilia.mcfarland@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:34 PM
To: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Subject: Bishop

Krysta,

Phyllis Harmon just returned my call from Monday night. I wasn't available to take the call but she left a message.

Do you think its necessary to call her back?

Thanks,

Erin

Berge, John

From: Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:20 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: CBC

FYI

Congressional Black Caucus releases statement on Sherrod firing

Posted: July 21st, 2010 10:42 AM ET

Washington (CNN) – The Congressional Black Caucus released the following statement today on the firing of USDA employee Shirley Sherrod:

"It is troubling that Shirley Sherrod was asked for her resignation as Georgia State Director for Rural Development at the U.S. Department of Agriculture because of an edited video clip. A full review of the clip demonstrates Ms. Sherrod's personal transformation. She was clearly educating the public about the power of redemption. It is now apparent that Secretary Vilsack did not have all of the facts available to him and overreacted.

"The Congressional Black Caucus continues to believe that Ms. Sherrod was unfairly asked to resign, without due process and should be reinstated immediately. There are many individuals still serving in the Department of Agriculture who were responsible for years of discrimination against African American farmers.

"We also believe that a national dialogue on race must be held. Last November, we held a forum on race in Washington DC to begin the discussion. The basis for Ms. Sherrod's resignation is another example of why we must not sweep race under the rug. Rather, we must come together as a nation and recognize that we do not live in a post-racial era and that while difficult, we must confront these issues head on with clarity and without fear.

"Ms. Sherrod has been an effective public servant and it would be tragic to lose a person of such caliber, competence and commitment to fairness and equality and one who has dedicated her life to working for a more perfect union."

Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

Berge, John

From: OC.News@oc.usda.gov
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 4:09 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: TODAY: Agriculture Secretary Vilsack to Deliver Statement to Media Regarding Shirley Sherrod



Media Advisory No. PENDING

Contact:
USDA Office of Communications
(202) 720-4623

TODAY: Agriculture Secretary Vilsack to Deliver Statement to Media Regarding Shirley Sherrod

WASHINGTON, July 21, 2010 – TODAY, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack will speak to members of the media and provide a statement regarding Shirley Sherrod.

WHERE: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Whitten Office Building, 1400 Independence Ave. SW
Press Briefing Room, Room 107
Washington, D.C.

WHEN: Wednesday, July 21, 2010
4:45 p.m. EDT

***Please Note: Limited media parking will be made available on both Independence Ave. and Jefferson Drive between 12th and 14th Streets SW.

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This message was sent from USDA Office of Communications to John.Berge@usda.gov. It was sent from: OC News, USDA Office of Communications 1400 Independence Ave, SW, Washington, DC 20250-1300. You can modify/update your subscription via the link below.

 Manage your subscription

Berge, John

From: JIC4, OC -USDA
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:17 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris; 'justin.dejong@usda.gov'; Weaver, Caleb; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Subject: Vilsack Statement Transcript

Station:

CNN

Date:

07/21/2010 16:51:39 - 5:10:39 PM

can't forget but she can forgive the hatred shown to her parents, to her father. the murder of her father, the cross on the lawn, those kind of things for a woman to grow out of that and reach the point she has i think is a remarkable story and it does reflect again the best strands of america at a time we're looking at the dark side of politics here she comes along and shows us what's still good about america and what we can still look up to.

david gergen, the man who's a bit of a sage around here and has a wonderful way of expressing things sometimes, i simply didn't want to get in your way. the break will though because we've got to get a commercial in real quick. stay with us. when we come back, you see the picture there. in fact, if you could, let's take that full so you can see. i think we finally got it now. there it is. that's the podium. that's where secretary vilsack is going to come back in just a moment and give the comment that so many americans have been waiting to hear and certainly shirley sherrrod has been waiting to hear although we understand he just called her a little while ago. brooke baldwin is going to stick around and be with me when we come back. hopefully we'll go right to that news conference. you're watching a special edition of "rick's list." this is "race in america, shirley's story." does this look risky to you? tdd# 1-800-345-2550 nancy? fred? no. well it is. in a high-risk area, there's a 1-in-4 chance homes like us will flood. i'm glad i got flood insurance. fred, you should look into it. i'm a risk-taker. [female announcer] only flood insurance covers floods. visit floodsmart.gov/risk to learn your risk.

here now secretary of agriculture tom vilsack. let's go live.

in the conversation i started off by extending to her my personal and profound apologies for the pain and discomfort that has been caused to her and to her family over the course of the last several days. i wanted to give her the opportunity to express what i'm sure has been an extraordinary range of emotions she must have had and still probably does have but she was extraordinarily gracious. i wanted to make sure that she understood that i regretted the circumstances and that i accepted full responsibility for them. we talked briefly about the process and then i asked if she would be interested in figuring out a way forward that would take advantage of the extraordinary life experiences that she's had. she has been a claimant in a case against the united states department of agriculture and has experienced some of the prejudice and bias that we still today are dealing with in terms of claims against the department. she's had a broad range of experiences at usda and understands many of the programs in usda. she has an extraordinary history of helping individuals in trouble and of course she has gone through a very difficult period in the last couple of days. as a result of that experience, she has a unique set of skills which i think would lend themselves to assisting and helping usda as we deal with trying to turn the page on our civil rights chapter which has been difficult. for the last 18 months we've spent a good deal of time and effort in an effort to try to resolve thousands of claims that have been filed against the usda. continuing that work. and we had an opportunity to discuss a unique opportunity here at usda that might be of interest to her. she asked for the opportunity to think about it, which i certainly respected. again, i expressed my deep regret and apology to her and to her family and advised her that i would be meeting with the press to publicly apologize to her and to express publicly my regret. so with that --

secretary vilsack, you say that you accept full responsibility. you clearly seemed to have jumped to conclusions, this agency did, early on. why did you jump to conclusions? was there pressure from the white house to make a quick conclusion here?

no. there was no pressure from the white house.

was there any communication between this agency, anyone in this agency and the white house consulting on this?

no. i want to make sure everyone understands. this was my decision and it was a decision that i regret having made in haste. you ask why. for the last 18 months we have really focused on trying to address the long standing history of civil rights claims against the department. they're outstanding claims brought by black farmers, hispanic farmers, women farmers, native american farmers. these are not just a few incidents or a few isolated claims. these are tens of thousands of claims that have been brought against the department. i made it as a goal when i took this office that we would try to reverse that history. we would try to close that chapter. that we would be a department that would not tolerate in any way, shape, or form discrimination. i still hold that belief very firmly. and i know shirley does as well. i've learned a lot of lessons from this experience in the last couple of days and one of the lessons i learned is that these types of decisions require time. i didn't take the time. i should have. and as a

result, a good woman has gone through a very difficult period. and i'll have to live with that for a long, long time.

mr. secretary, from the cbs evening news. when you made the decision to dismiss ms. sherrod, had you seen her full remarks in their full context or had you only seen the clip that was posted on the web?

i saw a transcript because i was out of the office. i was in ohio. i saw a transcript.

was that of the whole speech?

no, it was just of a portion of it.

ms. sherrod has told -- from cnn -- ms. sherrod has told cnn that cheryl cook called her and asked her to resign and she said the white house had made this decision to put the pressure on her. are we going to be able to hear from mrs. cook? is that true?

you know, i think that first of all i indicated to shirley my personal regret and my responsibility for the fact that she received multiple phone calls. that's again a problem that i could have corrected if i had done this job properly. having said that, there was no pressure from the white house here. this was my decision. i obviously was not party to those conversations. it may very well be that during the course of the conversation ms. cook indicated that a white house liaison had been contacted but i don't know that she necessarily indicated that there was any pressure because that was not the case. this was something i decided and i have to accept full responsibility for this.

what does that mean, a white house liaison?

we have a number of people in the white house that we communicate with from time to time when there are issues just to keep them informed. and i -- this was my decision. i mean, you know, i appreciate the concerns that folks are expressing, but this was my decision. and i made it in haste.

secretary, evan mcmarsh, talking points memo. what do you say to other employees of the agriculture department, worried that something might come up about them on the internet and they may be facing the same kind of problems ms. sherrod faced?

this is a teachable moment for me and i hope a teachable moment for all of us. i think it is important to understand that each of us represents this department. each of us represents the administration and the president. and we've got to be very careful about our actions and our words and we have to make sure that we think before we act. i did not think before i acted. and for that reason this poor woman has gone through a very difficult time.

will there be a vetting process put in place before you make a decision like this or how you might examine information?

sure. we went through a process today of reviewing precisely as best we could what took place and there will be changes. one thing is there needs to be a more deliberative process obviously and i need to do a better job of reaching out for input before a decision of this magnitude is made. that is a very serious lesson i learned. i was very sensitive and remain sensitive to the civil rights issues involving this department. again, when you're dealing with tens of thousands of claims, tens of thousands of claims, it is something that needs to be resolved that hasn't been resolved and must be resolved and so we have done two things. we've made a concerted effort to try to resolve these cases and we've also begun a process of looking at our entire operation from an outside consultant to take a look and see whether or not there are any other things that we're doing or shouldn't be doing that would potentially lead to claims in the future because we want to put a stop to this. this is a great agency. a lot of hard working people who care deeply. shirley is one of them. and they're proud of this agency. and this is part of our history. we need to close the chapter on. and that was foremost in my mind when i made a very hasty decision which i deeply regret.

mr. secretary, from ""the washington post"" --

ed, go ahead.

that was my question. can you elaborate a little more? had you met ms. sherrod previous to today's conversation? if she is so qualified, so uniquely qualified, why was she not given a more senior position previously when you were hiring new officials with the new administration?

ed, first of all, i may very well have visited with her or met her in the context of the larger group meeting of rural development

directors.

you don't recall specifically meeting her previously?

no. and i don't know for certain whether or not the rural development job was one she specifically sought. i know she was recommended for that job. but given her life experiences, as we begin the process of more aggressively doing advocacy and outreach, this is a person who because of these experiences, having been discriminated against and being a claimant, having gone through that process, having gone through the process that she described in great detail in her speech, having gone through the last couple of days, she is uniquely positioned to be able to identify with a number of different people who might intersect with this agency in an effort to try to make sure that we don't continue to make the same mistakes we've made in the past.

would she be a senior adviser or under secretary?

i don't really want to go into detail. i'm happy to do this after she has had an opportunity to think about this. i want to honor my commitment to her in our conversation today to give her a chance to think about this. i just simply want everyone to know that i value that experience and i think there is a way in which, despite the difficulties that i have put her through, there is an opportunity here for us, for me personally to learn, obviously, but for the department to be strengthened and at the end of the day i think that's what the people of this country would want. they want to do right by this woman but they also want to make sure this doesn't happen again, which is the learning process, and if there is a way of strengthening the department, then that's my responsibility to explore. and i'm hopeful that she sees it that way.

secretary vilsack, kate bolduan with cnn. have you spoken to **president** obama about this?

no.

secretary vilsack, from bloomberg news, is this a position that had been looked at previous to this incident or would this be a new position created in part as a result of the incident?

it's a position that needs to be filled.

secretary --

wait a minute. phil did you want to ask a question?

just to be clear when you saw the transcript i assume the staff provided you a transcript of the initial video clip. were you aware it was a partial transcript? did they make you aware of it? did you ask to see more of it?

i had not been aware of it and i talked with shirley about the fact that she had e-mailed the office the thursday prior to this video becoming an issue. i did not receive the e-mail because it was not addressed properly to me. in other words the e-mail address was -- there was a problem with the e-mail address so it never came to my attention. she had received some indication of this clip being available and she in an effort to try to respond sent an e-mail to me which i did not get. it was not addressed properly. it was also sent to the deputy secretary's attention. we did not discover it until after the fact. and that's one of the issues that we're going to address in terms of this review.

mr. secretary you're taking very deeply personal responsibility.

yes.

for this today.

yes.

does that absolve -- i mean barack obama, **president** obama is your boss. are you absolving the white house of any responsibility here in this situation?

you know, it's not my place to absolve anybody from anything other than to accept responsibility for what i did. and i am accepting that responsibility with deep regret. this is a good woman. she has been put through hell. and i could have done and

should have done a better job. i want to learn from that experience. i want the agency and department to learn from that experience. and i want us to be stronger for it. i want to renew the commitment of this department to a new era in civil rights. i want to close the chapter on a very difficult period in civil rights. so i accept responsibility. and i don't think -- the buck stops with me, as it should.

you decided to fire ms. sherrod and then you notified the liaison at the white house or someone did? and can you describe their reaction to that?

i requested her resignation about the same time sort of things crossed in time. i'm not certain in what period of time the white house was contacted but as these calls were being made, the white house through the liaison's office was aware. but the decision to do what was done was done by me. it was my decision and was communicated and one of the lessons learned here is that this type of decision first and foremost should have been communicated by me. it should have been done in a much more personal way. it should have been done with far more thought and it should have been done in far less haste. and all of those are my responsibility. and i accept that responsibility. and i ask for shirley's forgiveness and she was gracious enough to extend it to me and for that i am thankful.

all right. so there he is the secretary of agriculture tom vilsack, apologizing publicly and very enthusiastically to shirley sherrod for what has been done to this woman, this former official who was forced to resign from the department of agriculture but now she's been offered a brand new job at the department of agriculture and you heard tom vilsack say she is thinking about whether to accept this new position. we want to welcome our viewers here in the united states and around the world. i'm wolf blitzler. we're in ""the situation room"" and we're going to digest what we've now heard from the secretary of agriculture because it's been a dramatic several hours. first the white house went ahead and apologized to this former agriculture official and now the secretary of agriculture upon talking to her on the phone a little while ago formally apologized as well. let's bring in our senior white house correspondent ed henry. this is dramatic stuff. you don't see it every day. but he's basically saying and he regretted the circumstances, i accept responsibility for the pain and discomfort done to this woman and he is exonerating in effect the white house where you are.

reporter: he is trying to, wolf. you're right. he was very blunt in saying this woman, shirley sherrod, has been put through hell. the agriculture secretary also is saying that the buck stops with him. but it doesn't completely absolve the white house. very interesting that this comes, this statement a short time after robert gibbs was at the podium in the white house briefing room really being very vague about the details about exactly what the white house knew and when they knew it. when we pressed him on a whole series of issues in terms of when all of this started playing out on monday afternoon and evening, which white house officials spoke to the agriculture department, he wouldn't name any names.

Berge, John

From: Williamson, Todd
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:56 PM
To: Hannigan, Erin
Cc: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Subject: S's press conference playback

<http://www.c-span.org/Watch/Media/2010/07/21/HP/A/35860/Agriculture+Secretary+Tom+Vilsack+Press+Conference+on+Sherrod+Firing.aspx>

C. Todd Williamson, III
Office of Congressional Relations
U.S. Department of Agriculture
(202) 720-7095

Berge, John

From: OC.News@oc.usda.gov
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:59 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Statement by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Shirley Sherrod



Release No. PENDING

Contact:
USDA Office of Communications
(202) 720-4623

Statement by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Shirley Sherrod

WASHINGTON, July 21, 2010 - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today released the following statement in response to his conversation with Shirley Sherrod:

“Today, I reached out to Shirley Sherrod to apologize. I also told her I was sorry for the pain this caused her and her family and friends.

“I reacted too quickly. I should have taken the time to listen and learn.

“While I cannot change what happened, I can try to make something out of this difficult incident.

“As we know, Shirley has a unique and compelling story to tell. She and her family endured discrimination and overcame adversity. Fighting to advance justice and equality, she has helped farmers who were struggling to keep their land, fought for women in need of social and economic justice, and African-American men and women who faced discrimination. As USDA’s Georgia State Rural Development Director, she worked to promote economic opportunity for all people by enabling job creation and business growth. And Shirley has shown tremendous character through the events of the last few days.

“Shirley and I talked about a unique opportunity at USDA. With all that she has seen, endured and accomplished, it would be invaluable to have her experience, commitment and record of service at USDA. I hope she considers staying with the department.

“I did not handle this situation well. I will continue to review the circumstances that brought us to this day and I am committed to making sure it does not happen again.

“As part of this effort, I also want to renew my firm commitment to put behind all of us the USDA’s past record on civil rights. While we have made some progress over the last 18 months, more work is needed.”

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Berge, John

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:56 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Cc: Purchia, Liz; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: NBC Transcript: 5-7 p.m.

Station: NBC

Date: 07/21/2010 18:31:17 - 6:41:17 PM

Video:

<http://mms.tveyes.com/Transcript.asp?stationid=165&DateTime=07/21/2010+18:31:17&mediapreload=14&playclip=true>

good evening. a short time ago in washington, the secretary of agriculture entered a press conference and apologized to a low level employee who he had fired after a short piece of video came out that hardly told the full story. secretary tomvilsack took all the blame. he said the buck stops with him and he's offered her a new job.

i didn't take the time. i should have. and as a result, a good woman has gone through a very difficult period.

this story combines race, politics and media. it involves a black woman who was at first labeled a racist right before we learned she was anything but. it sounded like she was out to hurt a white family until we found out she saved their farm and became a hero to them. we begin our reporting tonight with our chief white house correspondent chuck todd. chuck, good evening.

reporter: good evening, brian. what started out as a simple speech about racial healing by shirley sherrod ended with apologies all around from the white house and the full obama administration.

this is a good woman. she's been put through hell. and i could have done and should have done a better job.

reporter: a humbled agriculture secretary took full responsibility for the firing.

these types of decisions require time. i didn't take the time. i should have. and i will have to live with that for a long, long time.

reporter: he said this afternoon he called sherrod to apologize and discussed bringing her back to the department in a new capacity.

she has a unique set of skills which i think would lend themselves to assisting and helping usda as we deal with trying to turn the page on our civil rights chapter.

reporter: vilsack said a history of racial discrimination contributed to his hasty decision on monday.

i was very sensitive and remain sensitive to the civil rights issues in this department.

reporter: two days after sherrod was dismissed for comment that is appeared to portray her as a racist, she seemed to be everywhere.

you know, this is a whirlwind.

reporter: this morning, sherrod told nbc news her comments had been taken out of context bit a conservative blogger. she got wind of the video via an angry e-mail last thursday. she alerted superiors and heard nothing back.

on monday all hell broke loose.

reporter: she was told she was being put on administrative leave.

i got in a car and started driving back toward athens thinking, my gosh, this is so unreal. then to get the first call saying, shirley, you know, they want you to resign.

reporter: this in spite of her efforts to make her bosses understand the speech was about overcoming her own prejudices.

working with him made me see that it's really about those who have versus those who don't. you know, they could be black, they could be white, they could be hispanic.

reporter: sherrod said she was disappointed that the ncaap also condemned her before hearing the tape. a sentiment echoed by her children today at a rally in her hometown.

for them to step out and rush to judgment because some organ organization is pushing them doesn't sound like the organization we have grown up with.

reporter: the white house today also apologized.

on behalf of the administration, i offer our apologies.

reporter: for his part the conservative blogger, andrew Breitbart who posted the original edited clip had no apologies. he wanted to secretary o rory -- seek retribution for the tea party movement.

the audience cheers in this video. that, to me, is the standard of showing that racism existed in that room.

reporter: you know, this story re-opened the debate about how easily the media can get manipulated in this day and age and for the white house, it's re-opened this debate about how the administration of the first african-american president deals with race issues, brian.

all correct. chuck todd from the white house tonight.

Station: NBC

Date: 07/21/2010 17:03:02 - 5:13:02 PM

Video:

<http://mms.tveyes.com/Transcript.asp?stationid=165&DateTime=07/21/2010+17:03:02&mediapreload=14&playclip=true>

many are angry today at the story of the recently fired usda employee shirley sherrod over what seems to be a misunderstanding and others wondering how something like this could happen.

siafa lewis is live with this incredible story that seems almost a tad unbelievable, siafa.

in 2010 really unbelievable is the appropriate word, and no matter how we try to sweep it under the rug, the issue of race is once again dominating the headlines. last week's naacp condemned what they believed to be racist elements in the tea party movement but conservative blogger andrew breitbart called the naacp racist and provided what he said was evidence in the form of a videotape.

reporter: on monday, breitbart released an edited video clip of usda director for georgia shirley sherrod speaking at a naacp event in march of this year.

[inaudible]. one person say their name. [inaudible]

reporter: the clip was to proof that naacp supported and promoted a racist. fox news opined it was further proof that the obama administration had racists in their ranks. even the naacp condemned her comments. by monday night, miss sherrod had been forced to resign her post. but on tuesday an unedited clip of her speech was released.

that's when it was revealed to me that got to that point.

reporter: miss sherrod would go on to speak for 43 minutes retelling the story of how she grew to overcome her own racial prejudices and to help that very same white farmer save his livelihood, despite the fact that growing up in the south at the age of 17 her father was violently killed by a white man who never served any time for that crime.

most people would not have known me but if they had looked at the entire tape, i just don't see how they could have come away with it thinking i was a racist.

reporter: but in a time with the 24-hour news cycle, the rush to judgment has become the norm.

In a 24-hour news cycle, we live for the sound bite, you know, something that catches and that, well, it's like a catchy fire, and in this case it caught fire through fox news and swept through all of media and as we can see independent through the white house.

reporter: but it begs the question, how did this all happen and what does it say about our media, our administration, our society, and race?

people do have a range of opinions. today about race just because they grew up in america and we live in a racist culture whether we want to it be or not, it is.

and after viewing the tape in its full context, both the obama administration and the naacp have apologized to miss sherrod. she has accepted. the bigger point is the raw emotions and reactions the story evoked no matter what side of the political aisle you're on or what your color is and that is what we as a society need to get to the bottom of and truly discuss, ladies, what do you think?

it occurs to me that's exactly what's happening we're all discussing and we're upset by it and so maybe there is -- there's a silver lining that we'll talk about it as we are.

we have to hope because it keeps happening. we saw the incident with the harvard professor and the police officer, reverend wright and the speech that obama gave about race and we keep getting to the same things over and over and we never discuss it.

communication is key.

Stephanie Chan

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Berge, John

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:57 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Cc: Purchia, Liz; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: ABC Transcript: 5 -7 p.m.

Station: ABC

Date: 07/21/2010 17:03:47 - 5:13:47 PM

Video:

<http://mms.tveyes.com/Transcript.asp?stationid=170&DateTime=07/21/2010+17:03:47&mediapreload=14&playclip=true>

we are following a developing story. shirley sherrod is getting an apology from the president and the agriculture secretary. she has been offered her old job back. she was dismissed by the agriculture department over comments about race made in a speech. dave evans follow willing this story.

right now the secretary of agriculture is talking with reporters in washington. he says a few minutes ago he did talk with shirley sherrod. he offered her her job back and apologized for the administration. this is more of what agriculture secretary tom vilsack had to say just a couple of minutes ago.

i wanted to give her the opportunity to express what i'm sure has been an extraordinary range of emotions that she must have had and still probably does have. but she was extraordinarily gracious. i wanted to make sure that she understood that i regretted the circumstances and that i accepted full responsibility for them.

after two days of controversy, an embarrassed white house apologized to shirley sherrod ousted for her remarks on race. today the white house said the administration, the media, agriculture secretary tom vilsack, all reacted before knowing all the facts.

i think without a doubt she is owed an apology. i would do so certainly on behalf of this administration.

earlier this week conservative bloggers point to the case as proof of a black government official being racist against white people.

so i didn't give him the full force of what i could do.

but a conservative blogger took her comments way out of context. they were from 24 years ago and she was actually talking of how her work as a volunteer on the case, saving the farm of a poor white family, transformed her vision on race.

working with him made me see that it's really about those who have versus those who don't. you know, and they could be black, they could be white, they could be hispanic.

but before federal officials knew the whole story, she was forced out. today she watched as the white house tried to explain how things were bungled.

do you accept their apology?

i accept the apology. i'm bigger than some of them. i can move beyond this.

the naacp after supporting the quick dismissal of shirley sherrod is now campaigning for her reinstatement. one official said the whole controversy highlight house hyper sensitive the issue has become on race.

i'm saddened. after being at the march on washington with martern luther king, to see how we have progressed, looked like now we're going backwards.

this whole controversy began after naacp officials said there were some racist elements in the tea party movement. ultra conservative bloggers jumped on that highlighting that small portion of shirley sherrod's speech. shirley sherrod says she has heard there agriculture secretary tom vilsack. he has spoken with her late this afternoon, offered her her job back and apologized. she is considering going back to work for the department of agriculture.

we have been getting a lot of comments on our website about this controversy and while -- this angers me. not because she was wrongfully fired, but the fact that she was fired because of the political climate we live in. racism and discrimination should not exist in these times and days but who are we kidding. to read what people are saying or positive comment, go to 7online.com.

Station: ABC

Date: 07/21/2010 18:34:02 - 6:44:02 PM

Video:

<http://mms.tveyes.com/Transcript.asp?stationid=770&DateTime=07/21/2010+19:04:03&mediapreload=14&playlist=true>

And now some political cloud gathering over washington, because of a viral video, the question of race and truth. there was embarrassment at the white house today, in the case of a black federal official fired for remarks she'd made about race. you'll remember our story yesterday about shirley sherrod. so, what happened today? here's jake tapper.

reporter: late this afternoon, agriculture secretary tom vilsack apologized to shirley sherrod.

this is a good woman. she's been put through hell. and i aslited for shirley's forgiveness and she was gracious enough to extend it to me.

reporter: the public mea culpa came after president obama privately expressed strong reject regrets tab whole all fair.

he talked about the fact that an injustice had happened, and that because the facts had changed, a review of the decision based on those facts should be undertaken.

reporter: actually the facts had not changed. it's just that the obama administration finally learned all of them. the story started when a conservative blog, and then cable tv, ran this video clip of sherrod at an naacp dinner earlier this year talking about a meeting with a white farmer seeking her assistance.

so i didn't give him the full force of what i could do.

reporter: but that clip did not tell the full story. the meeting with the white farmer was 24 years ago when sherrod worked for a non-profit and she ended up helping those farmers save their farm. they remain grateful today. the whole video indicates sherrod's full story was about her changing her views.

i've come a long way.

reporter: and realizing her calling was to help poor people of all races.

you know, and they could be black, they could be white, they could be hispanic.

reporter: apparently, she's watching this briefing, shirley sherrod, on cnn right now. is there anything you want to say to her?

on behalf of the administration, i offer our apologies.

this shouldn't have happened. took too long. but it makes me feel better that the apology is finally coming.

reporter: and diane, secretary vilsack suggested he offered sherrod another job but she needed to discuss it first with her family. diane?

jake tapper at the white house tonight, thank you, jake.

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Berge, John

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:57 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Cc: Purchia, Liz; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: CBS Transcript: 5-7 p.m.

Station: CBS
Date: 07/21/2010 18:31:25 - 6:41:25 PM

Video:

<http://mms.tveyes.com/Transcript.asp?stationid=160&DateTime=07/21/2010+18:31:25&mediapreload=14&playclip=true>

coric: good evening, everyone. it was an extraordinary scene on national television today. the president's top spokesman admitting the administration had fired an official of the agriculture department for alleged racism without knowing all the facts. and then he offered her an apology. but it didn't stop there. the man who fired shirley sherrod, agriculture secretary tom vilsack, soon popped up on t.v. himself and offered her another job. all this while the nation watched her watch them. we begin tonight with jan crawford in washington. jan, this is a very bizarre two-day drama.

reporter: oh, yes, katie. and we heard today the kind of thing you seldom here from the this white house or any white house.

without a doubt ms. sherrod is owed an apology. i would do so certainly on behalf of this administration.

reporter: that was a 180-degree turn from what administration officials said less than 24 hours ago when agriculture secretary tom vilsack abruptly fired shirley sherrod.

i made this decision. it's my decision.

reporter: after officials saw this edited clip of her speech.

i was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm lands and here i was faced with having to have a white person.

reporter: late this afternoon vilsack talked to sherrod

again, i express my deep regret.

reporter: the controversy consumed almost the entire briefing by press secretary robert gibbs, at one point a flustered gibbs was even told sherrod was watching it on television.

apparently she's watching this briefing, shirley sherrod, on cnn right now. is there anything you want to say to her? lafs (laughter)

she's watching it?

i understand.

she's watching you.

and let me... the secretary is trying to reach her.

reporter: it all started three days ago when a clip lit up the internet and cable outlets. but that wasn't the whole speech or the whole story.

it was just unbelievable, unbelievable to me.

reporter: it turns out, sherrod didn't say anything racist at all. her comments were edited and taken out of context which the administration would have known if someone had watched the entire tape before it fired her.

they definitely didn't do the right thing because they didn't look deeper to see what i was trying to say to them. please look at the

whole tape so that you see what my message is.

reporter: her message in the speech was one of unity.

it's really about those who have versus those who don't. and they could be black, they could be white, they could be hispanic.

reporter: sherrrod said the administration forced her out because it was scrambling to head off criticism from the conservative media, something gibbs seemed to acknowledge today.

the number of people called quite quickly after the comments aired and wanted to know what our response was.

reporter: but the controversy seems to show on one of the nation's most complex social issues-- race-- the obama administration reactive impulsively to deflect criticism from the right and in doing so shirley sherrrod was thrown under the bus.

there was no concern for me.

reporter: secretary vilsack fell on his sword at his press conference and he offered ms. sherrrod a job working on civil rights issues in the u.s.d.a. katie?

couric: jan crawford in washington. jan, thanks so much. jeff greenfield, the obama administration has often complained about the 24-hour news cycle and now it seems white house officials were caught in a vortex.

reporter: yeah, katie. the old united press wire service had a slogan "'get it first, but first get it right.'" in the wake of the shirley sherrrod story it's worth asking whether the second half of that slogan has been dumped into the trash bin. it's now clear that no one, not conservative blogger andrew Breitbart who posted the clip, not the n.a.a.c.p. who condemned her, nor the agriculture department, none of them had and seen the whole speech. but there's another part of this story, the deep-seeded desire of people who turn to news and opinion sites to reinforce their beliefs. for instance, the idea of an obama administration administration official harboring anti-white sentiments fits an idea espoused by one of fox news's most popular voices.

this president, i think, has exposed himself as a guy over and over and over again who has a deep-seeded hatred for white people or the white culture. i don't know what it is.

reporter: this doesn't mean fox would knowingly air a false or misleading tape. it may mean that the original incomplete and out-of-context video clip seemed to fit an idea that would resonate with many in the audience. this is not an impulse confined to any one ideological slas of the public. in march, 2006, a young black woman who worked as a stripper accused three members of the duke lacrosse team of raping her. the story was treated as a textbook case of racist privileged white athletes committing a viciously violent act. only later in reports of ed bradley's "'60 minutes'" piece did it become clear the charges were wholly false.

were you at all concerned that your students and some members of your faculty were engaged in a rush to judgment? that their actions might actually throw fuel on the fire?

we had public officials speaking as if it was almost a certainty this had happened. this charges engaged people's deepest fears and anxieties and dreads.

reporter: if there's any encouraging aspect of this it's that many of the players quickly took a hard second look. last night, fox news took a cool clear-headed look at the story.

i think this story has been thoroughly screwed up.

reporter: today white house press secretary robert gibbs publicly apologized to sherrrod and no less than three commentators on the conservative national review web site cautioned outlets on the right to use care before rushing to judgment.

it was wrong. it was entirely wrong and if there's an hour-long speech or a 30 minute long speech and you're putting up seven seconds of it, then you say "'i'm putting up seven seconds.'"

reporter: if you're an optimist, you might look at this as what the president calls a teachable moment but maybe we should wait and see if we've learned anything the next time, katie.

couric: certainly cautionary tale. jeff greenfield, jeff, thanks so much. overshadowed by all this is the financial reform bill the president signed into law today. it's designed to prevent another economic meltdown and the white house believes it's too important to fail. here's sharyl attkisson.

Station: CBS

Date: 07/21/2010 17:33:06 - 5:43:06 PM

Video:

<http://mms.tveyes.com/Transcript.asp?stationid=160&DateTime=07/21/2010+17:33:06&mediapreload=14&playclip=true>

reporter: kristine, two days after that controversial firing, the white house seemed embarrassed by the decision and the administration was rushing to offer shirley sherrod a new job at the agriculture department but she may not take it. president obama's top spokesman had a message for a civil servant fired from the agriculture department.

without a doubt, miss sherrod is owed an apology. i would do so certainly on behalf of this administration.

reporter: shirley sherrod accepted the apology. but says she should have never been dismissed.

he definitely didn't do the right thing because they didn't look deeper.

reporter: she and others argued the video clips of the speech she gave at an naacp banquet in georgia last spring were taken out of context.

reporter: sherrod and her supporters say the whole speech was about learning from mistakes and overcoming racial bias. a civil rights leader says the naacp acted too quickly when it first condemned the remarks.

last week, they accused the tea party movement of tolerating racial bias and bigotry and in the case of shirley sherrod they wanted to lean over backwards to make clear they had to keep their own house in order.

reporter: we one able to get a comment from the owner of the website but told fox news the naacp is cheering on a person describing a white person as the other. this is far worse than anything that has ever been alleged against the tea party. as for sherrod's future, she said wednesday after all the controversy, she is not sure she would go back to her old job. so while sherrod weighs whether or not to take that new post at the agriculture department, secretary vilsack is on capitol hill as we speak explaining the whole debacle to the congressional black caucus. live at the white house, i'm joel brown, cbs 2 news.

thank you.

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Berge, John

From: liz purchia [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:42 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Misailidis, Sarah; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: FOX 8 PM - The O'Reilly Factor

Fox News - U.S. Cable

The O'Reilly Factor

FNC 07/21/2010 20:06:35

Video: <http://mms.tveves.com/Transcript.asp?stationid=130&DateTime=07%2F21%2F2010+20%3A06%3A35&mediapreload=14&playclip=true>

that being said, miss sherrod's entire situation should now be reviewed by the obama administration. she may have well been treated unfairly. certainly she thinks so. the thing that fox has done is a total lie. they misrepresented a story that i told to a group to try to bring people together.

memo to shirley. using phrases like "his own kind" is not a good bringing people together strategy. although we all make mistakes and i don't think she had any malice there. as mentioned, the naacp also called for miss sherrodo be fired and then recanted blaming fox news for "snookerring them." well, since miss sherrod made her speech in front of that organization, maybe their own incompetence snookerred them. and then there is nbc news howling with left-wing indignation.

i don't know who to blame here, miss sherrod. i mean, the activists who p forward this garbage in the first place has an agenda. we shouldn't be surprised by that. the cable news network that played this garbage on and on and talked about it has an agenda.

this is what fox news does. this is how they are different from other news organizations. just like the fake acorn controversy, fox news knows that it has a role in this dance. that's not new. that's not actually even interesting about this scandal. fox does what fox does.

which is kick your network's butt every single night. and you have to be kidding with this fake acorn scandal stuff. unbelievable. do you live in this country? one of the few honest brokers on the cable news arm is chris matthews, democrat who says what he believes.

here's bill o'reilly last night on fox. knowing bill is going to correct this tonight, i hope he does, i think he will. here he is operating in the same rash judgment that the white house operated in.

not so much rash. but i did not analyze the entire transcript and that was unfair to miss sherrod as i've said. she does deserve to be treated fairly. but on the matter of her world view, talking points believes it is quite clear sherrod may see things through a racial pris and did make political statements under the usda banner. should she be doing the people's business with that kind of resume? i don't think so. she should be in the private or charity sector. and that's a memo. i hope it was fair. in a moment, dick morris will analyze a political implications of the story. we'll be right back with morris.

FNC 07/21/2010 20:10:29

Video: <http://mms.tveves.com/Transcript.asp?stationid=130&DateTime=07%2F21%2F2010+20%3A10%3A29&mediapreload=14&playclip=true>

continue now with the exploding shirley sherrod controversy. mark halprin has this to say about this.

it's clear to me that the white house's war against fox news, they've lost that war. and they are now weak and vulnerable to it in a way that is not just unbecoming but that is, as you said, panicky.

mr. morris, now, he's full of you know what because the white house made its pronouncement to fire miss sherrod way before - not way before but hours before ""factor"" came on, ""hannity"" came on and greta came on. they didn't know what we were going to do about it. it's true they may have been anticipating.

they probably could guess.

yeah, you know what? all right. that's fair.

they said oh, my god, fox has a hold of this story. they're going to beat us over the head. and if we don't get out there and fire her pre-emptive ly, we're going to look terrible and we're going to take it on the chin.

the reason that he said that was not to diminish the white house but to try to spur them in a macho way to attack us. that's why he said it. i'm a little annoyed by it. you're probably right. the anticipated blowback and now vilsack said this afternoon the white house didn't pressure him to make the decision.

wrau, right -- yeah, right.

do you think he's lying?

of course he is.

do you think the secretary of agriculture told a lie on national television?

yes.

you base that on?

on the fact that you would not make a decision on this magnitude on an issue like this.

she wasn't a big st.

no, but you're firing -- look at the controversy.

she's fairly low level department of agriculture employee. i mean, you think he called barack obama.

probably called rahm. may have technically spoken to his lobbyist, you spoke to rahm who may have said i'm not pressuring you but come on, the white house knew about it and obviously orchestrated it.

don't want to back off your statement that vilsack lied.

that's your statement.

you said he lied. i'm not --

i believe vilsack coordinated what he did with the white house, yes.

ok. now --

but let me talk about the political implications. if you're about to ask me that?

go ahead.

ok. i think there are two things. first, the very basis of the barack obama brand is that he is post racial. that's how we first met him. that's what he has always been about. and i have a column now on dickmorris.com explaining it. he is literally getting in the way of his brand. he's viciating his own brand. when he does that by suing arizona, immigration, when he does that by not prosecuting the panthers, when he does that by firing her and then he reinstating her, all of that makes him not post racial. secondly, it gives an impression of chaotic weakness, of incompetence and inability.

that's his point.

it's a correct one because the conservatives will say he caved in to pressure in rehiring her and blacks will say he caved into pressure in firing her in the first place.

while i'll say is --

they're both true.

what i'll say is secretary vilsack didn't read the entire transcript just like i did not.

ok.

i'll say that. and that barack obama basically righted a wrong. she wasn't treated correctly, all right? he said -- the president said this isn't fair to this woman so reinstate her. what's wrong with that?

i think that the -- that the perception is not that secretary vilsack made an honest mistake like you did. and --

why not? we both made the same mistakes.

he's the decision maker.

but he's running around like i'm running around. he's in ohio. somebody calls him and says this woman said this. he doesn't know who the woman is. i'm going to cut him a little slack. i'll going to say he did exactly what i did.

cut him all the slack you want. i won't. i think number one, he fired her on instructions from the white house because they wanted to stop fox news from running the story and getting embarrassed and they felt if they fired him after fox ran, they would seem to be caving to fox. number two, i believe when they reinstated her, he did that under white house pressure because a blowback from the black community so obama looks like he caved one way, he caved another way.

so there's no righting of an injustice here.

he looks just like bill clinton used to look.

but here -- let's go forward with the story. ok? as i said, shirley sherrod or sherrod, whatever, ok, is a well known far left individual who her whole career has been in those precincts and now we see her speaking to the naacp, raising the political mantle, mentioning the republican party and then she's entitled to her opinion but federal employees are not supposed to do that.

now, obama has a huge problem. remember joycelyn elders and the clinton administration, she was the surgeon general.

she had to resign because of --

because of outrageous comments about sexual behavior by children and drug use and all that. she had to resign, now they have someone who can't resign. because they fired her and unfired her. they're stuck with her now. they're stuck with every comment she's made and will ever make.

she may not come back, though. i would not be surprised. we would like to talk to miss sherrod or sherrod, she may not come back because there is a lot of thing -- there are and we're investigating right now. in her background, there are a lot of things. i mean, she sued her own department before she was hired.

yeah.

on behalf of her community organization.

but if she does come back, they are in serious trouble because they can't disown her. they have to embrace her and she said stuff undoubtedly --

you say she's in serious trouble. other media is not going to report what we reported. other media won't report what we reported.

it's like he has reverend wright on his staff.

come on, it's not nearly that bad.

see the stuff that comes out and see what you're going to dig up. see about the lady who was in charge of allocating funds in rural area where tensions exist, see what she said and the point is that she now owns her.

they own her.

and they can't get rid of her and they're liable for her so he -- this guy who was above racial politics is now in the tar pit unable to get it off --

should i suspend myself because of the mistake?

no, you shouldn't.

by the way, don't worry so much about other networks not covering it. what do you care? you're passing them all in ratings.

that's true. we will cover it and we will cover it fairly.

just tell everybody in the united states that if you didn't watch fox news, o'reilly's show on monday night, you don't know what's going on.

right. dick morris, everybody, check out his web site at dickmorris.com. in a moment, explosive press conference about the sherrod situation. major garrett and james rosen will weigh in. and later, dennis miller following the twists and turns in the story. can't wait to hear what the d man has to say upcoming. [armstrong] in 20 years of cycling, ev when i was ahead, i was always behind. behind cars... behind trucks... behind the guys... tailpipe... [clucking] ...after tailpipe after tailpipe... [engines rev] ...until now. the 100% electric... no-tailpipe nissan leaf. innovation for the planet. innovation for all. is this the year you do a little team building with the team that matters most? then you belong at bass pro shops. where you can save big during our summer clearance sale. and don't miss the tracker model year clearance going on now. your adventure starts here.

FNC 07/21/2010 20:20:39

Video: <http://mms.tveyes.com/Transcript.asp?stationid=130&DateTime=07%2F21%2F2010+20%3A20%3A39&mediapreload=14&playclip=true>

continuing now with the shirley sherrod situation, earlier today, white house spokesman robert gibbs was peppered with questions about it.

now shirley sherrod, have all come under attack from glenn beck, bill o'reilly, andrew brightbart, none of them are at this moment members of this administration. how do you explain the -- those three departures? do they really have nothing to do with the campaign that had been waged against them?

i was asked a larger question about this and my answer doesn't change. why do you do stories on all three of them?

you can fault the media, if you want.

i'm not faulting the media, jake, but -- hold on, i'm not here to fault the media. i apologize on behalf of the administration.

one of the lessons to be learned here that the administration should not be so quick to throw their own people under the bus?

bill, i don't know that i would -- i'm going to separate out and not get into something that happened last year.

all right. joining us from washington, fox news correspondent major garrett and washington correspondent james rosen. both have been following the story all day. begin with you, you're in a press conference. gibbs looked very uneasy, obviously. it's hard for the president to explain why the secretary of agriculture jumped the gun so quickly. the media is another matter. let me -- let me get your overarch on this story. is this an important sto for the administration?

it's important in this sense, bill. if, as the administration says, it -- if as the white house says, it was indifferent to whatever secretary vilsack originally decided about shirley sherrod's future meaning it was informed but not consulted about the decision to fire her, and then late last night reversed course and said no, secretary vilsack, you've got to back and revisit this and quite probably and he did today offer her another job, what is the sequence of events? why was the white house -- if we were to believe what it says, indifferent originally and then very, very interested subsequently to the full airing or its full awareness of the transcript and the full speech. what was the cause and effect? who was in the chain of command or who was not in the chain of command? all this is relevant when the country tries to evaluate the first black american president and itsensitivity at the white house to matters of race. now, secretary vilsack said today there was no direct white house pressure. for the first time, he allowed how the deputy secretary at the agriculture department who talked to and subsequently fired miss sherrod the first time might have mentioned those conversations, dealings with the white house liaison with the agriculture department. that's the first glimmer of white house involvement of this story before she was fired. he said it wasn't necessarily an expression of pressure that she be fired. in some way, shape or form, the white house was involved initially and then it got involved subsequently trying to tie this all up, robert gibbs came to briefing today with one purpose and one purpose only, to apology on behalf of the president of the united states and lay the groundwork for secretary vilsack's much more impassioned and personal apology later on today a setting up the avenue for miss sherrod to rejoin the agriculture department if she so decides. and all the power is in h hands, not the administration's.

what happens, though, and we have to do this to be fair if we do and there are, as i said in the talking points memo, some very dubious statements made by the woman about politics and about characterizations of their own kind and this, that and the other thing. as mara said, they're stuck with her, major, no matter what comes out and i suspect there's going to be a bunch of stuff that comes out.

well, whatever comes out, that's a story for another day. what robert gibbs is trying to do today is control the damage to the greatest degree possible and he also did not blame the media. he blamed what he called a frenzied culture involving the naacp, this white house and the media environment that moves things rapidly and demands responses from an administration.

that's true.

and the administration and gibbs said the administration acted hastily?

secretary lsack said he did something without thinking ithrgh. so he to the real hit on this onc. and cabinet secretaries historically have been required to do.

i did it, too. maybe gibbs didn't want to bash the media but the left-wing media is bashing fox and so is the naacp saying they got snookered by us which i think is pretty amusing.

i'm delighted that a lover of the english language to see the word snooker resurface, i can't remember when i saw it. it's, perhaps, the most preposterous of all the claims in this entire fair. if he completely forgot the contents of the speech and he was just relying on fox news and the web site [big government.com](http://big.government.com) to know what they knew about shirley sherrod's speech and make their decisions based on that, it would be hard to imagine they were snookered because, number one, ben jealous, again, the president and c.e.o. of the naacp is claiming today it wasn't until they looked at the full video that they understand shirley sherrod was telling a story of racial transformation, not glorifying reverse discrimination, a. they had control over that video. it was shot and owned by and at all times in the possession of the local naacp chapter in georgia. why didn't they consult it? he never fully explained why. b, fox news didn't really say much about the sherrod case until ""the o'reilly factor"", hannity and then dana perino subbing for greta van susteren each devoted relatively brief segments to it. this would, perhaps, be the first time that the naacpas acknowledged that it is so easily persuaded by o'reilly, hannity and dana perino.

i did 30 seconds on it in the ""reality check"" segment. ok. now, the other left-wing media, though, staking out the same territory, you heard them in the press conference going. oh, you know, o'reilly and this guy, i don't know who yossi is, pinhead with that question, have no idea what he's talking about. they're trying to say to the obama white house, you're intimidated by these fox guys. now, i don't know how anybody can be intimidated by me. i do, garrett and rosen you macho men all day long and i'm sure they're intimidated by you, too. how do you guys -- i'll give you both 20 seconds. how do you respond to fox news is now running the country. garrett?

we don't run the country. we do our level best to report the facts of single time. context is important, there's more to it and we should have paused a little bit longer. there's a lack of a pause button right now in the dominant media and we need to refined that pause button, run things to ground and understand all context, report them in their full context and move on. and take criticism as it comes.

james?

the most extreme statement about fox news has been uttered by shirley sherrod today to media matters saying fox news after a bigger thing. they would love to take us back to where black people were looking down, not looking white folks in the face, not being able to compete for a job out there and not be a whole person. i don't know anyone at fox news for whom that's an agenda.

that means i'm not going to get a loan for the farm that i want if shirley is involved. thanks very much. the factor moves along this evening. the tea party has to fire one of its members for racial insensitivity. we'll tell but that. and then dennis miller weighs in on shirley sherrod and vice president biden.

FNC 07/21/2010 20:33:41

Video: <http://mms.tveyes.com/Transcript.asp?stationid=130&DateTime=07%2F21%2F2010+20%3A33%3A41&mediapreload=14&playclip=true>

we tried to get a hold of him to come on the program and nobody can find him. now, the overarch on this story as i just asked major garrett in the segment before you, dana, the overarch on the shirley sherrod situation is that there's racism involved, and she may have been treated unfairly. now, here, there's racism involved as well. do you see any irony here or any connection here between what's going on over there and what you have to deal with?

that's interesting that you say that, too, because i think he gave an interview recently where he was -- or he may made some kind of statement on line where he was trying to analogize the two situations.

who is he?

mark williams, yeah. i think he was trying to be purposefully offensive. i don't think sherrod in relating that particular story, some people think her language was quite marxist. i don't think she was trying to be particularly offensive. mark williams, i look at it as he kind of was.

why would he want to do that -- why would williams if he really cares about the tea party movement want to do that when he knows the tea party is in this very harsh spotlight and racism is going to be thrown at you whether it exists or not. it hurts the whole movement.

yeah. well, you're presupposing that he cares more about the movement than he does hsee, on that particular instance we may agree. anyone who is willing to put the movement by way of moving themselves forward professionally or whatever, that's willing to put the movement secondary to that, i take -- i have a major problem with it. so on that -- i mean --

yeah, he totally did make a big mistake.

thanks very much. as always, we appreciate it. we come right back, dennis miller on shirley sherrod and vice president biden separately. not together. miller is next. [male announcer] this, our newest son, was imagined, drawn, carved, stamped, hewn, and forged here in america. it is well made, and it is designed to work. this was once a country where people made things... ..beautiful things, and so it is again. the new jeep grand cherokee. copd makes it hard i'm breathing better. for meo breathe. but with advair, so now, i can join the fun and games with grandchildren. great news! for people with copd, inuding chronic bronchitis, emphysema, or both, advair helps significantly improve lung function. whi, other copd medications advair is different from most because it contains both an anti-inflammatory and a long-acting bronchodilator, working together to help you breathe better. advair won't replace fast-acting hars for sudden symptoms and should not b used more than twice a day. people with copd taking advair may have a higher chance of pneumonia. advair m increase your risk of osteoporosis and some eye problems. tell your doctor if you have a heart condition or high blood pressure before taking advair. i had fun today, grandpa. you and me both. if copd is still making it hard to breathe, ask your docto if including advair will help improve your lung function for better breathing. get your first full prescription free and save on refills. and save on refills.

in miller time segment tonight, our guy dennis has been following this shirley sherrod controversy and joins us from los angeles. what say you, miller?

you know, you have a lot of gray areas here, billy. i'm not sure t list shirley der collateral damage or friendly fire. she'll hook up with somebody soon. i think she already has some work part time with the cambridge police department. i'll tell you what, they jump quick over there at the white house. i wish they'd do that with racial islamic terrorists. there, they're always a little hesitant but man, they will weigh in on you. by the way, vilsack made this call. at's why he's secretary of agriculture. vilsack had to clear this with his wife and his minister before he went ahead with this for god's sake. let's saythat vilsack has access to the nuclear football while we're at it, too.

are you with morris who say vilsack flat out lied to the public? are you saying he did consult with the white house in covering up for them?

not since shogun have i seen somebody fall on a bigger sword? of course vilsack fell on the sword for these guys. do you really think vilsack is out there making policy on who gets whacked in a delicate issue like this for god's sakes. come on.

all right. but, you know, she -- with all due respect, shirley did not hold a big job. she is a georgia administrator. yeah, it was racial tension in the situation. but i don't know if this rises, you know, maybe you're right. i find it very, very uncomfortable to accuse a guy like vilsack, former governor of iowa of being a liar on national television. i did it with barney frank. we could prove it. we had the tape. there's barney who said he didn't say what he said. i had to say barney, you're a liar. vilsack, i don't know. maybe he talked to stanley who --

FNC 07/21/2010 20:38:04

Video: <http://mms.tveyes.com/Transcript.asp?stationid=130&DateTime=07%2F21%2F2010+20%3A38%3A04&mediapreload=14&playclip=true>

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billy, this is -- you know, i don't know.

this is a big story, billy.

it is big.

it's a big story. and we're -- and in a world where the estate is lined up outside the courthouse for lindsay lohan like lindhberg arriving, this is a pretty big story right here. and, of course, in the 24/7 cycle, things are going to happen quickly. but she could have her job back tomorrow if she wanted. i'll be interested to see where this story goes tomorrow because i heard the rest of that speech. was this an epiphany story? yeah, it was. when you nibble on that cookie, man, nothing good can happen. listen, we were told this is going to be a post-racial presidency. does it feel like that? it doesn't feel like that to me.

they have an awful lot of bomb throwers in there. and i have to say it.

instead of the third rail, race is now the first and second rail in this country. and everybody ought to just cool out a second, give her the job back tomorrow if you want. i don't know if she'd take it. she's prone to a lawsuitbefore, certainly there could be one coming up here.

all right. but she does have in her background a radical left past. there's no doubt about it. and there are going to be things that come up that show her in a light that's similar to van jones.

maybe that's why she doesn't want to come back. let me say this, billy, it makes me long for the good, old days of acorn. now, i remember acorn very post-racial.

that was a --

when the white pimp and the white hooker came in and said, we want lenny to set up a brothel for white kids and nondenominational kids, they were right there, acorn. they said you got the money. we'll help you out.

mill, nbc news says that was all fake. the whole thing was fake.

that was the good, old days. hands across the water. i'd like to teach the world to sing

all right. your pal joe biden who i believe you go wolf hunting with along with sarah palin, he the other day talked about winning the -- the democrats winning the elections next november. let's roll the tape on that.

how bad are the losses going to be for democrats?

i don't think the losses are going to be bad at all. we're going to shock the heck out of everybody. we're going to win the house and the senate.

are you buying that, mill?

listen, i thought he was going to be president. now, he's going off to gufalastan for foreign dignitary funerals. i have to say two things about joe. somehow that thing in the back is now looking worse than the thing in the front. he has to trim that back hair up. second thing is he had a pretty good week in my book. i think of joe biden as like a sock puppet in a power tie, ok, he's so batty, he sleeps upside down. but i liked it this week when he came out and said he didn't feel the tea party was racist. good for him. i think bidon had a pretty good week. i can't beat down on joe this week. that's just a shot in the dark. of course he's going to say that. you know what else he's going to say? he's going to tell you vilsack made that call on shirley.

you predicting that? you think that joe biden will back vilsack up on that?

yeah, tom vilsack told me to shut the cameras off because he controls the whole deal. that's why he's tom vilsack.

shirley sherrod should not have been fired without knowing all the facts.

i watched them justice the stories because they aren't important: i seem to remember a lot on sarah palin's wardrobe. bingo. a viewer wrote in and said fox news ignore stories that benefit liberals. i asked for an example. bill scott mckellen wrote a book i don't believe i saw him interviewed on fox. you must have been vacationing on venus. we made national news with that interview it was a wild shootout. i appreciate you watching, but everybody must back up their statements:

we as a nation do not want the american people thinking we condone the release of the lockerbie bomber. mccaskill has brought shame on us all. americans love scotland but mr. mccaskill is a pinhead and needs to explain what happened.

i was watching the yankees-angels game and she showed you geraldo and glenn beck sitting together. i hope you enjoyed the final score. beck was the reason the yankees loss they wer distracted by him. can't let beck go to the game any more. pinheads and patriots americans love music it adds a lot of flavor to life. if you don't believe me, look at this: bill: maybe he's hanging around with whoopi goldberg. if you like music he's a patriot. oliver stone has a big movie coming it. admiring people like hugo chavez and castro he wants to make a movie about ahmadinejad. heavy odds are it will be produced by pinhead productions. that's eight for us. check out the factor news website. i eat a little crow. that's billoreilly.com. also spout off at oreilly@foxnews.com. when wig the factor no bilge when writing to us. again, thank you for watching tonight. i am bill o'reilly. please remember, the spin stops right here. again we are going to have more on the shirley sherrod story tomorrow this going to be big. this is not over. there's a lot of stuff below the surface on this story. i regret not being fair to miss sherrod yesterday. but we will be fair going forward. you know why we are going to be fair? because we are definitely looking out for you. captioned by closed captioning services, inc.

sean: both the department of agriculture on the white house apologized to shirley sherrod today. she was pressured to resign from her position after she was accused of delivering racist remarks at an event hosted by the naacp. as it turns out those remarks were seen taken out of context and sherrod was delivering a speech on the virtues of rejecting her racist impulses. the department of agriculture and the white house are now realizing they may have acted prematurely.

i've learned a lot of lessons from this experience in the last couple of ds. one of the lessons i've learned is these types of decisions require time. i didn't take the time. i should have. as a result, a good woman has again through a very difficult period. and i'll have to live with that for a long, longtime.

without a doubt mrs. sherrod is owed an apology. i would do so certainly on behalf of this administration. i think if we look back and decide what we want to learn out of this, i think it is, as i said, everybody involved made determinations without knowing all the facts and all the events.

sean: secretary vilsack noted that he offered sherrod another position at the usda and has said she will take time to think about either she will accept. with secretary vilsack and propaganda minister backing away the question remains why did the white house and department of agriculture reactin such a manner before having viewed the full tape? joining me now with reaction former democratic pollster pat caddell. and ann coulter. coulter?

the whole key to this story is andrew breitbart was set-up. he was sent a tape as we now know was massively out of context. it did look like this woman was saying something racist when she first said it was taken out of context. we've heard that before from politicians telling racist jokes. this is the first time in world history it was literally tan out of context. a lovely speech. of course the white house reacted that way of course you reacted the way you did. anyone would have. breitbart was set-up this was a fraud. the person who sent the edited tape has to know what the full speech said. and sent only that segment to andrew breitbart is the one who should apologize to shirley sherrod. i think to make things right they should offer her the job of vice president and most importantly, i want a one hour espn special in which she announces whether or not she will take it.

sean: pat, your reaction?

this was -- talk about lack of due process. she worked for these people for the department, she was a long time employee. she deserved due process. she was thrown under the bus instantly by them. and the white house held a celebration this morning the towel snap led by jim messina, according to politico, where they talked about how happy they were about how they handled -- this never would have happened if she had been juiced into the system as one of the key people. this doesn't happen to eric holder when he does what he does or anybody else. it happened to her.

sean: this is an important question. she is talking about position she held 24 years ago. in the tape she does admit she racially discriminated against a white farmer who has now become a close friend of hers. she describes how she was torn over how much help she was going to give him. she admits she didn't do everything she could because he is white. and then all right he was poor and needed help and she got him one of his own kind. then she says she realized she was wrong. but, the fact that she held those views 24 years ago, should that be factored in at all?

no. the speech is an amazing speech. the only reason we know what her views were 24 years ago because it was part of the story. the speech was stunning, it was amazing. i think the important point to make here is, this is the problem with taking things out of context. i can give you three examples off the top of my this being done to the tea partiers and anti-obama protesters right now. the lie about john lewis and people calling him the anti-obamacare protesters, calling john lewis a great civil rights hero the n-word, 15 times. that was repeated in a million venues, they are still saying it on msnbc and cnn. andrew breitbart put out a \$100,000 reward for anybody who has the tape. that never happened that was a life there's the context, it never happened. another one was, glenn beck the other night shocking tape that went to prove racism at the tea party a guy standing up saying i'm a proud white racist. a, obviously a liberal plan. and b, you don't see that context of that. you give us 10 more seconds about tape he's surrounded by tea partiers saying go home, we are not racist, you are not one of us, go home. that's not that you -- not what you saw.

sean: pat?

let me just say i'm sitting in the fort sumpter district in charleston, south carolina we are electing a black congressman, over strom thurmond's son. i came out of the civil rights movement we have all overcome. shirley sherrod overcame. people here overcome. it is not the kind of politics played in washington where race is used. to play race in any way is not playing with matches it is playing with nitroglycerin. as mary berry said, that's --

Berge, John

From: liz purchia [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:44 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Misailidis, Sarah; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: CNN 8 PM - Campbell Brown

**CNN - U.S. Cable
Campbell Brown**

7/21/2010 8:00:49 PM

Video:

<http://mms.tveyes.com/Transcript.asp?stationid=100&DateTime=07%2F21%2F2010+20%3A00%3A49&mediapreload=14&playclip=true>

day two of high political drama. another story that overshadowed the obama's administration agenda. 24 hours after the secretary of agriculture stood by his decision to force out an african-american employee accused of racism, both the usda and the white house are now tripping over themselves to apologize to her. that worker, shirley **sherrod**, watched today, the extraordinary developments, right from our studios.

also tonight, a look at america's new drug epidemic, prescription abuse. people scoring a quick fix from something you might have in your medicine cabinet. a ride down rocky road. and speaking of rides, ours is coming to an end tonight. i'm going to have some parting thoughts a little bit later in our broadcast. but our number one story, once again, grab the headlines today and all the buzz online tonight. there are major developments in the ouster of an african-american woman from the department of agriculture. both the usda and the white house now profusely apologizing to shirley **sherrod**, offering her her job back. the scandal has once again put the obama administration squarely in the middle of a controversy over race. we start tonight with white house senior correspondent ed henry.

reporter: agriculture secretary tom vilsack took one for the team. calling shirley **sherrod** to apologize, offering her a new job, and taking blame for the whole fiasco.

i am accepting that responsibility with deep regret. this is a good woman. she's been put through hell.

reporter: it didn't get much better for white house press secretary robert gibbs. he was vague about the white house's role in **sherrod**'s firing. and put the onus on vilsack.

when the secretary reaches her, he will apologize for the events of the last few days. and they will talk about their next steps.

this is the president's administration. it's bigger than vilsack or any department. this appears to be an injustice. why wouldn't the president intervene instead of letting this --

we have a fuller set of facts. a review is taking place. and the secretary's trying to reach miss **sherrod** to apologize for the exact injustice that you talk about.

reporter: gibbs tried to insulate the president. by saying he was not informed monday night when the tape first went viral. gibbs insisted nobody at the white house urged vilsack to push her out. but that runs counter to what **sherrod** has told cnn. that vilsack deputy cheryl cook called her three times monday and told her the white house wanted her to go, out of fear the story was about to explode on cable.

i know of no conversations that have happened like that, as the secretary said.

so no one at the white house or --

i answered your question.

reporter: the president did not get his first briefing until tuesday morning. and agreed with vilsack's initial decision. after white house aides saw the fuller context of **sherrod**'s remarks and realized they were not racist, the president got a second briefing late tuesday. someone at the white house then pushed vilsack to put out an extraordinary middle of the night statement, revealing his initial decision was now under review. though gibbs refused to say who made that demand.

tell us that information --

the white house --

reporter: it was one year ago this week the president slip up on another sensitive issue of race. the arrest of professor gates.

i think farther to say, number one, any of us would be pretty angry. number two, the cambridge police acted stupidly. in arresting somebody, when there was already proof they were in their own home.

reporter: the ensuing firestorm forced the president to clarify his remarks. he called it a teachable moment that ended in a beer summit with gates and the police officer.

ed henry is joining us right now from the white house. ed, boy this controversy couldn't have come at a worst time for the administration. they were really looking to highlight a major accomplishment today.

you're absolutely right. the president signed into law wall street reform. i just spoke to one of his top advisers who is furious at all this media coverage, saying it's not just overshadowing the wall street reform signing but also he's now gotten a victory on extending unemployment insurance, affecting millions of americans who are out of work, fwhu is exactly what played out last summer as well when that henry lewis gates fiasco popped up. that blue out the health rare reforms for a while as well.

ed henry for us from the white house tonight. as ed pointed out, for president obama, this was supposed to be a big day of celebrating political victory, with the wall street reform bill. instead, they are, once again, in damage control mode. here to help us make sense of all this is john ridley who runs the website thatminoritything.com. also, ""washington post"" columnist michael gersten who was a speechwriter. and analyst david gergen back with us. welcome to everybody. i want to listen -- or let people listen a little bit more to what secretary vilsack had to say in his mea culpa a little earlier. listen.

i did not think before i acted. and for that reason this poor woman has gone through a very difficult time. there will be changes. one thing is there needs to be a more deliberative process. i need to do a better job of reaching out to get input before a decision of this magnitude is made. the buck stops with me as it should.

david, will this and the fact that he offered shirley **sherrod** a new opportunity at the usda, close the chapter, as he put it?

well, first, campbell, let me say that it's an honor to be here among your gifts, as you close this chapter of your life and move on to the next.

thank you, david.

thank you for being here and thank you for all you've done. i do not think this ends it. i think secretary vilsack was truly remorseful. i think he lived up to his reputation, being a very decent man. he deserved credit for stepping up to it. but i'll tell you, campbell, we still don't know the full effects. the administration is being deliberately evasive about the conversations that occurred between the white house and the department over this issue. and about what happened. i think that the -- it's not clear to me they've offered miss **sherrod** a chance to go back to her old job and stay in her current house. she may not want to be uprooted and go to washington, whatever the job is. finally, campbell, i think the president really out of all the to call shirley **sherrod** and apologize personally. not because -- out of political calculations, because it's something he cares about.

and how much damage, david, though, do you think it has caused? i mean, is there still an opportunity to sort of wrap this up and say okay, we mailed a misstay, let's move on, or is this something that's going to fester a little bit?

i think it deepens the sense that they -- the administration's had a hard time dealing with racial issues. they've stumbled here a couple times. we had a teachable moment a year ago. now another teachable moment. at certain points, you sort of say, hey, guys, there's supposed to be a learning process here. and i don't know quite why there's sort of a blind spot for them. there's some obvious factors. but i do think that they need to -- i think they need to be introspective here and figure it out. there is a very strong sense here that the very team -- the president, who's condemned cable as cable chatter, we don't pay attention to it i never watch it, that they got stampeded by cable.

completely. john, to david's point about why this hasn't -- why there wasn't a teachable moment a year ago. ed henry pointed out in his piece, the beer summit that he hosted after the gates incident. why didn't they learn from that learn to sort of take a moment before diving into a racial dispute?

well, i think that these moments, these teachable moments, are a little bit different. think there's probably more of a teachable moment about race with the skip gates, professor crowley incident. i think there's -- everybody wanted to be ahead of the story. fox news wanted to be ahead of the story. i don't think they looked at what's going on. the administration wanted to keep ahead of the story. i don't think this is so much about that tape in particular. remember, fox was flogging this new black panther, there was a secret memo going around in the doj saying that blacks were not to be tried the same way as whites. i think there was, within the administration, the sense that we got to prove we are not favoring people of color over whites and that this is what drove this particular situation. certainly a lot of people fell down. the facts were not straight. i think there was more that was going on than what we're talking about right here.

michael, it's not just the **sherrod** incident that has brought race front and center. it's also been this battle that's ensued now between the tea party and the naacp. you wrote about this one. it is sort of fresh in everybody's mind right now. you wrote about it in ""the washington post"" this morning that within this fiery debate there's an element of sanity. i want you to expand on that a little bit.

7/21/2010 8:09:36 PM

Video:

<http://mms.tveves.com/Transcript.asp?stationid=100&DateTime=07%2F21%2F2010+20%3A09%3A36&mediapreload=14&playclip=true>

michael, it's not just the **sherrod** incident that has brought race front and center. it's also been this battle that's ensued now between the tea party and the naacp. you wrote about this one. it is sort of fresh in everybody's mind right now. you wrote about it in ""the washington post"" this morning that within this fiery debate there's an element of sanity. i want you to expand on that a little bit.

before this incident, it wasn't a bad, you know, week for the racial dialogue in a certain way. the naacp came out with, i think, a responsible statement, calling on the tea party to repudiate its least responsible members. and then, of course, the tea party federation did that, with a racist statement by a radio talk show host named williams. and so there's some progress here. but there's also this broader problem. i completely agree. there are people on the left and the right who are looking for incidents like this to run over and over on television, on the internet. you know, they'll take something like a video clip or they'll take something like a picture from a single tea party rally of a questionable poster. and they'll try to turn an incident into a narrative for i think raw political reasons or to get attention. that's a very dangerous thing in america. because race is really our unhealed wound. i mean, these are very close to the surface. these tensions. and people who try to exploit that are playing a very dangerous game.

all right, guys, stand by for a second. i'm going to bring you all back because we're going to take a quick break but on the other side on a night, as mike just pointed out, when race is getting so much attention, we are going to bring in what's going on with the tea party, as it battles to protect its own image in the midst of all this right after the break. boss: y'know, geico opened its doors back in 1936 and now we're insuring over 18 million drivers. gecko: quite impressive, yeah. boss: come a long way, that's for sure. and so have you since you started working here way back when. gecko: ah, i still have nightmares. anncr: geico. 15 minutes could save you 15% or more on car insurance.

as we dissect today's developments, and the controversy over shirley **sherrod**, there's another group battling accusations of racism and that is the tea party movement. the tea party is gaining some new legitimacy in washington. cnn's jim acosta gives us an inside look on the newest voting bloc on capitol hill.

Berge, John

From: liz purchia [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:43 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Misailidis, Sarah; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: MSNBC 8PM - Countdown With Keith Olbermann

MSNBC - U.S. Cable
Countdown With Keith Olbermann

MSNBC 07/21/2010 20:11:39

Video:

<http://mms.tveyes.com/Transcript.asp?stationid=205&DateTime=07%2F21%2F2010+20%3A11%3A39&mediapreload=14&playclip=true>

turns out she's the wife of charles **sherrod**, a founder of sniqc. who's got a deep understanding of racial issues. to say her last name alone should have prompted for the head of naacp an immediate moment of pausing and bother to google and get information. and the fact that it was not only the right wing and not only the administration, but that the very organization that should have known enough history to have immediately come to her defense instead tries to shame her and distance themselves from what happen here?

and they did do a corrective feaster than the administration did. julian bond was on this program last night calling on the administration to change their minds about this and reinstate her as they've now done in effect. but now andrew brightbart's mission seems to be to prove that all prejudicial feelings are equal. and anyone who harbors anybody prejudicial feelings has no right to accuse anyone else of any prejudice. andrew brightbart is trying to play a game of moral equivalence with racism. what do you make of that?

it's interesting. it reminds me very much of the academy award-winning 2004 film, "crash," i heard this story breaking, i thought this sounds like that film to me. if you remember that film, the first act of really horrifying racism occurs when the white police officer puts his hand up an african-american woman's dress, a sexual assault on her. but in a -- in a scene right after that, we see a black woman bureaucrat refusing government services to this police officer's aging father. and the idea in that film, and not different from the movie made, we embraced it as a country and felt good about awarding the oscar. the idea that a police officer and low-level bureaucrat is the same. all prejudice is equal. this is the thing that the na arc cp is moved to do. it's to explain that it is structural racism that matters. not just momentary sort of lapses of prejudice. even if that tape had been true, it would not be an equivalency to jim crow, to slavery, and to institutional racism.

melissa harris lacewell of prince ton university for us tonight. thank you for joining us tonight, melissa. we appreciate it.

thanks.

coming up, despite today's positive developments, the fact remains that the **sherrod** case has been mishandled it from the start. why did the administration fire her first, ask questions later.

he said this afternoon that the buck stops with him as it should. but that shouldn't put a stop to questions about what went wrong. it all started when he asked for the relevant clips of video. that's enough to bring keith back tonight for a special comment.

she said the tea party caucus would only be listening -- a listening ear to the tea party and nothing more. don't the tea partiers expect her to actually do something like maybe cut taxes? ooh! shoot the gap. shoot the gap! whooh so, they all come with carefree maintenance? yep, scheduled maintenance is included. i like the color. good. [male announcer] the autobahn for all event. lease the jetta limited edition for \$199 a month or get 0% apr.

decisions were made in haste, action was taken without all of the facts. now, i'm not describing the right-wing's rush to judge shirley **sherrod**, but the botched handling of her case by the obama administration. in the fourth story. why wasn't she fired first and questions asked only later. ms. **sherrod** said she received a series of phone calls from the usda undersecretary carol cook on sunday on a road trip. cook told **sherrod** the department wanted her immediate resignation because of the flap over the edit video was going to be on glenn beck tonight. she wasn't allowed to explain yourself. she was forced to pull over to the side of the road and submit her resignation via blackberry. mr. vilsack said the controversy compromises **sherrod**'s ability to do her job. today robert gibbs offered an apology on behalf of the administration saying that they acted without all of the facts. at a news conference this afternoon, mr. vilsack saying he only saw a partial transcript of ms. **sherrod**'s remarks before making the decision to fire her, first speaking to the several exchanges that ms. **sherrod** have with ms. cook, then absolving the white house.

first of all, i indicated to shirley, my personal regret and my responsibility for the fact that she received multiple phone calls. that's, again, a problem that i could have corrected if i had done this job properly. having said that, there was no pressure from the white house here. this was my decision.

joining me now is the washington bureau chief for mother jones magazine and david korn. good evening. no pressure from the white house we just heard. none at all. the white house said the administration acted without all of the information and admitted that. why were they so eager to pull the trigger on this one?

they were running scared. not the white house per se, but the ad department. i take shirley **sherrod** at her word when they say we've got to get you to resign because this is going to be on glenn beck. if you let your ideological enemies like glenn beck define your terms, you've lost bigtime. if you're not going to fight for your people when they're pummeled unfairly by fox and andrew brightbart and glenn beck and sean hannity, you don't have a lot of a spine. that's what made the obama administration supporters ill at ease, sick in their stomach. how quickly they moved to cut off someone who might have led to a bad spot on glenn beck. and, of course, as we know, there's no basis for that bad spot eventually.

now, are you buying the vilsack line of no pressure from

MSNBC 07/21/2010 20:18:32

Video:

<http://mms.tveyes.com/Transcript.asp?stationid=205&DateTime=07%2F21%2F2010+20%3A18%3A32&mediapreload=14&playclip=true>

there's that there. and we do know that vilsack as we noted in the lead-in here yesterday afternoon after it was becoming clear that shirley **sherrod** had been set up and had done nothing wrong, he was still releasing statements saying because of his controversy, we can't -- we can't have anyone like that out there, which, again, was a very shameful statement to make. you're seeding power and influence to your enemy if's any time they raise a fuss about someone falsely, you have to cut them off.

how areville sack and the administration doing with a mopup of the incredible mess. i can't think of this that the administration has been in before starting with the apology to shirley **sherrod**.

so far, so good. vilsack was contrite. robert gibbs at his press conference had a heart felt apology. people ask about some of the context after the dismiss, the white house and the ag department. we didn't go to the details on that. they're not being completely transparent. but right now they realize they screwed up big time. both sides -- the white house and the ag department. and i think they sincerely want this -- want to make good. want to make shirley **sherrod** as whole as possible and get out. what i find a little hard to believe is that they have no push-back whatsoever against the fact that she was the victim of a right-wing smear that was mounted quite purposefully. there are media and -- and partisan players out there who are targeting the white house, this administration, for their own ideological ends, that's fine. but they're doing it with false information. there seems to be no sort of indignation about that in the administration.

vilsack met with the congressional black caucus and they figured out that the ag department never filed anything against black farmers. the usda in that case had to reach two different billion dollar settlements with black farmers in two different lawsuits in 1999, again this year. for him to walk in to a meeting like that with a black caucus knowing his history, what can he possibly say to them?

i'm really sorry. oddly enough or ironically enough, that's part of the defense. the white house has said, because of the awful history at the u.s. department of agriculture in terms of racism against native americans, hispanic, black african-american farmers that they were highly sensitive, highly attuned to this issue. they overreacted when any racist-tainted charge came up in this race. he tried to use that partly to his defense. right now he's nothing except a lot of i'm really sorry to say to shirley **sherrod**, the black congressional caucus and the americans who care about truth in honesty to government and the media.

MSNBC 07/21/2010 20:48:12

Video:

<http://mms.tveyes.com/Transcript.asp?stationid=205&DateTime=07%2F21%2F2010+20%3A48%3A12&mediapreload=14&playclip=true>

the reputation of shirley **sherrod**, a woman who 24 years ago saw and overcame the vengeance in her own heart and achieved the kind of true greatness the rest of us can only hope we might express for one moment in the whole of our lots. a reputation assassinated by fox news, assassinated by that scum, brightbart. assassinated by all of the meager brained-imitators on other channels and other websites, the limp fellow travelers who never asked questions first but simply shot and shot and shot and shot and shot and laughed. let me make this utterly clear. what you read on right wing websites the utter and complete perversion of journalism and ca have no place in a civilized society. it's words crashed together, never to inform, only to inflame. it's a political guillotine. it's the manipulation of reality to make the racist seemed benevolent and to convict the benevolent as racist. even if her words should be edited, fabricated, falsified to do so. what you see on right wing websites a manipulation, not just of a story, not just on behalf of a political philosophy. manipulation of a society. the intentional redirection from reality and progress to a paranoid

delusion and the foermtng of americans by americans. and every last word of it is never in any tangible sense true. ask shirley **sherrod**. but this evil is not institutionalized because of the hard soulless work of rupert murdoch and roger als and the scum, brightbart. our society has not bought into the premise of the 24-hour parade of feces dressed up as news because of a clever marketing plan. the assassins of the right have been enabled on the left. the apologies are nice. they provide a thin line of self-respect but only a then one. the media did not look at the whole videotape. we didn't ask if the doctor did not seem to be leading up to a -- however, we didn't even today when this network left this pornographer of propaganda brightbart come on and spew his lies and venom and his false self-defense like a quack doctor attending a life-or-death surgery, we didn't once consider the source. we are appalled by her actions said the head of the naacp. she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race. benjamin jellus didn't look at the videotape. didn't ask the first farmer if proved true ms. **sherrod** had saved his farm. we have been working on turning the page on the sordid civil rights record at the usda. this controversy could make it more difficult to moving forwd on correcting injustice. john vilsack didn't look at the whole videotape. didn't ask when ms. **sherrod** worked for the usda and not 24 years ago and she didn't. we could have waited all day. we could have had media circus, said the deputy chief of staff at the white house. we took decisive action. a good example of how to respond in this atmosphere. jim mecina didn't look at the whole videotape. didn't first ask if the decisive action might have been like sending drafuss to devil's island. a good example of how to respond in this atmosphere -- this atmosphere. this atmosphere exists because the people around him have let this president be dumbed down. the question used to be, ""fire it up."" and the rhetorical answer -- ""ready to go."" the question now is ""fire it up,"" the answer now is -- ""not ready because we can't afford the impression of looking presidential and neutral and inviting media circus in this atmosphere. to paraphrase james lot, mr. mecina, mr. emmanuel, everyone is remodelling this president to something generic and safe and electable in 2012 on the slimmest of margins to be media and circus free and better suited to this atmosphere as possible. let obama be obama? and that advice must be heeded by one man above all others can you give us some -- specifically some things he said that would help us mr. gibbs was asked at this afternoon's press briefing. again, mr. gibbs replied. he talked about the fact that -- that a disservice had been done here. and the injustice had happened. he was quoting you, mr. president. fire it up? a disservice has been done. fire it up, an injustice had happened. mr. president, it is beyond admirable in your position and at this time of fearful division in this country that you view yourself as president of everyone not as the predecess did only as the president just of those who voted for you. you must at long last come to terms of the fact that you spent the first 18 months and one day of your presidency bending over backwards for the other people, they have spent the same time insisting that they are not actually president, or you are a communist or you're bent on restoring whatever started this week on fox knew and the brightbart. if only the arrogance of the irony that this crusade to prove you a foreign influence is led by an australian named murdock and the sons who pretend to be british and the second largest shareholder, prince al awid of saudi arabia. you, sir, must stand up against this attack on you and this nation. the game plan is transparent. can strand together all of the forces of anti-black racism in this country. direct them at you, and all for which you and this nation stand and convince the great unwashed and unthinking out there that not only are they not racest, but you -- you, barack obama, and van jones and shirley **sherrod**, you are the real racists. opposing you, they are not accepting the worst vestige of our past, they're standing up against it. as you stay silent and neutral and everybody is president, they are gradually convincing racists that they are the civil rights leaders and you are police chief bo connor. and then some idiot at fox news barks and your people throw an honorable public servant under the nearest bus for the sake of decisive action and the correct way to respond in this atmosphere. mr. president, please stop trying to act every minute like some noble neutral figure sharing equal and dispassionate minds and contemplated scholars. it's a freaking war out here. and the imagined consensus you seek is years in the future if ever it's to be rediscovered in this country. this false consensus has gotten us only the crucifixion of van jones and a racist gold-chilling baf food speaking on the memorial of the 42nd anniversary of dr. king's speech. and now it's gotten us shirley **sherrod**. and your answer is to note a disservice and injustice. get a copy of the michael douglas movie ""the american president,"" when you get to the line where he says, i was so busy keeping my job i forgot to do my job, hit the rewind button 20 times, fire it up. fire it up? anybody? anybody? lastly, ms. **sherrod** -- i got no business speaking on behalf of the people of the united states. that's the president's job, but frankly i don't know why he hasn't done this yet, so i'm going to. we all would like to apologize for you and ask that you return to work on our behalf, or if they want to make you secretary of agriculture or white house deputy chief of staff, the president would use somebody like you in there tonight. i would like for you to be honorably, quietly, and until the last few days, unanimously an outstanding america. there was harm done to you and you realized you weren't ending that harm and you were passing it along through vengeance and violence. you stopped not with fanfare or self-aggrandizing tears or on a political stage, you stopped and rejoined the righteous who occupy every corner of our great nation and politics and this hour of undeserved trial and abuse of your devil's island of the mind, you maintained your dignity and your honor. only one of us, in all of us from the mounted angst to the presidential advisors to the challenging reporters, only one of us this in all of this have done their job correctly. you know what decisive action is and how to respond in this atmosphere. and thank god somebody does. good night. and good luck.

Berge, John

From: liz purchia [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:50 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Misailidis, Sarah; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: CNN 7 PM - John King

CNN - U.S. Cable
John King, USA

CNN 07/21/2010 19:03:22

Video:

<http://mms.tveves.com/Transcript.asp?stationid=100&DateTime=07%2F21%2F2010+19%3A03%3A22&mediapreload=14&playclip=true>

...>> clearly, the american people deserve to know. this is a white house that really is a transparent white house. an administration that is transparent. the congressional black caucus met with the secretary just a few minutes ago. it was a very candid, very open meeting. he apologized. when one makes a mistake, we expect an apology. also, we talked about miss **Sherrod**'s life, her experiences, and the sensitivity that she brings to the department of agriculture, which has been, really, a department that hasn't lived up to -- >> could he explain to you why they got so hypersensitive about race and the worry about how this would play politically that they acted without having the common decency of, a, making sure they read the speech in its entirety and, b, asking her at his level what happened? >> the secretary admitted that he did not have the facts, that he acted hastily that he should have taken time to review the entire video, that he should not have had such -- made such a decision and a rush to judgment just as he did. he was very humble in his apology. I must say, and we asked early on today that he actually offer miss **Sherrod** her position back. and we told him that that was just unacceptable and, in fact, we have got to have this national conversation about race. the congressional black caucus continues to say this is not a post-racial era. we have to raise this to the level of the country in terms of trying to find a healthy way to talk about race and all of the problems we have. we've come a long way but we have a long way to go. >> james and mary, you've both helped presidents deal with crises. I want your take on how much the rush to judgment here was impacted by this story, at least if you believe the conservative blog posting was a toxic mix of race and politics. >> well, yeah, obviously, it was. they messed up. the secretary of the agriculture, what do you want to do? he said he made a terrible mistake. he's moving to correct it. I don't know exactly what more the man can do. maybe we ought to, you know, tie him up and flog him or something like that. they made a big error. yet, you're right it did have to do with the toxic -- the reason they did it is because this clown filmmaker set out an edited tape. if I was miss **Sherrod**, I'd sue him. >> the reason they keep repeating the same mistake and they don't take advantage of their teaching moments, is because of the presumption of race and that republicans and conservatives are racist. a year ago today or tomorrow, the president said the cambridge cops were stupid. the tea bag people -- the tea party people -- see, I can't even call them that so much --...

CNN 07/21/2010 19:13:07

Video:

<http://mms.tveves.com/Transcript.asp?stationid=100&DateTime=07%2F21%2F2010+19%3A13%3A07&mediapreload=14&playclip=true>

...was contacted. as these called were being made, the white house was aware. the decision to do what was done was done by me. >> the agricultural secretary, tom vilsack, explaining and taking full responsibility for his decision to first force shirley **Sherrod** to quit her job. he now hopes she will come back. let's continue our conversation. we'll go out to the reverend, in san francisco. when you hear that explanation, and that's called manning up, the secretary taking responsibility there, but reverend, you mentioned beforehand maybe miss **Sherrod** and maybe those white farmers she helped twenty-some years ago could come to the white house. do you believe the president of the united states, whether he had a direct hand in this or not, needs to address it with the american people? >> it's become such a huge issue now. I think that the sherrods have a tremendous background in civil rights. her husband is one of the founders 60 years ago this year. given the loss of her father to this matter. I think that the spooner, the white family, and the black family coming together is a big statement. but that's the symbolic part of it. the bigger issue beyond that, the day that they had the beer summit about the gates/crowley situation, an attorney from illinois on that day found these major banks we've now bailed out engaged in reverse red lining targeting blacks and browns. the subprime loans. the growing gaps of inequality requires symbolism, but more than that, it requires a commitment to enforce and form civil rights law. >> mary and james, if this is a teachable moment, as the white house says, let me ask each of you, mary, to you first, you weren't happy with your husband's answer in the first part there, who do you think needs to learn a lesson? >> no, if you're asking me personally, I learned the lesson a long time ago. this is not a need for a national dialogue. this is a need for kitchen table dialogue. I grew up in the north, where reverend jackson's from. I live in the south. black mothers here have the same concerns as white mothers. black entrepreneurs have the same concerns as white entrepreneurs. people need to sit down and talk to each other. what happens in politics is people lock in to positions, stupid positions, to further their political goals, and it truncates or eliminates any possibility of a real conversation. people need to go to their kitchen table -- >> john, john --...

CNN 07/21/2010 19:30:09

Video:

<http://mms.tveyes.com/Transcript.asp?stationid=100&DateTime=07%2F21%2F2010+19%3A30%3A09&mediapreload=14&playclip=true>

...>>> so, if you listened to the white house briefing told where gibbs had to apologize on behalf of the administration to shirley **sherrod**, he said yes, the white house and the administration had done a lot of things wrong but he also said that part of the reason was because people in my business, reporters, constantly call up and say, hey, i'm on deadline, i need an answer now. here's robert gibbs saying yes, we have a problem, but you do too. >> i think we live in a culture that, uh, uh, things whip around, people want fast responses, we want to give fast response, and i don't think there's any doubt that if, if we all look at this, i think the lesson, one of the great lessons you take away from this is, uh, is to ask all the questions first. and to come to that fuller understanding. >> yes, we should ask all the question first and come to a fuller understanding. yes, we sometimes pester people saying we're on deadline and need an answer now. but i could go through a long list of times when this white house, other administrations, other people we contact in politics say, we're still looking into that, i don't have an answer for you. >> right. and i think, you know, you can blame the media all you want in this, but he's right, they didn't do their homework. and i think you have to not blame the media but sort of take a look at the context in which this occurred. this came after the naacp had said, you know, tea partiers, you've got to condemn racism within your ranks. which the tea party, by the way, did. and so we were in this environment in which race and politics, which is always a toxic mixture, were becoming an issue. and then this story came out and clearly someone, we don't know quite who and we don't know quite how it unfolded, somebody decided, okay, we have to put the kibosh on this. >> this is a white house that believes it was unfairly -- shall we say there was overkill with jeremiah wright, the controversial with the president's former pastor. and some news outlets played over and over again the wright clips in an effort, they believe at the white house, to try to damage this president politically. if you listen to shirley **sherrod**, what she says her understanding of why she was being told quit and quit now was that some in the white house or somewhere in the administration thought it was going to happen again....

CNN 07/21/2010 19:42:17

Video:

<http://mms.tveyes.com/Transcript.asp?stationid=100&DateTime=07%2F21%2F2010+19%3A42%3A17&mediapreload=14&playclip=true>

...>>> all right, time-out on sarah palin. let's move on to other stories. today, you might call the most important person we haven't heard from is cheryl cook. the agriculture department's deputy undersecretary for rural development. this afternoon, secretary vilsack was asked about cook's involvement in the **sherrod** fiasco. >> i obviously was not party to those conversations. it may very well be that during the course of the conversation, miss cook indicated that a white house liaison had been contacted, but i don't know that she necessarily indicated that there was any pressure, because that was not the case. this was something i decided. and i have to accept full responsibility for this. >> do we need to find out the tick tock here? there are people in washington who say the president told me this, when it was the deputy assistant secretary for you know what. that happens in town. but if she was told the white house wants you to go and the white house says that's not true, do we need to figure that out? >> the secretary stepped up to the plate. he asked for -- it's an important thing. he stepped up to the plate, took full responsibility, and he asked for her forgiveness. that was important. she forgave him. the problem is, this is an incident that should go back, quite frankly, to breitbart because this guy went after her intentionally and consciously put out some false allegations, to destroy a good woman. it's not an isolated incident. we see it time and time again in politics. although you guys have taken it to a fine art. >> oh, come -- >> this is the thing that americans dislike and it's why you can't trust politics. >> you know what this is about, this is really about election politics. this is nothing more than an embattled white house with a 44% job approval rating. >> it's actually a little higher than that. >> that is looking ahead to november election and is worried about white voters are going to >> i think that's insulting. when that guy, that dirtball, intentionally puts out misleading evidence to try to -- >> that's the first time that's probably ever happened, right? >> he's personally hurt this woman and took her through hell. yes, in this sort of way, it is the first time i've seen it happen in my lifetime to this extent. that guy's a dirtball and it happens too often in politics. >> the lesson is you have to do your homework in this. they make the woman pull over to the side of the road and resign by blackberry -- >> for you to -- when you had this dirtball engaged in politics is a little shocking. >> all right, let's squeeze one more here from the radar....

CNN 07/21/2010 19:49:32

Video:

<http://mms.tveyes.com/Transcript.asp?stationid=100&DateTime=07%2F21%2F2010+19%3A49%3A32&mediapreload=14&playclip=true>

...>>> here's something important we just noticed. within the past hour, conservative activist andrew breitbart has p.o. add correction of sorts on biggovernment.com. the update sis, while miss **sherrod** made the remarks captured in the first video featured in this post while she held a federally appointed position, the story sell thises refers to actions she took before she held that federal position. >> here comes the play-by-play. >> and with us for play-by-play tonight, democratic cornell belcher, republican neil newhouse. clearly, if you watch the whole speech, what he put up was taken out of context. i interviewed him last night. he was make the point this is not about shirley **sherrod**. he wanted people to look at that video clip he says no so much for what she was saying but how the naacp audience was reacting. so let's put it to the fact check. first, listen to breitbart. >> what you see on the video are people in the audience at an organization whose sole job is to fight against discrimination, and they're applauding her overt racism that she is representing. >> remember those words. breitbart says they're applauding the overt racism she's representing. let's look at the event. >> what he didn't know, while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was -- i was trying to decide how much i was going to give him. i figured if i take either one of them, that his own kind would take care of him. >> there was a little laughter there, and then she goes on in this story to talk about how she confronts -- she says, i was prejudiced against this man at first. she make very clear her views were influenced in part by some prejudice. then she says i realized what i was doing and

this man needed my help and I gave it to him. if you listen to the whole speech, it's actually very inspiring. >> john, the guy's a liar. there was no cheering and waving about what she said. there was a couple chuckles because quite frankly I even thought it was funny. he took this anecdote this transcending anecdote that she was using to have a conversation, a real honest conversation about race in the south, and he used it against her in a political way. this sort of thing goes on way too often in politics and it's why most americans can't trust politics. >> wasn't there another segment in there that when she did talk about something and they did applaud or laugh, when she...

Berge, John

From: liz purchia [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:51 PM
To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Berge, John; Misailidis, Sarah; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: FOX 7 PM - The FOX Report With Shepard Smith

Fox News - U.S. Cable
The FOX Report With Shepard Smith

FNC 07/21/2010 19:03:12

Video:

<http://mms.tveyes.com/Transcript.asp?stationid=130&DateTime=07%2F21%2F2010+19%3A03%3A12&mediapreload=14&playclip=true>

but that was only part of the story. and apparently based on just that part, the edited comments alone out of context, miss **sherrod** lost her job on monday. in fact, she says her supervisor told her and I quote ""the white house wants you to resign."" apparently, without checking the merits of the story. president obama's team said she says jumped the gun and pushed her out but here's the entire clip where **sherrod** actually sends a very different message of overcoming her own racial prejudices.

that so many black people have lost their farm land and here I was helping a white person save their land. so i didn't give him the full force of what i could do. i did enough so that when he -- i assume that the department of agriculture has said that, either the department of agriculture, and he needed it and i did try to help him so i took him to a white lawyer that we had -- that had attended some of the training that we had provided. so he had been an act for the family farmer. i figured if i take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him. that's when it was revealed to me that it's about helping those and not so much about white. it is about white and black. but it's not, you know, it opened my eyes.

which led -- which led, she says, to a lifetime of trying to help the poor. a transformative moment and after the white house got word of those remarks, it says it told the agriculture secretary tom vilsack to reconsider his decision to fire **sherrod**. this afternoon, the white house apologized. tonight, secretary vilsack is apologizing and offering her a new job. our senior white house correspondent major garrett is live in the north lawn today. major, what about this woman's assertion that the white house pressured the agriculture department to oust her or push her out?

that's right. at today's briefing, robert gibbs said he had no personal knowledge of that. he was pressed many times on that question. all he would say is he had no knowledge of any white house pressure and denied it. agriculture secretary vilsack was asked that question at his later press conference today, here's part of his answer.

miss cooke indicated that a white house liaison had been contacted but i don't know that she necessarily indicated that there was any pressure. this was my decision. and i made it in haste.

two points, shepard. the miss cooke that secretary vilsack refers to is one of his deputies, cheryl cooke. the white house called me late this afternoon to say that reference to a white house liaison is not a white house employee, but someone who handles white house liaison work for the department of agriculture and is employed there. shep?

major, **sherrod** may be in line for a new government post now, we're led to believe and she said today on another network, she accepts the white house's apology.

she accepts the apology and is considering and mulling all of her options. secretary vilsack said, in fact, he would like to bring her back to the agriculture department at a position that may even be better than the one she previously had, director of agriculture, department of operations in the state of georgia citing her vast experience and many things she's gone to not only this episode or others might qualify her for a better post than the agriculture department and the secretary added this personal note of reflection.

i've learned a lot of lessons from this experice in the last couple of days. and one of the lessons i learned is that these types of decisions require time. i didn't take the time. i should have. and as a result, a good woman has gone through a very difficult period. and i'll have to live with that for a long, long time.

botm line, shepard, is shirley **sherrod** nowas the -- within her powers to decide how this will all work out. the administration awaits her response.

the white house press secretary this afternoon, robert gibbs, said that mistakes were made and this is a teachable moment. does that make president obama the teacher here?

not necessarily, shepard. the press secretary robert gibbs said all of us and what he meant by us is the media, the administration, the naacp and actors with a political motive, he said, needs to reflect on what happened, the rush to judgment, and he offered this evaluation of what the president may or may not do or may or may not be in this entire process.

i don't know who the teacher is in this. i don't think the teacher is even of himself necessarily the president. i think, again, i think everybody asked themselves questions about the events of the last 24 to 36 hours.

robert gibbs did not rule out, however, that the president might in fact call shirley **sherrod** and might address this matter publicly in the coming days. shep?

major garrett at the white house for us, as always, tonight. thanks very much. and if you'd like, you can watch the entire video of shirley **sherrod**'s speech to the naacp back in march. we posted it all at our web site at foxnews.com. the link is right there on our home page. it is day 93 of our national disaster in the gulf of mexico and today, today we learned that the end may finally be in sight. at least of the gush. unless, of course, a brand new weather system puts a stop to the work and that may happen. according to the national incidence commander, the retired coast guard admiral thad allen, the leak at the bottom of the sea could be plugged in as few as two weeks and we're told that the critical relief well should reach its target by this weekend. but there may be yet another major hurdle to clear. a storm system is brewing right now in the caribbean. forecasters are saying that this system has a 50/50 chance of turning into a tropical storm and, unfortunately, it's impossible to predict the direction it will take. but b.p. reports it is taking no chances. we're told the company has temporarily halted operations on the well and that it is now ordered skimming crews back to shore. steve harrigan tonight live in louisiana with more. how long a delay are we thinking about here? do we know?

FNC 07/21/2010 19:30:13

Video:

<http://mms.tveyes.com/Transcript.asp?stationid=130&DateTime=07%2F21%2F2010+19%3A30%3A13&mediapreload=14&playclip=true>

i'm shepard smith. this is ""the fox report."" it's the bottom of the hour. time for the top of the news. former agriculture department employee shirley **sherrod** says she's now been offered a new job. but she says that she needs to think about it first. here's what transpired over the last few days. she says she was forced to resign after an edited video appeared on line which to observers appeared to portray her as making racist statements. and then, after we learned the video was taken completely out of context, there came a number of apologies all the way to the top of the food chain. james rosen with the story from d.c.

i was a young girl at the age of 17, when my father was murdered. by a white man.

the full 43 minute video of shirley **sherrod**'s speech to a georgia chapter of the naacp belatedly posted on the organization's web site supports **sherrod**'s claim that far from glorifying reverse racism, the grounds for her firing by the usda this week, she was urging racial unity to help the poor.

and they could be blk. they could be white. they could be hispanic.

but the video also showed **sherrod** hurling the charge of racism at president obama's g.o.p. critics.

we endured eight years of the bushes and we didn't do what the republicans are doing because you have a black president.

why the naacp which enjoyed exclusive access to the full video at all times failed to consult it before condemning **sherrod** and applauding her firing only to do a complete 180 a few hours later has not been fully explained by the group's president.

we didn't realize it's been spliced and diced six ways from sunday so as to completely hide this beautiful story of transformation.

the original excerpts posted on the web site did not completely hide **sherrod**'s story of transformation.

and not so much about white. It is about white and black. but it's not -- you know, it opened my eyes.

still, the naacp claimed to have been ""snookered"" by brightbart and by fox news. yet, monday's timeline suggests if the leaders of the nation's oldest and largest civil rights group were influenced by this network, they took their cue from commentators, not reporters. brightbart posted the clips at 8:18 monday morning. by mid afternoon, **sherrod** said usda undersecretary cheryl cook was demanding she resigned by order of the white house because ""you're going to be on glenn beck."" the glenn beck program aired with no mention of the case. they talked nothing of the story until primemehen bill o'reilly, sean hannity and dana perino devoted segments to it. it wasn't until midnight that the naacp weighed in with their first statement cheering the termination. the statement you saw earlier and so many of these statements were on cnn because shirley **sherrod** has refused to come on fox news. they

previously sued and settled with the usda on claims of discrimination against black farmers. they received a combined \$300,000 for pain and suffering. **sherrod** told an interviewer yesterday she felt harassed by the usda official and told another interviewer i would love to sue. i'm going to talk about it.

FNC 07/21/2010 19:58:42

Video:

<http://mms.tveyes.com/Transcript.asp?stationid=130&DateTime=07%2F21%2F2010+19%3A58%3A42&mediapreload=14&playclip=true>

the cable news network that played this garbage on and on and talked about it has an agenda.

fox news under fire for reporting the department of agriculture official shirley **sherrod** made some insensitive remarks toward whites. and indeed, miss **sherrod** might have been treated unfairly. but there is much more to this story. we'll have a ""factor"" investigation.

without a doubt, miss **sherrod** is owed an apology. i would do so certainly on behalf of this administration.

the white house also under fire for firing miss **sherrod**. and one pundit believes the obama administration is intimidated by fox news.

clear to me that the white house's war particularly against fox news, they've lost that war.

dick morris on that. also, dennis miller will weigh in on the exploding controversy surrounding shirley **sherrod**. caution -- you are about to enter the no spin zone. the factor begins right now.

hi, i'm bill o'reilly. thanks for watching us tonight. who is shirley **sherrod**? and why was she unjustly fired by the obama administration? that is the subject of this evening's talking points memo. this is a fascinating story with all kinds of political and media implications. on monday night, ""the factor"" ran a tape of department of agriculture official shirley **sherrod** speaking to a group of naacp people last march. miss **sherrod**'s speech was more than 30 minutes long and we used just a small portion of it in which she said that years ago, as an administrator in georgia, she did not help a white farmer with aid as much as she could have because he was white and she thought he was talking down to her. after hearing that statement, i said miss **sherrod** should resign from the usda and secretary vilsack felt the same way so the woman was fired. what i did not know at the time was that miss **sherrod** told the farmer's story in order to make this point.

i come to realize that we have to work together and, you know, it's sad that we don't have a room full of whites and blacks here tonight. because we have to overcome the divisions that we have. we have to get to the point where as toni morrison said, race exists but it doesn't matter.

so i owe miss **sherrod** an apology for not doing my homework, for not putting her remarks into the proper context. since the exact same thing happened to me a few years ago on the despicable media matters, and nbc news took my words out of context about sylvia's restaurant in harlem, i well understand the need for honest reporting. but the story does not end there. this afternoon, secretary vilsack announced miss **sherrod** would be hired back by the feds. but in a different job. however, that could be problematic. in her speech last march, the speech you just saw there, miss **sherrod** said a number of other things that need explanation. for example, she said this about helping the farmer by taking him to a white lawyer.

so i figured if i'd take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him. that's when it was revealed to me that it's about for vs. those who have and not so much about white -- it is about white and black but it's not, you know, it opened my eyes because i took him to one of his own.

one of his own? would that be another american, miss **sherrod**? if a white public servant reference his own kind or one of his own when speaking about an african-american, that white person would be fired on the spot. now, shirley **sherrod** is a long-time liberal activist who actually sued the department of agriculture and won \$13 million for her organization including \$300,000 for herself and her husband. even knowing that, the obama administration hired miss **sherrod** in 2009 which is very unusual. in that same speech to the naacp, miss **sherrod** defined her politics.

i haven't seen such mean spirited people as i've seen lately on this issue of health care.

all right.

some of the racism we thought was buried, here -- now, we endured eight years of the bushes and we didn't do what the republicans are doing because you have a black president!

so here we have blatant partisanship, publicly put forth by miss **sherrod**, also very unusual for an appointed public servant and a possible ethical violation because, according to the hatch act, federal employees are forbidden to endorse political parties while on duty. that being said, miss **sherrod's** entire situation should now be reviewed by the obama administration. she may have well been treated unfairly. certainly she thinks so.

the thing that fox has done is a total lie. they misrepresented a story that i told to a group to try to bring people together.

memo to shirley. using phrases like ""his own kind"" is not a good bringing people together strategy. although we all make mistakes and i don't think she had any malice there. as mentioned, the naacp also called for miss **sherrod** to be fired and then recanted blaming fox news for ""snookerring them."" well, since miss **sherrod** made her speech in front of that organization, maybe their own incompetence snookerred them. and then there is nbc news howling with left-wing indignation.

i don't know who to blame here, miss **sherrod**. i mean, the activists who p forward this garbage in the first place has an agenda. we shouldn't be surprised by that. the cable news network that played this garbage on and on and talked about it has an agenda.

this is what fox news does. this is how they are different from other news organizations. just like the fake acorn controversy, fox news knows that it has a role in this dance. that's not new. that's not actually even interesting about this scandal. fox does what fox does.

which is kick your network's butt every single night. and you have to be kidding with this fake acorn scandal stuff. unbelievable. do you live in this country? one of the few honest brokers on the cable news arm is chris matthews, democrat who says what he believes.

here's bill o'reilly last night on fox. knowing bill is going to correct this tonight, i hope he does, i think he will. here he is operating in the same rash judgment that the white house operated in.

not so much rash. but i did not analyze the entire transcript and that was unfair to miss **sherrod** as i've said. she does deserve to be treated fairly. but on the matter of her world view, talking points believes it is quite clear **sherrod** may see things through a racial pris and did make political statements under the usda banner. should she be doing the people's business with that kind of resume? i don't think so. she should be in the private or charity sector. and that's a memo. i hope it was fair. in a moment, dick morris will analyze a political implications of the story. we'll be right back with morris.

Berge, John

From: liz purchia [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:54 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Misailidis, Sarah; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Updated AP Story

Updated AP Story

Sherrod case shows power of conservative media

By DAVID BAUDER (AP) – 1 hour ago

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5iv-NWIPtRHuJVAf76B8YegLLnJWQD9H3P8500>

NEW YORK — A conservative blog posts 2 minutes, 38 seconds of video clips of a black federal agriculture official saying she didn't do everything she could to help a white farmer. The blogger labels it racism. Calls grow for the Obama administration to remove her. No one at the Agriculture Department or the White House checks further. The official is forced to resign.

Monday ends, but not the story.

A complete, 43-minute version of the video surfaces the next day, Tuesday, and casts a much different light on Shirley Sherrod's comments: They were part of an NAACP speech about how she overcame her racial prejudice to help the farmer, not about prejudice that stopped her from helping him.

Now, the administration is criticized for wronging her by rushing to judgment.

By Wednesday afternoon, Sherrod is sitting at a studio in CNN's Atlanta headquarters, watching on live television as White House press secretary Robert Gibbs apologizes to her.

She accepts and says: "Being afraid of the machine that the right has put out there — that's what's driving this."

A split screen shows her face and Gibbs' in a surreal moment, concluding a whirlwind 48 hours in which conservative media had the Obama administration on the defensive.

Fox News Channel has been riding high in the ratings since Barack Obama became the nation's first black president a year and a half ago. Commentators Glenn Beck and Bill O'Reilly offer a favorite destination for many administration opponents.

The Sherrod story erupted after BigGovernment.com, a website run by conservative activist Andrew Breitbart, posted portions of her speech at an NAACP banquet in March.

Breitbart's story began: "Context is everything." He said he offered "video evidence of racism coming from a federal appointee," and followed with snippets of the speech.

On the video, Sherrod, hired last August as director of rural development for the U.S. Agriculture Department in Georgia, talked about her unwillingness to offer much help to a white farmer when she worked at a non-profit organization 24 years ago.

The story moved from the Internet to Fox News Channel on Monday night.

In seeking her resignation, Sherrod said, a USDA deputy undersecretary told her the story was going to appear on Beck's program late Monday afternoon. Instead, Beck didn't discuss it that day; it first appeared a few hours later on the top-rated prime-time show "The O'Reilly Factor."

Host Bill O'Reilly showed the brief portion of Sherrod's March speech where she explained that she didn't give the white farmer "the full force of what I could do."

"Wow!" O'Reilly said after the clip aired. "That is simply unacceptable, and Ms. Sherrod must resign. The federal government cannot have skin color deciding any assistance."

As he talked, Fox flashed the news on the bottom of its screen that Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack had accepted Sherrod's resignation.

Fox's Sean Hannity aired the same short snippet of Sherrod's speech shortly afterward.

"This was at an NAACP dinner, and this was racist," Hannity said.

CNN's Rick Sanchez said producers there were intrigued by Biggovernment.com's posting and immediately started reporting on it. But with all the questions involved — Was this a fair characterization of Sherrod's full speech? Can she be reached to give her side of the story? — they wouldn't be ready to discuss it on his afternoon show until Tuesday, he said.

By then, the story rushed by.

"As journalists, we have to protect ourselves the best we can," Sanchez said. "It's easy for it to happen to anybody, by the way — jump to a conclusion, get excited, look at the coverage. It's kind of like creating a bandwagon effect. Once you get on the bandwagon, you can't hit the brakes."

By Tuesday morning, "Fox & Friends" headlined the story "Racism Caught on Tape."

Commentator Laura Ingraham talked about "people who have burrowed their way into the Obama administration with radical outlooks, a radical agenda and, in this case, a racist sentiment. How many more like Ms. Sherrod exist in the Obama administration who weren't so stupid as she was to actually explicitly state her views on the issue of race?"

When the full tape became available later, it was clear that Sherrod said the case taught her a lesson about the importance of helping all those in need, regardless of race.

"What's happening here is that she's guilty until proven innocent," Beck said on his show. "They fired her and now they are back-pedaling. There's no due process here. Doesn't an American have a right to a fair trial? They have politically assassinated this woman. No one has heard the case for or against her, they just took her out. When did we stop having the right to face our accusers?"

It's not clear when, or if, someone at Fox saw the full tape.

Fox spokeswoman Irena Briganti and David Tabacoff, executive producer of "The O'Reilly Factor," did not immediately return calls for comment. Sherrod said that she wasn't contacted by anyone at Fox until Tuesday, when she refused their requests for an interview.

After a video of her full speech was posted online by the NAACP, the White House called the Agriculture Department on Tuesday night, and it was agreed that her ouster should be reviewed.

As more came out Tuesday about Sherrod's speech, Fox's focus shifted. "Race Story Takes Strange Twist" was Wednesday's headline on "Fox & Friends."

"They may have acted without knowing the whole story," co-host Brian Kilmeade said of the administration.

Breitbart did not immediately respond to an AP request for an interview.

But on ABC's "Good Morning America" Wednesday, he said his story "was not about Shirley Sherrod." Instead, he said, the video provides evidence of Georgia NAACP members applauding or laughing at racist behavior, at the same time national NAACP figures are criticizing the tea party movement for having members that express racist sentiments."

Breitbart's BigGovernment.com attracted attention last year for airing video of workers at the community group ACORN counseling actors posing as a prostitute and her boyfriend. This month, Fox News has aggressively reported the story about the U.S. Justice Department choosing not to pursue a voter intimidation cases involving the New Black Panther Party in Philadelphia.

Paul Levinson, a journalism professor at Fordham University, said those cases — and the attention they received on Fox — were likely on the mind of Obama administration officials when Breitbart's story on Sherrod first appeared.

"They panicked," Levinson said. "They're giving the media far more power than they should have."

In issuing his apology, Gibbs said the government, media and interest groups on all sides made quick determinations without knowing all the facts involved.

"One of the great lessons you take away from this is to ask all the questions first and come to a full understanding," he said.

Berge, John

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:55 PM
To: [REDACTED] Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Berge, John; Misailidis, Sarah; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Re: MSNBC 7 PM - Hardball With Chris Matthews

Thanks for sharing these clips Liz. Good work.

From: liz purchia
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Misailidis, Sarah; Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wed Jul 21 21:51:46 2010
Subject: MSNBC 7 PM - Hardball With Chris Matthews
MSNBC - U.S. Cable
Hardball With Chris Matthews

7/21/2010 7:02:16 PM

Video:

<http://mms.tveyes.com/Transcript.asp?stationId=205&DateTime=07%2F21%2F2010+19%3A02%3A16&mediapreload=14&playclip=false>

we start with the case of shirley **sherrod**. here's agricultural secretary tom vilsack late today.

in the conversation i started off by extending to her my personal and profound apologies for the pain and discomfort that has been caused to her and to her family. she was extraordinarily gracious. i wanted to make sure that we understood that i regretted the circumstances and that i accepted full responsibility. i've learned a lot of lessons from this experience in the last couple of days, and one of the lessons i learned is that these types of decisions require time. i didn't take the time. i should have. and as a result, a good woman has gone through a very difficult period. and i'll have to live with that for a long time.

wow. earlier i spoke about **sherrod**'s case with wade henderson of the leadership conference on civil and human rights.

wade, thank you very much for joining us. i don't know but i was surprised at the dignity of this guy taking the bullet for this. he said he did it. he was wrong. he apologized. it's all his fault.

it was an incredible moment in american history. for the first time, you've seen a secretary in this instance secretary of the department of agriculture making a very personal apology to an employee whom we all agree has been deeply aggrieved. tom vilsack is an incredibly honorable individual. what he did this afternoon showed great courage, tremendous dignity, and a sense of personal responsibility that's rare in any public official. i think he should be commended for both his concern about disavowing racism on the part of his department but more importantly, recognizing that an injustice has occurred and taking steps, personal steps to correct it. i thought it was an extraordinary moment and i'm honored to have watched tom vilsack address this important issue.

did you catch, i don't want to be rash in my judgment but i caught an admission there is an institutional or systemic problem in that department and perhaps in american life still whereby a black person, a black woman in this case is quickly and rationally misjudged.

well, i think tom vilsack acknowledged what many of us have come to accept about the department of agriculture and indeed what a federal court through its findings of discrimination against the department particularly on behalf of african-american farmers but also as secretary vilsack said on behalf of latino farmers, women, farmers native american farmers and others, asian-american farmers. i think that the secretary has acknowledged a reality in american life, which is that discrimination has occurred. that racial bias indeed is deeply engrained in american history and that in this instance, a department that he now heads has a long and established history of violating the rights of other americans with regard to their race and with regard to the equal protection of the law. it takes great courage for any secretary to make that acknowledgment but it takes even more courage for a secretary to acknowledge his personal involvement in making a mistake and in proposing a solution, a remedy to that problem and for me that was an important statement and important admission and one that i think we should lift up and commend.

has this is president leaned over too far in accepting the crap coming from the right wing rather than rebuke it? because he doesn't want to get into a fight that will then justify the bad guys who always say we can't get along among the races. then they win their argument. because whenever there's a dispute, the racists win. they make their point. the races can live together.

again, i think you're absolutely on point. again, as the first african-american prez, barack obama has been under a virtual perpetual assault from political opponents who have attempted to use race in both a subtle and sometimes a very overt way to undermine his credibility and his integrity as the leader of all americans. and i think barack obama is especially sensitive to accusations that he

sometimes favors the interests of african-americans which of course, is not true. i think he treats african-americans almost like any other constituency within his party and within the country. secondly, he is especially sensitive to accusations that somehow he has been less than fully forthright in his dealings on issues of race. i think that will hypersensitivity sometimes works to his disadvantage because there is a real fear that unless he establishes a distance between himself and any of the accusations made against him, is he somehow buying into the rhetoric that has been fomented by those who are his critics. i think in this instance while secretary vilsack takes full responsibility for the decision, the climate in which that decision was made has to be taken into context. both as with the naacp that had made accusations against the a party movement, you're seeing it now. i would agree with you, chris. i think there is a tendency to be overly sensitive and sometimes ta works to his disadvantage politically.

great to have your fine mind and heart on the show tonight. it's fortunate we have you at this moment coming out of that press conference. thank you, wade henderson of the leadership conference. let's go to errol lewis of the new york daily news. the professor mentioned a change in climate. he mentioned climate. there's sort of been a change in the weather in 48 hours. two days ago this woman was guilty as charged. now the secretary of agriculture thanks to his statement, she's clean as a whistle. he's the bad guy. he rashly judged her. she's a good woman. she's been put through hell by his decision. where is president obama in all of this? he has not had any role in this at all according to what we've heard officially. what do you make? do you think he's had nothing to do with this.

i know the white house staff was monitoring this, and a vigorous debated according to my source ensued within the white house what to do about this. there were some who very much were in favor of the initial vilsack decision in saying look, let's cut our losses and leave the decision where it is. and others were saying no, you've got to make this right. the president i think is going to step forward. there's some talk he may at some point make his own phone call or have some talk with shirley sherrod, which is only appropriate. they screwed up, the reality is, it makes them look skittish when it comes to issues of race, as if they're overly worried about really trivia. you know, any given news cycle in late july, you know, it doesn't really particularly matter. i mean certainly there's time to fix these things before this election year and certainly before 2012. so i think this is a lesson that hopefully, the political staff both at agriculture in the white house and elsewhere will have learned that you cannot let these right wingers stampede you into panicking because it ends up making you look as foolish as they now look because they were deceives. they were deceitful and deliberately told untruths running around with edited videos. they tried it last summer and trying it ever since. i don't think if takes hold with any real voters but you know, you can lose half a day of work at a time when this country cannot afford to have the white house agriculture or anybody else take their eye off the ball. we've got some real problems in this country.

what do you make of this sort of, sort of like a ping-pong ball bouncing around in a tile bathroom? it goes all over the wall bouncing back from one wall to the next. it never stops. some character right wing blogger puts out the word that this woman was bad and she made racist counter -- whatever you call it, reverse racism whatever that is. and that she's made these comments and therefore, she ought to be sacked. it gets on to a website with the fox news network, i guess they call it news network. you somebody at the white house hears it. there's some kind of conversation with the ag department, the lie and so. somebody down in georgia says this fine woman, the white house wants you out. what does that say about this administration that it can operate so passively?

i don't know if i can put all the blame at the administration. last year, the hit job, the edited video hit job of the moment was against a.c.o.r.n. and all of congress, the democratic leadership of congress without a hearing, without even caucusing, jumped to conclusions based on what breitbart ash the swill he fed people last year. it turned out to be completely unconstitutional, illegal decision they made. they rushed to judgment. a lot of good people got hurt. a very similar situation. so washington the beltway is susceptible to these panics and the people like breitbart play on that susceptibility and edit a 43-minute speech down to three. we'll get half the facts wrong. i'm surprised he got her name right and people rush it onto the air. there are a lot of producers who need to be called to account. i would love to see the equivalent that have vilsack press conference with the leadership team at fox news. who duvet? did anybody make a phone call before you put this on television? you know, there are a lot of questions.

they put on their website, maybe there's a lower threshold for the website. a lot of people grab something off a blog and put it on their website without any editing. there's never any editing by the blogger or website that puts it on. nobody checks anything. it just goes up.

we've got to get past that. we've got to get past that.

MSNBC 07/21/2010 19:21:38

<http://mms.tveyes.com/Transcript.asp?stationid=205&DateTime=07%2F21%2F2010+19%3A21%3A38&mediapreload=14&playclip=true>

...you're politically correct. you don't look at racism from black people, from liberals. so the mainstream media gets sucked into these controversies, as well. but i have to give of the msm credit. the atlanta journal constitution took the time to listen to shirley sherrod's story. i think we were the first to interview her and she said they haven't heard me out. but i think it is the mainstream media has to do a better job of vetting our sources in some of these controversies, as well, chris. >> definitely. we want rely on fox news. >> by the way, in all credit, it's not just your print press. cnn did a very good job on this the other night. >> excellent interview with shirley sherrod. professor get to the point about the white house. i'm trying to find paradigms here. i like the one of ""to kill a mockingbird,"" because it's rash judgment. you know, we were talking about earlier about in the program, we were all putting this together tonight and we're all sports nuts to some extent and thinking about jackie robinson. the first black president like jackie robinson broke into baseball. plenty of talent there for generations before pp. he got the break browse branch rickey said you can't complain about any of the ugliness from the crowd or from the other dugout for three years. is this president like jackie robinson? he has to take it because he made a point, i'll go back to this of completely staying out of this fight as of now >> he did. this analogy works in the following way. he is going to have to take a tremendous amount of racial baiting and back biting that other presidents don't have to deal with and hopefully other presidents of color and women won't have to deal with because he's the first

to break that mold. maybe he takes that a little bit too seriously. look at the situation again here. the perception of his administration was cast when this story broke. and so once the mainstream media value dated fox and Breitbart it's very difficult for the administration to. >> slow down there, professor. nobody validated those two entities. >> they were. >> they're value dated by the fact that they were covered by major news networks. >> that is erroneous. >> now as erroneous, but not initially, Chris. not initially. I was on very early in the morning on Tuesday. and I was trying to explain to folks that it is clear to me this is out of context....

Berge, John

From: liz purchia [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:10 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Misailidis, Sarah; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Updated AP Story - MARY CLARE JALONICK and BEN EVANS

Fired Ag worker mulls job offer after WH apology

By MARY CLARE JALONICK and BEN EVANS

The Associated Press

Wednesday, July 21, 2010; 9:24 PM

http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/07/21/AR2010072100477_pf.html

WASHINGTON -- The White House did a sudden about-face Wednesday and begged for forgiveness from the black Agriculture Department employee whose ouster ignited an embarrassing political firestorm over race. She was offered a "unique opportunity" for a new job and said she was thinking it over.

With lightning speed, the controversy moved from Monday's forced resignation of a minor U.S. Ag official in Georgia to Tuesday's urgent discussions at the White House amid a rising public outcry and then to Wednesday's repeated apologies and pleas for Shirley Sherrod to come back.

Sherrod said she resigned under White House pressure after the airing of a video of racial remarks she made at an NAACP gathering about events that transpired more than two decades ago. But Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said repeatedly on Wednesday that the decision had been his alone.

"I asked for Shirley's forgiveness and she was gracious enough to extend it to me," he said after reaching her by telephone.

Sherrod, in a phone interview with The Associated Press, said, "They did make an offer. I just told him I need to think about it."

The controversy threatened to grow into more than a three-day distraction for Obama's administration, with important midterm congressional elections nearing and partisan feelings already running high. President Barack Obama said nothing publicly about the developments while administration officials tried to simultaneously show his concern and to distance him from the original ousting.

It all began with the airing of a video on a conservative website of Sherrod's remarks about not doing all she could to help a white farmer. After she was told to resign - with the NAACP declaring its approval - the situation grew more complicated when the rest of the edited video was released by the NAACP and Sherrod insisted her remarks were about reconciliation, not the stoking of racism.

By Wednesday afternoon, White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs was apologizing to Sherrod "for the entire administration" and saying that officials did not know all the facts when she was fired and should have investigated more. He said he didn't know if the president would talk to Sherrod himself.

The president had been briefed, Gibbs said, and "he talked about the fact that a disservice had been done, an injustice had happened and, because the facts had changed, a review of the decision based on those facts should be taken."

Said Vilsack, who also met with the Congressional Black Caucus, "This is a good woman. She's been put through hell. ... I could have done and should have done a better job."

"Shirley and I talked about a unique opportunity at USDA," he said. "With all that she has seen, endured and accomplished, it would be invaluable to have her experience, commitment and record of service at USDA. I hope she considers staying with the department."

"I accept the apology," Sherrod said on CNN after watching Gibbs talk to reporters on television. But she said the apology took too long.

Sherrod, appointed to her job last July, was asked to resign after conservative bloggers posted a video of her saying she didn't initially give a white farmer as much help as she could have 24 years ago, when she was working for a farmers' aid group. Sherrod said she used the story in her speech to the NAACP to promote racial reconciliation and that the edited video distorted her remarks.

Like the administration, the NAACP reversed its stance on Sherrod and called for her to be rehired.

The incident was the latest in a series of race-related brouhahas to garner national attention since Obama became the nation's first black chief executive.

A year ago, Obama convened a "beer summit" at the White House between a black Harvard scholar and the white police sergeant who arrested him after a confrontation at the black man's home. The president also faced criticism over nominating to the Supreme Court judge Sonia Sotomayor, who had once remarked on the virtues of having a "wise Latina" on the bench. And there are complaints about the Justice Department's handling of allegations that New Black Panther Party members threatened voters at a Philadelphia polling place on the day Obama was elected.

Black leaders piled on Wednesday in criticizing Sherrod's ouster. The Rev. Jesse Jackson called on the administration to apologize and give Sherrod her job back. The Congressional Black Caucus, with 42 members of Congress, called for Sherrod to be reinstated immediately.

However, the Rev. Al Sharpton said black leaders should refrain from calling for an apology from the Obama administration, saying that creates the impression that black leadership is fractured. "We are only greasing the rails for the right wing to run a train through our ambitions and goals for having civil and human rights in this country," Sharpton said.

The episode comes as the NAACP and the conservative tea party group have been trading charges of racism.

The two-minute, 38-second clip posted Monday by BigGovernment.com was presented as evidence that the NAACP was hypocritical in its recent resolution condemning what it calls racist elements of the tea party. The website's owner, Andrew Breitbart, said the video shows the civil rights group condoning the same kind of racism it says it wants to erase. BigGovernment.com is the same outfit that gained notice last year after airing video of workers at the community group ACORN counseling actors posing as a prostitute and her pimp.

In the clip posted on BigGovernment.com, Sherrod described the first time a white farmer came to her for help. It was 1986, and she worked for a nonprofit rural farm aid group. She said the farmer came in acting "superior" to her and she debated how much help to give him.

"I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland, and here I was faced with helping a white person save their land," Sherrod said.

Initially, she said, "I didn't give him the full force of what I could do" and only gave him enough help to keep his case progressing. Eventually, she said, his situation "opened my eyes" that whites were struggling just like blacks, and helping farmers wasn't so much about race but was "about the poor versus those who have."

The story moved from the Internet to Fox News Channel on Monday night. Host Bill O'Reilly showed a brief portion of Sherrod's speech where she talked about withholding "the full force" of her efforts.

"Wow," O'Reilly said after the clip aired. "That is simply unacceptable and Ms. Sherrod must resign. The federal government cannot have skin color deciding any assistance." Fox's Sean Hannity aired the same short snippet of Sherrod's speech and said that "this was racist."

"This was at an NAACP dinner and this was racist," Hannity said.

By Wednesday, Fox's focus shifted to accusing the Obama administration of rushing to judgment.

People who knew Sherrod were quick to defend her, including the wife of the white farmer whom she discussed in the speech.

"We probably wouldn't have (our farm) today if it hadn't been for her leading us in the right direction," said Eloise Spooner of Iron City, Ga. "I wish she could get her job back because she was good to us, I tell you."

In the full 43-minute video, Sherrod tells the story of her father's death in 1965, saying he was killed by white men who were never charged. She says she made a commitment to stay in the South the night of her father's death, despite the dreams she had always had of leaving her rural town.

"When I made that commitment I was making that commitment to black people and to black people only," she said. "But you know God will show you things and he'll put things in your path so that you realize that the struggle is really about poor people."

Sherrod said officials showed no interest in listening to her explanation when she was asked to resign. She said she was on the road Monday when USDA deputy undersecretary Cheryl Cook called her and told her to pull over and submit her resignation on her Blackberry because the White House wanted her out.

"It hurts me that they didn't even try to attempt to see what is happening here, they didn't care," Sherrod said.

Berge, John

From: liz purchia [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:27 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Misailidis, Sarah; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: MSNBC 9 PM - Rachel Maddow Show

MSNBC - U.S. Cable
The Rachel Maddow Show

MSNBC 07/21/2010 21:12:38

Video:

<http://mms.tveyes.com/Transcript.asp?stationId=205&DateTime=07%2F21%2F2010+21%3A12%3A38&mediapreload=14&playclip=true>

it's a good way of getting a message across that random black guys are threatening. they're coming for you, they're coming for you. black people are coming for you to take what's yours. and so it goes.

a fox news alert, an obama administration official resigned after a she was caught on tape appearing to tell an audience she had used her position to racially discriminate against white farmers.

no, no she didn't. she didn't use her position as an obama administration official to discriminate against white people, she didn't. it fits the narrative, doesn't it? beautifully.

what are the four major fox news stories have in common. the four major stories pressed and pushed on fox over and above the facts as their own make-up-the-news-cycle you wish you had narrative to pin on the obama administration. what is the same about the four fox news initiated scandals? van jones, acorn, the new black panther party, and shirley **sherrod**. what's the same about these four stories. this isn't about racism. this is not a story about picking on black people. this is a story about political outcomes, the tried and true political strategy of not targeting black people, but targeting white people. targeting white people. white voters, or white would-be voters to feel afraid of black people. to feel afraid of african-american people as if they're not fellow americans but rather a threat to what white people have. they're coming for you. a zero sum game. if they get anything, that means you lose something. the message is a political one, clear as a 1960 campaign-funded segregationist comic book. stand up, white people, stand up against the black threat. the shirley **sherrod** is a racist against a white people story is not true. everyone knows that by now. but it's not now. it's political strategy to stoke fear and racial resentment among white voters, like kevin phillips said in 1970., that's where the votes are. this is a political strategy. advanced not by a news organization, but political activists who use a cable channel as a political outlet. they are pros at this. there's no reason to expect them to stop doing stuff like this. unless it stops working some day. unless some day it stops working. [male announcer] the financial headlines can be unsettling. but what if there were a different story? of one financial company that grew stronger through the crisis. when some lost their way, this company led the way. by protecting clients into confidence. and turning uncertainty what if that story were true? it is.

promoted a baseless story on monday and tuesday and spent wednesday shrinking away from the scene of the crime. the fox news channel goes with the "who me?" defense. it happens in public and it can be checked. that's coming up. pulitzer prize-winning columnist eugene robinson. please stick around. well check this out... boo-yah! shazam! h2...o! hydrolicious! look what i can do! magic bananas! adios contamininos! introducing the first faucet filter that installs with just one click and removes 99% of lead and microbial cysts. check it out at purwater.com. [male announcer] presenting the cadillac a fantastic opportunity to get 0% apr financing on every new 2010 cadillac model. like the cts sport sedan. the most acclaimed vehicle in its class and a "car and driver" 10 best, three years in a row. or the all new cadillac srx luxury crossover. and even the most acclaimed luxury suv ever, the cadillac escalate. summer brings out the best in all of us. hurry in to get 0% apr financing on every new 2010 cadillac during cadillac's "summer's best" sales event, going on now at your cadillac dealer.

the shameful and momentarily effective contrivence that is the story of shirley **sherrod** should not surprise anyone. the conservative movement has targeted the white voters on the overwhelming majority of the voting populace with political tactics disguised as stories to scare them. to scare them that voting rights and property rights and educational rights and everything that americans are supposed to be guaranteed that those are a zero sum game. the story goes the elevation of african-americans to the electoral process, politics, business, schools, and the rest of american life will necessarily take those things away from white people. so white people need to defend themselves against it. it's a calculated strategy and it works over and over and over again -- it has until right this second. i wonder if that's ever going to change? columnist and associate editor for "the washington post." hi, jean, nice to see you.

hi, rashle, good to be here. i haven't heard in many years, negro-phobia.

negro-phobia.

yeah.

MSNBC 07/21/2010 21:17:49

Video:

<http://mms.tveyes.com/Transcript.asp?stationid=205&DateTime=07%2F21%2F2010+21%3A17%3A49&mediapreload=14&playclip=true>

it's perfect because it's targeting white people to be afraid. it's picking on black people but picking on black people for a presumed white audience to make white people afraid that black people are coming to take what's theirs. the tactic is as old as the son. do you see it that way?

it is. you see it played out. the black people are just foil in this tactic. it really is aimed at white people. and there's been an evolution of it now, though, because it's not just black people who fully participate in american life, it's black people who achieve a certain status and power. and that once they achieve that status and power, they inevitably are going to use it to -- to take revenge against whites somehow. and it's perfectly set up for that sort of thing. the african-american president. there are a lot of african-americans who have advanced in every walk of american life. and the nation is moving forward every year to the time where there will not be a racial or ethnic majority in this country, just a bunch of minorities. that freaks people out. so, hence, the evolution of this tactic. but, you know, in a larger sense, it's the same old story.

you saw it -- it's popped up in ways that seem surprising. i remember being completely befuddled in the fight over health reform, some on the right said the health reform is a stalking horse for reparations for slavery. remember that line from talk radio?

where did they come from? these things are so random that it takes a few days to register. how in the world do you get from here to there? the things have nothing to do with each other. i got to admit that my favorite -- and we're being kind of detached and ironic here. because i do take this stuff seriously. i write about it in a column for tomorrow. it's clearly a tactic, it's -- it is a political tactic that isn't a random kind of thing. it's not just news organizations, these are political pros who know how to do this sort of thing. but the -- but the thing about the new black panther party, you know, this is a couple of guys. you know, the whole organization membership might climb in to the dozens, maybe, on a good day. if you watch fox news, you would think there are kabals and these are such whack jobs the original black panthers are issuing statements disavowing connections with me. they're not good people. but there are only like a handful of them, yet, they've been made into this huge national threat. all part of the same -- part of the same game.

that's the thing. it only makes sense if you recognize the continuing narrative and how it has functioned so well politically over time. i mean, with the new black panther thing, it's not just that there's three random guys wearing sandwich boards and beards which it is. the horrible incident with them happened two years ago. happened in the election. but all of a sudden, there was a need for a new scary black thing in order to make people afraid about voting issues. with acorn gone, what are we going to -- what tape are we going to run?

we only have three seconds of tape.

if you play it for longer, it might give dangerous context. you can't allow that. it is -- anyway, so let me ask you specifically about what happened agriculture secretary tim vilsack apologized, offered her a job at usda. that goes some distance to making up for the huge mistake. what else does the administration have to do to recover from this?

well, first of all, i think they have to recognize that they -- they handled this really poorly. i mean, they -- they forced the woman to pull her car over wherever she's driving -- trying to drive home, and resign on the spot rather than be criticized on glenn beck on monday evening. before anybody knew what she had said, even took the time to get her side of the story, we're talking about this tonight because the curtain has been pulled back. this was so transparent, the way that -- that andrew brightbart edited that clip to -- to make it seem as if she were saying something diametrically opposed to what she actually said, and when the truth came out, you could just see -- see it as the tactic that it is. and i think there's -- there have to be ways to capitalize on that. and to push back on that. i think the way you deal with bullies is don't run away from them. confront them, push back. maybe that's a lesson the white house can draw from this too. push back.

guy who's as amused and horrified by all of this as i am in equal measure. i appreciate it, thank you.

thank you, rachel. great to be here.

MSNBC 07/21/2010 21:29:02

Video:

<http://mms.tveyes.com/Transcript.asp?stationid=205&DateTime=07%2F21%2F2010+21%3A29%3A02&mediapreload=14&playclip=true>

i think without a doubt ms. **sherrod** is owed an apology. i would do so on behalf of this administration.

white house press secretary robert gibbs offering the apologies of the obama administration. the apology offered a few hours later by another apology, her former boss, the person who asked for and accepted her resignation. our nation's agriculture secretary, tom vilsack.

i had the opportunity to speak with shirley **sherrod** over the phone. i started out by extending to her my personal and profound apoloies for the pain and discomfort that has been caused to her and her family over the course of the last several days.

in addition to that, he offered shirley **sherrod** a new job. ms. **sherrod** is considering whether to accept that offer.

one of the amazing things that's happened in the last 24 hours is this political bomb continues to explode, the people who lit the fuse in the first place are trying to pretend they had nothing do oh with it. they're pretending they're shocked, just shocked with the big explosion. we talked about the incredible links that fox news channel went to to hype the scandal after it was broken by the conservative website that fed lots of stuff to fox in the past.

breaking news on being caught on tape making racially charged comments to media audience.

the skin color couldn't decide any assistance.

an obama administration official resigned a short time ago after she was caught on tape appearing to tell an audience she had used her position to racially discriminate against white farmers.

none of which is true, except for the resignation part. fox news channel jumped on it instantly without having any of the facts straight about what happened. almost like the whole thing was coordinate. a few hours after the original article and videos were posted on that right wing website, an identical version of the story literally just about verbatim appeared on the fox news website under the totally misinformed headline, ""caught on tape: obama official discriminates against white farmer."" she didn't discriminate against a white farmer. she wasn't a obama official caught on tape doing anything. you did spell everything right, so good job. fox news forced this story like the fake acorn scandal, the fake van jones controversy. fox news cooked it up and sold it out of context as we found out. after having done that, after having lit that fuse, here's the fox news take on the matter. now that the real story has come out and the bomb has gone off. this is amazing.

well, the fallout now is a headache for the white house because they may have -- well, i don't know, they may have acted without knowing the whole story.

it kind of looks like it.

do not adjust your tv machine. fox news -- that's -- fox news, not actors portraying fox news in a laughably ridiculous way, actually fox news, condemning others for acting without knowing the whole story. this is the fox news story as the story was unfolding. fox news anchor steve ducy the blond you saw sitting on the left a moment aching. just yesterday.

outrageous. everybody needs a refresher course of what racism looks like.

that's exhibit a.

to do it so publicly as though she's proud of her actions. right.

right. exhibit a. this is racism, exhibit a. that according to fox news anchor steve ducy yesterday. steve ducy today? oh.

what was the big hurry for them to condemn her in the first place? i don't get it.

come on -- to condemn -- people are so quick to judge.

how about former bush press secretary turned fox news host dana perino. she offered this lecture today to those who got it so wrong.

MSNBC 07/21/2010 21:33:22

Video:

<http://mms.tveyes.com/Transcript.asp?stationid=205&DateTime=07%2F21%2F2010+21%3A33%3A22&mediapreload=14&playclip=true>

her comments cost shirley **sherrod** her job. did the white house jump the gun before getting the facts.

you can't fire first and ask questions later. same fox news show, same show one day earlier.

this emerging and confirming what people thought about people who burrowed their way in the obama administration about a radical agenda and racist sentiment clearly by her.

people shouldn't jump to conclusions. what's made clear is she was taken out of context, her speech was edited to make it look like the opposite of what it was. fox news had a major bone to pick of anybody guilty of doing that, taking part of her speech out of context and making a judgment about her based on a little snippet.

she said that i assumed g things that they -- that the white family came off arrogant and condescending to her and she reacted in a certain way. if you take that when she was described in the way she did act at one point and then left it right there, you would have a different impression of what shirley **sherrod** was like in doing.

right. i know. dude, you should totally see what they did on the same show yesterday. really.

an official from barack obama's united states department of agriculture making a speech to the naacp that sure sounded racist -- listen. so i didn't give him the full force of what i could do.

she admits there that because a farmer was white, she doesn't extend the full helping hand to him. she's touting this in this anecdote as if this is a feather in her cap somehow for her to be congratulated. i mean, it's really a shocking admission. same show. been a striking transformation in the fox news that hype in this story yesterday and the fox news quick to lay blame today. here's how fox described the story yesterday. usda official admitted race. on tape. here's another one, racism caught on tape. that's fox news yesterday. today, look what it is. rush to judgment, jumping the gun, a modern-day witch hunt. did they act too fast? fox news trying to put the blame on others now, trying to disavow any responsibility for what they did to shirley **sherrod**, just like what they did to acorn and van jones and all the rest, telling half the story, distorting the outcome but making sure the story meets their political objectives. if we had to count on fox news to cover the story of the tortoise and the hare, we would think that the tortoise lost. they wouldn't cover the outcome of the race. they would unload on that slow tortoise.

MSNBC 07/21/2010 21:57:40

Video:

<http://mms.tveyes.com/Transcript.asp?stationid=205&DateTime=07%2F21%2F2010+21%3A57%3A40&mediapreload=14&playclip=true>

that is the man behind the race baiting shirley **sherrod** fake scandal. why now? the third week in july, 2010, to post a clip in a months old speech before a naacp audience which taken in audience is an inspiring story about one woman's personal growth on race and shown without context, well, you know how it played out. an electronic hit job on a completely innocent person. a conservative website said they had this video for months but no run to unleash it until the naacp joined the right wing in battle. last week the naacp passed a resolution asking the tea party movement to repudiate overtly racist groups associated themselves with the tea party movement as well as the occasionally racist signs that have happened at tea party events. by his own admission, the purvey investor of the tape was using the tape and shirley **sherrod** as a direct reply of the naacp's condemnation of the overtly racist tea party. i will see you resolution and raise you a 24-year-old story that will make it seem the black people are the hot headed. charging in that wind is the tea party caucus. representative michele bachmann posted the names of the 29 members. whoa. 29. for a while. a few hours later a new list was posted listing the names of the 25 members. four members names disappeared and three others were added. some of the confusion may be because ...

which of these stories will you be talking about tomorrow? the backpedaling begins only hours after the full video is posted on-line. agriculture secretary tom vilsack reconsiders his decision to sack usda official shirley **sherrod**. vindicated at last.

i kept saying look at the entire thing. look at my message and no one would listen.

why did vilsack fire her before all the facts were in? how involved was the white house? what is andrew brightbart's new defense.

i asked that person send me the relevant clips.

tonight david frum on how the right wing manipulated the media and the story. melissa harris-lacewell on how the administration is dealing with race issues, david corn on how the administration botched the case and keith oibermann returns for a special comment. gop extreme -- the tea party holds the first official caucus in the house thanks to michelle bachmann.

the tea party is a set of ideas.

but are they good ideas for the republican party? all of the news and commentary now on ""countdown"".

they need to speak for themselves.

good evening from new york. i'm lawrence o'donnell in for keith olbermann. the obama administration has spent the last 24 hours jumping through hoops for a right wing blogger considered noncredible and scrambling to undo the unnecessary damage. our fifth story tonight, when you're falsely vilified and sacked, you've been vilsacked. but tonight, agriculture secretary tom vilsack both apologized to shirley **sherrod** and asked her to come back to work.

i've learned a lot of lessons from this experience in the last couple of days. one of the lessons i learned is that these types of decisions require time. i didn't take the time. i should have. and as a result, a good woman has gone through a very difficult period. and i'll have to live with that for a long, long time. vilsack's agency forced **sherrod** to resign after video was posted where she appeared to recount her thoughts about a white farmer. it was blogger brightbart. he's the same one that brought us the incomplete and fraudulent tapes that smeared the community group a.c.o.r.n. leading fearful democrats to kill funding and kill the group. more later on the white house role on all of this. brightbart spoke with maura schiavocampo and said, only after the naacp recall the story, he got a tip about **sherrod** speaking to the naacp in march.

i sort of forgot about it. and when the naacp started to resurrect the false narrative of the tea party being racist -- when i realized that the naacp was doing this, i knew this story existed and i asked that person to send me the relevant clips.

the relevant clips, he wanted, not the whole thing. who needs the whole thing. brightbart's attack on the naacp for allegedly making up false claims of racism in the tea party came one day after the tea party federation expelled the tea party express because of racist remarks by leader mark williams. brightbart today refocused his attacks call the audience and the naacp racist.

the first one, the controversial one where the racism exists because of the audience reaction and the narrative she plays is it's still newsworthy in and of itself. i'm sympathetic to the fact they went after her and not after naacp to tell them stop it. stop bringing back racism.

the problem for mr. brightbart as media matters demonstrates tonight, there was no racist reaction from the audience. he then claimed as he did with a.c.o.r.n. to have more supposedly damning videos.

the naacp -- i believe i can show you more videos, there's a lot of video out there that shows that the naacp countenance is racism and i think more offensively if anybody goes off of the plantation, as it were, who's an african-american, they're called uncle toms by this group.

let's bring in david fromm, former speechwriter for president george w. bush and columnist for theweek.com. can you help me with his last remark the plantation? what is he trying to say there?

it's clear. what's so painful is andrew is suggesting you can meet false accusations of racism with false accusations of racism of your own. and that when you come under attack the way you should for a mistake is not by apologizing but being going on further attack. what's so heart rending is that the conservative movement to which andrew brightbart speaks is a movement people who are clamoring for an alternative path for this country. they want a different path for the way they're leading the country. instead of giving solutions, we're giving them a racial division, fanning animosity needlessly. and it sound like -- it sounds like, i hope it's not true, consciously needlessly.

now, david, you have written this incident illustrates what you referred to as the closing of the conservative mine. can you explain that?

the second day narrative that's gripped the conservative world, on july 19 when the story broke, conservatives by and large believed it. there are a few honorable exceptions. by the 20th, the story fell apart. by that point, brightbart issued a second line of defense. this story reflects badly on the president for believing him, reflects badly on the naacp for issuing an apology for believing him. that the news here. and he's kind of a co-victim with ms. **sherrod**. and the conservative world has fallen in line with this. they concentrated the attack on the administration and not pondered this is a false story here and disseminated the false story. that makes us a part of the distraction. not saying we have ideas, we have solutions, you want a job? we know how to put you to work.

Berge, John

From: liz purchia [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:28 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Misailidis, Sarah; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: FOX 9 PM - Hannity

**Fox News - U.S. Cable
Hannity**

FNC 07/21/2010 21:35:54

Video:

<http://mms.tveyes.com/Transcript.asp?stationid=130&DateTime=07%2F21%2F2010+21%3A35%3A54&mediapreload=14&playclip=true>

sean: tonight on our great, great american panel. he's worked at the ""washington post"", white house correspondent juan williams is here. she is a member of resurge agen republican, republican strategist as well, leslie sanchez is back with us. he is a former nfl rock star and chaian of tarkenton.com fran tarkenton who brought me a brand new real football. i used to be a pitcher and i throw from out here you are okay with that?

under-handed almost.

sean: exact . i'm going to let you throw that ball tonight.

all right.

sean: shirley **sherrod**, what happened at the white house, your reaction?

most of my errors are errors of assumption, assume nothing, question everything. it shows again when you get politics and government involved things get totally messed up. this is a debacle. the story is not going to end tonight. it is going to go on and on. it is just shows the questionable decision-making of this administration shows up again.k&m5

sean: why did they jump the gun? the tape shows up. i'm listening to the tape released. we didn't air it until she was already fired by the white house juan. their tape. by the way i did not call for her firing. i just said what is this?

it is not their tape. obviously, somebody doctored that tape.

sean: no, i think they only sent a portion they didn't the end.

they chopped things out even in the portion we saw. and bright pwaft on big government posted it. -- breitbart on big government posted it. intended to pay back the administration to make it seem as if why aren't you aggressively pursuing --

sean: forget about -- what do you think about how they handled it?

it does reflect on poor decision-making it reminds me of what happened last summer with the gates and the policeman situation, obama speaking before he had all the facts in front of him. they shouldn't have fired her. they should have collected the facts and not reacted to what they thought was a right wing conspiracy.

sean: she blames fox news.

it does go back to accountability. definitely with the administration in terms of it is very sore more rick that's the -- sophomoric. very much to professor gates he at the white house saying i don't know all the facts, but i think the came -- the cambridge police acted stupidly.

sean: we saw with it gulf oil spill, i can't suck it out with a straw, i to know whose blank to kick.

we have to take responsibility, when things go wrong leaders take responsibility. they man-up and say i was wrong. i made a mistake here's what we are going to do to correct it. that's what --

sean: you did that your whole career.

I got to get my players to play, block, tackle, kick and catch that's what leadership does. you're getting people to come together to try to solve problems. how about unemployment?

sean: back to shirley **sherrod** for one second. I asked this question of ann coulter. she did say some things she admits she discriminated against in white farmer. granted she is now friends with the guy. she did say she was ton on whether to help him. she adms she didn't do anything she could. she decided to get him help from one of his own kind. she was admitting she harbored these racial feelings.

hang on a second. I don't think that is fair sean. this woman said her father was killed by a white man. and the father was never -- the farmer was never indicted.

sean: horrible.

for this person to have racial and muss in her heart. you can say okay. she is not working for them 24 years ago. she said she felt she talked down to him. she said i didn't give him the full force of my efforts and directed him to some whites who could help.

sean: she said one of his own kind. do you find anything objectionable in any of that testimony?

yeah. the best defense that could be made for tom vilsack is that he should have a zero policy against all discrimination. but the fact is, i think he let the bus run er shirley rather than giving process because agriculture has their own problems in having discriminated against black farmers.

Berge, John

From: liz purchia [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:17 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Misailidis, Sarah; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: CNN 10 PM - Anderson Cooper 360

**CNN - U.S. Cable
Anderson Cooper 360**

CNN 07/21/2010 22:00:35

Video:

<http://mms.tveves.com/Transcript.asp?stationid=100&DateTime=07%2F21%2F2010+22%3A00%3A35&mediapreload=14&playclip=true>

we begin tonight with the smearing of shirley **sherrod**. the white house apologized today and so did the guy who fired her and she has been offered a new job. we'll talk to her in a moment to see if she'll accept that new job. she has been dragged through the mud and has had to prove she is not a racist. this can happen to anyone. it is not right. imagine it happening to you. the truth is, it can happen to anyone and the truth does matter. we live in an age where that simple fact is increasingly lost. people on the right and the left. people view things through the prism of politics and ideology seek to score points by seeking scalps. right and left have their own anchors who only report on the stories to suit their slant. that's their right. we think the truth matters. it's even worse on the internet where there are no standards and anonymity allows for hate. what seems to have been lost in much of it is the man who first posted this video, which was clearly edited to deceive and slander miss **sherrod**. his name is andrew breitbart. watching him try to weasel his way out of taking responsibility for what happened to miss **sherrod** is what's wrong with this. breitbart posted the clip monday on his website. nearly everything he said about shirley **sherrod** was wrong or somehow slanted to make a larger point about racism in the naacp. he initially said her speech showed a government official who allowed racist views to influence her work with a white farmer. we now know it was a speech about her change of heart 24 years ago when she wasn't even at the usda. today, mr. breitbart could have apologized and said he was wrong but he didn't. bullies never do, nor do ideologs. he claims this was never about miss **sherrod** but the naacp and their racism based on the audience's reaction to the speech.

this tape is about the naacp. it's race on debt is about nondiscrimination. when shirley **sherrod** is talking in which she expresses a discriminatory attitude towards white people, the audience responds with applause and the naacp agrees with me and it rebuked her.

well, the fact is, there was no applause when miss **sherrod** was talking about the white farmer. we'll talk to members of the audience who were there that night about the reaction that they saw and heard and that they, themselves, had. breitbart said there were cheers over racist comments. again, the facts do not bear him out. the truth matters. the closest mr. breitbart came to an apology today was this comment.

i feel bad that they made this about her. and i feel sorry that they made this about her. i'm not sure if that was done because they rushed to judgment or whether they wanted to make it about shirley versus me, because that's what it's become.

he goes on to say he's sympathetic to what miss **sherrod** has gone through. notice the passive voice here, because his words, quote, they went after her and not the naacp. it's like the arsonist saying i'm sorry, ma'am, for the water damage caused by firefighters. he started the fire. black racism happening now at the usda and the naacp he says it proves. it didn't. he said it proved racism in the crowd. we'll play you the tapes and you'll hear from audience members. he claims to feel sorry for the victim but blames others acting on his misleading information for hurting her. it was a phony story. it isn't the first and it isn't the first about race. but why let the truth stop you when you're making political points? that's the way a lot of people seem to think these days on left and the right. you can blame the media for acting as a conveyor belt, you can blame the obama administration for being hyper sensitive about race. race baiters, smear artists learn trumped up stories about race pay off because people care about race. they care more, we think, about the truth. the truth matters. it certainly does to shirley **sherrod** and certainly should to all of us. as we mentioned, the white house apologized today, so did her former boss at the agriculture department, secretary tom vilsack. here is what he said.

this is a good woman. she has been put through hell. and i could have done and should have done a better job. i want to learn from that experience. i want the agency and department to learn from that experience. and i want us to be stronger for it. i want to renew the commitment of this department to a new era in civil rights. i want to close the chapter on a very difficult period in civil rights. so i accept responsibility. and i don't think the buck stops with me, as it should.

shirley **sherrod** is with us now in new york, her first live interview since getting a new job offer from secretary vilsack. what do you think? were you satisfied with secretary vilsack's apology?

yes, i was satisfied with it. i told him i appreciated the apology. and i know that we need to try to move forward from here.

he said that he offered you another job at the usda. what was the job and are you going to accept it?

well, i haven't seen the full offer. he mentioned it. he mentioned something in civil rights with the office of outreach. i just don't know. i told him i need time to think about it. and i truly do need time to think about it.

what's the thought process? i mean, has this changed your belief in the agency? what's the thought process?

well, i know the secretary says that we need to deal with the issue of civil rights. i believe he's convinced that we do need to do that. i need to know that the department is truly wanting to do that. and that means more than just the secretary of agriculture. that's why i would want to weigh the seriousness of others and their commitment to once and for all ridding the usda of the civil rights issues, the discrimination issues that have been there for so long. you know, i wouldn't want to be someone just out there swimming in the river all by myself and the burden of discrimination is placed on me. i haven't actually seen the offer in writing. he did say he would send that to me by e-mail and i was actually y on a flight in atlanta when he told me that. i haven't -- i just arrived here in new york. so, i haven't had a chance to look at just what it is he's offering yet.

yesterday when we talked, you had said, based on what you initially had been told, you thought this had come from the white house initially, that the white house wanted you fired. they have, all day, said today they did not weigh in on this in advance and this was a decision by secretary vilsack. a, do you still believe this originally came from the white house? if so, do you think the president owes you an apology?

well, i firmly believe that if the president -- if not the president, someone there at the white house was involved in that. you know, he is the president of the united states of america, and i received an apology from the secretary. it would be great to talk to the president, but, you know, i would not insist upon an apology from him.

i don't know if you heard andrew breitbart today saying -- not really apologizing, but saying he felt sympathy toward you because this was made to be about you and not the naacp, do you buy that?

no, i don't. you know, it was all about me, to get at the naacp. if he wanted to just get at the naacp, he should have figured out a way to go directly at them. he knew exactly what would happen when he put that tape out there in the way that he did. and he knew i would be the fall guy for that.

what do you think his motivation was?

you know, exactly what was happening in the very beginning, he set out -- he didn't care who he destroyed to try to do whatever it is -- i wish i could understand why they want to divide so much. i don't understand the thinking that he and so many more like him have. you know, they don't care. what is it they're after? why is it that they cannot think that we can all live and work together in this great country?

and, i mean, the last 48 hours have got to be the most surreal, the most upsetting of your life or close to it. what is -- what is the lesson you have learned here, if anything? what is it you want to tell other people? because it seems to me this could happen to anybody. what happened to you, anybody could take a speech somebody made, cut it down, put it on the internet and brand somebody a racist for whatever ideological reason they have.

CNN 07/21/2010 22:11:03

Video:

<http://mms.tveyes.com/Transcript.asp?stationid=100&DateTime=07%2F21%2F2010+22%3A11%3A03&mediapreload=14&playclip=true>

well, shirley **sherrod**, i appreciate you being with us tonight. you know, we'll keep in touch with you and continue to follow this. it's not a story that's going away any time soon and we obviously want to hear about what happens with your job. we appreciate it. thank you. we want you to weigh in as well. join the live chat at ac360.com.

andrew breitbart says the tape shows the audience applauding racism. we'll hear from audience members and you'll hear the tape yourselves. there was no applause when hearing the speech about the white farmer. we'll break down how shirley **sherrod**'s story played out from the moment she learned she was about to become, against her will, a household name. [male announcer] there's in a recently published study, key nutrients reviewed were found to be absorbed by the body. these nutrients help support energy and immunity. science gives you more reason to trust centrum. [male announcer] presenting the cadillac ""summer's best"" sales event. a fantastic opportunity to get 0% apr financing on every new 2010 cadillac model. like the cts sport sedan. the most acclaimed vehicle in its class and a ""car and driver"" 10 best, three years in a row. or the all new cadillac srx luxury crossover. and even the most acclaimed luxury suv ever, the cadillac escalade. summer brings out the best in all of us. hurry in to get 0% apr financing on every new 2010 cadillac during cadillac's ""summer's best"" sales event, at your cadillac dealer. going on now i want to fix up old houses. [woman] when i grow up, i want to take him on his first flight. i want to run a marathon. i'm going to work with kids. i'm going to own my own restaurant. when i grow up, i'm going to start a band. [female announcer] at aarp we believe you're

never done growing. thanks, mom. i just want to get my car back. [female announcer] together we can discover the best of what's next at aarp.org.

the edited tape cost shirley **sherrod** her job. the conservative blogger who posted it still claims that the organization she was speaking to, naacp, racist. he uses this portion of the clip as evidence. he says the audience applauds.

he had come to me from help. what he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was i was trying to decide just how much help i was going to give him.

well, did you see or hear the crowd bursting into applause? you can decide for yourself. we decided to ask people in the room about their reactions. we heard some laughter, saw some people nodding their heads. the reverend rudolph porter and yvonne laud. i talked to them earlier today.

you're the president of the naacp chapter that held this event. this glerks andrew breitbart, it's interesting. his description has kind of changed over the last two days. initially he said that the audience was, quote, laughing and applauding as she described as she treated the white farmer. on abc today, he claimed that the audience was cheering racism. and that you see some people nodding their heads and murmuring, but was anyone cheering racism?

no.

no.

not cheering racism. like i told you before, we were acknowledging that we understand what she is saying, where she's coming from. and i think that that gentleman, he is insane. i mean, whatever he tried to accomplish is unfolding on him and it's not to his advantage. what do you expect him to do?

you think he's now covering his tracks?

exactly.

also, anderson, this event was honoring young people for academic excellence and excellence in various high school endeavors. she was inspiring young people by talking about man humanities to man. her theme was really, if i can help somebody, then my living will not be in vain. and she was challenging us to help somebody, using our time and our talents and she made that appeal to the young people in this small rural down in douglas, georgia, that is known for to be alcohol, cotton, peanuts, chicken and she was saying you can use your talents and come back to your community and make it a better place.

the other thing that andrew breitbart had said on sean hannity's program is that people were nodding in ascent, call and response, responding to her speech but that early on people didn't know it was a story of the way her attitudes had changed through her experiences because of what had happened to her dad, she started off thinking one way and how she came to another way of thinking. and what mr. breitbart is saying is that when the speech started you, in the audience, didn't know she had changed her way of thinking, that you were agreeing with her when she was talking about, you know, sending a white couple to a white attorney, to somebody of, quote, unquote, their own kind.

no. what i got out of that is that i had talked with her before about this same situation. and i knew what she was talking about. i knew that she was saying based on what happened at that time is what changed her.

in other words, i was sitting there thinking, as she was talking, that it's almost what happened to me when i was 13 years old, because my father was killed the same way and nothing was done about it. and she got beyond that. i had learned to live with that. even though you just -- as a child, you just think my father is dead. somebody else killed him. you don't know what to think as a child. but as i got older, i just learned to live with it.

anderson, i sat two seats away from her. and it was crystal clear that she gave a chronology of what life was like in rural georgia as a youth and how she went to college and committed herself to trying to make her community a better place and she encouraged us to do so. so, it was crystal clear with me that this lady was talking about not from thyself, but doing something to help others. when i heard breitbart on hannity, i immediately got on the telephone and started calling my friends sing what is this guy talking about? he must have been at an event other than the event i attended. he was completely out of context and i think he had a hidden agenda that was detrimental and breitbart owe this is lady an apology.

i've known miss **sherrod** for, what, 11 years now. so, i knew better than what you're saying he's trying to indicate, the history about that. so, that's totally untrue. and in terms of saying that the naacp was cheering on this kind of behavior or attitudes or whatever, you know, is just totally absurd. because the people who were there, first of all, they were not all naacp members anyway. but to say that, you know, we were cheering something on and learned something else about it, that's totally untrue. i've known shirley for 11 years and i know that that's not her character.

if you were doing a sermon about this, what is the lesson here for all of us, in this incident, in the aftermath? what's the take away?

let the work I've done speak for me, not for myself, but for others. help somebody.

I would like to add, if I may, the message is still -- is also to let America know, to let all of us know that our work is not done. with this surfacing like this about it being a racial issue, all of the publicity that has come up about it, it lets us know that our work is not done. we still have a long way to go.

CNN 07/21/2010 22:24:22

Video:

<http://mms.tveyes.com/Transcript.asp?stationid=100&Date=07%2F21%2F2010+22%3A24%3A22&mediapreload=14&playclip=true>

if you think about it, if Shirley **sherrod** had not fought back as she did, if she had not gone on television and started telling her version of events and had the white farming family to back her up, this story would have turned out very differently, even by the 24-hour news standards, the smearing of Shirley **sherrod** was turned on its head at warp speed. Monday she was forced to resign from her job at the USDA. Today, showered with apologies and offered a new job. Randi Kaye breaks it all done for us.

reporter: just after 8:00 am Monday morning, an edited clip of Shirley **sherrod**'s speech is published on a website run by Andrew Breitbart. Below that link, a blog written by Breitbart begins with no hint of irony. Context is everything. Indeed, it is.

to show me he was superior to me.

reporter: at 12:51 Monday afternoon, Breitbart tweets about the speech, federal employee brags about discriminating against whites.

racist act that is we had to endure.

reporter: suddenly, it's all over YouTube and **sherrod** is cast as a racist. **sherrod** says she first got wind of the controversy last Thursday when I stranger e-mailed her, taunting her about her comments. She says she alerted the USDA and was told someone would look into it. Then she says she never heard another word about it until Monday when the USDA, she says, called her at least three times, pressuring her to resign, claiming the White House wanted her out. At around 6:00 pm Monday, **sherrod** pulls over to the side of the road and e-mails her resignation. Conservative talkers unaware she's resigned sound the alarm. About 8:00 pm Monday, Fox News Channel airs the video.

wow! well, that is simply unacceptable. and miss **sherrod** must resign immediately.

reporter: late Monday, Secretary Tom Vilsack accepts **sherrod**'s resignation and issues a statement saying, quote, there is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA. The NAACP backs Vilsack and at midnight issues a press release, blasting **sherrod**, claiming it's appalled by her actions. This, even though the speech was given at an NAACP event. No one at the organization had clearly bothered to learn more about what was said. It wasn't until early the next morning we learned this portion of the tape was only a snippet of the full 40-minute speech. **sherrod** told ""American Morning.""

the stuff that Fox and the Tea Party does is scaring the administration. I told them, get the whole tape and look at the whole tape. and look at how I tell people we have to get beyond race and start working together.

reporter: Tuesday afternoon, about 3:40 pm, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack defends his firing of **sherrod**.

I saw the statements and the context of the statements, I determined it would make it difficult for her to do her job as a development director.

reporter: difficult? he acknowledges there was more to the speech but said it didn't matter. 5:00 pm Tuesday, the NAACP does a 180. It releases a new statement, after finally watching and posting the entire speech on its website. This time, it says, quote, we were snookered by Fox News and Tea Party activist Andrew Breitbart into believing she, **sherrod**, had harmed white farmers because of racial bias.

what we didn't realize is it had been spliced and diced six ways from Sunday so as to completely hide this beautiful story of transformation.

reporter: that evening on CNN, John King presses Breitbart about why he posted just a portion of the speech. Breitbart dodges the questions, never gives clear answers about anything.

did you reach out to her and say, what is it you're talking about? when did this happen?

this was not about shirley **sherrod**. this was about the naacp attacking the tea party and this is showing racism at an naacp event. i did not ask for shirley **sherrod** to be fired.

reporter: around 2:00 am wednesday with the full tape now public, the usda decides to take a second look and review the case. around 5:00 pm, after days of ignoring their employees' explanations and relying on a snippet of videotape instead, the usda apologizes and offers **sherrod** a job. randi kaye, cnn, new orleans.

CNN 07/21/2010 22:38:44

Video:

<http://mms.tveyes.com/Transcript.asp?stationid=100&DateTime=07%2F21%2F2010+22%3A38%3A44&mediapreload=14&playclip=true>

david frum, you wrote about the shirley **sherrod** incident and andrew breitbart's role in it and the lack of focus on him over the last 24 hours. why do you think that is?

i think conservatives find it painful when one of their own is called out. i think andrew breitbart was really called out here, hasn't seemed to have done any due diligence, causing so much damage to a woman's reputation and her career. the circle the wagons mentality, they're shut out of power. you feel helpless and you feel nervous. at the same time -- and you also feel that you constantly are on the receiving end of unfair accusations. it's not a good response to fabricate accusations of race made against you to fabricate them and redirect them back.

i know you've written for andrew breitbart's website in the past about a year ago. you're probably not surprised by the tone of what he wrote. this is something, obviously, both liberals and conservatives -- ideologs tend to see things through a very limited lens. should we accept it? should this stuff be part of the national discourse now?

accusations of racism flying around? absolutely not. i don't even know it's ideologs. remember geraldine ferraro, the last person that you would think throwing around racism, about barack obama being licky to get where he was. you know, the problem is that race gets so -- we can sit around and intellectualize it. shirley **sherrod**, buried in all the things that she said, it's not about black and white. it's about the haves and have-nots. we see the haves enging up the have-nots over race. it's unfortunate but those are the people, in my opinion, causing a lot of issues.

david frum raised point that conservatives circle the wagons. liberals do that as well. i don't want to make this bashing conservatives. it seems idologs do that. people don't like to just say they were wrong. it's all about seeing things through your political prism.

and also by scoring political points. i think david frum is being very kind to andrew breitbart. there was a certain malice involved in this. let's be straight about that. there is a circle wagons mentality on both sides. you're right about that, anderson. even today, i must tell you, as much as i admired the secretary of agriculture for coming out and saying i take the hit on this. i take the blame. it's my responsibility, there has been a circle of wagons around this within the administration. and the story doesn't add up. i mean, the underlying story about who talked to whom between the white house and the agriculture department, and according to what shirley **sherrod** has told us doesn't seem to add up.

david frum, do you agree with that? do you think it adds up?

it looks like they panicked. it looks like they have some overwitchy decision making and they don't seem to show the kind of loyalty that was often shown during the bush administration. we're rediscovering the merits of the style of george bush, who did back his people, sometimes to a fault, but he did back them. i agree with you, anderson, about not making this a point about one faction or another. factionalism is the problem. we're at a time of tremendous economic strain for a lot of people. and they want answers, exclusions and they want to -- solutions and they want to see -- it's too easy to offer them a battle over race. what they need to hear from conservatives are better ideas about how to create jobs.

i think, john, more people would believe what people say if somebody, whether it be on the hard left or the hard right every now and then say i was wrong about that and i was seeing it through a limited lens rather than -- basically andrew breitbart doubled down in the wake of this and said i wasn't attacking shirley **sherrod**. i was talking about the naacp and in larger issue.

i put this woman up there, say she's a racist but i'm talking about somebody else. all of us would like to think we're full of forgiveness and when somebody says we're wrong, we're going to forgive them. you say double down, anderson, then people triple down and say if you say you're wrong, then you're actually admitting you screwed up in the first place and it's just attack, attack, attack. as david said, we're living in a highly charged, highly politicized atmosphere and everything has become politicized. race has always been political. when we can have discourse about it at this point with so many other things happening, unfortunately it's not going to happen.

even the reaction to this story, liberals use it as a way to bludgeon conservatives for what they did without looking into the mirror for things they did in the past as well. it's frustrating when you're looking at things just as they are, rather than through a limited lens.

Berge, John

From: liz purchia [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:17 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Chan, Stephanie; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: FOX 10 PM - On the Record With Greta Van Susteren

Fox News - U.S. Cable
On the Record With Greta Van Susteren

FNC 07/21/2010 22:04:27

Video:

<http://mms.tveyes.com/Transcript.asp?stationid=130&DateTime=07%2F21%2F2010+22%3A04%3A27&mediapreload=14&playclip=true>

greta: the obama administration sure has changed its tune. when a controversial video first surfaced this week and it appeared **sherrod** discriminated a white farmer. **sherrod** was gone within hours. when the naacp released a full version of her speech it shed a very different story.

it made me realize then that I needed to work to help poor people. those who don't have access the way othersave.

greta: joining us live from baltimore april ryan for urban radio networks. she was present in the white house briefing room today and here in washington. byron york for the washington examiner. april first to you. you were in the room when robert gibbs was addressing the press. did you get full and complete answers to every question, if not, what didn't you hear?

I got answers. what I really want to know is will the president call miss **sherrod**. because this reached the level of the president. for it to reach the level of the president for people to go to the president to tell him that this is a problem, you know you are wondering will he call her? is it on his schedule? it reached the level of the president. when that happens it makes it a story of this magnitude.

greta: when you say, will he call? here's one of the thoughts I have if he didn't call her already the only reason he would call is not because of personal conviction because he's had many hours but because he's gotten political heat from you and me and everybody else. he should have done it already or else it is because he's reacting to us.

okay you are bringing up a bunch. of issues. I'm going to try to break it down as easily as I can. number one, the situation is as such that it was a knee-jerk reaction. robert gibbs did say because of the immediacy of the news cycle. there's a lot of blame to be laid. the administration today said it was injustice and a disservice happened. if there was a disservice that happened and they made a full apology to miss **sherrod** who was watching, indeed the president could if he does, you know I would not be surprised. if he doesn't, I would be surprised. but I want to say this, greta there's a lot of blame to be laid. I'm going to start, as a reporter who started out in this business going from the basics the facts and learning how to put the full context of the story out there, it started shoddy. I'm sorry the full context was not put out. yesterday, when the tape started coming out the full 43 minutes we understood it was about racial redemption and reconciliation. some say maybe she shouldn't have said, some say maybe she should have. either way the context was not put out at the beginning. there's blame to be laid in almost every facet. you can say the naacp. they are having a meeting this evening. they are very upset about the fact they to retract a statement and all the racial aspects going on. then the white house having to retract. so many people are involved in this. it started from shoddy reporting.

FNC 07/21/2010 22:06:21

Video:

<http://mms.tveyes.com/Transcript.asp?stationid=130&DateTime=07%2F21%2F2010+22%3A06%3A21&mediapreload=14&playclip=true>

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greta: byron, everyone messed up?

nobody looks good in in. this guess back to a feud over the tea party and allegations of racism within the tea parties the conservative web andrew breitbart took it to himself to push back on that idea. and had done a lot of work about accusations that racial epithets were shouted at black lawmakers when the health care bill was passed. comes the naacp passes a resolution accuse the tea party of race. . breitbart has heard of this speech in which an agriculture official may say something racially charged. gets it, it is incomplete - incomplete. he puts it out. lacks context. naacp panics they've just condemned racism in the tea party and it looks like there is something within their own ranks. they panicked. they could have looked at the whole tape, they did not. white house follows the lead of the naacp, panics themselves. shirley **sherrod** was told she was to pull over on the side of the road and resign. so everybody just panicked here. there wasn't due process, there was no process at all. no one asked her what was going on. breitbart did not look for the whole tape before publicizing it. everybody looks bad there.

greta: go ahead april.

there's another context to the story. people were talkg about it a bit today. vilsack brought it up as well as chuck todd from another network. he brought into the fact the black farmers. you have to remember when agriculture secretary vilsack said there is zero tolerance for racial discrimination. this incident happened 24 years ago at a time when the department of agriculture was engaged in rampant discrimination against black farmers, hispanic farmers and indian farmers. because of that and because right now the department of agriculture is in ed in a major -- engrossed in a major audit to root out racial ripple effects from years ago and trying to prevent it that is one of the reasons why there was such a knee-jerk reaction from the usda. it wasn't warranted.

greta: the other reason i think there was a knee-jerk reaction as i sit back and watch, can we call a truce on flinging the word racism on both sides. it is the most -- racism does exist, both ways. it is extremely painful to be falsely labeled and it is a horrible thing to be accused of it.

it is a terrible feature of our politics but i don't think it is going anywhere now. you have seen it a lot about the tea parties and this mess was created as a push-back toward that the obama administration also the white house is worried about losing the support of white voters. they are abandoning the president. they were very important to his reelection, independent voters in 2008. there's a political calculation in here as well. the bottom line is, this was a tape, a video presented as an accurate representation of what shirley **sherrod** said, i think it was in march. in fact, it was not the whole story.

greta: now we've got this horrible mess with a lot of -- taking away from other important issues in this country. now everyone apologizing and saying i've own done half my job.

FNC 07/21/2010 22:41:57

Video:

<http://mms.tveyes.com/Transcript.asp?stationid=130&DateTime=07%2F21%2F2010+22%3A41%3A57&mediapreload=14&playclip=true>

greta: if you think the white house and president obama are having a bad day with the firing blunder of shirley **sherrod**, it just worse. in a new quinnipiac poll, president obama is losing a hypothetical election to unnamed republican 39-36%. losing to an unnamed republican. even bleaker in the president's approval rating is at 44%. what do you make of this? what do you read into this?

i make into this a complete repudiation of president obama. only one in three or slightly more americans say they will vote for him, % say they approve. when you look at those numbers, three months or so before a midterm election and you're a democrat you have to panic.

Berge, John

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 7:33 AM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Purchia, Liz; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: GMA Transcript 7 AM

Station: (ABC)
Date: 07/22/2010 07:01:39 - 7:11:39 AM

Video:
<http://mms.tveyes.com/Transcript.asp?stationid=1715&DateTime=07/22/2010+07:01:39&mediapreload=14&playclip=true>

anytime you bring up race, it's such a charged topic. shirley sherrod, the government official forced to resign was reinstated on wednesday, and offered a new job. agriculture secretary, tom vilsack, personally apologized to her. so did white house press secretary, robert gibbs. both said the comments were taken out of context. there was a rush to judgment. but serious questions remain about how this all began. and there's no question about it. the administration could have handled it better.

and ms. sherrod wants questions answered before she accepts the job offer.

we're also watching the gulf this morning. they're preparing to evacuate all ships ahead of what could become tropical storm bonnie. the relief wells were stopped. one was supposed to be finished in a couple of days. if this hits, it could set efforts back two weeks. sam champion is tracking it.

we'll talk to sam in a few minutes.

we begin with the fallout over the controversy of shirley sherrod. we have her reaction this morning. she'll join us here in our studio. first, jake tapper has the latest at the white house. good morning, jake.

reporter: good morning, robin. you know, you seldom see something like this, where somebody claims they've been wronged. the white house admits it. apologizes. she's offered a job. but the white house does seem very eager to get this story behind them. overnight, secretary of agriculture, tom vilsack, met with members of the congressional black caucus, to discuss the circumstances that led to the ouster of agriculture department official shirley sherrod. it was vilsack's most recent act of contrition for the episode.

it was a very good meeting. and we really believe that mrs. sherrod deserves our respect.

reporter: this followed vilsack's apology to sherrod. after it became clear that her words had been taken out of context, in the short clip making the rounds on the internet and cable.

this is a good woman. she's been put through hell.

apparently, she's watching this briefing, shirley sherrod, on cnn, right now. is there anything you want to say to her?

on behalf of the administration, i offer our apologies.

reporter: and it was more than an apology. vilsack suggested he offered her a new job in the agriculture department's task of settling minority lawsuits for farmers who claim they were discriminated against in farm mroons.

she has a unique set of skills, that i believe will help in assisting usda as we deal with turning the page on our civil rights chapter, which has been difficult.

reporter: but for some conservatives, the matter is not over.

if a white public servant's referenced his own kind or one of his own, when speaking about an african-american, that white person would be fired on the spot.

reporter: and, george, so far this morning, white house officials say they have not heard yet back from shirley sherrod about that job offer. george?

she hasn't decided yet, jake.

when i spoke with shirley sherrod early this morning, she said she accepted the apology. but she's not ready to accept the job offer.

that, i just don't know at this point. i really have not had a chance, yet, to look at just what that offer is. as i said earlier, i really -- i know he talked about discrimination and the agency. and after all of these years, that's still happening. i would not want to be the one person in the agency that everyone is looking at to clear up discrimination in the department of agriculture.

seems to me that you're saying, at this point, it's not your personal situation that bothers you so much. you want to know that there's an institutional commitment to fight this discrimination.

right. if there is, there's some other things that would need to happen within the agency that have not happened to this date.

but don't you think that president obama's committed to that?

i would hope that he is.

you were quite harsh on the white house in the early days, as this story unfolded. are you satisfied now that they've done everything they can, that the president's done everything he can? and that he's fully behind you?

you know, i can't say that the president is fully behind me. i would hope that he is. i have not talked to him. he is my president, though. so, i --

would you like to talk to him?

i would love to talk to him. but i respect him as a president of this great nation. and he is my president.

and let's assume he picks up the phone and calls you into the oval office. what specifically would you say to him? what do you want him to do?

i'd like for him -- he's not someone who has experienced some of the things i've experienced through life, being a person of color. he might need to hear some of what i could say to him. i don't know whether that would guide him in the way that he deals with others like me. but i'd at least like to have the opportunity to talk to him about it.

so, it sounds like you want some reassurance from the president, as well, not just the secretary.

that would help a little.

finally, you have been through so much, in the last week or so, at this point. going from, at one moment, being a villainous symbol of racism. now, to someone being a heroine, of racial redemption. what has that been like?

for me, especially in the beginning, it was so tough because my life has been about fairness. and to have people think that i was a racist, someone who's worked against racism all of my life, really, really hurt, to feel that people thought of me in a way that i know i wasn't. and a way that so many people who know me knew that that wasn't me. but the thought of thinking that this country -- other people in this country would never know the real me was really, really taxing on me. and then, to move to a point where the truth is out there. and people can see the life that i've lived. i would hope that it could inspire someone else.

well, we can all hope your story's more widely shared. thank you for for your return this morning.

thank you.

and more for the fallout on this, we're joined by our political contributor, donna brazile. and also, nicolle wallace, who was communications director for president george w. bush. donna, i was struck by something you said in "'aud today'" this morning. the white house, the naacp, the conservative noise machine. the liberal noise machine. who gets the most blame?

there's enough on everybody's plate to keep the high and mighty in washington, d.c. to eat bird until, you know, turkey season. truth is, george, there's a lot of blame here. there's a lot of blame. george, when i first heard about this story, i didn't simply react. i kept thinking, sherrod, sherrod. and then, i googled because i recalled that charles sherrod, one of the founders of the student nonviolent planning committee. i had to google charles sherrod. i said, is this charles' wife? she said, yes. she screamed at me. the point is, george, all you had to do was simply google sherrod, to know that shirley sherrod has an extraordinary life story of commitment to justice, civil rights, fairness for all people. it is one of the saddest chapters i've seen in this small but very unique period of history, under president obama. when no one simply picked up the phone to call this wonderful woman or her husband and say, what's up?

you know, you make a good point there. nicole, i bring you in here. that is what is most striking here. the white house may have had nothing to do with this. but no one at the agriculture department picks up the phone and makes the phone call. inexcusable. on the other hand, in some ways, understandable, given the hair trigger that everyone's on now, because of the way the stories fly across the internet.

i know we're going to get to the polls. and i don't think they're unrelated. i think this is a white house, to me, appears very brittle. it's a white house that's created a climate at their agencies where everyone is so eager to protect and promote the white house's political interests, that they're overreacting.

they thought they were doing the white house's bidding, even though the white house didn't ask them to do it.

it goes to work with ill motive. certainly, the remorse makes clear that no one intended the consequences. i think, perhaps, we've done more in the last 24 hours around the issue of race and racial reconciliation this woman's story, the original speech, which i think more people have now listened to, than the original audience. and, you know, with this morning, it was incredibly moving. the fact that she has the sense to be measured and restrained, and not make her decision with the same rapidity that decisions are made in washington, is quite striking.

what i'm thinking, is maybe everyone should be off the hair trigger. donna, i want to bring you in. this is not the president's - he didn't cause this problem. but now, it's his responsibility to fix it. what does he need to do?

look, everyone is overreacting to these edited videos. i really hope that the president -- not just the president. there's so many people that can learn a little bit from shirley sherrod. her grace, her willingness to go out there and be courageous and telling her story. perhaps, though, the con conservative blogger should talk to her. he could use an honest conversation about race. and naacp could be reminded of its history and understand that its mission is to promote equal justice under the law. i think this white house, the president, the administration, the congress, everyone else, can learn a wonderful lesson from shirley sherrod. before we leap to judgment, we should learn to listen. to believe that the best motives that we all have is truly available, if we just listen. that's all we're asking. listen to people. don't rush to judgment.

this comes against the backdrop, as you mentioned, nicolle, showing the president has new tough numbers. 48% disapprove now of the job he's doing. more disapprove than approve. and 48% say they will not vote for him again. does not deserve re-election. clearly, the turnaround the white house has been hoping for has not begun yet.

this is a tough political climate. i think the toughest moment that robert gibbs was in the briefing, when he was asked by a reporter, whether they were too quick to throw people under the bus. that, again, is the symptom of a white house really feeling the heat, when their poll numbers are plunging. they have to take a deep breath and keep it together. one of the democrats brought out the story of ronald reagan. i think someone will make that correlation to reagan's journey to re-election. we'll see if this white house crafts an appeal to the sector.

donna, you get the last word.

he won 53% of the vote. if he's down by five points, i hope he can make it up this fall. the independents are the same as democrats or republicans. we're sick about the economy. if he continues to put forward good legislation, get the jobs, get the country moving again, his numbers will return to normal. whatever normal is these days.

donna brazile, and nicolle wallace, thanks very much.

Stephanie Chan

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Berge, John

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 7:49 AM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Purchia, Liz; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: NBC Today Show 7 AM

FYI- She says that she still has yet to see the job offer emailed from the secretary

"yeah. i haven't seen the offer, you know. the secretary said he would e-mail it to me. i have not seen it yet. so before i say no totally, i would like to look at that to weigh in."

Station: **(NBC)**
Date: 07/22/2010 07:02:20 - 7:12:20 AM

Video:
<http://mms.tveyes.com/Transcript.asp?stationid=1665&DateTime=07/22/2010+07:02:20&mediapreload=14&playclip=true>

it's been an interesting 48 hours for shirley sherrod. she's accepted apologies from the white house, and the secretary of agriculture. but, is she ready to take a new job within the same administration that demanded her resignation just three days ago?

it is a decision that she is mulling over this morning after agriculture secretary tom vilsack admitted he should have done a better job of investigating the video that started the controversy. so is she ready to put it all behind her? does the president himself owe her a personal apology? well, she's sitting right over there. i'm going to talk with shirley sherrod right ahead.

also a storm brewing in the caribbean has brought efforts to permanently plug the busted oil well in the gulf to a near standstill. we're going to get the latest on that story and a rare view of the disaster as crews use a submarine to search for oil beneath the surface. we're going to take you live to the gulf in just a couple of minutes.

and plus-sized and proud. the model who is furious that recent pictures of her were altered to make her appear thinner than she actually is.

but we begin on this thursday morning with the fallout over the premature firing of an agriculture department official named shirley sherrod. we'll talk to her in a moment. but first, nbc's savannah guthrie is at the white house with the latest on the story. savannah, good morning to you.

reporter: good morning, matt. well the white house is hoping to move past this chapter, now that the agriculture secretary has come forward to offer miss sherrod a new job with the agency, and to apologize. under fire for the firing of a usda worker, agriculture secretary tom vilsack faced the cameras.

this is a good woman. she's been put through hell. and i could have done and should have done a better job.

reporter: vilsack said he personally called sherrod to apologize.

i asked for shirley's forgiveness and she was gracious enough to extend it to me. and for that i am thankful.

reporter: at the white house wednesday, it was also all apologies.

i think without a doubt miss sherrod is owed an apology. a disservice was done for which we apologize. and on behalf of the administration, i offer our apologies.

reporter: after initially standing by the agriculture secretary's decision to fire sherrod, the white house now acknowledges it was a rush to judgment. a usda official called sherrod monday afternoon, in her car, asked her to pull over and resign by blackberry. this, after video surfaced online of sherrod making racially charged comments that turned out to be selectively edited.

how did we not ask the right questions? how did you all not ask the right questions? how did other people not ask the right questions?

reporter: watching the apologies as they were issued, live on cable tv, shirley sherrrod herself later reacted.

i'm just wondering how will my grandchildren look at this when they read about this in later years, and their grandmother being the first black person to be state director of rural development in georgia, was asked to resign by the first black president.

reporter: as for andrew breitbart, the conservative blogger who posted the video, he acknowledged he put it online without seeing the full content of the remarks. but he didn't apologize for posting it. though he did say he has sympathy forsherrrod.

i feel bad that they made this about her and i feel sorry that they made this about her. i'm not sure if that was donebecause they rushed to judgment, or whether they wanted to make it about shirley versus me. because that's what it's become.

well, there's one issue outstanding. senior aides here at the white house insist they did not push the agriculture secretary to fire ms. sherrrod, that it was a decision made at agriculture and they were, frankly, looped in essentially after it had beendone. on the other hand, miss sherrrod has said repeatedly it was her impression, based on her conversation with an agriculture department official, that it was the white house who wanted her to resign. so that's one of those issues of fact that a lot of people will be talking about today, meredith.

all right, savannah guthrie, thank you very much. shirley sherrrod is with us again this morning. ms. sherrrod, thank you so much for joining us.

thank you.

you have now received apologies from the usda, the white house and the naacp for their rush to judgment. you've accepted those apologies. you really are a woman, as the secretary put it, who has been through hell. how are you feeling right now?

you know, i've gone from being at such a low on monday, as this was unfolding, and thinking, this is so unreal, to feeling so great about the support i've received from around the country. it's encouraging. it makes me feel that there are many others out there who think like i do, and so many who do not think like the individual who started this in the first place.

let's talk about that. i want to talk about it in a minute. but first of all, do you think that you deserve a phone call from president obama?

i think i do.

you do?

mm-hmm.

an apology?

well, you know, he is the president of the united states of america. i received the apologies that are important. i really would not want the president to apologize to me. i'd love to have a conversation with him, though.

and what would you say to him?

you know, i'd like to talk to him a little bit about the experience of people like me. people at the grassroots level. people who live out there in rural america, people who live in the south. i know he does not have that kind of experience. let me help him a little bit with how we think, how we live, and the things that are happening.

what do you think he doesn't understand and a lot of the rest of the country doesn't understand about people like you and the way you live and what you're faced with?

you know, we are people who struggle every day, who do the best we can in our community. who love this country. we love him. we want him to be successful, because we feel thinks, in some ways, like we do. and we think that's good for the country. yes, there are issues out there that we are faced with. issues of poverty. issues that i worked so hard on these last 11 months at rural development to try to really have an impact on, mainly because that's me. but the other thing, i want everything to reflect, i want a good reflection for him as the first black president.

but why do you think when it comes to this topic of race, it just presses people's buttons? people are so quick to react without thinking. you're in the center of a storm here. why do you think that is?

you know, this has gone on for years and years, and i thought we were getting to a place where we really could talk about it. but we can't deal with it until we can face each other. that's the whole point i make when i talk. the things that are being done by the gentleman who started this, and i can't even think of his name --

andrew Breitbart.

yes. i didn't know of him before this happened. but the things he's doing, being done more to divide us so we can't move on.

but i guess his point was that this is not him versus you. he was trying to point out racism within the membership of the naacp. that when you told that story about being reluctant to help a white farmer, before he realized this was about poverty, that there was acceptance within the crowd, people who are yeah, you're right, what he was trying to say was there's racism in the naacp, the same way they claim there might be racism within the tea party. is there room for debate, for discussion about that?

you know, there's always room for debate and discussion. because that's what will get us to a point where we can tolerate each other. people were not laughing in that audience. and he knew that his actions would take shirley sherrrod down. he didn't mind doing that. he thought, i think, he probably hoped, it would also deal with the naacp. but what he did was getting me. and that, i cannot -- well, he's never offered to apologize for what he's done. but that, you know, it would be hard for me to forgive him at this point.

but at some point the white house could have checked and seen the whole video, the usda could have seen the whole video, the naacp could have seen the whole video before going on the attack with you. the white house has said they had nothing to do with your ouster. you have said that you had three phone calls on monday from your superiors saying that the white house was behind it, they wanted you to resign. do you stand by that?

i stand by that. because i asked what has happened? you know, i just couldn't -- it was so -- you know, the first call i received said we're putting you on administrative leave. i had to explain to my leadership staff that we were quite a ways from the office, in a meeting, that i explained what happened, and i told them, i have to leave and go turn this government car in and get my car and go home. you know, i asked -- so first they were putting me on administrative leave. the next call was shirley, we're going to have to ask you to resign. and then the white house wants you to resign. because i'm asking them, what happened? this is just so unbelievable. it was one thing for them to put me on administrative leave and then look into it. but they went from administrative leave directly into asking me to resign.

so obviously you still feel the white house has some explaining to do. meanwhile the usda, the secretary of agriculture has offered you a new job that you're thinking about. what can you tell us about this job?

you know, it's -- it's discrimination happens in the usda. that's why there are lawsuits by black farmers, hispanic farmers, native american farmers, women farmers. and they're because the agency that never deals with the people who call it. no one lost their job because they're discriminated against a black farmer or a native american farmer or a hispanic farmer or a female farmer. those individuals, many of them, some have retired, but many of them are still there. i would not want to be that individual that the department and everyone is looking to solve the issue of racism in usda. it takes a lot more to get that job done.

so i'm just asking very quickly, what is the job exactly that they'd like you to do?

they talked about the office about me dealing with discrimination within the agency.

and you're inclined to say no to that?

at this moment, i would think i would be.

so as far as you're concerned at this point you're out of the usda for good?

yeah. i haven't seen the offer, you know. the secretary said he would e-mail it to me. i have not seen it yet. so before i say no totally, i would like to look at that to weigh in.

ms. sherrrod we appreciate very much you coming in.

thank you.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
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Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

Berge, John

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 7:55 AM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Purchia, Liz
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: CBS The Early Show 7:30 AM

This interview with Shirley focuses mainly on NAACP and Andrey Breitbart whom she is considering taking legal action against.

Station: WRAL-RAL (CBS)
Date: 07/22/2010 07:37:53 - 7:47:53 AM

Video:
<http://mms.tveyes.com/Transcript.asp?stationid=2060&DateTime=07/22/2010+07:37:53&mediapreload=14&playclip=true>

we want to recap the explosive story we reported earlier in the telecast. a video was shown on conservative blogger, showing shirley sherrod with her reluctance to help a white farmer 24 years ago. that video went viral. sherrod was forced to resign and then the entire video surfaced when it became clear her statement taken out of context. secretary vilsack has apologized and offered her another job.

we had an opportunity to discuss a unique opportunity here at usda that might be of interest to her.

shirley sherrod joins us live in the studio this morning. good to have you with us.

thank you. good to be here.

i'm sure it's been an exhausting few days for you.

yes, it has.

there's so much to talk about, how quick everyone was to react to this. the administration, the naacp. you said you weren't given a chance to explain. you were told to pull over on the side of the road, resign on your blackberry. what does that say about the state of thing in this country for them to say so quickly, you're wrong, you're out.

yes. it tells me we've gotten to the point where we're not interested -- well, i guess i shouldn't say interested in the truth. but we're not willing to take the time to look at all of the facts before jumping out there to make decisions. decisions that were so wrong in this -- especially in this case.

and when you look at your case specifically, you were taken -- things you said were taken, put on a website, edited because someone had a bone to pick. not with you.

right.

but with someone else, with something greater. how does that make you feel as a person?

you know, it does not feel good that someone was just willing to -- you know, as much as -- i can't even think of his name --

andrew breitbart.

yes. as much as he's is saying it was about the naacp, he had to know that it was about me. he was willing to destroy me to get to what he thought -- to try to destroy the naacp. i don't see how he could connect the two because the naacp didn't make those statements. i made the statements. i told the story. i was using my life to really help people see how i changed. and in doing that -- and i have every -- you know, if you hear my story, you know i have every reason to think differently.

but in telling my story, how i moved to a place where i could work with anyone, it helps others to see that they can do the same.

it seems to be the ultimate irony that your story, which was about understanding, it's not about black and white or different races, but it's a struggle for the haves and are notes. the ultimate irony that that story was used, in fact, to hopefully portray the exact opposite.

right. that's why he had to know what he was doing. i think he -- i'm certain he didn't think the other side of the story would come out, but he knew he was misrepresenting the facts.

has he apologized to you.

no, he hasn't.

do you expect an apology?

no, i don't. you know, i don't know him, never heard of him before this happened. but from what i think he is, i don't think i would ever receive an apology.

~~would you consider legal action against him?~~

~~yes.~~

and is that something you're actively talking about or --

i haven't talked about it actively, but i would definitely consider it.

you've also been ofd a job, a new job, not your old position, back with the agriculture department. i know you still need time to look at the offer but essentially dealing with civil rights issues.

right.

is that something you'd like to be involved in?

that's something i've been involved in since 1965. it's not something new to me. maybe it's something new to the department, but definitely not something new to me. i would not like to be the one person that this country is looking at to solve all of the problems of discrimination within the department of agriculture. they have been going on for years in terms of black farmers and now hispanic farmers, native american farmers, women farmers. there are many, many, many layers of issues there. and i don't know that the department is ready to deal with them.

which is sort of a sad statement to say they may not be ready to deal with them. do you think the government, perhaps the american people, are ready to deal with issues like this, the quick reaction, the knee-jerk reaction because someone is so afraid of any perceived bias or any perceived racism?

you know, i would hope that by -- you know, having gone through this, these last few days, it would help this country -- people in this country to really look at what we're doing. you know, let's step back and see if we can have a new start. you know, if my sufficiering ov the last few days can help move that forward, hey, i'm willing to be the fall guy for that.

that's quite a fall, but you're rising up from it. we do appreciate you taking the time to join us this morning. shirleysherrod, thanks.

thank you.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture*

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Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Purchia, Liz
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 9:00 AM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Cc: Chan, Stephanie; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: MSNBC - Shirley Sherrod on Morning Joe

07/22/2010 08:21:18

Video:

<http://mms.tveyes.com/Transcript.asp?stationid=205&DateTime=07/22/2010+08:21:18&mediapreload=14&playclip=true>

shirley, great to see you this morning. thank you for coming in.

thank you.

i went to go back to the beginning of this. people asking you questions here. take us back to monday. you are on your way to athens, georgia.

yes.

tell us about the three phone calls you got and what exactly was said, who they were from.

tell me tell you about the first phone call placed on administrative leave which would have been a good thing to do and continue while you look into it. so the first call said, shirley, we will have to put you on administrative leave. i said --

what time is this?

this is around 3:00, 2:30, 3:00 on monday.

okay.

and it was, like, such a letdown. i walked outside of the room to take the call because i was meeting with the staff. we call it the leadership staff at rural development in georgia and we were three and a half hours from the office because we had gone over to west point, georgia, to tour the kia plant and had a meeting there because we assisted the city of west point with getting ready to bring the plant and jobs into the area.

who was that on the phone?

cheryl cook. she said go home. all i can say is get some rest.

you know her?

yes. she knew me before i came to the department.

did she say this is a message from the white house specifically?

she didn't say it with that call. when i was placed on administrative leave, she did not say that with that call. so i explained to the staff what was happening and i said, all i can do now is take this government car back to athens. get my car and go home. and they pulled me into a circle to pray before leaving. so i got in the car. still so unbelievable. and then, the first call came in saying shirley, they want you to resign. she didn't say the white house on that call. and i said, oh my goodness.

but i want to know, shirley, how you were told what you had done. how did you know you were in trouble?

oh --

they didn't say you're on administrative leave.

they didn't say i had done anything.

they said what? i was the one when i first learned that that video was out there, it was last thursday. i was in a meeting in atlanta with land grant institutions and having to check my e-mail while sitting in the meeting and saw that meeting from this person saying shame on you. you have no business working at the agency and said some other stuff and i replied, you are so wrong. that's the first thing, you are so wrong. i said, that's not what i was saying. i went on to explain to that individual in my message what i was doing and i said, you should see the whole video. so, he then e-mailed back. you know? they have these e-mails. you don't know who it's coming from. but i e-mailed him and said, i suggested where i thought he could get it. and then, i sat there and forwarded all of that to the department of agriculture to say, hey, look at what's happening. i wanted them to see my response to him and, you know, so i was told we'll get back with you. when i left the meeting that day, i drove to south georgia. i stopped in the city of forsyth, georgia, to get a call at 4:00 and the thing was, well, we don't know what to do with this. we'll get this to the media people. and get back to you. no one got back to me. you know? and by monday i'm getting a lot of hate mail. hate e-mail messages, calling me all kinds of things and saying i have no business working at the agency and just -- it was just awful. so i made the first call up there to see what was going on. and then, the next call was the call putting me on administrative leave.

shirley, we have joe and mika down in pensacola who have a question for you. guys?

okay.

let me say the woman who's received the most apologies over the past 24 hours in america, shirley, i i would like to apologize to you, too.

yeah. you should.

i apologize all the time. i screw up all the time and not sure if i owe you an apology but found it's much safer to apologize.

it's what he does.

i want to step back because this is a -- you know, we are having media wars over this episode. we're having political wars. this sort of garbage goes on all the time. i want to step back, though, and i want to talk about the underlying message. the message of reconciliation. a remarkable message that you took when you gave this speech and again, you're getting hate mail from people based on a speech where you're preaching what we need preached today more than ever, reconciliation. get -- tell us about that message again. the underlying message of this entire video. reconciliation. looking at somebody not based on race but based on need.

and perhaps why we need it now more than ever.

yes. you know, and let me say i tell that story using my life, you know, so that people are not just hearing words but they -- if you get to know me and the things that have happened to me and the things that i have done, and i say to them, if i can get over it, you certainly should be able to do it. we need to get to a point where we can move forward working together. i say to people, especially in the south, it's a great region of this country. and if we could just figure out how to work together, get beyond the civil war, i say to folks all the time, you know, i go into some of these communities and it looks like the civil war ended just last month. you know? we have to get beyond that. and i use my life. when you look at the fact of my father was murdered. i could tell you many, many, many, many more stories of things that happened to me over the last 45 years to me and my husband and my family. and if i can move beyond that to try to work together, hey, people in this country ought to be able to do this. we can get beyond this, you all. we can work together and make a good place for all of us to be able to live.

your father was killed by the ku klux klan?

yeah. you know, it's so interesting. you know, i didn't know him to be a klansman and my father was murdered in 1965 and a group of white men came to burn a cross in front of our house. i had gone on to college 100 miles away but in that house was my mother, my young brother that my father didn't get to see, he was born june 6th and this was the month of june and, actually, september when the cross burning happened and my four sisters. they knew there was no male other than -- how old was he? about 3 or 4 months old at that point. and these white men could come to burn a cross in front of a house they knew contained mostly females and a baby male.

mika?

yeah.

mika?

miss **sherrod**, given the message you had in response to joe's question about how we can get beyond this, does that mean maybe then that you will consider taking your job back, that getting beyond this will be you moving beyond this, as well? do you think you can do that?

i have not seen the full offer yet. haven't been able to get to my e-mail if they've sent it. the secretary told me they would put it in writing and i gave him my e-mail address yesterday so that he could send that to me. i just don't want -- i'm not sure -- i need to talk to them more and i told him i need to think about it. we certainly need to have other conversations. i would not like to be looked at as that one person who can be responsible for all of the discrimination in the department of agriculture. and you have not only blacks receiving that discrimination but there are lawsuits now by native americans and us panic, women farmers.

this is a department that settled the litigation in the billions of dollars of discrimination against black farmers.

yes.

before we ever get to this chapter this week.

they haven't completely dealt with the black farmers yet. because there's a whole issue of 1.25 billion that congress and it is not costing taxpayers money because i think that comes from a special fund that's been set up. but that whole issue of completing that lawsuit, yet you have all of these others now.

joe?

hey shirley, yeah, i want to thank you, shirley for --

thank you very much.

07/22/2010 08:29:33 - 8:39:33 AM

Video:

<http://mms.tveyes.com/Transcript.asp?stationid=205&DateTime=07/22/2010+08:29:33&mediapreload=14&playclip=true>

you know, it's so interesting. you know, i didn't know him to be a klansman and my father was murdered in 1965 and a group of white men came to burn a cross in front of our house. i had gone on to college 100 miles away but in that house was my mother, my young brother that my father didn't get to see, he was born june 6th and this was the month of june and, actually, september when the cross burning happened and my four sisters. they knew there was no male other than -- how old was he? about 3 or 4 months old at that point. and these white men could come to burn a cross in front of a house they knew contained mostly females and a baby male.

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joe?

hey shirley, yeah, i want to thank you, shirley for --

thank you very much.

i want to thank you for you this exclusive, coming to n= f ""morning joe"" first.

good to finally hear from you.

thursday 8:30 eastern. really quickly, though, i want you -- i don't think you should go back to work for the department of agriculture. i think you can go out and deliver a more important message on reconciliation. robert gibbs of the white house yesterday talked about a teachable moment. what have you lned from -- what's the big lesson from this story of the past 24, 48 hours and what can we learn from it moving forward?

well, one of the lessons is that we can be so quick to judge. and that's what gets us in trouble most of the time. if we were not that way, i don't think we would be -- i would be sitting here today talking to you. the other lesson, i think, from all of this is that we haven't gotten to the point where we need to be in this country. and you know, if my being in this position having gone through everything i have gone through the last few days help move the discussion forward, that need to happen in this country, now that i'm willing to be the fall guy for. you know?

shirley, as you're considering your job offer options, i want you to know i have a show coming on this network at 10:00 p.m. sometime in the fall when i feel the energy to do it.

say no now.

i don't have a mika. i don't have a mika.

just say no.

i need a 10:00 p.m. mika. take your time. think about it. you have a lot to think about. if you're available for 10:00 p.m., monday through -- i don't know, most days of the week.

he is --

shirley, if you think this last week has been tough, sit next to this crazy man and your life will be a living, breathing hell.

never fired anyone. i have never fired anyone.

shirley, look into his eyes, look into his heart and then just say no.

yes.

amen.

it's what i should have done.

reconciliation has its limits.

thank you so much for being here.

Liz Purchia
Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture

Desk: (202) 720-2168 | BB: [REDACTED]
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Berge, John

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 12:57 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Sharrod Charade

John: some free advice from afar:

Tell Plouffe and the folks in the White House to come clean as to who in the WH West Wing ordered Shirley Sharrod's termination. This is now a coverup story sans scandal. You and Cook are in the eye of the hurricane. Unless corrected, politically whomever in the WH ordered that Sharrod be immediately axed may become as infamous as "Brownie". That could be you!

"Admin leave" is routine procedure in the fed bureaucracy in cases like this. Pulling off the freeway to resign on your blackberry is bizarre behavior. The press will not rest now till they nail someone in the WH West Wing. good luck. don't try to be the fall guy for your bosses. The truth will come out. good luck.

Berge, John

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 6:56 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Misailidis, Sarah; Purchia, Liz; DeJong, Justin
Subject: CNN Transcript- POTUS on Shirley

CNN 07/22/2010 18:38:51

President Obama has granted an interview to ABC News and he spoke about the Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack's decision to go ahead to fire **Shirley Sherrod**, and listen to this.

he jumped the gun partly because we now live in this media culture where something goes up on YouTube or a blog, and everybody scrambles, and I have told my team and I told my agencies that we have to make sure that we are focusing on doing the right thing instead of what looks to be politically necessary at that very moment. We have to take our time and think these issues through.

the president of the United States. All right. Let's bring in Candy Crowley, our chief political correspondent and host of "State of the Union" which airs Sunday mornings at 9:00, and John King who hosts "John King USA" which comes up at the top of the hour. You spoke with **Shirley Sherrod**, John, and how did that conversation with you go with her after she spoke with the president?

Well, good. She said she had a brief conversation with the president, and she is grateful that he did not use the words I'm sorry, but right in the vein that he regretted what had happened. Interestingly, she has questions and still believes that someone, and not the president, and she believes him, but someone in the White House was involved in her firing. Other things, well, she is not sure if she will take the job and she is exhausted and tough words for the NAACP and how they treated her in this, and I asked her about Andrew Breitbart, the conservative who put the edited words on the air, and what she thought about him.

Reporter: If you had a few seconds for Andrew Breitbart, what would you say?

I would say he is a liar. He knew exactly what effect that would have on the conservative racist people he is dealing with. That is why I started to get the hate mail. And that is why I started to get the hate calls. He got the effect he was looking for.

She said it would take a very long time, and she would have to have deep personal conversation with Andrew Breitbart, and she will forgive the White House, and Secretary Vilsack, but not Andrew Breitbart.

Well, what is your take, Candy. I have been anxious to speak to you over the last couple of days.

I think that the post-presidency race isn't. I was having a conversation saying that is the White House tried to take President Obama out of this, and sort of keep him above it, and yet he makes this phone call, and I said, that there is no way to keep this president away from racial issues. He is the first African-American president, and naturally, I mean, I was trying to think that if this, if the Gates, the Harvard thing that happened with the policeman, and the professor, if that had happened under George W. Bush, nobody would have looked at him to say something, but they do look to Barack Obama to say something, because he is president and made history and something they know they have to live with.

So, it is not just that the buck stops here as Harry Truman said, but also because he is African-American?

Sure, sure. Ask any other -- and look at any other president trying to put him in position of the particular Harvard incident and no one would have expected that they would have to put something out there, but they do expect it of President Obama, and they do also expect, and they did politically 101, get rid of the problem. That is what everybody's first reaction is when a political problem comes up, everybody has learned to get rid of the problem, and that is a problem for them, except he is exactly right in this day and age --

It turned out to be a big problem.

Except that she was not a problem and gave a remarkable and redemptive speech. Remember when the Gates thing happened the president regretted that the Cambridge police acted stupidly and now his administration has acted stupidly, and they didn't check out to the right, and the speech did not get investigated, and they accepted that she was a racist and

problem and it looked especially bad when it is the administration of the first african-american president, and the naacp act on the premise to treat everybody fairly and jumped the gun, and didn't treat this woman fairly, and they have egg on their face and they know it.

we look forward to your show at the top of the hour, ""john king usa,"" and candy crowley sunday.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]

Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 8:09 PM
To: 'ron.stroman@mail.house.gov'
Cc: Berge, John
Subject: Request for briefing

Hello Ron, sorry I did not get back with you earlier today. Can we talk in the morning re your boss' request for a briefing. Just need to know when, you are requesting come up etc.

Thank you. KH

Berge, John

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 8:11 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Berge, John
Subject: Re: NBC NY: Brooklyn Congressman Calls for Probe on Firing on Shirley Sherrod

Yes just getting wind of this

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Sent: Thu Jul 22 19:20:08 2010
Subject: FW: NBC NY: Brooklyn Congressman Calls for Probe on Firing on Shirley Sherrod
fyi

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Sarah.Misailidis@oc.usda.gov [mailto:Sarah.Misailidis@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 3:17 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Chan, Stephanie; Purchia, Liz; DeJong, Justin
Cc: JIC7, OC -USDA; JIC4, OC -USDA; JIC6, OC -USDA
Subject: NBC NY: Brooklyn Congressman Calls for Probe on Firing on Shirley Sherrod

Brooklyn Congressman Calls for Probe on Firing of Shirley Sherrod

Demands Sec. Vilsack appear to explain what went wrong

NBC NEW YORK
By JUAN DEJESUS

Updated 3:05 PM EDT, Thu, Jul 22, 2010

Rep. Edolphus "Ed" Towns is calling on Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack to appear before a Congressional Committee to explain just what went wrong in the firing of Shirley Sherrod.

"Ms. Sherrod was vilified in the press and her professional reputation called into question, and that is deeply troubling," Towns, a Brooklyn Democrat and the Chairman of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform wrote in a letter to Vilsack.

Sherrod resigned as the Georgia state director of rural development for the U.S. Department of Agriculture late Monday night after a misleading video surfaced of her delivering a speech before the NAACP in which her remarks seemed to conflict with the department's "zero tolerance" policy for discrimination.

Vilsack called Rep. Towns yesterday to discuss the decision to request Ms. Sherrod's resignation. However, in the hours after the discussion Rep. Towns has come to believe that "details have emerged" that warrant an investigation.

"To prevent this kind of incident from happening again, we must ensure that the Department's actions with regard to employees are based on the facts," said Towns in a letter to Secretary Vilsack.

"It is also important that the Department have in place a personnel process that ensures fact-based decision making," Towns wrote.

Towns requested that Vilsack and his staff schedule a "comprehensive briefing as soon as possible" to fully understand the circumstances surrounding Sherrod's termination.

"To condemn Ms. Sherrod without full knowledge of her remarks is unjust, especially when it appears the message she was trying to convey was one of reconciliation," said Towns who represents the Flatlands section Brooklyn.

Requests for comment from the United States Department of Agriculture have not yet been returned for comment. No date has been established for the briefing between the committee and the USDA.

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is the main investigative committee in the U.S. House of Representatives. Their powers give them jurisdiction to investigate any federal program and any matter with federal policy implications.

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Berge, John

From: Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 12:15 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; 'Justin, DeJong'; Chan, Stephanie; Purchia, Liz; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Cc: JIC7, OC -USDA; JIC4, OC -USDA; JIC6, OC -USDA
Subject: Shirley Sherrod summary clips
Attachments: 7.23.10_ShirleySherrodclips.doc; image001.jpg



USDA Clips

Friday, July 23, 2010

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Rural Development print/wire clips

Obama: Vilsack 'jumped the gun' on Sherrod (AP 7/22)

President Barack Obama says Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack "jumped the gun" when he decided to dismiss employee Shirley Sherrod from her job at the department amid accusations of racism. Obama tells ABC News in an interview that Vilsack acted in part because the current media climate requires everyone to scramble when something goes up on YouTube or a blog. Vilsack acted after portions of a speech Sherrod had given were posted on a conservative website. The administration changed course and apologized after the full speech was made available and told a different story. Obama personally apologized to Sherrod on Thursday and appealed to her to return to work at the department. [Link](#)

Obama voices regret to ousted Agriculture official (AP 7/22)

President Barack Obama on Thursday conveyed his regrets to former federal official Shirley Sherrod over her ouster in the midst of a racially-tinged firestorm that ensnared the White House, Agriculture Department, NAACP and an Internet blogger. "The president told Ms. Sherrod that this misfortune can present an opportunity for her to continue her hard work on behalf of those in need," the White House said in a statement about a phone call that Obama had with her at midday. "He hopes that she will do so." Sherrod was forced to resign earlier this week after a conservative blogger posted an edited video of her recalling her reluctance 24 years ago to help a poor white farmer seeking government assistance. She said the posting took out of context a talk she gave urging racial reconciliation. [Link](#)

Black racism: a real problem, or pure politics? (AP 7/21)

Is black racism a real problem? Or is it pure politics? Shirley Sherrod was dismissed from her Agriculture Department job because remarks she made almost a quarter century ago about her dealings with a white farmer were perceived as racist. She was offered her job back Wednesday because a full viewing of that speech showed it to be a tale of racial reconciliation. But put aside the furor and confusion over the employment of the black woman who headed the USDA's rural development office in Georgia. The Sherrod affair brings to the fore a simmering debate over whether black racism is cause for concern in America under its first black president. [Link](#)

Agriculture secretary says he offered ousted employee post; she says she's considering return (AP 7/21)

The Obama administration scrambled on Wednesday to defuse a racial furor, profusely apologizing to an ousted black Agriculture Department employee and offering her a unique new position at the agency. The incident is the latest in a series of race-related issues that have commanded national attention since President Barack Obama took office as the first African-American president. Obama's race has been a backdrop throughout his 1½-year-old presidency. Even today, there are questions raised periodically about his qualification for the presidency by people who contend he was born outside the United States rather than in Hawaii, despite a birth certificate and newspaper reports offered as proof of his natural-born status as required by the U.S. Constitution. [Link](#)

AP Top News at 8:15 p.m. EDT (AP 7/21)

The White House did a sudden about-face Wednesday and begged for forgiveness from the black Agriculture Department employee whose ouster ignited an embarrassing political firestorm over race. She was offered a "unique opportunity" for a new job and said she was thinking it over. With lightning speed, the controversy moved from Monday's forced resignation of a minor U.S. Ag official in Georgia to Tuesday's urgent discussions at the White House amid a rising public outcry and then to Wednesday's repeated apologies and pleas for Shirley Sherrod to come back. [Link](#)

White House apologizes to ousted USDA worker (AP 7/21)

An embarrassed White House apologized on Wednesday to a black Agriculture Department employee who was ousted for her remarks about race, acknowledging that officials did not know all the facts when she was fired. White House spokesman Robert Gibbs called the dismissal of Shirley Sherrod an injustice and a mistake and said he was apologizing for the "entire administration." He also said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack was trying to reach her to extend an apology. "I accept the apology," Sherrod said on CNN after watching Gibbs talk to reporters at a televised briefing. Sherrod said the apology took too long and she wasn't sure if she wanted her job back now. "I just don't know at this point, I don't know," she said, adding that she would be surprised if Vilsack offered her the job. [Link](#)

Racial firestorm surrounds USDA employee's ouster (AP 7/21)

The Obama administration faced a blast of criticism on Wednesday over its ouster of a black Agriculture Department employee for her remarks about race. The woman says she's not sure she would go back to her job now, even if asked. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said that he would reconsider the department's decision to ask Shirley Sherrod to resign. Sherrod, the director of rural development in Georgia, was asked by department officials to leave her job on Monday after conservative bloggers posted an edited video of her saying that she initially didn't give a white farmer as much help as she could have 24 years ago, when she was working for a nonprofit farm aid group. Sherrod says the video distorted her full speech, which described how she came to realize the white farmer needed her help and which she says was intended to promote racial reconciliation. Sherrod says she submitted her resignation under pressure from the White House; the USDA said seeking the resignation was Vilsack's decision alone. [Link](#)

Vilsack to apologize to ousted Agriculture worker (AP 7/21)

The White House says Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack is reaching out to a black employee to apologize on behalf of the "entire administration" for forcing her ouster because of her remarks on race. White House spokesman Robert Gibbs said Wednesday that Vilsack had been unable to reach Shirley Sherrod so far. Sherrod was asked by department officials to resign on Monday after conservative bloggers posted an edited video of her saying she didn't initially give a white farmer as much help as she could have 24 years ago. Sherrod says the video distorted her full speech. The White House called the Agriculture Department about the case Tuesday night and it was agreed that her ouster should be reviewed based on new evidence. Gibbs says the administration acted without knowing all the facts. [Link](#)

Obama administration tries to defuse racial furor that started with conservative video clip (AP 7/21)

The Obama administration on Wednesday was scrambling to defuse a new racial furor, this one stemming from a video posted by a conservative Web site. The administration dismissed a black U.S. Agriculture Department official after video excerpts were posted in which she appeared to acknowledge using race as a reason for not giving a white farmer as much help as she could have 24 years ago when she worked for a private organization. But the full video indicated those remarks were taken out of context and led to

fresh calls for the reinstatement of the employee, Shirley Sherrod. The incident is the latest in a series of race-related issues that have garnered national attention since Obama took office as America's first black president. Sherrod's dismissal has been the talk of cable news shows and has been debated on liberal and conservative blogs. The Rev. Jesse Jackson, a prominent civil rights leader, called on the administration Wednesday to apologize for Sherrod's treatment. [Link](#)

Jesse Jackson wants apology for Sherrod's ouster (AP 7/21)

The Rev. Jesse Jackson is calling for an apology from the Obama administration for ousting an Agriculture Department employee now at the center of a racially tinged firestorm. Jackson said he talked to Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack late Tuesday night before Vilsack said that he would reconsider his department's decision to ask Shirley Sherrod to leave her job. Vilsack issued a short statement early Wednesday morning after Sherrod said she was pressured to resign because of her comments that she didn't give a white farmer as much help as she could have 24 years ago. Until Tuesday, Sherrod was the department's director of rural development in Georgia. [Link](#)

Sherrod not sure she would go back to Ag Dept (AP 7/21)

The woman at the center of a racially tinged firestorm involving the Obama administration and the NAACP said Wednesday she doesn't know if she'd return to her job at the Agriculture Department, even if asked. "I am just not sure how I would be treated there," Shirley Sherrod said in a nationally broadcast interview. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said Wednesday he would reconsider the department's decision to oust Sherrod over her comments that she didn't give a white farmer as much help as she could have 24 years ago.

A conservative website posted video of Sherrod's remarks, causing a furor which led to her condemnation by the NAACP and her ouster by Vilsack. Until Tuesday, she was the Agriculture Department's director of rural development in Georgia. Then, she said, she was pressured by superiors to resign. Sherrod said her remarks, delivered in March at a local NAACP banquet in Georgia, were part of a larger story about learning from her mistakes and racial reconciliation, not racism, and said they were taken out of context by bloggers who posted only part of her speech. Vilsack's statement came after the NAACP posted the full video of Sherrod's comments Tuesday night. [Link](#)

USDA worker pressured to resign over race comments (AP 7/20)

The Obama administration is standing by its quick decision to oust a black Agriculture Department employee over racially tinged remarks at an NAACP banquet in Georgia, despite evidence that her remarks were misconstrued and growing calls for USDA to reconsider.

Shirley Sherrod, who until Tuesday was the Agriculture Department's director of rural development in Georgia, says the administration caved to political pressure by pushing her to resign for saying that she didn't give a white farmer as much help as she could have 24 years ago, when she worked for a nonprofit group. Sherrod says her remarks, delivered in March at a local NAACP banquet in Georgia, were part of a story about racial reconciliation, not racism. The white farming family that was the subject of the story stood by Sherrod and said she should keep her job. [Link](#)

USDA worker resigns over racism charge from video (AP 7/20)

A black employee who resigned from the Agriculture Department over comments at a Georgia NAACP meeting said Tuesday the White House forced her out of her job over a manufactured racial controversy. Shirley Sherrod, who until Tuesday was USDA's director of rural development in Georgia, said she was on the road Monday when USDA deputy undersecretary Cheryl Cook called her and told her the White House wanted her to resign. "They called me twice," Sherrod told The Associated Press in an interview. "The last time they asked me to pull over the side of the road and submit my resignation on my Blackberry, and that's what I did." A USDA spokesman would not comment on whether the White House was involved, but Secretary Tom Vilsack issued a statement saying the agency has no tolerance for discrimination. [Link](#)

USDA worker quits over racism charge from video (AP 7/20)

A black federal worker has resigned from a Georgia agricultural job after a video clip showed her saying she had not helped a farmer as much as she could have because he was white. U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a statement Tuesday he had accepted the resignation of Shirley Sherrod. Vilsack says the USDA has no tolerance for discrimination. Sherrod told the Atlanta-Journal Constitution she was forced out of her job as the USDA's rural development director for Georgia. She said the two-minute, 38-second video posted online Monday misconstrued her message. Sherrod's taped remarks were from a local

meeting of the civil rights group NAACP. National NAACP President Benjamin Todd Jealous welcomed the resignation because the group opposes racism of all kinds. [Link](#)

Obama says USDA "jumped the gun" on Sherrod ouster (Reuters 7/22)

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack rushed to judgment when he dismissed a former government official over racism allegations, U.S. President Barack Obama said in an interview on Thursday. "He jumped the gun, partly because we now live in this media culture where something goes up on YouTube or a blog and everybody scrambles," Obama said in an interview on ABC's "Good Morning America" that will be broadcast on Friday. Obama called former Agriculture Department official Shirley Sherrod on Thursday and expressed his regret about the events that led to her resignation this week. Sherrod, who is black, has said her bosses pushed her to quit after conservative media repeatedly broadcast a tape that seemed to show her saying she had discriminated against a white farmer because of his race. [Link](#)

President Obama speaks to Shirley Sherrod (Reuters 7/22)

President Barack Obama called a former government official caught up in racism allegations on Thursday and expressed his regret about the events that led to her resignation this week. Obama spoke to Shirley Sherrod for seven minutes, the White House said in a statement. "The president told Ms. Sherrod that this misfortune can present an opportunity for her to continue her hard work on behalf of those in need, and he hopes that she will do so," it said. Sherrod, a black official at the U.S. Agriculture Department, said her bosses pushed her to quit after conservative media repeatedly broadcast a tape that seemed to show her saying she had discriminated against a white farmer because of his race. [Link](#)

ANALYSIS: Race issues beset Obama's 'post-racial' presidency (Reuters 7/21)

Many supporters of Barack Obama hoped his election as America's first black president might herald an era of post-racial politics, but race has been an issue his administration just can't seem to avoid. Division and tension between black and white Americans has cropped up repeatedly over Obama's 18 months in office, hurting his popularity and distracting from his political agenda. The issue surfaced this week when the Agriculture Department pushed a black official to resign after allegations she discriminated against a white farmer, only to apologize a day later for acting too quickly and without the facts. Some said the White House was too eager to prove to its critics on the right that it does not favor blacks. [Link](#)

Obama Calls Sherrod to Express 'Regret' Over Ouster From USDA (Bloomberg 7/22)

President Barack Obama spoke with ousted U.S. Department of Agriculture official Shirley Sherrod today to express his "regret" over her forced resignation, according to a White House statement. Obama told her Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack is sincere in his effort to rid the agency of racial discrimination. "The president told Ms. Sherrod that this misfortune can present an opportunity for her to continue her hard work on behalf of those in need, and he hopes that she will do so," the statement from press secretary Robert Gibbs said. Obama's call follows up one made to Sherrod yesterday by Vilsack, who said he extended "my personal and profound apologies." Vilsack said he took responsibility for turmoil caused when he demanded her resignation without fully investigating the circumstances. He also extended a job offer to Sherrod, 62, who had been the agency's director of rural development for Georgia. [Link](#)

Obama Administration Issues Apology to Ousted USDA Official (Bloomberg 7/21)

The Obama administration apologized to a black USDA employee who was forced to resign after an edited video clip of her remarks suggested she acted with racial bias in dealing with a white farmer 24 years ago. White House press secretary Robert Gibbs said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack acted without having all the information about the speech by Shirley Sherrod at an NAACP banquet in Georgia in March. Vilsack is trying to contact Sherrod to discuss whether she will return to the agency, he said. "A disservice was done," Gibbs said at a White House briefing. "The secretary will apologize for the actions that have taken place over the past 24 to 36 hours." Sherrod said in an interview on CNN as Gibbs was speaking that she wanted people to see the entire speech, rather than a clip taken out of context. The incident she was speaking about occurred in 1986 when she was working for a nonprofit agency, not the USDA. [Link](#)

Vilsack to Reconsider Ouster of Black USDA Official Over Racial Remarks (Bloomberg 7/21)

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said today that he will reconsider the ouster of a black USDA official in Georgia over comments she made that she didn't use the "full force" of what she could do to help a white farmer. "I am of course willing and will conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts to ensure to the American people we are providing services in a fair and equitable manner," Vilsack said in a written

statement. Vilsack had asked for Shirley Sherrod's resignation after a clip from a video surfaced showing her comments, made as part of a speech she gave in March at an NAACP banquet in Georgia. The video was highlighted by the Web site biggovernment.com and posted on YouTube. "There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA and we strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person," Vilsack had said in a statement. "We have been working to turn the page on the sordid civil rights record at USDA, and this controversy could make it more difficult to move forward on correcting injustices." [Link](#)

USDA Boss To Review Sherrod Resignation Over Video (Dow Jones 7/21)

U.S. Department Of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said early Wednesday that he will review the case that led to the resignation of Shirley Sherrod, the black official caught up in the "white farmer" video controversy. "I am of course willing and will conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts to ensure to the American people we are providing services in a fair and equitable manner," said Vilsack in a statement obtained by NewsCore. It suggests a rethink on behalf of the secretary, who earlier defended his decision to demand the resignation of Sherrod -- the department's former Georgia director of rural development -- claiming that the controversy itself was enough to make her job difficult. [Request Story](#)

Obama expresses 'regret' to worker fired in race row (AFP 7/22)

US President Barack Obama on Thursday expressed his "regret" to a black government official fired for comments about race that later were found to have been taken out of context, the White House said. Obama spoke for about seven minutes to Shirley Sherrod, the White House said in a statement, adding that the US leader "expressed to Ms. Sherrod his regret about the events of the last several days." "The President told Ms. Sherrod that this misfortune can present an opportunity for her to continue her hard work on behalf of those in need, and he hopes that she will do so," the White House press release said. The statement also reiterated an apology issued one day earlier by her boss US Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, who was responsible for sacking her, and affirmed the top farm official's commitment to "rid USDA of discrimination." [Link](#)

NAACP: 'Snookered' by Fox, Tea Party (UPI 7/20)

The head of the NAACP says "we were snookered" by Fox News Channel and a Tea Party activist in the case of a U.S. official who resigned amid charges of racism. Shirley Sherrod resigned Monday as U.S. Department of Agriculture director of rural development for Georgia after Fox News and other media aired a video excerpt from a speech Sherrod made at an NAACP event, describing a 1986 incident in which she did not give a white farmer "the full force of what I could do" to help him avoid foreclosure. The incident occurred before Sherrod, who is black, was a USDA official. In media appearances Tuesday, Sherrod said the clips aired on Fox and Andrew Breitbart's biggovernment.com Web site omitted the part of her speech in which she said she eventually helped the white farmer. [Link](#)

Dismissed employee blames media (UPI 7/20)

An employee of the U.S. Department of Agriculture says she lost her job because the media misconstrued a speech she gave at an NAACP banquet. Shirley Sherrod, who was forced out as the USDA's rural development director for Georgia, is seen on a video admitting she didn't do everything she could to help a white farmer who needed aid, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported Tuesday. What the media didn't report, Sherrod says, was that the incident she was relating on the video happened 24 years ago when she was working for another organization, not the federal government. Also left out, Sherrod says, is the part where she says she was trying to figure out how to help someone who was condescending. [Link](#)

Sherrod Not Inclined to Return to Job (NY Times 7/22)

Shirley Sherrod, the black Agriculture Department official whose firing and subsequent offer of rehiring by the Obama administration this week has renewed a conversation about politics and race, said Thursday that she believed she deserved a telephone call from President Obama... she told NBC's "Today" that she did not want the burden of solving the department's racial problems to rest entirely on her... "I'd like to talk to him a little bit about the experiences of people like me, people at the grassroots level, people who live out there in rural America, people who live in the South," she said on "Today." "I know he does not have that kind of experience. Let me help him a little bit with how we think, how we live, and the things that are happening."... Ms. Sherrod later said Fox had not tried to contact her before running the video clip repeatedly on Monday. (A Fox spokeswoman said the O'Reilly program had contacted the Agriculture Department for comment. ...By Tuesday night, however, the White House had intervened, a senior official said, and sent word to the Agriculture Department that Mr. Vilsack needed to reconsider.

...In an interview Wednesday afternoon, shortly after Mr. Vilsack extended his public apology, the Rev. Jesse Jackson said Mr. Obama should hold another summit with Ms. Sherrod and the Spooners. [Link](#)

Editorial: Faster Than a Speeding Blog (NY Times 7/21)

The Obama administration has been shamed by its rush to judgment after it forced the resignation of a black midlevel official in the Agriculture Department who was wrongly accused of racism by the right-wing blogosphere. Shirley Sherrod was sandbagged by a two-and-a-half-minute clip from a 45-minute speech in which the real message was reconciliation. Instead of tracking down the whole speech, the administration ran scared. Tom Vilsack, the agriculture secretary, dismissed Ms. Sherrod from her job as the chief of the department's rural development office in Georgia. On Wednesday, Mr. Vilsack apologized that Ms. Sherrod had been "put through hell" and offered her a new job with a "unique opportunity" to help the agency move past its checkered civil rights history. The White House admitted it "bungled" the entire affair. [Link](#)

For Fired Agriculture Official, Flurry of Apologies and Job Offer (NY Times 7/22)

The White House and Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack apologized profusely and repeatedly on Wednesday to a black midlevel official for the way she had been humiliated and forced to resign her Agriculture Department job after a conservative blogger put out a misleading video clip that seemed to show her admitting antipathy toward a white farmer. By the end of the day, the official, Shirley Sherrod, had gained instant fame and emerged as the heroine of a compelling story about race and redemption. Pretty much everyone else had egg on his face -- from the conservative bloggers and pundits who first pushed the inaccurate story to Mr. Vilsack, who looked stricken as he told reporters he had offered Ms. Sherrod, until Monday the Agriculture Department's rural development director in Georgia, a new job that would give her a "unique opportunity" to help the agency move past its checkered civil rights history. She told him she would think about it. [Link](#)

White House Asks for Review of Firing of Official (NY Times 7/21)

The White House intervened late Tuesday night in a racially-tinged dispute that prompted Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack to fire a black civil servant, and Mr. Vilsack is now reconsidering his decision. "I am of course willing and will conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts to ensure to the American people we are providing services in a fair and equitable manner," Mr. Vilsack said in an e-mail statement sent at about 2 a.m. Wednesday. A White House official confirmed that advisers to President Obama spoke to officials at the Department of Agriculture "and we agreed that the issue should be reviewed." The official, speaking anonymously to reveal internal discussions, said Mr. Vilsack was amenable. "There was a convergence there, but we did initiate the conversation," the official said. [Link](#)

N.A.A.C.P. Backtracks On Official In Bias Dispute (NY Times 7/21)

The president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People apologized Tuesday to a black civil servant whose ouster the civil rights organization had originally cheered. Last week, the N.A.A.C.P. garnered headlines when it accused parts of the Tea Party movement of being racist. Then, over the weekend, a video emerged of Shirley Sherrod, the head of the Department of Agriculture's rural development office in Georgia, speaking at an N.A.A.C.P. event in Douglas, Ga., in March. In a two-and-a-half-minute clip, Ms. Sherrod seemed to explain that she discriminated against a white farmer 24 years ago. Ms. Sherrod said she was pressed to resign after the video whipped around the Web. But she said the clip was misleading. According to Ms. Sherrod and people who have seen the full video, she went on to say in her speech that she had learned from working with the farmer that all people must overcome their prejudices. [Link](#)

David Frum Is Silly (Wall Street Journal 7/22)

"[White House press secretary Robert] Gibbs said people in the administration and outside of it acted without all the facts," the Associated Press reports. Alas, he wasn't referring to ObamaCare, the stimulus or the new financial regulation law but to a personnel matter: Shirley Sherrod's forced resignation from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Conservative blogger Andrew Breitbart on Monday falsely reported that Sherrod said at an NAACP event, in Breitbart's words, "that her federal duties are managed through the prism of race and class distinctions." As we noted Tuesday, the NAACP swiftly denounced Sherrod for racism, and the USDA demanded her immediate resignation, which she tendered. Oops! The NAACP has now renounced its condemnation. Politico quotes a statement from the organization's president, Ben Jealous: "With regard to the initial media coverage of the resignation of USDA official Shirley Sherrod, we

have come to the conclusion we were snookered by Fox News and Tea Party Activist Andrew Breitbart into believing she had harmed white farmers because of racial bias." [Link](#)

U.S. News: Worker Fired in Video Flap Gets White House 'Sorry' (Wall Street Journal 7/22)

Capping an unusual sequence of events that for two days captivated politicians and pundits here, the White House apologized to a former Agriculture Department worker a day after she was fired over an allegedly racist speech first publicized by a conservative website. The case of Shirley Sherrod, who had been the USDA's director for rural development in Georgia, highlighted the Obama administration's sensitivities to conservative political accusations in a heated political year. It also became the latest episode to show how a toxic political atmosphere and a rapid-fire media can quickly turn a minor event into a media conflagration—in this case consuming a previously unknown official deep in the government's bureaucracy. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, who made the decision to fire Ms. Sherrod Monday, offered "his personal and profound apologies" on Wednesday—as well as a new job. [Link](#)

Gibbs on Sherrod: 'A Disservice for Which We Apologize' (Wall Street Journal 7/21)

White House spokesman Robert Gibbs apologized and apologized and apologized again to former Agriculture Department official Shirley Sherrod, who was pressured to resign. Sherrod was forced to quit after an edited video clip of her remarks was circulated by conservative Andrew Breitbart that portrayed her as making racist remarks. When the complete video of her remarks emerged, showing that her comments were taken out of context, a firestorm erupted over her dismissal. "A disservice was done for which we apologize," Gibbs said, adding that Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack was trying to reach Sherrod to apologize as well. "The secretary is trying to reach her, I hope that the secretary reaches her soon and they have the opportunity to talk. The secretary will apologize for the actions that have taken place over the past 24-36 hours, and on behalf of the administration, I offer our apologies." [Link](#)

Ex-Agriculture Official Says White House Forced Her Out (Wall Street Journal 7/20)

A U.S. Agriculture Department employee who resigned after a video surfaced on a conservative website showing her describing her unwillingness to help a white farmer said Tuesday that the White House had forced her out of her job. Shirley Sherrod, the department's director of rural development for Georgia, said in an interview with CNN that she was telephoned several times the previous day by an Agriculture Department deputy undersecretary and told that the White House wanted her to quit. She said she then resigned. The website Big Government, run by conservative media figure Andrew Breitbart, had published a video Monday showing part of a speech given by Ms. Sherrod at an NAACP fund-raising dinner in March. [Link](#)

'Post-racial'? Ask Sherrod (LA Times 7/23)

Nobody involved in the Shirley Sherrod scandal emerged with reputation intact -- except, of course, for Sherrod herself. But although key players Andrew Breitbart, Tom Vilsack and Benjamin Jealous all deserve a measure of scorn, we're even more distressed by a political culture that, despite the promise of a "post-racial" society after Barack Obama's election as president, has clearly made little progress in coming to terms with the issues that divide our multiracial nation. The whole sorry spectacle was set in motion last week at the annual convention of the National Assn. for the Advancement of Colored People, which approved a resolution accusing the "tea party" movement of harboring racists. Breitbart, a conservative Internet entrepreneur who has built a career out of taking umbrage, responded Monday by posting a short, edited video on his BigGovernment.com website that he presented as evidence of racism in the NAACP. [Request Story](#)

President Obama expresses 'regret' to fired USDA worker (LA Times 7/22)

President Obama spoke by phone Thursday with former Agriculture Department official Shirley Sherrod and "expressed his regret" about her firing based on a misleading video clip posted on a conservative website... The Sherrod story has gained national attention, with subplots about race, the power of conservative bloggers and the perils of the Internet as a source of reliable information... "That's what so scary about going back into work and thinking, 'Oh, she'll deal with the problems,' she said on CNN. "But anything could be blamed on me."... Sherrod was in New York and was scheduled to fly home to Georgia on Thursday night. Her family said she might take a few days to weigh the job offer. Her son, Kenyatta Sherrod, said in an interview that he would be uncomfortable seeing her return to work in a subordinate role to Cheryl Cook, a Department of Agriculture undersecretary. Cook was the one who phoned Sherrod on Monday and asked for her resignation, Sherrod had said, telling her that the story about the video clip

would be appearing on the conservative TV talk show hosted by Fox's Glenn Beck. "For my mother's sake, I wouldn't want her to work for that individual anymore," Kenyatta Sherrod said. [Link](#)

An extraordinary apology; The White House offers to reinstate a fired USDA official (LA Times 7/22)

Reporting from Washington — The Obama administration issued an extraordinary public apology Wednesday and offered to reinstate a federal official who was fired after she appeared to make racial comments on a misleading snippet of video. When it became clear that her comments had been taken out of context, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack spoke to Shirley Sherrod by phone to apologize and to ask if she would return to the department. The events came as an embarrassment to Obama administration officials, who have sought to depict themselves as immune to the blogosphere and demands of the news cycle. In this case, though, the administration fired the woman based on Vilsack's reading of a transcript of a video on a conservative website that left the inaccurate impression that Sherrod, a black Department of Agriculture official, had deliberately not helped a white man save his family farm in 1986 when she worked for a Georgia nonprofit. [Link](#)

USDA resignation stirs racial feud; NAACP, in reversal, defends ex-official's speech. It says she should be reinstated. (LA Times 7/21)

A feud between the NAACP and the "tea party" movement engulfed the Department of Agriculture this week when the agency ousted an African American official for remarks that some have called racist. Shirley Sherrod, the USDA's director of rural development for Georgia, was pressured to resign Monday when a video surfaced in which she told an NAACP audience that she had not given a white farmer "the full force of what I could do" to help him save the family farm in 1986, when she worked for a Georgia nonprofit group. The National Assn. for the Advancement of Colored People initially condemned her remarks, which were publicized by a conservative blogger and picked up by Fox News. But on Tuesday, when the video of her full speech was released, the NAACP retracted its condemnation and called on the USDA to rehire her, saying it had been "snookered" by Fox and conservative website publisher Andrew Breitbart. And the farm couple involved in the incident stepped forward to defend Sherrod, calling her a friend and saying that she saved their farm. [Link](#)

Some find irony in Shirley Sherrod's USDA incident (The Washington Post 7/23)

There is a glaring irony in the wake of Shirley Sherrod's firing and subsequent reinstatement offer, say those who know her in Georgia. She lost her job in a matter of hours under the suspicion of racism, but officials in the Department of Agriculture who were found to have withheld loans from Sherrod and her husband's farming cooperative were never fired. "Discrimination happens in USDA. . . . And it's there because the agency never did deal with the people who caused it," Sherrod said Thursday morning on the "Today" show. "No one lost their job because they discriminated against black farmers, Hispanic farmers, Native American farmers, women farmers. . . . Those individuals . . . some have retired, but many of them are still there." [Link](#)

The Obama team's image of steely resolve gets a bit tarnished (Washington Post 7/22)

At the height of the 2008 presidential campaign, as Barack Obama started the search for a running mate, the media seized onto a story about Jim Johnson, the man Obama had chosen to lead the search. .. But such discipline has not been a hallmark of the Obama presidency, and certainly not of the past 48 hours, leaving Democratic allies and former Obama confidants speechless...But in the end, it was the White House which was stuck with the repeated questions about why officials had acted without at least asking some questions about the video, or about Sherrod's background and history at the agency...Gibbs had few answers. [Link](#)

Ousted official Shirley Sherrod blamed Fox, but other outlets ran with story (Washington Post 7/22)

The White House spokesman and the agriculture secretary weren't the only ones offering regrets Wednesday to the lower-level official abruptly fired over a videotape excerpt that turned out to be totally misleading. Bill O'Reilly apologized to Shirley Sherrod as well... But for all the chatter -- some of it from Sherrod herself -- that she was done in by Fox News, the network didn't touch the story until her forced resignation was made public Monday evening, with the exception of brief comments by O'Reilly... Sherrod ripped Fox in an interview Wednesday with Media Matters, saying the network would "love to take us back to where we were many years ago. Back to where black people were looking down, not looking white folks

in the face, not being able to compete for a job out there and not be a whole person." Clemente, the Fox executive, said in an interview that Sherrod "certainly could be forgiven for being confused." As for other critics, he said that blaming Fox is "a comfortable reflex for some people." [Link](#)

Fired USDA official receives apologies; White House, Vilsack say excerpts of speech on race were misleading (Washington Post 7/22)

Ousted Agriculture Department official Shirley Sherrod, who was portrayed as a racist in a selectively excerpted Internet video, on Wednesday achieved something almost unheard of in overheated Washington: swift and utter vindication. Two days after Sherrod was fired from her job overseeing rural development in Georgia, both the White House and Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack apologized to her. Vilsack also offered her another unspecified position with the department. Sherrod said she would consider it. "This is a good woman," Vilsack said. "She's been put through hell. I could have done and should have done a better job. I'll learn from that experience. I want this agency and department to learn from this experience, and I want us to be stronger for it." [Link](#)

White House issues public apology to ousted USDA staffer (Washington Post 7/21)

The White House offered a full-throated apology to former Department of Agriculture official Shirley Sherrod, calling her ouster as the result of an out-of-context video an "injustice," and said the agriculture secretary is attempting to contact her to discuss "next steps." Press secretary Robert Gibbs conceded Wednesday afternoon that the government had acted rashly and without all the facts when it sought Sherrod's resignation for racially themed comments she made during a recent speech to the NAACP. But Gibbs would not say whether Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack will offer her job back. "The secretary is trying to reach her. The secretary will apologize for the actions that have taken place in the past 24 to 36 hours," he told reporters. "On behalf of the administration, I offer our apologies." [Link](#)

Obama supports reconsidering USDA worker's ouster (Washington Post 7/21)

A White House official says President Barack Obama supports the Agriculture Department's decision to reconsider the ouster of a black employee for her remarks about race. The official says Obama hasn't spoken with the employee, Shirley Sherrod, about the controversy. But the president is being kept informed of the developments in her case. The White House official was not authorized to talk publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity. Sherrod was asked by department officials to resign on Monday after conservative bloggers posted an edited video of her saying she didn't initially give a white farmer as much help as she could have 24 years ago. Sherrod says the video distorted her full speech. The White House called the Agriculture Department about the case Tuesday night and it was agreed that her ouster should be reviewed based on new evidence. [Link](#)

Tom Vilsack, USDA and civil rights (The Washington Post 7/21)

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said early Wednesday morning that he's willing to reconsider his decision to force Shirley Sherrod's resignation. "I am of course willing and will conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts to ensure to the American people we are providing services in a fair and equitable manner," Vilsack said in a statement sent out after 2 a.m. But Sherrod raised doubts she will return to USDA, telling NBC's "Today" Show Wednesday, "I'm just not sure how I would be treated there. I'm not just not sure at this point." To understand why he sought Sherrod's resignation so quickly, let's go back to February 2009. That's when Vilsack publicly vowed to tackle USDA's troubled civil rights history by ensuring that employees fairly treated minority and women farmers. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod case unfolds, revealing culture of racial politics in Washington (Washington Post 7/21)

As the sorry saga of fired Agriculture Department official Shirley Sherrod continues to unfold, it is hard to remember another episode that so vividly reveals how Washington's political culture is driven these days by impulse and self interest, rather than judgment. The Obama administration says it is reconsidering the decision to force her resignation -- and a wave of sympathy for her is mounting as it has become clear that Sherrod was the victim of a smear. It has also become clear that there are many culprits. That such a sensation could have been generated by a selectively and unfairly edited videotape, posted by a conservative blogger whose record shows a casual regard for the truth, reflects badly on everyone who played a part. This includes the government officials who acted before they learned the true story; the NAACP, which invited her to speak and then turned around and denounced her; the media that blew the story into something that had little resemblance to reality. [Link](#)

Firing of USDA official Shirley Sherrod now under review (Washington Post 7/21)

A fuzzy video of a racially themed speech that prompted the ouster this week of an Agriculture Department official has opened a new front in the ongoing war between the left and right over which side is at fault for stoking persistent forces of racism in politics. By early Wednesday, as the full context of the video became known, U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said he would review his decision to ask USDA official Shirley Sherrod to step down. Sherrod, a black woman appointed last July as the agency's Georgia state director of rural development, was forced out after a blogger circulated a video showing part of her March 27 appearance at an NAACP banquet. In her speech, Sherrod described an episode in which, while working at a nonprofit organization 24 years ago, she did not help a white farmer as much as she could have. Instead, she said, she sent him to one of "his own kind." [Link](#)

New front in racism battle; USDA official's words provide fodder to those who call Obama biased (Washington Post 7/21)

A fuzzy video of an Agriculture Department official opened a new front Tuesday in the ongoing war between the left and right over which side is at fault for stoking persistent forces of racism in politics. Shirley Sherrod, a black woman appointed last July as the USDA's Georgia state director of rural development, was forced to resign after a video surfaced of her March 27 appearance at an NAACP banquet. In a speech, she described an episode in which, while working at a nonprofit organization 24 years ago, she did not help a white farmer as much as she could have. Instead, she said, she sent him to one of "his own kind." The video was posted Monday on the Web site of conservative activist Andrew Breitbart as a counterattack on the NAACP, which passed a resolution last week accusing the "tea party" movement of having "racist elements." [Link](#)

USDA worker quits over 1986 racial incident (The Washington Post 7/20)

A U.S. Agriculture Department official from Georgia resigned late Monday after she was caught on tape admitting that she had not helped a farmer as much as she could have because he was white. Shirley Sherrod, USDA state director of rural development, made the remarks on March 27 at an NAACP Freedom Fund banquet. Her videotaped remarks surfaced on YouTube on Monday. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack accepted Sherrod's resignation, saying, "There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously." NAACP President and Benjamin Jealous called Sherrod's actions shameful and agreed with the decision to fire her. [Link](#)

White House official: We didn't push for Sherrod's firing (Washington Post 7/20)

A White House official insists that the White House didn't pressure Shirley Sherrod to resign, or pressure USDA chief Tom Vilsack to fire her, over the Andrew Breitbart video allegedly showing her claiming she didn't help a white farmer 24 years ago because of racial reasons. "We did not pressure USDA or Ms. Sherrod," the White House official emails me. Ben Smith was told something similar. Separately, Vilsack, who fired Sherrod while declaring zero tolerance for "discrimination," released a statement that seemed to take ownership of the firing, without quite clarifying whether the White House had any role: Yesterday, I asked for and accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation for two reasons. First, for the past 18 months, we have been working to turn the page on the sordid civil rights record at USDA and this controversy could make it more difficult to move forward on correcting injustices. [Link](#)

Did White House fire woman on strength of bogus Breitbart video? (Washington Post 7/20)

By now you've heard about the story burning up the right: A U.S. Agriculture Department official says the USDA forced her to resign because Andrew Breitbart posted a video of her supposedly describing how she didn't help a white farmer 24 years ago because of racial reasons. The woman has now said the video is bogus and that she said nothing of the kind, and she's hinted that the White House urged her firing. So the question is this: Did the White House have this woman fired before the facts were known, all in response to what may prove to be a Breitbart-manufactured racial controversy? If so, this would illustrate an appalling White House willingness to "jump" when Breitbart says "how high," as Digby put it in a scorching post today. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod: Racist or scapegoat? (Washington Post 7/20)

Were the administration and the NAACP too hasty in their reactions to Shirley Sherrod, the Department of Agriculture employee who resigned (i.e., was fired) for allegedly racist comments? A video clip posted online Monday shows Sherrod delivering a speech at a March NAACP banquet, where she talks about her failure to help a white farmer who was in danger of losing his farm. Her suggestion: If he'd been black, she would have moved heaven and earth to help him. "There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, in accepting Sherrod's resignation. The NAACP, which last week accused the Tea Party of racism, rushed out a searing condemnation of Sherrod: "We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers," said NAACP president Benjamin Jealous. [Link](#)

Vilsack swept up in racial whirlwind (Des Moines Register 7/22)

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack violated a cardinal rule for people in his job: Stay out of the news. Little good happens when you're the story. The former Iowa governor precipitously fired a black Agriculture Department official and then issued an anguished mea culpa that took all day Wednesday to materialize. The episode embarrassed an administration already weighed down by the sagging economy and slumping poll numbers and instead focused the nation's attention on the explosive issue of race. [Link](#)

Obama's fall guy in Shirley Sherrod case is Vilsack the Pooh (Chicago Tribune 7/23)

In post-racial America, whenever conservatives provoke liberals to foolishly overreact in a racial controversy and step right into the doo-doo, two things are required: A ticket to "sensitivity school." And a fall guy. Lately, we can't help getting hit with all the flying racial cards. Everything from whether LeBron James was treated like some "runaway slave" to whether the NAACP was racist by accusing tea party activists of being racists. And now the latest. The knee-jerk reaction by the Obama administration in firing Department of Agriculture bureaucrat Shirley Sherrod, an African-American accused of racism when there wasn't any. So let's meet the new fall guy, Sherrod's boss, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. [Link](#)

White House apologizes to former USDA employee who was forced to resign (Chicago Tribune 7/21)

The White House has apologized to a former USDA employee it now says was fired before the situation involving controversial videotaped comments was fully reviewed. "A disservice was done for which we apologize," White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs said Wednesday afternoon, saying he spoke for the entire administration. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack was attempting to reach the former employee, Shirley Sherrod, to speak further about the matter, Gibbs added. Vilsack said in a statement released overnight that he would reconsider the department's decision to demand Sherrod's resignation. While apologizing for the White House specifically, Gibbs also said the media and political activists also were culpable for making "determinations and judgments without a full set of facts." [Link](#)

USDA official says she was pressured to resign (Chicago Tribune 7/21)

The U.S. government unfairly forced a Georgia woman to resign from her federal job to assuage conservatives who accused her of racial bias against a white farmer, the woman at the center of the dispute said Tuesday. Shirley Sherrod, who is black, said in an interview that her bosses at the U.S. Department of Agriculture put her under intense pressure to resign Monday as rural development director for Georgia, an assertion denied by the department. Some conservative media called for Sherrod to quit over a YouTube video of a speech she gave at a banquet in Georgia held by the NAACP. In the March 27 speech, Sherrod talks about a white farmer who came to her for help 24 years ago when she worked for the Federation of Southern Cooperatives Land Assistance Fund. [Request Story](#)

Right words on race get harder to hear (Pittsburgh Post-Gazette 7/23)

During the height of the Democratic primary fight in 2008, presidential candidate Barack Obama gave a remarkable speech at Philadelphia's Constitution Center, ostensibly to deal with the incendiary matter of the Rev. Jeremiah Wright. You couldn't turn on Fox News without seeing footage of Mr. Obama's former pastor and friend denouncing America. He was the perfect boogie man for a network desperately searching for a worthy successor to Willie Horton to use to bash the Democrats. ... This week, a 62-year-old black woman, a civil rights veteran who worked for the Georgia bureau of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, was treated abominably by an unlikely alliance of Fox News, the NAACP, the White House and U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. Without due process, Shirley Sherrod was pressured to resign

because an influential right-wing blogger mau-maued her as a racist with a duplicitously edited videotape of a speech she made to the NAACP in March. [Link](#)

Farm firestorm: Obama officials overreacted on the Sherrod case (Pittsburgh Post-Gazette 7/23)

When will the Obama White House stop taking the character-assassinating ilk of the right-wing blogosphere seriously? Shirley Sherrod, the Department of Agriculture's director of rural development in Georgia, resigned Monday under pressure from the Obama administration after a video in which she allegedly implicated herself in anti-white bias surfaced. The clip of Ms. Sherrod giving a speech before the NAACP in March was posted by conservative activist Andrew Breitbart and edited in a way to suggest that the African-American employee had bragged of not using the full power of her office to help white farmers in need. Fox News talk host Bill O'Reilly played the clip Monday night and called for her resignation, although by the time his taped show aired Ms. Sherrod had already quit. By now, mainstream news outlets were picking up the story, which had been bolstered by the frenzy of right-wing online media. It all created an echo chamber that terrified the White House. The NAACP also hastily denounced Ms. Sherrod. [Link](#)

Obama apologizes to fired official (Pittsburgh Post-Gazette 7/23)

He didn't reach her on the first try, but President Barack Obama phoned former Agriculture Department official Shirley Sherrod to apologize Thursday for her abrupt firing based on a 2 1/2-minute video excerpt that gave a misleading portrait of her views on race. Mr. Obama and Ms. Sherrod spoke for about seven minutes, in which he mentioned his own exploration of race in his first book, "Dreams From My Father," White House press secretary Robert Gibbs said. Mr. Obama also urged her to continue speaking up for poor people. At no point, Mr. Gibbs said, did he explicitly ask her to return to the Agriculture Department. The president had been briefed on Ms. Sherrod's firing Tuesday morning and initially supported Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack's decision, according to the White House. He reversed course after release of the full, 45-minute videotape of Ms. Sherrod's appearance before a local NAACP group in Georgia four months ago. [Link](#)

Mercury News editorial: USDA firing goof is at least a teachable moment (Mercury News 7/23)

No permanent harm has been done to Shirley Sherrod, now that her Internet vilification and knee-jerk dismissal have been offset by widespread praise and a profuse presidential apology. So let's take this sorry affair as a teachable moment. It's appalling that any employer, let alone the secretary of agriculture, would fire anyone based purely on a post by a blogger with a clear and vehement political agenda. Blogs are great for airing opinions and rumors or fomenting anger and bitterness, but for getting reliable information? Not so much. Shame on Secretary Tom Vilsack, who has taken the fall for firing Sherrod, and the Obama administration. So what's to learn? Across America, there are people who accept what pundits of all persuasions say as Gospel, apparently unaware that selective choice of details, quotes or even video clips can be used as evidence to appear to prove what's actually a barefaced lie. That's what happened here. Sherrod's speech to the NAACP was edited to sound racist, when she clearly is not. [Link](#)

Obama's Teachable Moment (Newsweek 7/22)

I think it's time for President Obama to give another "race speech." Because in response to the very public and very undeserved firing of Shirley ... It is simply mind-boggling that Sherrod was forced to resign via BlackBerry on the side of road based on evidence provided by Andrew Breitbart, the man behind the release of the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now pimp and hooker videos. Nobody—not the NAACP nor Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack—seemed to have done the basic fact-checking that would have revealed the whole story was wrong... Obama needs to tell us in the clearest terms why his administration seems so deathly afraid of accusations of racism. We deserve to know more about why no one even asked Sherrod for an explanation before the NAACP and agriculture secretary publicly condemned her as a racist in the harshest of terms... And yet she works for same organization that discriminated against her family farm and thousands of other black farmers in the very lawsuit Vilsack mentioned when he announced her resignation. [Link](#)

The Shirley Sherrod 'Scandal' (Newsweek 7/21)

The whole thing is "appalling from many angles," says Shannen Coffin of the conservative National Review, and Shirley Sherrod deserves some apologies. The administration showed a total disregard for due process by firing her, while the conservative media also "has some 'splainin' to do... Clearly, firing

Sherrod was a hasty, ignorant, and cowardly move, says Justin Elliott of the liberal site Salon. The White House says Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack made the move on his own; Sherrod says she was told otherwise--but those are just technicalities... No one should pretend this is a surprise, says Wilmer Leon, writing for the black-issues site The Grio. It's just like the New Black Panther Party or denials of racist slurs used against congressmen: cases of Breitbart and others race-baiting Americans. [Link](#)

Agriculture Secretary to Review Shirley Sherrod Resignation (TIME 7/21)

After a video seemingly showing the Agriculture Department official making racist remarks made the rounds online, Shirley Sherrod said she was pressured to resign. Now that the video's context has surfaced, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack says he will review her case. Sherrod, who is African American, is shown in the clip saying in 1986, she did not offer her "full force" of help to a white farmer. However, she told CNN that the clip was part of a story she told, demonstrating how her views of race changed. She was working for a nonprofit at the time, not the USDA. At first, Sherrod received harsh criticism from the NAACP, but the organization apologized and retracted its remarks, saying it was "snookered" by FOX News and conservative blogger Andrew Breitbart, who originally posted the video. Breitbart told CNN the intention was not to make Sherrod resign, but to highlight racism in the NAACP, after said organization called the Tea Party racist. [Link](#)

USDA Official Resigns in Racial Flap (TIME 7/20)

A U.S. Department of Agriculture official who is African American has resigned after a tape of discriminatory comments she made at an NAACP event was posted to the web. Shirley Sherrod, who had been Georgia's state director of rural development told CNN the video, first shown by conservative web publisher Andrew Breitbart, was taken out of context. In the clip, Sherrod describes how in 1986 she didn't offer her "full force" of help to a white farmer. Sherrod told CNN that at the time of the incident, she was not working for the USDA, but for a nonprofit organization and that she had been trying to help the farmer who had been foreclosed on. "I was telling the story of how working with him helped me to see the issue is not about race," she said "It's about those who have versus those who do not have." [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod: casualty of escalating 'tea party'-NAACP race spat? (Christian Science Monitor 7/20)

The Obama administration quickly asked an African American official in the Agriculture Department to resign Monday after a conservative website showed an excerpt of a speech she had given in which she appeared to describe her unwillingness to help a white farmer. Administration officials said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack made the decision to ask for Shirley Sherrod's resignation, hours after the video was posted on the website Big Government. Ms. Sherrod had been the department's chief rural development director in Georgia. Ms. Sherrod told CNN Tuesday that the comments she had made in March to an NAACP fund-raising dinner had been misconstrued. A white couple who were the subject of her remarks told CNN that she had helped save their land. The NAACP, which had initially backed the Agriculture Department in pushing for the resignation, changed course late Tuesday and called for the department to reconsider, calling the incident a "false controversy" generated by conservative media. Ms. Sherrod couldn't be reached for a comment. [Link](#)

Vilsack peers surprised by quick response, relieved by apology (Sioux City Journal 7/22)

Those who know Tom Vilsack well are surprised the former Iowa governor is caught up in a series of hasty decisions embarrassing him and the Obama administration. On the other hand, his apology for the firing of a USDA employee based on an edited video and his offer to rehire her are more typical of what a former legal counsel described as Vilsack's "incredibly diligent" approach to decision-making. "He was incredibly well-prepared and very thoughtful, especially to the extent that it had tangible impacts on people," said Brian Gentry, who served as the two-term governor's legal counsel. He also found it ironic that Vilsack would be caught up in a controversy with racial overtones. Vilsack, Gentry said "really worked hard to increase access to services, to opportunities and to engagement in the governmental apparatus to people who historically had not had significant representation." [Link](#)

Vilsack role in USDA firing seen as uncharacteristic of 'thoughtful' decision-maker (Cedar Rapids Gazette 7/22)

Those who know Tom Vilsack well are surprised the former Iowa governor is caught up in a series of hasty decisions embarrassing him and the Obama administration. On the other hand, his apology for the firing of a USDA employee based on an edited video and his offer to rehire her are more typical of what a

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Shirley Sherrod shaped by father's slaying (Atlanta Journal-Constitution 7/23)

Shirley Sherrod's 17th year probably did more to mold her personality and set her on a path that traveled through the dangerous, volatile world of race.

That year, 1965, her father was shot and killed by a white man in a dispute over cows, the family says. That year, she was one of the first black students to integrate the high school in Baker County in rural southwest Georgia. That year, she decided to become involved in the civil rights movement in that area of the state. And in later years, like some of the farmers she helped when she worked for a non-profit, Sherrod and her husband lost a group farm to bankruptcy. Now the former Georgia director of rural development for the U.S. Department of Agriculture is fending off allegations that she is racist because of something she said during a speech before the NAACP last spring. It was a few sentences in a story she told about an epiphany that changed her way of thinking two dozen years ago; the problems of farmers were not defined as black vs. white but "poor vs. those who have." [Link](#)

Ousted official shaped by pain: Since age 17 with dad's slaying, Sherrod has prevailed over loss. Glenn Beck among those who say: Give back her job. (The Atlanta Journal-Constitution 7/22)

Hounded from the right and the left --- an incredibly broad spectrum covering everyone from Glenn Beck to the NAACP --- an embarrassed White House apologized to Shirley Sherrod on Wednesday and offered her a new job with the Agriculture Department. Sherrod was forced to resign as Georgia director of rural development with USDA by a piece of video that seemed to show her admitting racism toward white people. The video went viral on the Web, and the White House bought into the attack without having all the facts. Those facts began to emerge on Wednesday. For the record, the video was edited from a longer piece of tape in which Sherrod spoke not of animosity but of redemption. But that's just the beginning of Sherrod's story. [Request Story](#)

White House: USDA chief will apologize to Sherrod (Atlanta Journal Constitution 7/21)

White House spokesman Robert Gibbs said USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack will apologize to fired Georgia USDA official Shirley Sherrod, but stopped short of saying whether she will get her job back. "Secretary Vilsack has tried and is trying to reach Ms. Sherrod," Gibbs said. "When the secretary reaches her, he will apologize for the events of the last few days and they will talk about the next steps." Sherrod, who is African-American, resigned under pressure on Monday night after videotaped comments she made at a local NAACP banquet surfaced on a conservative Web site and quickly spread to cable and broadcast news outlets. On the tape, Sherrod says that she didn't give a white farming couple, Eloise and Roger Spooner, "the full force" of her help. "I think clearly that a lot of people involved in this situation ... acted without the facts," Gibbs said. [Link](#)

USDA reconsiders firing of Ga. official over speech on race (Atlanta Journal Constitution 7/21)

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said today he is reconsidering his department's decision to fire a Georgia official in wake of new details about her controversial speech to the NAACP. Vilsack said in a statement early Wednesday morning that he will "conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts" about his decision to ask Shirley Sherrod to resign. Washington's apparent reversal came hours after a video of Sherrod's full speech was released, and the director of rural development in Georgia was defended by the white couple at the center of the controversy. [Link](#)

Farmer's wife backs official accused of racism (The Atlanta Journal Constitution 7/21)

The wife of a white Georgia farmer on Tuesday defended a black federal official who lost her job for saying she didn't help the couple as much as she could have in 1986 because of their race. The former official, Shirley Sherrod, "kept us out of bankruptcy," said Eloise Spooner, 82, of Iron City in southwest Georgia. Spooner, in an interview with The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, added she considers Sherrod a "friend for life." Eloise and Roger Spooner approached Sherrod for help in 1986, when Sherrod worked for a nonprofit that assisted farmers. Sherrod resigned Monday night after videotaped comments she made in March at a

local NAACP banquet surfaced on the Web and quickly spread to cable and broadcast news outlets. On the tape, Sherrod says of the Spooners that she didn't give the couple "the full force" of her help. [Link](#)

Couple says fired USDA official helped save their land; USDA won't rehire (Atlanta Journal Constitution 7/20)

Despite being defended by the white farmer she allegedly discriminated against, former U.S. Department of Agriculture official Shirley Sherrod will not get her job back. Sherrod "kept us out of bankruptcy," said Eloise Spooner, 82. She and her husband Roger Sooner, who own a farm in Iron City, located in southwest Georgia, approached Sherrod in 1986 -- when she worked with the Georgia field office for the Federation of Southern Cooperative/Land Assistance Fund -- seeking assistance. Sherrod, who is black, was asked to resign Monday night by USDA Deputy Under Secretary Cheryl Cook after videotaped comments she made in March at a local NAACP banquet surfaced on the web indicating that she did not work as hard as she could on behalf of white farmers. [Link](#)

Farmer's wife says fired USDA official helped save their land (Atlanta Journal Constitution 7/20)

The wife of the white farmer allegedly discriminated against by the USDA's rural development director for Georgia said Shirley Sherrod "kept us out of bankruptcy." Eloise Spooner, 82, awoke Tuesday to discover that Sherrod had lost her job after videotaped comments she made in March at a local NAACP banquet surfaced on the web. Sherrod, who is black, told the crowd she didn't do everything she could to help a white farmer whom she said was condescending when he came to her for aid. She said the video was selectively edited but regardless U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack was adamant that she resign. [Link](#)

Resigned USDA official says racial story misconstrued (Atlanta Journal Constitution 7/20)

The USDA's rural development director for Georgia says she was forced out of her federally appointed job after a "snippet" of a speech she gave in March appeared to show her admission to only half-heartedly aiding a struggling white farmer because of his race. But in a phone interview from her home in Albany early Tuesday morning, Shirley Sherrod told the Atlanta-Journal Constitution that the two-minute, 38-second video posted online Monday by biggovernment.com and reported on by FoxNews.com and the AJC completely misconstrued the message she was trying to convey. Sherrod, 62, insisted her statements in the video were not racist. "For Fox to take a spin on this like they have done, and know it's not the truth ... it's very upsetting," she said. [Link](#)

Op-ed: Civil Disagreement: The Sherrod affair (Seattle Times 7/22)

President Obama's financial reform victory lap this week was interrupted by a major stumble over Shirley Sherrod. It is unfathomable, and an example of the administration's hair-trigger sensitivity about being criticized as racially biased that no one bothered to listen to Sherrod's 45-minute speech. It is a compelling narrative about racial anger, hatred and redemption. Sherrod notes that she initially referred the farmer to a lawyer. But when the lawyer didn't help him, she stepped back in, and as the farmer and his family recounted to the Washington Post, personally helped save their farm. It was a seminal moment in which Sherrod saw the plight facing farmers as equally horrific, regardless of skin color. The USDA has documented discrimination by banks and other entities against black farmers, but Sherrod understand that her role was to help everyone who asked for her help. Regardless of skin color or sympathy for the plight of black farmers. [Link](#)

US To Reconsider Action Against Sherrod For 'Racial Bias' (RTT News 7/21)

The Barack Obama administration in the US is likely to reconsider an earlier decision by the Agriculture Department to terminate the services of Shirley Sherrod, an African-American official, for remarks apparently having racial overtones, reports said on Wednesday. Sherrod was fired after an edited video clip from 1986, posted by a blogger on a conservative website, likely showed her as saying that she did not help out a Georgia farmer to the extent she ought to have because he was White. However, a full version of the same video that came out shortly after Sherrod was sacked revealed that her remarks had been taken out of context. Following this Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said the decision to sack her would be reviewed and "additional facts" that emerged will be taken into account. [Link](#)

Black Caucus Urges Reinstatement of Fired Agriculture Official (CQ Politics 7/21)

The Congressional Black Caucus says Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack should immediately reinstate a black department employee whom he fired Monday because of a video in which she appeared to admit that she withheld assistance from a white farmer. Vilsack demanded that Shirley Sherrod resign after an edited version of the video was posted on a conservative blogger's website and widely publicized on Fox News. In the excerpt, Sherrod says she initially didn't give a white farmer as much assistance as she could have while working at a non-profit 24 years ago. But after she was ousted, a full copy of the video put the remarks in context, showing that Sherrod went on to recount how she overcame her bias and helped poor farmers, regardless of race. The white farmer and his wife said Tuesday that Sherrod saved their farm. [Link](#)

Vilsack Gets Heat For Sherrod Firing (Congress Daily PM 7/21)

The Congressional Black Caucus, the Federation of Southern Cooperatives and the Rural Coalition today called on Agriculture Secretary Vilsack to reinstate Shirley Sherrod, the Georgia rural development director who was forced to resign Tuesday amid controversy over remarks on race. Sherrod has come under fire for comments she made at a March NAACP conference - which were taped and widely circulated - that critics have called racist. As a member of an anti-poverty group 20 years ago, Sherrod said, she denied a white farmer full assistance. But in extended comments heard only in the full videotape, she said she later helped the farmer, and she used the example to underscore that her job was to help poor farmers regardless of race. In a statement, CBC Chairwoman Rep. Barbara Lee, D-Calif., and other caucus members said it was troubling that Sherrod was asked for her resignation "because of an edited video clip." "A full review of the clip demonstrates Ms. Sherrod's personal transformation. [Link](#)

Obama's Achilles' Heel (The New Republic 7/22)

One outgrowth of the Shirley Sherrod debacle is that people have started to take note of the way the Obama administration folded like a cheap suit in the face of a half-baked accusation from a non-credible source. "[I]t is hilarious to watch the White House scrambling out of fear for Andrew Breitbart," writes Erick Erickson. Jonathan Bernstein likewise castigates the administration's panicked response. These observations are accurate as far as they go. But I don't think there's a generalized pattern of the administration folding in the face of right-wing attacks, credible or otherwise. Rather, the issue is that the Obama administration is, and always has been, terrified of engaging on race. Obama's call for a "national conversation on race" in 2008 was interpreted by many people as a desire to use his campaign to alter racial perceptions. [Link](#)

On a libel suit, the White House waits (Politico 7/22)

Shirley Sherrod is considering a libel lawsuit against conservative Web impresario Andrew Breitbart — and the White House isn't exactly discouraging her. Sherrod, a former (and perhaps future) Agriculture Department employee, told CNN Wednesday that she was mulling the possibility of a suit against Breitbart, who posted a shoddily edited video of a speech she delivered at an event for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in March. "You know, I don't know a lot about the legal profession, but that's one person I'd like to get back at," she said when Anderson Cooper asked about the possibility of suing Breitbart, who runs biggovernment.com. [Link](#)

Breitbart: 'I am public enemy No. 1...!' (Politico 7/22)

An unrepentant Andrew Breitbart told POLITICO on Thursday that the Obama administration and its allies have manufactured a controversy over the video he posted of Shirley Sherrod's speech to the NAACP as part of an orchestrated effort to take him down. "I am public enemy No. 1 or 2 to the Democratic Party, the progressive movement and the Obama administration based upon the successes my journalism has had," Breitbart said in a telephone interview late Thursday morning as he headed to the airport for what he said was a long-planned, three-day vacation. Breitbart asserted that liberal media outlets are shifting the focus to the misleading excerpting in the videos he posted — as well as his erroneous statement about the context of the footage — to divert attention from what he asserts is a double standard on racist behavior exposed by the video, which he released Monday to push back against a recently passed NAACP resolution expressing concern about "racist elements" in the tea party movement. [Link](#)

W.H. tries to keep Obama above racial fray (Politico 7/21)

The White House struggled mightily Wednesday to make things right with an aggrieved Shirley Sherrod — but they are working nearly as hard to distance President Barack Obama and his top aides from the racially tinged firing fiasco. Administration officials unanimously leveled the finger of blame at Agriculture

Secretary Tom Vilsack on Wednesday for sacking Sherrod on "insufficient evidence" — even as West Wing officials admitted they did nothing to stop Sherrod from being let go on the basis of a single, shabbily edited video clip. "There was no pressure from the White House. This was my decision," said Vilsack, who agreed to reverse his decision and offer Sherrod a job after White House officials pressured him to change course Tuesday night. [Link](#)

Breitbart issues correction, sort of (Politico 7/22)

Three days after posting a misleading video that cost Shirley Sherrod her job and started a race debate, Andrew Breitbart has posted a 37-word correction unrelated to the controversy he stirred up... But rather than acknowledge any sort of mistake in posting the abbreviated video, Breitbart has updated the post — which still comes under the headline "Video Proof: The NAACP Awards Racism" — with only a clarification on when she held her government position. "While Ms. Sherrod made the remarks captured in the first video featured in this post while she held a federally appointed position, the story she tells refers to actions she took before she held that federal position," the correction reads. Breitbart has been unapologetic in defending his decision to post the original video, blaming the NAACP in a recent interview with Fox News' Sean Hannity for having picked a fight with the tea party. "I could care less about Shirley Sherrod, to be honest with you. This is not about Shirley Sherrod," Breitbart told Hannity. "This is about tarring the American people and the tea party movement with the false charge of racism." [Link](#)

Sherrod: I want to speak to Obama (Politico 7/22)

Shirley Sherrod said she'd like President Barack Obama to reach out to her, not for an apology but for a conversation about what life is like where "the rubber meets the road." ... "He hasn't lived the kind of life I've lived," she said on CNN's morning show. "I know he's African-American or part African-American, and many of us are not totally black in our genes. I'm one of them. But when you get down to where the rubber meets the road, I think he needs to understand a little more of what life is like at that level." ... Sherrod said that Vilsack had offered her an "outreach" job dealing with discrimination. She said she was still waiting for an e-mail with specifics, but that at this point she was not inclined to take the job. She said she would not like to be "the one person" everyone is looking at to clear up a long history of discrimination at the Agriculture Department. There's another reason as well, she said on CNN: "You know the thing that really hurts? It was so easy for them to make a decision to throw me under the bridge without looking. ... It was easy to put the blame all on me [and] get me out of there. You've dealt with the problem. That's what's so scary about maybe going back into work and [officials] thinking, 'Oh, she's dealing with the problem.' Anything could be blamed on me." [Link](#)

President Obama, White House react to 'cable chatter' (Politico 7/21)

President Barack Obama has made a mantra out of insisting he and his White House won't get caught up in "cable chatter," with aides proudly insisting they don't let 24-hour news outlets drive decision-making. But this week's forced resignation of a previously obscure Agriculture Department employee is just the latest example of Obama officials reacting to a cable news-driven obsession of the right. It not only infuriates Obama's liberal base, which feels like the episodes just reinforce the power of the right to push a damaging story into the mainstream press. But as this week shows, the White House's touchiness even threatens Obama's ability to keep control of his own public persona, or steer the national conversation in a way that's conducive to promoting his message and his agenda. [Link](#)

USDA will reconsider firing (Politico 7/21)

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said Wednesday that he will reconsider the abrupt firing of Shirley Sherrod, a Georgia-based Agriculture Department official who was the victim of a media frenzy over comments that turned out to have been distorted by video editing. "I am of course willing and will conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts to ensure to the American people we are providing services in a fair and equitable manner," Vilsack said in a statement e-mailed by USDA at 2:07 a.m. A White House official said: "Not sure what the ultimate result will be, but it's clear that with new information through the full speech, a longer look needed to be taken. The White House contacted the Department last night about the case and agreed, based on new evidence, that it should be reviewed." [Link](#)

Sherrod blames NAACP for firing (Politico 7/20)

The Agriculture Department official who has resigned after a video surfaced showing her saying she withheld assistance from a white farmer insisted on Tuesday that she really lost her job over the tea

party's clash with the NAACP. A video of Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of rural development, telling an NAACP audience that she didn't give a white farmer the "full force" of what she could provide, went viral Tuesday and prompted Sherrod to leave the department. The NAACP condemned Sherrod's comments in a statement, calling them "shameful." Asked about the NAACP's actions during an interview with CNN on Tuesday, Sherrod said the only reason the video surfaced was in response to an NAACP resolution accusing the tea party of using "racist" tactics. "They got into a fight with the tea party, and all of this came out as a result of that," Sherrod said. [Link](#)

The lynching of Shirley Sherrod (The Hill 7/21)

It is wrong when an entire Tea Party movement is smeared with the false charge of racism. It is wrong when Shirley Sherrod is smeared by a right-wing media that distorts the truth and tries to destroy this woman through character assassination. It is wrong when the president of the United States and the secretary of Agriculture cower in fear of right-wing media and execute the lynching of Shirley Sherrod. Let's see if MSNBC can rise to the occasion of recognizing that not all Tea Partiers are racists and that criticizing Fox News and Glenn Beck is not enough. In this matter it was unconscionable for the White House to execute the lynching before learning the facts or trying the case. Let's see if Fox News can act like a professional news organization and offer a detailed apology to Shirley Sherrod and a detailed critique and criticism of any in the conservative media who doctored the tapes and the truth to promote the hatred that gave rise to the lynching. [Link](#)

Sherrod: 'We all have to work together' (Charlotte Observer 7/23)

If it's possible to make lemonade from the sour lemons of the Shirley Sherrod affair, it might be this: Sherrod's insightful words about struggling with and overcoming racial animus, about not living with hate, and about looking beyond race to an understanding that "there's no difference between us" - that we must work together to help each other - are now accessible to a lot more people. It's a message many need to hear. Of course, for the moment, the spotlight is riveted on the politics. The Obama administration is in full apology mode after Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack ousted Sherrod from her job as director of Rural Development in Georgia, mistakenly believing she had made racist remarks during a local NAACP banquet in March. Vilsack had seen a two-minute edited clip of the 43-minute speech Sherrod gave that was posted Monday by conservative blogger Andrew Breitbart on his website. [Link](#)

Op-ed: Thoughtfulness, what a concept (Charlotte Observer 7/22)

Shirley Sherrod, who ran a Department of Agriculture office in Georgia, gave a speech back in March at an NAACP banquet. A Web publisher named Andrew Breitbart put out a segment of video from the speech. In the clip, it sounds like Sherrod admits she deliberately didn't do her best to help a white farm family in trouble. Problem is, when the full video was released, it's clear that Sherrod did help the family. She told the story - which happened 24 years ago - as an example of how she struggled with her own prejudices and overcame them. That's exactly what we want in a leader, right? Someone honest enough to admit her flaws, and capable enough to learn and grow? Um, no. What we really want, at least in Washington, is somebody who won't give a sound bite that will help the other side. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack asked for (and got) Sherrod's resignation Tuesday, after the short version of the speech had come out but before the long version. In other words, before he knew the context, but just in time for the Obama team to salvage a bit of the news cycle. [Link](#)

Obama apologizes to Sherrod (USA Today 7/22)

President Obama called and apologized today to Shirley Sherrod, the former U.S. Department of Agriculture employee fired over distorted comments about race. Sherrod has told various interviewers she's not sure if she will accept Vilsack's new job offer. White House spokesman Robert Gibbs said the president did not lobby Sherrod to rejoin the administration because the decision is up to her. White House operators, acting on Obama's behalf, actually tried to call Sherrod last night -- twice -- but couldn't get through to her voice mail, Gibbs said. The call came a day after Gibbs apologized to Sherrod on behalf of the administration. [Link](#)

Gibbs: Vilsack to apologize to woman he fired 'without all the facts' (USA Today 7/21)

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack will apologize to the black woman he fired over misconstrued comments she made about a white farmer, White House spokesman Robert Gibbs said today, adding that government officials, the media, and others acted "without all the facts." Vilsack is trying to reach Shirley Sherrod today, and "he will apologize for the events of the last few days, and they will talk about their next

steps," Gibbs said. Meanwhile, Sherrod said she might not return to her job if asked, citing the negative publicity surrounding her case. "We would need to talk," Sherrod told WXIA-TV in Atlanta. "I wouldn't want to go back and be harassed. I definitely wouldn't go back and do anything like I didn't do before to embarrass this administration. I support the administration too much." [Link](#)

Farmer says USDA official should get her job back (USA Today 7/21)

The white farmer who's part of a controversy involving ousted Agriculture Department employee Shirley Sherrod says he believes she's been wronged. "I hope she does get her job back -- if she wants it," Roger Spooner told USA TODAY's Gregory Korte. "I don't think they've done it right. But I can see where she's undecided about what she wants to do," Spooner said. Sherrod, the USDA's director of rural development in Georgia, said she was asked to resign by department officials on Monday after conservative bloggers posted an edited video of her saying that she initially didn't give a white farmer (Spooner) as much help as she could have 24 years ago. At that time, Sherrod was working for a non-profit farm aid group and was not a federal employee. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said today that he is reconsidering Sherrod's dismissal and reviewing her case. Sherrod told our Gannett colleagues at WXIA-TV that she isn't sure if she would go back to her Ag Department post -- even if she is asked. [Link](#)

Fired Ag Department employee says Obama White House wanted her out (USA Today 7/20)

The Obama White House has been dragged into the controversy over an U.S. Agriculture Department employee fired for comments about a white farmer. Shirley Sherrod, a black woman who was the USDA's director of rural development in Georgia, told the Associated Press that a department official said the White House wanted her resignation. "They called me twice," Sherrod said, referring to the Ag Department. "The last time they asked me to pull over the side of the road and submit my resignation on my Blackberry, and that's what I did." Sherrod told CNN the White House was worried about more attacks from Fox conservative commentator Glenn Beck. [Link](#)

The Jester, the Coward, and the Employee (Vanity Fair 2/23)

Andrew Breitbart is a blip on the American screen and only a minor player in this story. The central character in this regrettable drama is agriculture secretary Tom Vilsack, who fired Shirley Sherrod before he got his facts straight. Before he got any facts at all, it seems. Did Vilsack, an adult, even take the time to ask Ms. Sherrod, another adult, any questions? Or was he too preoccupied being terrified by the easily disproved distortions of known laughing stock Andrew Breitbart? That Vilsack acted on the assumption that Breitbart was telling the truth was a huge mistake that shows an astonishing lack of judgment and character. To fire anyone on information that is not carefully and fully verified is grossly irresponsible.

Shirley Sherrod seems like a good and dedicated person. We should, like the Spooners, feel lucky to have her working on our collective behalf. Tom Vilsack should relieve himself of his job and seek employment elsewhere. No apology he can offer to Ms. Sherrod, even if it is sincerely accepted by her, is good enough to neutralize his pathetic misstep. You want this guy holding any government position? Not me. He should clear out his desk, turn in his keycard, and exit the building immediately. Perhaps Monsanto would take him back. [Link](#)

Op-ed: USDA: No bias in Tensas Parish (The News-Star Blog 7/23)

The much-maligned U.S. Department of Agriculture seems to accept as fact accusations of widespread racial discrimination taking place over the past 30-40 years. I'm not sure exactly how much, if any, took place, but I have great reservations due to my personal knowledge of Farm Home Administration officials during my many years as a community agricultural banker. The late Howard Joyce and Julius Bradley served the Tensas Parish Farm Home Administration office for many years, and I personally observed their total dedication to helping the minority population of Tensas Parish, many of them living today in housing provided by an aggressive approach by these two men to all programs available over the years to create truly affordable housing for low-income residents of Tensas. [Link](#)

Editorial: Look before you leap (The Philadelphia Inquirer 7/23)

'Life is a grindstone, but whether it grinds us down or polishes us is up to us.'

With those words to live by, Shirley Sherrod ended a 43-minute speech that ultimately made even the president of the United States take note - for the wrong reason. Sherrod was accused of racism and fired by the U.S. Department of Agriculture after a video snippet of her speech in March to a Georgia chapter of the NAACP was posted this week on a conservative blog. Had anyone with the USDA bothered to actually

watch the entire speech, that would have never happened. In it, Sherrod talks about her conversion from being prejudiced to understanding that people of every color need help. She says she has committed her life to helping the poor whenever she can. [Link](#)

Op-Ed: The lynching of Shirley Sherrod (The North Jersey Record 7/23)

OVER 24 hours, the White House and the NAACP and a host of bloggers have been exposed to a painful and public lesson in one of journalism's basic rules: If you're going to accuse someone of wrongdoing, you must give them a fair chance to explain themselves. The reason behind this rule should be obvious. Things aren't always what they seem. Sources have agendas. People's memories are faulty. And, yes, there are people who want to plant misleading stories. There are those who argue that the modern pace of the news cycle has made the requirement of seeking comment as quaint as glue pots and typewriters. Some news is too hot to hold! Just be transparent about what you know! Update when new facts come to light! [Link](#)

Beltway rush to judgment White House running scared reacted too quickly to conservative firestorm (Newsday 7/22)

Shirley Sherrod worked for the U.S. Agriculture Department until Monday, when she was slammed by a political express moving at the speed of broadband. Hers is a cautionary tale: With so many snippets of information hurtling at us, it's important not to rush to judgment. Sherrod, who is black, was branded a racist and forced to resign based on a video clip of her recounting an incident, 24 years ago, when a white man asked her to help save his farm. "I didn't give him the full force of what I could do," she said. She didn't work in government then. But that comment landed her in a political skirmish ignited when the NAACP called upon the tea party movement to purge racists from its ranks. In an apparent tit-for-tat, a blogger posted the two-minute clip of Sherrod speaking at a 1986 NAACP banquet. It went viral. It was broadcast nationally. Sherrod said she was told the White House wanted her resignation to quell the bad press. [Request Story](#)

USDA big quits in bias-boast shock (New York Post 7/20)

A black official in the US Agriculture Department resigned yesterday after a video surfaced of her bragging to the NAACP that she didn't do everything she could to help a white farmer facing bankruptcy. Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, told the audience at a March banquet in Atlanta that she claimed the man felt "superior" to her, according to FoxNews.com. "He had come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was talking all that time, trying to show me he was superior to me, was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," Sherrod said. "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land -- so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do." "I did enough," she said. [Link](#)

O the race 'healer' just another heel (New York Post 7/22)

After nearly two years of Hope and Change, the seas have not receded, the world has not turned into a gentle dove in His hands, and we have not slipped the surly shackles of partisanship. Turns out, President Obama hasn't even advanced us beyond puberty when it comes to race relations. No matter the extraordinary efforts yesterday to mollify fired USDA official Shirley Sherrod -- including offering her another job. The fact remains that again, the Obama administration went off half-cocked and turned a routine situation into a poisonous racial fight. In a thoughtful speech last March about racism before a civil-rights group, Sherrod, who is black, told a black audience of her own personal experience learning that racism against white farmers is no less evil than racism against blacks. [Link](#)

White House forced me to resign over fabricated racial controversy (NY Daily News 7/20)

One strike and she was out. A black employee who resigned from the Agriculture Department on Monday said the White House forced her out after remarks that she says have sparked a fabricated racial controversy. Shirley Sherrod, the former Georgia director of Rural Development, said she received a phone call from the USDA's deputy undersecretary Cheryl Cook on Monday while she was in a car. Cook told her that the White House wanted her to call it quits. "They called me twice," Sherrod told the Associated Press. "The last time they asked me to pull over the side of the road and submit my resignation on my Blackberry, and that's what I did." [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Re-revisited (National Review 7/21)

The Sherrod episode is appalling from all sorts of angles. First, there's the kneejerk reaction of the administration to demand her resignation — by her account, she was asked to pull over to the side of the road to resign by cellphone by a USDA official, who claimed pressure from the White House. This shows a despicable lack of respect for due process: Surely Sherrod was entitled to at least defend herself — to produce the full text of her remarks in order to show her broader point. Second, as I understand it, her remarks related to her conduct as a non-governmental official more than 20 years ago. She did not claim to have denied government benefits on the basis of race, which would have been a violation of the applicant's constitutional rights, but rather recounted a story of her time in, as I understand it, a non-profit organization. And it turns out that her story was merely a description of how she came to have more enlightened views on issues of race and poverty. [Link](#)

White house takes back fired official; Unjust, Obama Says; Black director's 'racist' remarks out of context (National Post 7/22)

The White House apologized yesterday to a black civil servant who was fired over remarks made 24 years ago that were taken out of context and made her appear racist on a politically conservative website. Shirley Sherrod, the Agriculture Department's rural development director in Georgia, was asked to resign after the broadcast on Monday of video from a March speech. In it, she described a decision not to do her utmost to help a white farmer when she worked for a non-profit group in 1986. Her hasty dismissal was widely condemned after it emerged the video had been heavily edited. In fact, her anecdote was part of a larger narrative about the need for racial tolerance when dealing with poor people -- white, black or Hispanic. [Request Story](#)

Krauthammer's Take (National Review 7/21)

That was a really remarkable statement from the NAACP. They obviously reacted without even knowing that this [Sherrod's racially tinged action] had happened a quarter century ago — in their original statement, they seemed to be under the impression that this had happened while she was at the USDA. And the Obama administration — they didn't speak to her. As she said herself in the interview, nobody spoke to her, nobody from USDA had spoken to her, nobody from the NAACP had spoken to her. She is owed an apology, restitution, and the restoration of her job. I don't think there is any question about that. ... She did say, interestingly, that this is because of what the NAACP did in attacking the Tea Party, which it did ... egregiously, gratuitously, and without any [evidentiary] support. ... As a result of that provocation, she was essentially saying the NAACP had to undo it by then throwing her under a bus without even looking at her case. And I think her analysis of that is entirely right. [Link](#)

USDA reviews firing of official Shirley Sherrod after speech on race (Syracuse Post-Standard 7/21)

Shirley Sherrod was the USDA's Georgia State Director of Rural Development, but was asked to resign Monday night from her position, after remarks that she made at a NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet on March 27 were made public. The USDA and NAACP both backed Sherrod's resignation after conservative blogger Andrew Breitbart and his site biggovernment.com released clips of the speech. The video showed Sherrod talking about an instance 24 years ago when she was dealing with a white farmer facing the loss of his family farm, and her thoughts about withholding help. Sherrod said in the speech, "What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was, I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him. I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough." [Link](#)

Top USDA Employee Resigns After Remarks are Considered Racist (Afro American 7/21)

Shirley Sherrod, a Black USDA official announced her resignation on July 19. Sherrod, the former USDA Georgia Director of Rural Development said the White House pressured her to resign. "They called me twice," Sherrod told the *Associated Press*. "The last time they asked me to pull over the side of the road and submit my resignation on my Blackberry, and that's what I did." USDA Secretary Tom Vilsak released a statement on June 20, accepting Sherrod's resignation. "Our policy is clear. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA and we strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person," Vilsak said in the statement. "We have a duty to ensure that when we provide services to the American people we do so in an equitable manner. But equally important is our duty to instill confidence in the American people that we are fair service providers." [Link](#)

Sherrod resignation: Political blunder stirs racism fears (Denver Examiner 7/21)

Once again, the threat of racism appears with the rush to judgment for remarks provided by Shirley Sherrod, now former U.S. Department of Agriculture director of rural efforts in Georgia. An apparent incomplete portion of a video provided the Department of Agriculture (USDA) with fears that Sherrod was a racist and prior to thorough investigation, called for her resignation. Reference to a more than two-decade's old story of a farmer that Sherrod assisted was allegedly posted by a blogger to make the speech appear as inappropriate. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsak maintains his decision to support the resignation of Sherrod despite the misrepresentation of her statements. President Obama has reportedly received information for the tape and the White House information released indicates that the decision to ask for Sherrod's resignation was provided by the USDA, and Sherrod's remarks were misrepresented. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod isn't sure that she wants her USDA job back, and fears how she would be treated (Denver Examiner 7/21)

Wednesday, Shirley Sherrod said that she isn't sure she wants her USDA job back even if it was offered. Sherrod was asked to resign from the USDA after a three minute clip of a speech she gave at an NAACP meeting was given to her supervisors. The USDA announced Wednesday that they will conduct a full investigation of the situation. Wednesday, Sherrod said that the USDA's decision to review her case is "bittersweet," and said that she isn't sure she wants her job back. She said that she isn't sure what type of job it might be, and what people will think of her or how she will be treated. The three minute clip was part of a much longer speech in which she tells the story of how she learned to treat people equally, and about a time when she didn't. She goes on to tell the story of a "white farmer" that she didn't help based on the farmer's race. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod not sure she'd accept reinstatement at USDA (Denver Examiner 7/21)

My respect for Shirley Sherrod increases by the minute. Sherrod is quoted by the Associated Press as stating that she's not sure she would accept her old job at the USDA if it were offered. "I am just not sure how I would be treated there," she is quoted as saying. Sherrod, who was vilified by FOX News and other voices in the media, including this column—mea culpa—for racist remarks made before the Georgia chapter of the NAACP, has turned out to be a victim of circumstance. Her early protestations that comments captured in a video were "taken out of context" have turned out to accurate. The comments, as I wrote in an update to my original post, were part of a longer statement about personal redemption—about how a person holding the most wrongheaded and despicable views can come around to the light. But the conservative media are not the only villains in this tale. The White House—the same White House that rushed to judgment regarding the actions of the Cambridge police in another "racial incident"—leaped to the wrong conclusion in this case as well. [Link](#)

Poll: Should Obama's USDA re-hire Shirley Sherrod? (Denver Examiner 7/21)

The NAACP has retracted its criticism of USDA official Shirley Sherrod for "acting stupidly" and admitting to showing racist favoritism toward non-whites, and the USDA is now considering reinstating her. This is happening because information has now surfaced indicating that there was more to the story, such as that Sherrod's Marxist class hatred eventually trumped her racial bigotry enough to allow her to go back and help the struggling white farmer. But should this really be enough to justify our "post-racial" bigot-in-chief publicly endorsing yet another extreme Jeremiah Wright-style race/class hysteric (see also Van Jones)? Especially after he refused to allow the prosecution of armed Black Panthers for openly intimidating voters at a polling location...during the election that put him in office? [Link](#)

NAACP investigation exonerates USDA's Shirley Sherrod of racist accusations (Denver Examiner 7/21)

As reported exclusively Tuesday morning, media reports of Shirley Sherrod's alleged racist remarks were overlooking a brief clue about a revelation she was revealing in her presentation at the NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet on March 27, 2010. Now an investigation conducted by the NAACP has exonerated her of continued racism because of the issue reported on Examiner.com. As reported by the Detroit Diversity Examiner in a copyrighted article (NAACP to investigate . . .), Sherrod says, "That's when it was revealed to me that it's about the poor versus those that have and not so much about white . . ." What the YouTube Video failed to show was that the speech was about this revelation. Sherrod continued, although missing from the YouTube video, to tell how she developed a relationship with the white farmer's family and how she worked to save their farm. In its entirety it is a moving story that shows that once we can

get beyond the "visible" and look at others as humans we open our eyes to new relationships, personal horizons, and inner growth. [Link](#)

USDA considers re-hiring Shirley Sherrod after full video of NAACP "racist" speech is released (Denver Examiner 7/21)

Wednesday, USDA Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said that he will now reconsider re-hiring Shirley Sherrod after she was asked to resign; his decision comes after the NAACP released the full video of Sherrod giving a speech and realizing that her words were taken out of context. The decision to fire Sherrod was made after a three minute clip of her speech was seen, but the three minutes were part of a much longer speech. The full video of her speech can be seen below, and at about 15 minutes into the video is when Sherrod reaches the part that led to the loss of her job. Wednesday, Vilsack released a statement that said he will "conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts" about his decision to ask Shirley Sherrod to resign. Sherrod tells the story of how she learned to treat people equally, and during that speech she tells of a time when she didn't. And she tells the story of a "white farmer" that she didn't help based on the farmer's race. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod vindicated by full tape (Denver Examiner 7/21)

Conservative media went ballistic yesterday with a purported case of racism by a black social worker against a white farmer. Their fury was directed at Shirley Sherrod, a woman employed at the USDA, who supposedly bragged about the crime while speaking at a local NAACP meeting. A heavily edited video of the event went viral on the right, and the noise machine cranked up the volume. Their only problem is that the full tape tells a very different story. To put it in context, the NAACP recently pleaded with the Tea Party to disavow its racist elements. The right screamed, "foul," but then Tea Party Express leader, Mark Williams, had to be dismissed after composing an overtly racist "letter to Lincoln" as part of their defense. In this situation, the tape of a black woman admitting racism must have seemed like manna from heaven. They announced it everywhere, as if her failure could somehow mitigate their own. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod NAACP controversy takes a surprising turn (Denver Examiner 7/21)

Well, here is a case where people need to check all the facts before making assumptions. I am guilty of this. Many other journalists are as well. It is so easy to take an incomplete sound bite from the Internet and condemn somebody without hearing the full tape or understanding the context in which the alleged bad words were said. Yesterday, many conservative journalists condemned Shirley Sherrod for bragging how she discriminated against a white farmer. It sounds horrific until you hear the whole tape, which I have and--unfortunately--don't have a copy of. From the rest of the tape, listeners learn that the event Mrs. Sherrod speaks of happened over twenty years ago. They also learn how Mrs. Sherrod overcame her racism and saw the farmer as being poor, rather than White. She helped the farmer and his family and they are still grateful for what she has done. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod's Disappearing Act: Not So Fast (Washington Examiner 7/20)

My oh my, that happened quickly. Perhaps too quickly. Until yesterday, Shirley Sherrod was Georgia Director of Rural Development for the USDA. Earlier in the day at Big Government, Andrew Breitbart put up a video that exposed Ms. Sherrod as someone all too willing to discriminate based on race. Within hours of the video's release, USDA Director Tom Vilsack announced Sherrod's recognition, and in the process issued an exceptionally strong condemnation ("We are appalled by her actions ... Her actions were shameful ... she gave no indication she had attempted to right the wrong she had done to this man"). The NAACP, at whose Freedom Fund Banquet Sherrod spoke of her discriminatory posture, and at which the audience seemed to indicate approval of her outlook, followed a short time later, virtually echoing Vilsack. [Link](#)

BREAKING: Racist Obama administration member resigns (Manhattan Conservative Examiner 7/19)

Shirley Sherrod of the USDA's Georgia Rural Development office has resigned following the airing of overtly racist remarks she made in a speech before—of all organizations—the NAACP. At a local NAACP meeting in March of 2010, Sherrod boasted of withholding assistance to a farmer based on the color of his skin, which happened to be white. Sherrod (surprise!) is black. In her comments, which are captured in the video below, Sherrod freely admits to "struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land." She further confesses to abusing her position by refusing to "give him the full force of what I could do." The remarks

conclude with a racist gem: "I took him to a white lawyer... I figured that if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him." [Link](#)

Running scared at the USDA (The Baltimore Sun 7/22)

The forced resignation of U.S. Department of Agriculture manager Shirley Sherrod after a misleading video purporting to show her making racist comments appeared on conservative media outlets this week raises any number of questions about the Obama administration's apparent willingness to jump to conclusions before getting all the facts... But what's the Obama administration's excuse? Ms. Sherrod says that within hours of the video surfacing on Fox, a USDA official contacted her to demand her resignation and gave the impression that the White House had approved the request. What's just as striking is that higher-ups at the agency itself apparently were so preoccupied with insulating themselves from potential political fallout that it never occurred to them to check for themselves whether Mr. Breitbart's allegations of discrimination were true. That the administration caved so cravenly to Mr. Breitbart's provocations is unnerving to say the least. It hardly inspires confidence when people see government manipulated into flinching like a whipped dog at the slightest irritant. And that raises an even larger question: If the administration is primed to panic over every real or imagined public relations blip generated by the 24-hour news cycle, no matter how baseless or absurd, how can it ever be counted on to stand up for the principles of fairness, decency and common sense on the issues that really matter? [Link](#)

USDA Official Implicated in NAACP Racism Flap (Buckeye Ag Network 7/20)

Days after the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) denounced the Conservative Tea Party movement on allegations of racism, the organization was itself implicated in charges of racism involving a USDA official. In a video released at BigGovernment.com, USDA's Director of Rural Development in Georgia Shirley Sherrod was depicted acknowledging discriminating against white farmers. The video, of a speech Sherrod gave to the NAACP's Freedom Fund banquet in March of this year, stirred quite a controversy on the internet this week, forcing Sherrod's resignation from the department Monday. Sherrod's remarks in the NAACP speech indicated that she "didn't give [a white farmer] the full force of what I could do," because "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land." [Link](#)

Commentary: A knee-jerk reaction to Shirley Sherrod (Lexington Herald-Leader 7/22)

Can we talk about race? No, it's too risky. Just ask Shirley Sherrod, the federal agriculture official who was forced out as head of rural development in Georgia, after a right-wing blogger — devoid of ethics or conscience — circulated a snippet from her after-dinner speech to the NAACP in rural Coffee County, Ga., earlier this year. What was portrayed on the blog twisted Sherrod's message into the exact opposite of what it was. Sherrod, who is black, was the victim of a "high-tech lynching," to borrow Justice Clarence Thomas' phrase. But that's not the outrageous part. We've come to expect such slimy shenanigans from certain quarters. The outrageous part is that the Obama administration and even the NAACP immediately knuckled under to the political con artists who are trying to stir up anger among white voters by portraying the administration as anti-white. [Link](#)

Sherrod's family demands USDA, White House apologies (Albany Herald 7/21)

Members of Shirley Sherrod's family gathered in support of the family's embattled matriarch at a rally this afternoon at the Charles Sherrod Civil Rights Park here. Son Kenyatta and daughter Russia defended their mother from charges of racism which led to her resignation from the U.S. Department of Agriculture position as director of its Rural Development program in Georgia on Tuesday. Her ouster stemmed from a video posted on the Internet from an NAACP banquet in March. In the video Shirley Sherrod recalled a case where a white farmer asked for her help and her initial reluctance to throw the full weight of her office behind his problem because of his race and what she felt was his superior attitude. The three-minute video clip that was posted on a conservative website, however, was just a snippet of the entire speech. [Link](#)

Get ready for another phony race story on FOX News (Milwaukee Journal Sentinel 7/20)

I'm sure the folks at FOX News will do as much with the resignation of Shirley Sherrod as they did with the fake outrage over the New Black Panther Party. Sherrod, who worked for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, was forced to resign after being accused of discriminating against a white farmer. A video of a talk she gave to black farmers that went viral on right-wing blogs seemed to suggest she admitted not helping the white farmer as much as she could have. But it turns out, the farmer's wife told CNN Sherrod

did help her husband and did the best she could to help save their farm. Sherrod thinks she was forced to resign because of the recent political backlash over an NAACP statement condemning racism in the Tea Party Movement. [Link](#)

Analysis: So much for that 'conversation' on race: With 'gotcha' from both sides, America is dumber (Twin Cities Pioneer-Press 7/21)

...The turn toward racial farce drew an embarrassing, reactive reversal from the Obama administration Wednesday morning, as Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack promised in a terse statement to reconsider the firing of Shirley Sherrod, his hitherto obscure Georgia director of rural development. In a video posted Sunday on Andrew Breitbart's Big Government website, Sherrod recounted a story in which she considered refusing a federal grant to a white couple based solely on race. The deceptively edited video seemed to present yet another racial stock figure turning her resentment into a kind of petty tyranny, and the Obama administration did not hesitate in demanding and receiving her resignation. But an extended version of Sherrod's speech suggested she was in fact preaching the exact opposite message. The story she was recounting had taken place more than two decades ago - and she was using it to tell a far more nuanced tale. She had, the white farmer from the anecdote emerged to testify, saved his farm. The line delivered just before the excerpt began introduced the anecdote as a lesson from God that "the struggle is really about poor people," not race. [Link](#)

Former USDA official tells her side of racial controversy (Federal Times 7/20)

CNN has an interview with Shirley Sherrod, an Agriculture Department official who stepped down yesterday after a video surfaced where she describes a 1986 incident where she didn't help a white farmer as much as she could because of his race. The NAACP applauded her resignation, but Sherrod — who was USDA's director of rural development in Georgia — said the comments in the video don't tell the whole story, and said the incident took place before she joined USDA. What do you think? Did Sherrod cross the line? Or is this a puffed-up controversy? [Link](#)

White House forced into U-turn over Shirley Sherrod race row (Guardian 7/21)

The White House has been forced to make an embarrassing U-turn after it appeared to have acted rashly in approving the sacking of a senior black official who was being targeted by a controversial rightwing blogger. The Obama administration had initially supported the decision of Tom Vilsack, the agriculture secretary, to force the resignation of Shirley Sherrod after a misleadingly edited version of a speech she gave in March caused outrage on the Internet. The edited clips, put out by Andrew Breitbart of the conservative site BigGovernment.com, who has worked with the leading rightwing blogger Matt Drudge, gave the impression that Sherrod, the department's head of rural development in the southern state of Georgia, had boasted about having discriminated against a white farmer 24 years ago. But when the full footage of the speech was released hours later, it became clear that she was recounting the story as a parable for why every poor person deserved to be helped equally, whatever their race. [Link](#)

Robert Gibbs Apologizes to Shirley Sherrod (New York Magazine 7/21)

In his White House press briefing just now, Press Secretary Robert Gibbs apologized to former USDA employee Shirley Sherrod on behalf of the "entire administration" and said that Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack is trying (Trying? How hard can it be?) to call her to apologize himself and discuss what will happen next. Gibbs also said that President Obama had no part in the decision to fire Sherrod. As for who's to blame for the embarrassing incident, it's our crazy media and political "culture." "We live in a culture that things whip around, people want fast responses, we want to give fast responses, and I don't think there's any doubt that if we all look at this, I think that one of the great lessons we take away from this is to ask all the questions first, and to come to that fuller understanding," Gibbs said. "I say that from the perspective of this administration, from the perspective of those that cover this administration, and those that are involved in the back-and-forth in the political theater of this country." [Link](#)

The Washington Post on the Sherrod Case: See no racism (Harpers Magazine 7/21)

The significance of the Shirley Sherrod affair is clear: an employee at the U.S. Department of Agriculture lost her job and was painted as a racist due to the release of an edited, highly misleading video of a speech she made a quarter-century ago. In any rational world, the headline for a story about the case is pretty obvious: "African American woman fired due to bogus charge of racism; victim smeared by video snippet released by conservative group." Needless to say, this was not the headline above the idiotic piece that ran in today's Washington Post by Karen Tumulty and Krissah Thompson: "New front in racism battle:

USDA official's words provide fodder to those who call Obama biased." This was a classic piece of spineless "he said, she said" Washington journalism that was desperately afraid to take a position or state the obvious... So basically both sides are guilty here and questions about Obama's "motives, his legitimacy and even his citizenship" stem from "[s]uspicious on the right that Obama has a hidden agenda." [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod (Commonwealth Magazine 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod should get her job back (though I wonder whether she even wants it at this point), and Tom Vilsack should publicly apologize to this woman. It's scandalous that anyone in this administration would push someone to resign based on a Fox News/Andrew Breitbart report without conducting a full investigation to ascertain the real facts. The NAACP should also be ashamed [for condemning Sherrod before it bothered to get her story]. As for Breitbart and Fox, we already know they have no shame. UPDATES: Vilsack doubles down on stupid. Breitbart admits he hasn't even seen the whole video. What a sorry, sordid episode. [Link](#)

The Curious Case of Shirley Sherrod (Atlanta Post 7/21)

A USDA worker became the first innocent causality in the verbal race war being played out in the media between conservative entities and the NAACP. Yesterday, the mainstream media was buzzing about a Shirley Sherrod, former agriculture director of rural development in Georgia and virtual unknown, who was forced to resign after a video surfaced on conservative blogger Andrew Breitbart's Big Government website (and replayed over and over again on Fox News) of Sherrod supposedly expressing racist intent and remarks before an NAACP banquet. Sherrod, who was condemned by the NAACP, was taped speaking about an encounter she had with a white farmer 28 years ago, who she said appeared to have superiority issues and yet was asking her for assistance. Later on in the news day, the wife of the white farmer, who supposedly was discriminated against by Sherrod, came forward and defended her, saying that Sherrod had worked tirelessly to help the couple save the farm. It was also "discovered" that the tape had been edited (gasp again) to produce a false biasness on Sherrod's part. [Link](#)

USDA Sec. Vilsack still owes an apology and swift action to discriminated Hispanic farmers (Latina Lista 7/21)

LatinaLista.net -- What happened to Shirley Miller Sherrod and the swiftness of her firing at the hands of her boss Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack was an outrage. Yet, what was a bigger outrage was the reason Vilsack gave the press for doing what he did: Vilsack said he had been focused on trying to address "the longstanding history of civil rights claims made against the department," and that he was acting in the spirit of trying to eliminate discrimination within the USDA. He referenced the "tens of thousands" of civil rights claims made against the USDA by minority and female farmers. If that sentiment was even remotely true then Vilsack would have resolved by now the court case pending against the USDA in Garcia v. Vilsack, where Hispanic farmers have been forced to go to court to get the USDA to compensate for the years of discrimination levied against them through the agency's farm credit and non-credit farm benefit programs. [Link](#)

Rural Development broadcast clips

Viral Politics: Shirley Sherrod Video Flap Highlights Political Trend (Good Morning America 7/21)

The controversy over comments about race made by ousted USDA official Shirley Sherrod has ignited a political debate over using viral videos to "race-bait." The conservative publisher of the Web site that posted the clip of Sherrod at a recent NAACP conference saying she had not given a white farmer as much help as she could have more than two decades ago stood by his decision today, even after it was revealed that the comments may have been taken out of context. "The video shows racism and when the NAACP is going to charge the Tea Party with racism ... I'm going to show you it happens on the other side," Andrew Breitbart, publisher of biggovernment.com, told "Good Morning America" today. He contended that this only goal in publishing the clip was to turn the tables on the NAACP, which made headlines this month when they exposed racism within the ranks of the Tea Party. [Link](#)

Black farmers' settlement is at the mercy of the Senate (CNN 7/22)

Money to pay for a discrimination lawsuit brought against the Department of Agriculture by black farmers remains stuck in a legislative body described as a place where bills go to die... Pelosi's sentiments were echoed by John Boyd, a fourth-generation farmer and founder of the National Black Farmers Association.

"We are still stuck in Senate politics, and it looks like it's very bipartisan politics with the Democrats on one side of the fence trying to get something done, and the Republicans focusing on midterm elections," he told CNN. Boyd urged President Obama to step in and move the bill forward. "We just need the president to focus in on this thing just a little while longer and ask that the black farmers get a vote on this very, very important issue before the recess," he said. "I want to go on record making sure that everybody understands that we support the president 110 percent. We just feel that we need a little push in the Senate to help get this done." [Link](#)

Sherrod speaks to President Obama in a telephone call (CNN 7/22)

A former Agriculture Department employee who was forced to resign from her job based on incomplete and misleading reports of a speech she gave spoke to President Barack Obama by telephone Thursday... "If not the president, someone there at the White House was involved in that," she said. According to Sherrod, she received direct pressure from White House officials to resign, and no one gave her an opportunity to explain... As she was asked for her resignation, Sherrod said, she pleaded with USDA officials to look at the whole speech, but got nowhere. [Link](#)

On Sherrod, blame White House, NAACP (CNN 7/22)

What does the rhetorical feud between the Tea Party and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People have to do with the case of Shirley Sherrod, a black former Agriculture Department employee who resigned this week under pressure from the Obama administration? Everything, if you ask Sherrod.... I'd argue, the administration deserves most of the blame. The buck stops with the White House, or at least it should. If Obama didn't want Sherrod out, then he could have stopped her from resigning. I'm afraid he didn't do that because this whole awkward story interfered with the fantastical narrative he's desperately trying to spin that his administration is "post-racial... But she told CNN that the USDA official who "harassed" her into resigning told her that the White House wanted her gone. [Link](#)

Sherrod offered new job, but says she is not so sure (CNN 7/22)

A former Agriculture Department employee who was forced to resign from her job based on incomplete and misleading reports of a speech she gave has been offered a new job by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, but said Thursday she is "not so sure."
"I'm not so sure that going back to the department is the thing to do," Shirley Sherrod told CNN's "American Morning." Sherrod said she was offered some type of civil rights position in the department's Office of Outreach, and that she was expecting to receive something official in an e-mail from the department. She said Thursday she had not had a chance to see that yet. But "I would not want to be the one person at USDA that's responsible for issues of discrimination within the agency," she said. "You know, there's a lawsuit by black farmers, there's a lawsuit by Hispanic and Native American and women farmers ... There are changes that would need to happen in order to once and for all really deal with discrimination." [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod an innocent bystander on never-ending race highway (CNN 7/21)

There is no issue that is more volatile, passionate, confusing, perplexing and complex than the reality of race in America. Whether we are discussing the motives of the Tea Party, the legal ramifications of the new Arizona immigration law, the impact of the Supreme Court deciding a discrimination case involving white firefighters, or the speech of a Department of Agriculture official at an NAACP convention, race is an issue that permeates so many of our discussions, whether we want to admit it or not. The latest flare-up in this ever-evolving story involves Shirley Sherrod, a USDA official, who became a national story when Andrew Breitbart's website, BigGovernment.com, posted a video that seemed to show her admitting to discriminating against a white farmer. As the story began to gain circulation and got picked up by national media outlets, USDA swiftly moved to quell a potential firestorm by asking for her resignation, which was granted. Later, the NAACP weighed in, saying that the comments attributed to her were not right and went against their mission of racial equality. [Link](#)

The Tale of Shirley Sherrod (CNN 7/21)

Shirley Sherrod's story is not as straight forward as it originally appeared. After a video clip of Mrs. Sherrod giving a speech to an NAACP group surfaced, she was fired from her job at United States Department of Agriculture on the basis of racism. However, that clip did not show the full story. After watching the entire video, it is clear that Mrs. Sherrod is anything but a racist. Her comments were taken out of context. Although Mrs. Sherrod has been through her share of racism, she has turned those

experiences into positives by only aiming to promote race relations. Now Mrs. Sherrod is speaking out. Although coming out of a bad situation, Mrs. Sherrod is taking the opportunity to tell the world about her experiences with racism. She is devoting her life to change – and now, she's even hoping to write a book. This morning, we are asking if you have a job offer for Shirley Sherrod, especially if you are a book publisher. [Link](#)

Campbell Brown (CNN 20:03:3 – 8:13:13 PM 7/20)

a conservative blogger, andrew breitbart posted a link to that video, showing it clearly showed racism and the racism was being tolerated by the naacp. sherrod claimed she was effectively fired yesterday after the usda demanded her resignation. we just learned president obama supported the usda's move. joe johns has been working this story for us. here's the latest from joe. reporter: hey campbell. this is a story about race and politics and america's history in the south, the story of the personal journey of shirley sherrod, a top ranking agriculture official in the state of georgia and of a white farmer who came to her for help decades ago, also sherrod's boss, the agriculture secretary, who asked for her resignation. sherrod's tale is the expert of the tape you saw was taken out of context. she says she's not a racist and she treated the white farmer and her story fairly. i did not discriminate against him. in fact, i went all out. i had to frantically look for a lawyer at the last minute, because the first lawyer we went to was not doing anything to really help him. in fact, that lawyer suggested they should just let the farm go. all of that process -- that's why i tell it, because everything that happened in dealing with him -- he was the first white farmer who had come to me for help. everything that i did working with him helped me to see that it wasn't about race, it's about those who have and those who don't. [Request Story](#)

American Morning (CNN 7/21)

First though, a stunning twist in a story that's once again brought the sensitive state of race and politics to the surface in this country. It now sounds like Agriculture Department official Shirley Sherrod could get her job back. And it was just 24 hours ago when we first gave her the chance to defend herself right here on this show. Many were branding her a racist after a conservative Web site released unedited tape of comments that she made back in March. Comments that sounded bigoted when taken out of context, comments that cost her her job, comments that cost her her reputation. But now the whole tape is out, the whole story is out, and so is the whole truth. CNN's Joe Johns has the whole story for us. This is a story about race and politics and America's history in the south. A story of the personal journey of Shirley Sherrod, a top-ranking Agriculture Department official in the state of Georgia who gave a speech to the NAACP a few months back, made some personal disclosures about whether she was going to help a white farmer who came to her for help decades ago. [Request Article](#)

Ex-USDA official insists she was told White House wanted her to quit (CNN 7/20)

While officials say the White House didn't ask for Shirley Sherrod's resignation, the former black Agriculture Department employee insisted Tuesday that the push for her to step down came from the Obama administration. But Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack said he asked her to resign without interacting with the White House. "When I saw the statements and the context of the statements, I determined that it would make it difficult for her to do her job as a rural development director, and compromise our capacity to close the chapter on civil rights cases, I didn't want anything to jeopardize her job in terms of getting the job done and getting people to work in Georgia," Vilsack said. [Link](#)

Top News (CNN 9:33:34 - 9:53:27 AM 7/21)

racist, prejudice, out of touch, just 24 hours, shirley sherrod has been viciously attacked from every end of the political and ethnic spectrum. unfair and outrageous accusations against an african-american whom says she's been fighting for civil rights her entire life. you probably heard her story. have you probably seen the video clips. key word here. if you watched the former usda official address members of the naacp this way, you probly would think she was a racist. i was struggling with the fact so many black people lost their livelihoods here i was faced with that with the white person. i'm going to give him the full force of what i can do. okay. it sounds offensive. right? well, here's the problem. that's what happens when you manipulate the message. tinker with the truth twist it. how about we tell you what shirley sherrod really meant. it is funny because this part of the speech never made the conservative blog the first time around. 25 years ago, i couldn't stand here and say what i'm saying, what i will say to you tonight. like i told you, god helped me to see it is not just about black people. it is about poor people. and i have come a long way. i knew that i couldn't do it with hate, you know. as my mother has said to so many, if we had tried to live with hate in our hearts we probably would be dead now. but i come to realize that we have to work

together. you know, sad that we don't have room for the white and blacks here tonight. because we have to overcome the divisions we have. [Request Story](#)

Top News (CNN 12:06:58 – 12:16:58 PM 7/21)

wants to further review the encouraging of this resignation. that's absolutely right, fred. and i think we are going to have to see how this plays out in the next 12 hours or so, whether or not people are satisfied, whether or not people are convinced here, and whether or not the president, quite frankly, can be shielded from this. because a lot of people have looked at the president for guidance when it comes to racial discussions, racial matters. ... the congressional black caucus continues to believe -- i'm reading a quote now, that mrs. sherrod was unfairly asked to resign without due process, and should be reinstated immediately. of there are many individuals still serving in the department of agriculture who were responsible for years of discrimination against african-american farmers. the basis for mrs. sherrod's resignation is another example of why we must not sweep race under the rug. rather, we must come together as a nation and recognize that we do not live in a post-racial era, and that while difficult, we must confront these issues head-on with clarity and without fear. the statement coming from the congressional black caucus as it pertains to shirley sherrod. so sherrod's story has a lot of people talking about race, power, politics, and we're hearing from you, as well, on our blog. keep sending your comments to cnn.com/tony. we'll read more of them this hour. [Request Story](#)

White House Briefing (CNN 14:34:27 – 3:01:57)

are we missing anybody back there that's going to -- do you know if anybody else is back there waiting? can you tell us what the white house he's position is right now on shirley sherrod? should she get her job back? well, let me -- secretary vilsack has tried and is trying to reach ms. sherrod. when the secretary reaches her, he will apologize for the events of the last few days and they will talk about their next steps. i think it is -- i think clearly that a lot of people involved in this situation from the government's perspective on through acted without all the facts. now, as you saw secretary vilsack's statement from last evening, now that we have greater knowledge and broader facts sent, he is going to review all of those facts and that's what he'll talk to ms. sherrod about today. does the secretary plan to offer her her job back? again, i think that's something that the secretary and ms. sherrod are going to talk through those next steps. what was the president's involvement in this? can you walk us through that? [Request Story](#)

More White House Briefing (CNN 15:08 – 3:18:59 PM)

shirley sherrod, in fact, mentioned commentator glenn beck when she was asked what she was told by mrs. cook. as it stands right now, and that's why we wanted you to hear that moments ago -- as it stands right now, the white house is denying or appears to be denying that that conversation took place. we will obviously stay on top of this story. once again, let me bring to your attention what we're going to do. we are going to cover some of the big stories in just a moment, including the situation in the gulf with oil. we're going to be joined by charlie crist and chad myers. but aside from that, we are going to be spending the great majority of the next hour and 30 minutes letting you understand this story comprehensively. we're going to do that by doing something we think no one has done yet to this point. and that is, we're going to let you hear for yourself -- not we're going to listen to it and then select a sound bite here and a sound bite there. no. we're going to let you hear for yourself in its entirety shirley sherrod's speech, the speech in question. so you can decide if something was taken out, if something was left out of context, how, in fact, it was edited, because you've already heard the original release, right? now you're going to be able to hear the entire thing. it's about 35 minutes long. before we do that, let's go back now to robert gibbs. who made that call? [Request Story](#)

Top News (CNN 07/21/2010 11:01:04 - 11:11:04 AM 7/21)

look at the facts. will sherrod get her job back and an apology? does she even want it? when i look back over the past couple of days, it seems oh unreal. president obama will sign a financial reform bill this hour that will affect your wallet. good morning, i'm frederica whitfield in for tony harris. these stories and your comments right here right now in the cnn newsroom. what a difference a day of media frenzy makes. the agriculture department is reconsidering a case of an african-american employee pressed to resign over comments about a white farmer. it's a case about race and power, context and controversy. shirley sherrod says the videotaped comments about an incident 24 years ago were misconstrued. she said she was actually speaking out against racial discrimination. agriculture secretary tom vilsack released a statement saying, quote, i am, of course, willing and will conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts to ensure to the american people we are providing services in a fair and equitable manner

end quote. the farmer in question and his wife came to sherrod's defense. we heard from the wife while tony was interviewing sherrod live on television yesterday. [Request Story](#)

Former USDA employee says White House pressured her to resign (CNN 7/20)

A black former Agriculture Department employee, who resigned after a video clip surfaced of her discussing a white farmer, insisted Tuesday she "went all out" to help the man keep his farm and said she resigned under pressure from the Obama administration. Shirley Sherrod, who resigned Monday as the department's director of rural development for Georgia, told CNN she had four calls telling her the White House wanted her to resign. "They asked me to resign, and in fact they harassed me as I was driving back to the state office from West Point, Georgia, yesterday," she said. The last call "asked me to pull to the side of the road and do it [resign]," she said. [Link](#)

Ex-worker: USDA 'wasn't interested in hearing the truth' (CNN 7/20)

A former USDA employee who resigned after a video surfaced of her talking about a white farmer told CNN on Tuesday that the administration "wasn't interested in hearing the truth." Shirley Sherrod, who resigned Monday as the department's state director of rural development for Georgia, told CNN she had four calls telling her the White House wanted her to resign. She said she was driving at the time, and the last call asked her to pull to the side of the road and offer her resignation. Sherrod's resignation came after media outlets aired the video, in which she tells an audience she did not give the white farmer "the full force of what I could do" to help him avoid foreclosure. [Link](#)

USDA employee says statements on white farmer misconstrued (CNN 7/20)

A black Agriculture Department employee who resigned after a video clip showed her talking about a white farmer said Tuesday her remarks were taken out of context. Shirley Sherrod, the department's former state director of rural development for Georgia, told CNN on Tuesday the incident she discusses in the clip took place more than two decades ago -- and she recounted it to an audience to make the point that people should move beyond race. "I was speaking to that group, like I've done many groups, and I tell them about a time when I thought the issue was race and race only," Sherrod told CNN's "American Morning" from her home in Albany, Georgia. The incident took place in 1986, while she worked for a nonprofit and before she worked for the USDA, she said. "I was telling the story of how working with him helped me to see the issue is not about race. It's about those who have versus those who do not have." [Link](#)

'HANNITY': COULTER SAYS BREITBART WAS SET UP WITH SHIRLEY SHERROD TAPE (FOX NEWS 7/22)

SEAN HANNITY, HOST: Both the Department of Agriculture and the White House apologized to former USDA employee Shirley Sherrod earlier today. Now Sherrod was pressured to resign from her position after she was accused of delivering racist remarks at an event hosted by the NAACP. As it turns out those remarks were seen taken out of context and Sherrod was actually delivering a speech on the virtues of rejecting her racist impulses. Well, the Department of Agriculture and the White House are now realizing they may have acted prematurely. [Link](#)

'Glenn Beck': Sherrod Has White House Scrambling; They Need to Call Glenn (Fox News 7/22)

GLENN BECK, HOST: You know, Vilsack said that it is teachable moment here. Hot root beer? Great! Hot root beer? Yes, go ahead. What are you hiding behind the camera, Oscar? Like a hot root beer? Thank you very much. It's a teachable moment. A year ago, we had a beer summit. I'm an alcoholic, recovering. Yes. So, we will have a root beer summit to see what we can learn from the mess with Sherrod. Has it — has it hit anybody else that's the way the English say charade? Sherrod. Hmm. Just like the lady's name in this. Sherrod...

The other thing this thing is about is incompetence. I mean, how many terrible decisions has this administration made? I mean really — ones that are destroying the country, it's almost like they're intentionally trying to destroy it? Oh, did I say that? I better take another swig of root beer. [Link](#)

Sherrod Says She's Inclined to Turn Down Outreach Job at USDA (Fox News 7/22)

Ousted Agriculture Department official Shirley Sherrod said Thursday that she's inclined not to accept the job she was offered by Secretary Tom Vilsack after the administration scrambled to apologize for jumping to conclusions about comments she made in a video clip... Ousted Agriculture Department official Shirley Sherrod said Thursday that she's inclined not to accept the job she was offered by Secretary Tom Vilsack

after the administration scrambled to apologize for jumping to conclusions about comments she made in a video clip. Sherrod, who spoke during several interviews Thursday morning, revealed that she was offered an outreach position that would deal with discrimination matters. But she said she's not so keen on being the go-to person for those issues. "I would not want to be that individual that the department and everyone is looking to solve the issue of racism at USDA. It takes a lot more to get that job done," she said. "I haven't seen the offer. ... Before I say no totally, I would like to look at that." Sherrod also said she's not certain that President Obama "fully" supports her but would like the opportunity to teach him some life lessons, describing him as "not someone who has experienced some of the things I've experienced in life." [Link](#)

Gibbs Offers Administration Apology to Ex-Agriculture Official (Fox News 7/21)

White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs on Wednesday apologized "on behalf of this entire administration" to the Agriculture Department official forced to resign two days ago over a brief video clip that showed her making racial remarks. Gibbs said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack also is trying to reach Shirley Sherrod to personally apologize for the administration's handling of the incident. "He will apologize for the events of the last few days and they will talk about their next steps," he said, without clarifying whether Vilsack would offer Sherrod her job back as Georgia's director of rural development. Sherrod said earlier Wednesday she was not sure whether she wanted that job back. Gibbs said a "disservice" and an "injustice" had been done to Sherrod. [Link](#)

Andrew Breitbart on 'Hannity': 'This Is Not About Shirley Sherrod' (Fox News 7/21)

SEAN HANNITY, HOST: It was exactly one week ago when the NAACP passed a resolution condemning members of the Tea Party movement as racist. And now video has surfaced of a speaker making what appears to be racially charged remarks at an event hosted by the NAACP. Now the woman in the video, Shirley Sherrod, abruptly resigned last night from the USDA. Now let's take a look at a longer portion of the speech. This video was just posted on the NAACP's website. [Link](#)

O'Reilly Factor (FOX News 20:2:46 – 8:22:46 PM 7/20)

bill: continuing now with the lead story agricultural department shirley sherrod being forced to resign because of remarks. this comes on the heels of black panther voting place crimes. and justice department official the case was dropped because of race. joining us from washington kirsten powers who last week questioned the importance of the panther situation. ask you what i asked colmes of all the stories that i listed that the networks news felt that it should not cover, do you see anything news worthy about any of them? should any of them been covered by the network news? i'm with alan pretty much on the acorn thing. i think that was news story. i don't know that it was something that should have consumed day after day but certainly something to talk about. i think on -- i would say all of the other ones i doot think are news worthy except on the new black panther case i think that there was some legitimate questions that should be asked but i don't think that frankly there were a lot of answers that, you know, i question a lot of the answers that were giv and the conclusions that have been drawn. and i think that there is probably more to look into it in terms of the motivations of this whistleblower in terms of what is going on at the commission. bill: look, as i told colmes i want to hear shirley sherrod's story. i want all the facts to be uncovered here. that's what we do here. let's run down the stories. you think that van jones, a man personally known to the obamas who is appointed to a job that is fairly serious, developing environmental jobs for americans, it comes out that is he a marxist and that he believes that 9/11 might have been an inside job. this is a high-ranking official in the white house. you don't think this is -- rates network news coverage, kirsten? no, i don't. [Request Story](#)

Hannity (FOX News 21:00:30 – 9:10:30 PM 7/20)

sean: it was one week ago when the naacp passed a resolution condemning members of the tea party movement as racist. now video has surfaced of a speaker making what appears to be racially charged remarks at an event hosted by the naacp. the woman in the video shirley sherrod abruptly last night. let's look at a longer portion of the speech. this video was just posted on the naacp's website. ... sherrod claim she was taken out of context and had harsh words for the obama white house saying her resignation was forced and came only after several harrasing phone calls from an administration officials. tom vilsack secretary of agriculture is not backing down. he leased another statement today: there is zero tolerance for discrimination: we are getting word from the white house official the president was briefed on the circumstances behind sherrod's removal and he fully supports the secretary's decision. the naacp initially released a statement in which they sided with the administration saying, according to her remarks, she

mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race. we are appalled by her actions. her actions were shameful. ... they go on to say this shows the lens to which extremists elements will go however, it is important to note that the fox news channel did not make any mention of this story yesterday on air until after shirley sherrod had already lost her job after secretary vilsack had drawn his own conclusions that the president apparently agrees with. joining me with reaction the founder of big government.com the one and only infamous andrew breitbart. welcome back. [Request Story](#)

Why Was Shirley Sherrod Fired? (Fox News – Glenn Beck 7/20)

Let me show you the comments from Shirley Sherrod, the USDA's director of rural development in Georgia. Back in March, while addressing the NAACP, she said this about helping a white farmer: (BEGIN VIDEO CLIP) SHIRLEY SHERROD, FORMER USDA OFFICIAL: I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough. So that when he, I assumed the Department of Agriculture had sent him to me, either that or the Georgia Department of Agriculture, and he needed to go back and report that I did try to help him. [Link](#)

Forcing Ga. Official to Resign Over YouTube Clip was the Right Call, Agriculture Chief Says (Fox News 7/20)

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack on Tuesday stood by his decision to demand the resignation of a Georgia official over a controversial YouTube clip, though the ex-official claimed afterward that the Obama administration never gave her a chance to tell her side of the story. Shirley Sherrod, the department's ex-Georgia director of Rural Development, said the White House forced her out after the video surfaced showing her telling a story about how she withheld help to a white farmer in trouble. But she claimed the video omitted key context and that the administration just got scared. "They were not interested in hearing the truth. No one wanted to hear the truth," she said in a television interview Tuesday morning. [Link](#)

Ex-Ag Official Says Video Showing 'White Farmer' Story Excludes Key Context (Fox News 7/20)

The Department of Agriculture official who resigned Monday night over comments she made at an NAACP dinner in March is claiming that the video clip that caused the firestorm excluded critical context. Shirley Sherrod said the Obama administration got scared after the YouTube clip surfaced. In the video, the department's ex-Georgia director of Rural Development is shown telling the story about how she withheld help to a white farmer in trouble. But Sherrod, in an interview overnight with The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, said she was telling a story about events that happened 24 years when she was working for a local non-profit group. [Link](#)

Video Shows USDA Official Saying She Didn't Give 'Full Force' of Help to White Farmer (Fox News 7/20)

Days after the NAACP clashed with Tea Party members over allegations of racism, a video has surfaced showing an Agriculture Department official regaling an NAACP audience with a story about how she withheld help to a white farmer facing bankruptcy -- video that now has forced the official to resign. Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, is shown in the clip describing "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." Sherrod, who is black, claimed the farmer took a long time trying to show he was "superior" to her. The audience laughed as she described how she determined his fate... "There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person," Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a written statement. "We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously. [Link](#)

Gingrich Responds to Discrimination at USDA (Fox News 7/20)

SEAN HANNITY, HOST: And this is a Fox News alert. An Obama administration official resigned just a short time ago after she was caught on tape appearing to tell an audience that she had used her position to racially discriminate against white farmers. Now the woman, Shirley Sherrod, was the Georgia state director at the Department of Agricultural. Now the president's Agricultural Secretary Tom Vilsack just released a statement saying the USDA has a zero tolerance policy against discrimination. Here's part of the shocking video that ignited this controversy. (BEGIN VIDEO CLIP) SHIRLEY SHERROD, FORMER USDA GA STATE DIRECTOR: The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took

a long time talking but he was trying to show me he was superior to me. I know what he was doing. But he had come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him. [Request Story](#)

Government apologizes, offers ousted official new job (MSNBC 7/21)

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said Wednesday he has apologized to an employee he ousted over remarks about race and offered her a "unique" new position at the agency. "She's been put through hell and I could have done, and should have done, a better job," Vilsack said of Shirley Sherrod. Vilsack told reporters that Sherrod accepted his apology. He said, "She was extraordinarily gracious." Sherrod said she is considering Vilsack's offer of a new job working on civil rights. "They did make an offer," she told The Associated Press. "I just told him I need to think about it." Earlier Wednesday, an embarrassed White House also apologized to Sherrod, who was forced to resign over her remarks about race to an NAACP banquet in Georgia earlier this year. White House spokesman Robert Gibbs said the administration did not know all the facts when it acted. [Link](#)

Rachel Maddow (MSNBC 20:59:52 – 9:09:52 PM 7/20)

we have one clarification before we go. in the Breitbart manipulation story about Shirley Sherrod's speech we seem to have given the impression Ms. Sherrod was working for the federal government at the time in that story. she was actually helping these people by working an estate program in the state government of Georgia at that time. with much more on that story here is Rachel Maddow. good evening. good evening, Lawrence. I appreciate that. we'll have the head of the NAACP joining us to be talking about that story. but even more importantly and you would never know this if you got all your information from Fox News, Shirley Sherrod never actually followed through on this idea of withholding help to the white farmer. The whole point of her telling this story was that in the end she decided that her initial reaction was wrong, having never been confronted with the opportunity or the possibility of helping a white farmer before having always worked with black farmers. Her initial reaction to the first opportunity to help a white farmer was wrong. This is the point of the story. The point of the story was that she should actually help the white farmers and that is exactly what she did. [Request Story](#)

Top News (MSNBC 11:57:46 – 12:07:46 PM 7/21)

agriculture department. greatly appreciate it. that does it for me in this hour. I'll see you back here at 2:00 p.m. eastern time. we'll talk with a senior White House economic adviser about the signing of the historic Wall Street Reform Bill. is it going to change anything? coming up we have the big interview, the woman at the center of that controversy, Shirley Sherrod the federal employee at the center of this controversy over her speech at the NAACP accused of being a racist, forced to resign. now the White House and NAACP are backtracking but she has choice words for them. ... who do you blame for this rush to judgment, Reverend? well, those who made the determination to force her to resign or to fire her clearly this is a distorted story where with the low cable standards this thing became viral. she was hurt by it and in some sense maybe damaged by it. she deserves an apology and restoration and the department of agriculture should be investigated for the decision made relative to her. I had a guy write to me today who said, I personally think everyone involved in that lady's firing should be ashamed. the White House, the USDA, the NAACP, and the media. what does this say to you about how motivated the administration is by whatever is the controversy of the day on conservative cable? [Request Story](#)

Countdown With Keith Olbermann (MSNBC 20:35:04 – 8:45:04 PM 7/20)

an African-American federal worker has been forced to resign by the Obama administration because a speech she gave supposedly shows that she is a racist. and that she allowed that racism to affect her treatment of a white farmer in need of federal assistance. but in our third story that employee Shirley Sherrod says the speech she gave was edited and that the point of her full speech was just the opposite. the edited video in question put on a website yesterday by Andrew Breitbart. Mr. Breitbart tells TPM that he received the video already edited and that he does not have the full video. here is part of what Mr. Breitbart posted on Big Government.com. it is a portion of Shirley Sherrod's speech before the Georgia chapter of the NAACP. she describes her interaction with a white farmer in 1986 in her role as the USDA director of rural development in Georgia. what he didn't know, while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me, was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him. I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land and here I was faced with having to help a white person -- save their land. so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. in the

video she goes on to how she directed the white farmer to a white lawyer but later within the same video Breitbart posted she said this. that's when it was revealed to me that it's about poor versus those who have. and it's not so much about white. it is about white and black but it's not, you know, it opened my eyes. and ms. sherrrod has since defended the full, unedited speech. quote, my point in telling that story is that working with him helped me see that it wasn't just a black and whitish unite. [Request Story](#)

Black USDA official resigns after admitting she only 'did enough' for white farmer (MSNBC 7/20)

A black USDA official in Georgia has resigned after publicly admitting she didn't help a white man trying to save his farm to the "full force" of her power and instead referred him to "one of his own." Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said he had accepted Shirley Sherrod's resignation, saying there was "zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA." The NAACP, which recently condemned racism in tea party groups, also issued a statement Monday night saying: "Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race." [Link](#)

Morning Joe (MSNBC 7/20)

Well, another story of reverse discrimination comes out today. This one is really interesting. I'm thinking that this woman regrets this comment. a USDA official in Georgia has resigned after I YouTube clip shows her admitting that race helped determine how much aid would be given to a white farmer. You're not supposed to do that, are you? I mean, I'm not --it's probably not a good idea. for being so stupid. It's not even -- well, how about you just don't do it. Anyway, the state's director of rural development apparently made the comments during an NAACP banquet in March. Take a listen. The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking, but he was trying to show me he was superior to me. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time to show me he was superior to me was i was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him. I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So, I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. [Request Story](#)

Was It Fair to Fire Dept. of Agriculture Official Shirley Sherrod? (ABC World News 7/21)

In a case that mixes the potent topics of race and politics, some are questioning whether the Department of Agriculture made the right decision when it fired a Georgia official, Shirley Sherrod, after a video surfaced of her talking about seemingly-racist actions 24 years ago. In the NAACP video, posted on a conservative website, Sherrod, an African American, said, "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland. And here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land, so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do." Almost immediately, Sherrod was forced to resign by the Obama administration, and Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack issued a statement declaring that "there is zero tolerance for discrimination" at the agency. [Link](#)

Are Liberals Too Concerned with Being "Colorblind?" (CBS News 7/22)

The nation - especially its liberals - celebrated the election of the first black president in 2008 and saw for the first time the prospect for a "colorblind" country. If the debacle surrounding former Department of Agriculture employee Shirley Sherrod proves anything, however, it's that race is still a very raw issue in the United States. But the left has tried to ignore the issue, liberal activists said Thursday at Netroots Nation, a progressive conference taking place this weekend in Las Vegas. And by doing so, those activists say, they are ceding the debate to the right -- and losing ground. "To the center and the left, we have this colorblind mantra," said Rich Benjamin, author of the book "Searching for Whittopia: An Improbable Journey to the Heart of White America." [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod "Very Pleased" After Phone Call with Obama (CBS News 7/22)

Former USDA employee Shirley Sherrod, who was fired over an out-of-context video of remarks she made about race posted to a conservative website, spoke with President Obama over the phone early this afternoon. "The President reached Ms. Sherrod by telephone at about 12:35. They spoke for seven minutes," the White House said. "The President expressed to Ms. Sherrod his regret about the events of the last several days. He emphasized that Secretary Vilsack was sincere in his apology yesterday, and in his work to rid USDA of discrimination." "The President told Ms. Sherrod that this misfortune can present an opportunity for her to continue her hard work on behalf of those in need, and he hopes that she will do so," according to the White House. [Link](#)

Andrew Breitbart: Sherrod "Sees Things Through a Racial Prism" (CBS News 7/22)

On Thursday's "Washington Unplugged," conservative commentator and editor Andrew Breitbart spoke with CBS News senior White House correspondent Bill Plante about the firestorm of criticism over the controversial video posted on his BigGovernment.com site that cost Shirley Sherrod her job at the Department of Agriculture... Breitbart continued, "I believe the Shirley sees things through a racial prism. She has the right to do that. I'm sorry that the White House through her under the bus. I did not ask for her to be investigated. I did not ask for her to be fired."

Shirley Sherrod: Vilsack was "Ready to Throw Me Out" (CBS News 7/21)

Overnight, Shirley Sherrod became the most talked about person in Washington. The frenzy over "racist" comments made at an NAACP event in March resulted in her boss, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, firing her. The NAACP and the White House seemed to back Vilsack's decision. But, the clip in question turned out to be heavily edited, missing the full context of her speech. After backtracking and a series of mea-culpas, Sherrod may get her job back, but now she may or may not accept. The incident has now sparked a larger debate over the continuing issue of how race is perceived in America, particularly during the presidency of Barack Obama. [Link](#)

Sherrod Story Shows Ugly Side of 24-Hour News (CBS News 7/21)

The old United Press International wire service had a slogan: "Get it first, but first get it right." In the wake of the Shirley Sherrod story, it's worth asking whether more and more the second half of that slogan has been dumped into the trash bin. It's now clear that no one - not conservative blogger Andrew Breitbart, who posted the original clip, not the NAACP, which condemned Sherrod, not the Agriculture Department official who ordered her to resign - none of them had seen the whole speech. There's another part to this story: the deep-seated desire of people who turn to news and opinion sites to reinforce their pre-existing beliefs, reports CBS News senior political correspondent Jeff Greenfield. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Gets White House Apology (CBS News 7/21)

Stating that "a disservice was done," White House press secretary Robert Gibbs today apologized to former USDA employee Shirley Sherrod over her firing after a conservative news outlet posted an out-of-context video of comments she made two decades ago. "I think without a doubt Shirley Sherrod is owed an apology," Gibbs told reporters. "I would do so certainly on behalf of this administration." Sherrod, who watched the briefing, immediately responded on CNN that "it makes me feel better that the apology is finally happening." "I accept their apology," she said. Gibbs maintained that the decision to fire Sherrod was made by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and that the White House, which initially stood by Vilsack's decision, did not direct that she be fired. [Link](#)

Critics Blast White House for Shirley Sherrod Firing (CBS News 7/21)

There's no excuse for Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack's decision to fire former USDA employee Shirley Sherrod or for the White House's endorsement of the decision, according to liberal commentators, who suggest the move has disquieting implications for the administration. The racially-charged episode has also prompted the Congressional Black Caucus to weigh in. The group calls Sherrod's forced resignation "troubling" and says Vilsack overreacted before getting all the facts. The USDA asked Sherrod to resign on Monday after a conservative blog released an edited video of remarks she gave at an NAACP conference. The edited video gave the impression Sherrod admitted to discriminating against a white farmer. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod: I'm Not Sure I Want my Job Back (CBS News 7/21)

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said early Wednesday morning he may consider reversing Shirley Sherrod's dismissal, but the former USDA official, fired because of out-of-context remarks about race, says she may not want her job back. "Because of all the publicity surrounding what happened...how would I be treated once I'm back there? I just don't know," Sherrod said this morning on ABC's "Good Morning America." "I would have to be reassured on that." The USDA asked Sherrod to resign on Monday after a conservative blog released an edited video of remarks she gave at an NAACP conference that gave the impression she discriminated against a white farmer. Her full remarks, however, made clear she was relating a story from two decades ago -- long before she joined the USDA -- and that she ultimately learned an important lesson to disregard race. The wife of the farmer in question stated yesterday that Sherrod is a "friend for life" who helped save their family farm. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod: White House Forced My Resignation (CBS News 7/20)

The Department of Agriculture employee who resigned after a controversy erupted over recent remarks she made is now saying that the White House forced her resignation. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, however, is taking responsibility for the resignation, and the White House reportedly says it had no part in his decision. Shirley Sherrod, the USDA's former director of rural development in Georgia, said USDA deputy undersecretary Cheryl Cook called her Monday and said the White House wanted her to resign, the Associated Press reports. "They called me twice," Sherrod told the AP, noting that she was driving when she received the calls. "The last time they asked me to pull over the side of the road and submit my resignation on my Blackberry, and that's what I did." [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Resigns Over USDA Race Remark Furor (CBS News 7/20)

A high-ranking black employee of the U.S. Department of Agriculture has resigned after remarks she made about race were distributed by conservative web sites and aired on Fox News. A video clip of Shirley Sherrod, the USDA's Georgia State Director of Rural Development, was circulated by conservative blogger Andrew Breitbart and his site, biggovernment.com, in which Sherrod talked of withholding help to a white man facing the loss of his family farm. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack released a statement Tuesday saying he had accepted Sherrod's resignation, and added that the department has no tolerance for discrimination. [Link](#)

Brooklyn Congressman Calls for Probe on Firing of Shirley Sherrod (NBC New York 7/22)

Rep. Edolphus "Ed" Towns is calling on Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack to appear before a Congressional Committee to explain just what went wrong in the firing of Shirley Sherrod. "Ms. Sherrod was vilified in the press and her professional reputation called into question, and that is deeply troubling," Towns, a Brooklyn Democrat and the Chairman of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform wrote in a letter to Vilsack. Sherrod resigned as the Georgia state director of rural development for the U.S. Department of Agriculture late Monday night after a misleading video surfaced of her delivering a speech before the NAACP in which her remarks seemed to conflict with the department's "zero tolerance" policy for discrimination. Vilsack called Rep. Towns yesterday to discuss the decision to request Ms. Sherrod's resignation. However, in the hours after the discussion Rep. Towns has come to believe that "details have emerged" that warrant an investigation. [Link](#)

Obama 'regrets' sacking of official Shirley Sherrod (BBC 7/22)

President Barack Obama has called agriculture official Shirley Sherrod to express "his regret" over her recent sacking. Mrs Sherrod was fired after a blogger posted a video of her apparently suggesting she had not fully helped a farmer because he was white. It was revealed afterwards that the comments, at an equality group event, had been taken out of context. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack has already apologised for the dismissal. A spokesman for the president said he had told Mrs Sherrod "this misfortune can present an opportunity for her to continue her hard work on behalf of those in need". In the edited video clip, Mrs Sherrod appears to say that in 1986 she did not give a Georgia farmer all the assistance she could to save his farm because black farmers were losing their land and he was white. [Link](#)

US reviewing dismissal of Shirley Sherrod for 'racism' (BBC 7/21)

Agriculture department official Shirley Sherrod appears to be exonerated in the full video, which surfaced soon after she was sacked. On Wednesday morning, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said he would reconsider the decision to oust her.

Mr Vilsack said he was willing to review "additional facts". Ms Sherrod said the video first posted on a conservative website lacked context and was part of a larger story about learning from her mistakes and racial reconciliation, not racism. She also complained the department fired her without listening to her explanation. In the edited video clip, Ms Sherrod appears to say that in 1986 she did not give a Georgia farmer all the assistance she could to save his farm because black farmers were losing their land and he was white. [Link](#)

White House apologizes to fired USDA worker (Fox2 7/21)

The Obama administration issued an extraordinary public apology Wednesday and offered to reinstate a federal official who was fired after she appeared to make racial comments on a misleading snippet of video. When it became clear that her comments had been taken out of context, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack spoke to Shirley Sherrod by phone to apologize and to ask if she would return to the department.

The events came as an embarrassment to Obama administration officials, who have sought to depict themselves as immune to the blogosphere and demands of the news cycle. [Link](#)

NAACP Slams Shirley Sherrod's Actions As 'Shameful' (My Fox New York 7/20)

The actions of a black U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) official who admitted withholding help to a white farmer facing bankruptcy were late Monday described as "shameful" by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, was exposed in a video recorded at an NAACP banquet describing "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." Sherrod claimed the farmer took a long time trying to show he was "superior" to her. "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land -- so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough," she said in the video. The Agriculture Department announced Monday, shortly after FOXNews.com published its initial report on the video, that Sherrod had resigned. [Link](#)

Ga. USDA Official Resigns Over Comments (My Fox Atlanta 7/19)

Racially charged comments have led to the abrupt resignation of an agriculture department official. Shirley Sherrod was the top official who oversaw rural development in the state of Georgia. According to FOX News, Sherrod, the director of the USDA's rural development agency, resigned over comments she made at an NAACP meeting. FOX News obtained taped comments from an NAACP meeting that took place in Douglas, Georgia in March. According to FOX News, Sherrod is seen talking about how she withheld help to a white farmer who was facing bankruptcy. "I didn't give him the full force of what I could do, I did enough," Sherrod said during the meeting. In the video, Sherrod said she was struggling with the fact so many black people have lost their farmland and she was faced with having to help a white person save their land. Sherrod said she took him to see a white lawyer. "I figured if I took him to one of them his own kind, [they] would take care of him," said Sherrod. According to FOX News, the agriculture department announced Monday that Sherrod had resigned. [Link](#)

Albany residents react to Sherrod resignation (Fox 31 7/21)

After being pressured to resign, USDA official and Albany resident Shirley Sherrod could be offered her job back. On Wednesday dozens of family members, civic leaders, and residents came to show support for Shirley Sherrod. They say a rush judgment unfairly cost Sherrod her job. "Just outraged by her treatment considering the fact that she has fought for them, she has fought for rural communities, both black and white people," Sherrod's daughter-in-law Mikhiela Sherrod. "For all that Shirley Sherrod has done for this community. At the very minimum what we can do is offer our support," said rally organizer Daaiyah Salaam. Sherrod was forced to resign after video of her surfaced supposedly admitting to not helping a white farmer keep his farm. [Link](#)

Georgia's Rural Development Director resigns (Fox 31 7/20)

A black USDA worker has resigned after a video of her making racist remarks has surfaced. US Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced Monday he has accepted the resignation of Georgia's Rural Development Director Shirley Sherrod, who lives in Albany. Here is a comment Sherrod made about helping a white farmer during her speech at the NAACP's 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet in March. "So many black people had lost their farm land and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough" says Sherrod. National NAACP President Benjamin Todd Jealous welcomed the resignation because the group opposes racism of all kinds. Sherrod is married to a prominent Civil Rights Activist in Albany. [Link](#)

Vilsack offers embattled former USDA worker a job (ABC2News 7/21)

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack says an ousted black department employee has accepted his apology. Shirley Sherrod is also being offered a new position. She was fired after a conservative blogger posted edited video of a speech Sherrod made about race. [Link](#)

Sherrod unsure if she would take back job if offered (WKOW 7/21)

Shirley Sherrod of the U.S. Department of Agriculture says she's not sure if she will reclaim her job, if offered. Sherrod, who was the Agriculture Department's director of rural development in Georgia, was forced to resign after speaking at an NAACP banquet in March. Sherrod says her remarks were taken out

of context, as a portion of her speech was presented on a web site. Sherrod says her remarks were for the purpose of explaining how she learned from mistakes about racial reconciliation, and did not reflect racism. She said officials did not ask for her explanation before asking her to resign. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack says he is now reconsidering the USDA's decision regarding her forced resignation, and plans to "conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts." If offered the job, Sherrod said she was not sure how she would be treated on the future. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod: It just hurt (WALB 7/20)

An Albany woman who fought for civil rights says she's unfairly labeled a racist. 62-year-old Shirley Sherrod is in our nation's headlines, following her resignation as Rural Development Director for the USDA. She says she was forced to quit her job Monday after video of a speech to the NAACP became public. In the video, Sherrod talks about helping a white farmer back in the 80's. Shirley Sherrod should be at her office in Athens. Instead she's in her Albany living room under fire for what's been called racial comments, upset she was forced to pull over and resign late yesterday afternoon. "You know it just hurt," she said. This land has been owned by 87-year-old Roger Spooner of Iron City and his family for decades, in part thanks to the help Shirley Sherrod gave the Spooners in the 80's. [Link](#)

GA USDA Worker Quits Over Racism Charge (11 ALIVE 7/20)

A black federal worker has stepped down from her post as Georgia's rural development director for the USDA after a video clip posted online this week showed her saying she had not helped a farmer as much as she could have because he was white. In a statement Tuesday, U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said he had accepted Shirley Sherrod's resignation. Vilsack says the Department of Agriculture has no tolerance for discrimination. Sherrod, however, says she was forced out of her job. The Albany woman says her words were taken completely out of context and misconstrued. The video posted on YouTube Monday only shows a portion of a speech she gave at a local NAACP event in March. [Link](#)

State-level USDA official resigned after accused of racism (Headliner Watch 7/20)

A state-level U.S. Department of Agriculture official resigned officially after she was accused of racism. She was found speaking of not providing enough help to a white in a video. Shirley Sherrod, the former Georgia director of Rural Development, southeast Georgia, said a white farmer was "struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land." "What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was, I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," Sherrod said she said she decided to hold back the assistance, and sent the white farmer to a "white attorney", because "if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him." But Sherrod on Tuesday claimed that the video was manipulated and blamed Fox News. [Link](#)

Obama agenda: Rebuffed (NBC First Read 7/21)

What happens in a Breitbart-Fox News world, as they try for scalps: "Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said Wednesday he will reconsider the department's decision to oust a black employee over racially tinged remarks after learning more about what she said." The mid-level official in charge of rural development in Georgia Shirley "Sherrod said her remarks, delivered in March at a local NAACP banquet in Georgia, were part of a larger story about learning from her mistakes and racial reconciliation, not racism, and they were taken out of context by a blogger who posted only part of her speech. Vilsack's statement came after the NAACP posted the full video of Sherrod's comments Tuesday night." [Link](#)

White House Apology (WFIR 7/21)

Shirley Sherrod was fired over her edited comments posted on a conservative website. She said that she didn't give a white farmer as much help as she could have 24 years ago. Sherrod and others argue that the video clips of a speech she gave at an NAACP banquet in Georgia last spring were taken out of context. Civil rights leader Wade Henderson says the NAACP acted too quickly when it first condemned the remarks. As for Sherrod's future, she says, after all the controversy she's not sure she'd go back to her old job. [Link](#)

Rural Development radio clips

Ag Secretary Reviewing Shirley Sherrod Resignation (NPR 7/21)

Now that the NAACP has retracted its denunciation of former USDA official Shirley Sherrod, saying it was "snookered" by conservatives and urging her reinstatement, the pressure is on the Obama Administration to reverse its decision to ask for her resignation. The White House called Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Tuesday night to ask him to review his decision to force out Sherrod because of new information that came to light, according to reports. Vilsack had indicated Tuesday that Sherrod's "resignation" was final. But that was before his later discussion with the White House. Vilsack issued the following brief statement Wednesday: "I am of course willing and will conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts to ensure to the American people we are providing services in a fair and equitable manner." [Link](#)

Ex-USDA Official's Tale Just Another Racial Landmine Example (NPR 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod is getting her 15 minutes of fame and what a 15 minutes it is. She, of course, is the black woman, a former U.S. Agriculture Department official forced to resign because of what sounded like an admission that, more than two decades ago, long before she at the USDA but still working in a farmer-assistance program, she didn't help a white farmer in danger of losing his farm to the fullest extent possible because of race. A video of Sherrod making the statement went into heavy rotation on conservative media outlets like Breitbart.com and Fox News. Sherrod has been called a racist; the Obama Administration has been accused of harboring same. [Link](#)

Bob "Fibbs" on Racist USDA (Rush Limbaugh 7/22)

RUSH: Here is Robert Fibbs, Baghdad Bob Fibbs, the White House spokesman, the press secretary today. A reporter said, "The president has expressed his regret. Is it accurate to say that he apologized, personally apologized?"...RUSH: What am I missing here? I'm 59 years old. What is it that we all should know about the racism of the Department of Agriculture? What am I missing here? I've had people tell me, "That's a reference to Reagan." What did Reagan do? Did he want to shut it down? What's the institutional racism at USDA? Last I knew the USDA was giving a bunch of white farmers a bunch of money not to do anything. Last I heard the USDA was giving a bunch of corn farmers a bunch of subsidizes to turn the corn into ethanol. Well, no, I'm not ashamed to admit that I -- (interruption) Oh. Oh. Oh. Reagan tried to close the USDA civil rights division? What? The US Department of Agriculture has a civil rights division?...See, I'm supposedly a racist and I don't know of the racism going on at the USDA. And apparently it's institutional...RUSH: All right, here's this lawsuit in a nutshell. Obama has offered black farmers a \$1.25 billion class-action award to settle claims of discrimination that started after Reagan closed the USDA's civil rights office in 1981, and he's offering women, Latino farmers, a similar settlement of \$1.3 billion for the same thing. Folks, this is just reparations under a different name. It's all this is. [Link](#)

Rural Development blog clips

Congressman: Sherrod's Hiring Should Be Investigated (Big Government 7/22)

Yesterday, I had the opportunity to interview Congressman Steve King (R-Iowa) for my radio show, "The Ben Shapiro Show," which broadcasts every Sunday 1-4 PM ET in Orlando, FL. The topic of Shirley Sherrod came up, and in particular, the topic of the so-called Pigford Farms settlement... Shirley Sherrod was not only an initiator of the Pigford Farms case, she received a chunk of change for her company, New Communities, Inc. To be accurate, she received the largest chunk of change for New Communities — \$13 million... I asked Congressman King about this, because he is on the House Agriculture Committee. He pledged that if Republicans won the House back in November, he would initiate an investigation into Sherrod's hiring, which is deeply suspicious at best. [Link](#)

Longer Video of Speech in Question Is Released by N.A.A.C.P. (NY Times Blog 7/21)

As my colleague Sarah Wheaton reported, "The president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People apologized Tuesday to a black civil servant whose ouster the civil rights organization had originally cheered." Shirley Sherrod, who was until Tuesday the head of the Department of Agriculture's rural development office in Georgia, came under fire after an edited video clip posted online by a conservative activist accused her of admitting racism while speaking at an N.A.A.C.P. event in Douglas, Ga., in March. In the two-and-a-half-minute edited clip, Ms. Sherrod was seen explaining that, when asked to help a white farmer save his land 24 years ago, she initially "didn't give him the full force of what I could do" since she thought at the time that it was more important for her to help black people. [Link](#)

Fooled Again And Again and Again (NY Times Blog 7/21)

So I don't know if readers have been following the Shirley Sherrod affair. It goes like this: Ms. Sherrod was an Agriculture Department official; a right-wing blogger released clips of a video that purportedly showed her making racist remarks; the clips were featured big on Fox News; and the Obama administration promptly fired her. But whaddya know, the scandal was fake. The clips were taken completely out of context. It was basically as if I said, "Some people say that violence is always the answer; they're wrong", Fox ran with the story "Krugman says violence is always the answer", and the Times fired me. What's shocking here isn't the behavior of the right, which was par for the course. It's the seemingly limitless credulity of the inside-the-Beltway crowd. I mean, there's a history here: ACORN, Climategate, Vince Foster, Whitewater, and much much more. (Someone recently reminded me that the GOP held two weeks of hearing on the Clinton Christmas card list.) [Link](#)

Tom Vilsack's classy apology (Washington Post Blog 7/21)

I've got a pre-existing soft spot for Tom Vilsack, but I thought that was a model apology to the un-fired Shirley Sherrod. Apologizing is hard for all of us; even more so, it seems, for political types. So many politicians -- and Vilsack was governor of Iowa before he was agriculture secretary -- have a bizarre, and self-defeating, inability to take blame when blame is due. They hedge. They deflect. They employ the passive voice. They use weasel words and weaselier phrases: they are sorry if anyone was offended, etc. This is an episode in which almost no one has looked good, Vilsack prominent among them. On Wednesday afternoon, though, the secretary stepped up to the plate. Repeatedly. [Link](#)

President Obama calls Shirley Sherrod (Washington Post Blog 7/22)

President Obama has expressed his "regret" to former U.S. Agriculture Department official Shirley Sherrod over her ouster, the White House said Thursday. The president reached Sherrod around 12:35 p.m. ET and "emphasized that Secretary Vilsack was sincere in his apology yesterday, and in his work to rid USDA of discrimination," the White House said Thursday. "The President told Ms. Sherrod that this misfortune can present an opportunity for her to continue her hard work on behalf of those in need, and he hopes that she will do so," the statement said. Obama made the call from his private office on Thursday after twice trying unsuccessfully to reach her on Wednesday evening, according to a White House aide. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod: 'Where are we headed?' (Washington Post Blog 7/22)

Talk about luck. When "Morning Joe" asked me yesterday to be on at 30 Rock today, they didn't tell me that Shirley Sherrod would be appearing... Hear Sherrod in her own voice talk about how she thinks President Obama should stop running away from discussions of race and use incidents like hers to facilitate a broader discussion..."What, exactly, do you think the president should do," I asked."He could facilitate some major discussions with mixed groups. He could use it more rather than run away from it. And I think what happened to me was an attempt to run away from it." "So you think over and over again the president has had opportunities to address issues of race but he's run away from them?" "Yes... know, I'm a nothing, so it's easy to snap a finger and get me out of the way. That's exactly what happened. [Link](#)

President Obama calls Shirley Sherrod (Washington Post Blog 7/22)

President Obama phoned former U.S. Agriculture Department official Shirley Sherrod Thursday to discuss her ouster, the White House said. The president reached Sherrod around 12:35 p.m. ET and "expressed to Ms. Sherrod his regret about the events of the last several days," the White House said in a statement. "He emphasized that Secretary Vilsack was sincere in his apology yesterday, and in his work to rid USDA of discrimination." "The President told Ms. Sherrod that this misfortune can present an opportunity for her to continue her hard work on behalf of those in need, and he hopes that she will do so," the statement said. But Sherrod seemed reluctant to rejoin the Obama administration Thursday morning during a series of television interviews, saying she first hoped to hear directly from the president and secure his commitment to fighting discrimination against black farmers. [Link](#)

White House apologizes to Shirley Sherrod (Washington Post Blog 7/21)

This is a good start: At the press briefing just now, Robert Gibbs appeared to extend a heartfelt apology to Shirley Sherrod on behalf of the Obama administration, and promised a look at what went wrong. Interestingly, though, he sidestepped a question about whether fear of the conservative media drove the decision to fire Sherrod before the facts were all in. Here's what Gibbs said, referring to Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack: The secretary is trying to reach her. I hope the secretary reaches her soon, and they have an opportunity to talk. The Secretary will apologize for the actions that have taken place over

the past 24 to 36 hours. And on behalf of the administration, I offer our apologies. Gibbs also seemed to promise some kind of reckoning as to how the White House botched this mess, though he stopped short of promising anything official: I think everybody has to go back and look at what has happened over the past 24 to 36 hours, and ask ourselves how we got into this. How did we not ask the right questions? How did you all not ask the right questions? How did other people not ask the right questions? [Link](#)

More questions arise about White House handling of Sherrod mess (Washington Post Blog 7/21)

Here's what I want to know: Did anyone at the White House or the Department of Agriculture ever ask themselves for one second whether the Andrew Breitbart tape of Shirley Sherrod might be bogus? This morning, after the full Sherrod tape surfaced and vindicated her, the White House leaked word that they had leaned on Tom Vilsack to reconsider his decision to fire her. This came after the White House leaked word yesterday that they'd played no role in Vilsack's decision to ax Sherrod. But a new report from Ben Smith raises new questions about what really happened here. Ben reports that on Tuesday morning -- after her firing, but before anyone knew that the whole Breitbart story was about to blow up -- a senior White House official praised the White House's handling of the whole mess at a morning meeting. [Link](#)

Story pick: One phone call and racism charge evaporates (Washington Post Blog 7/21)

The Shirley Sherrod story is quickly becoming a classic cautionary tale about the polarized politics of our age, the act first-think later nature of behavior in this phase of the transition into digital journalism, and the human desire to gang up on someone about whom we know nothing. The U.S. Department of Agriculture official who told an NAACP gathering about an incident in which she was less than fully helpful to a farmer simply because he was white lost her job because it appeared that she was boasting about her racism. But as the full story emerged, Sherrod morphed from narrow-minded, bitter bureaucrat to thoughtful, self-deprecating friend of the very same farmer she had supposedly mistreated. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod: in her own words (Washington Post Blog 7/21)

Shirley Sherrod, the Georgia director of Rural Development for the agriculture department, deserved better. A conservative blogger took a snippet from a 43-minute speech she gave to the NAACP's Freedom Forum banquet in March to paint her as a federal official using her position to actively discriminate against a white person. Richard Cohen gives a nice recap of the last 48 hours if you need it. But I want you to take the time to watch the full speech. The story Sherrod tells is quintessentially American. She talks about how she vowed to help black people "and only black people" after her father was murdered by white men. And she talks about how her eyes were opened to and her heart rescued from the hate encircling her. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod blasts Fox News as racist (Washington Post Blog 7/21)

Now this is going to drive the right bananas. Check out this nugget in an interview that Shirley Sherrod did with Joe Strupp, in which she comes right out and claims Fox News is using her as a "pawn" in a racist plot to undo the gains African Americans have made: She said Fox showed no professionalism in continuing to bother her for an interview, but failing to correct their coverage. "I think they should but they won't. They intended exactly what they did. "They were looking for the result they got yesterday," she said of Fox. "I am just a pawn. I was just here. They are after a bigger thing, they would love to take us back to where we were many years ago. Back to where black people were looking down, not looking white folks in the face, not being able to compete for a job out there and not be a whole person." [Link](#)

The Morning Plum: Vilsack must come clean (Washington Post Blog 7/21)

Now that the full Shirley Sherrod video has been released, vindicating her completely, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack is promising to undertake a review of her firing. So maybe he will re-instate her after all. But it isn't enough for Vilsack to reinstate her. People should demand that his review include an explanation for his own decision to fire her. We need to hear his justification for the decision to ax this woman before all the facts were in, on the strength of nothing more than an Andrew Breitbart smear. Did Vilsack make any effort to learn more about her speech before giving her the push? If not, why not? Sherrod says she told top USDA officials that the full speech would vindicate her. Did anyone at USDA give her protestations even a passing listen? Did anyone try to obtain video of the full speech? If not, why not? Why was Breitbart's word alone allowed to drive such a high-profile decision? [Link](#)

The firing of Shirley Sherrod -- and the cowardice of Tom Vilsack (Washington Post Blog 7/21)

From everything I've read, I'm told that the firing of Shirley Sherrod, the once and probably future Agriculture Department official in Georgia, is about race or dishonest journalism or the vagaries of the 24-hour, incessant news cycle. Permit me a dissent. It is mostly about cowardice. The coward in question is Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack who, even though from Iowa, fired Sherrod in a New York minute, and by extension and tradition – "The buck stops here," remember? – Barack Obama himself. Where do they get off treating anyone so shabbily? Sherrod was caught on video supposedly telling an NAACP meeting last March that she had not given a certain farmer the service he deserved because he was white. A clip of that speech made the rounds of right wing blogs and media outlets -- Fox News, for instance -- and in no time Vilsack ordered the woman canned. He moved with what would have been commendable dispatch had he first heard her side of the story, viewed the entire video and asked what its source was. The answers should have stopped him in his tracks. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod: Sacrificial lamb on the altar of race (Washington Post Blog 7/20)

As teachable moments in the minefield of race in America go, the case of Shirley Sherrod is a big one. When I first saw the video clip this morning, I was astonished. There was a black agriculture department official, Sherrod, boasting about how she used her federal position to deny help to a white farmer. Oh yeah. She needed to go. Or so I thought. As the day wore on and the truth was revealed, my heart sank. The videotape that caused a firestorm had been selectively edited. Sherrod was relating a story of redemption from 1986 when she worked for a non-profit in Georgia. Sure, she didn't want to help the white man before her too much because he displayed what she called a superior attitude towards her. But Sherrod went on to talk about how she spent the next two years trying to help the man save his farm. Sherrod said she learned from that experience. That it wasn't so much about black and white as it was about helping the poor. [Link](#)

Let's review this racism firing (Washington Post Blog 7/21)

Our Readers Who Comment are having a vigorous name-calling left-right discussion about race in politics after the firing of an Agriculture Department official -- a firing now under reconsideration -- for a videotaped speech she made that mentioned an experience that showed the role race could play in a decision-making process. The article about U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack firing Shirley Sherrod had 365 comments before Vilsack said early this morning that he was reviewing his decision in light of the knowledge that the video segment posted Monday on the Web site of conservative activist Andrew Breitbart told only part of the story. The full video has been released by the NAACP. More than 300 comments have come in since then. Reader comments both before and after Vilsack's decision to review show significant tensions along the left-right divide around questions of race. It is far too simplistic to call this a bout between Tea Party activists and the NAACP or the debate about whether all media except Fox News lean left. [Link](#)

An Ag official's bum racism rap (Chicago Tribune Blog 7/20)

Did Shirley Sherrod get a bum rap? The USDA's rural development director lost her job after a video turned up in which she appears to confess to having discriminated years ago against a white farmer who came to her for help. In the clip from a speech she made in March at a local NAACP banquet, Sherrod, who is black, appears to tell the crowd she didn't do everything she could to help a white farmer whom she said was condescending when he came to her for aid – at least not at first. "What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was, I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," Sherrod said in the video, recorded March 27 in Douglas in southeast Georgia. The trouble is that the clip does not show what the late, great Paul Harvey used to call "the rest of the story." [Link](#)

In the curious case of Shirley Sherrod, let's see the whole tape (Atlanta Journal Constitution Blog 7/20)

A couple of folks in comments yesterday brought up the case of USDA official Shirley Sherrod, a black woman caught on tape at an NAACP meeting here in Georgia apparently bragging about being less than diligent in helping a white farmer. The folks at Big Government posted a portion of her speech as part of the running feud between the NAACP and the Tea Party over which organization is more racist. By the end of the day Monday, Sherrod had been forced to resign her post, and NAACP President Ben Jealous had released a statement agreeing with the forced resignation: "Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race. [Link](#)

Gibbs is sorry (Politico Blog 7/22)

White House press secretary Robert Gibbs apologized to Shirley Sherrod, a Department of Agriculture employee who was forced out after a videotape surfaced of her making what initially appeared to be racially discriminatory remarks to an NAACP audience. "Without a doubt, Miss Sherrod is owed an apology," Gibbs said Wednesday at his afternoon briefing. "I would do so on behalf of this administration." [Link](#)

In meeting, Messina praised Sherrod handling (Politico Blog 7/21)

In a closed staff meeting Tuesday morning, a senior administration praised elements of the White House's initial response to a partial video of a speech by a Department of Agriculture official -- a response that the Administration has since reversed. White House officials yesterday afternoon told reporters they did not press Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack to demand the resignation of Shirley Sherrod, but that they stood by the hasty decision; last night, they took credit for pressing Vilsack to rehire her when a fuller video revealed that her remarks had been edited to mean the opposite of what she said. [Link](#)

Media torches Vilsack, W.H. over firing (Politico Blog 7/21)

Shirley Sherrod says she was called while she was driving by an Agriculture Department superior and asked to pull over and "text" a resignation in a hurry because she was going to be featured "on Glenn Beck tonight." But in trying to avoid one cable host, the White House and Department of Agriculture have instead attracted widespread scorn for firing a woman based on a brief video clip that was edited to be misleading. "Seriously? They're scared of the guy with the chalkboard?" said Joe Scarborough on MSNBC's "Morning Joe." [Link](#)

NAACP: Breitbart 'snookered' us (Politico Blog 7/20)

NAACP President Ben Jealous on Tuesday said the organization had been "snookered" into condemning former Agriculture Department official Shirley Sherrod. Sherrod was fired Monday after a video — posted on one of Andrew Breitbart's conservative sites — showed Sherrod saying she had not given a white farmer her "full force." On Tuesday, the family of the Georgia farmer Sherrod was speaking of in the video came forward to defend her. Additionally, Sherrod took to CNN to defend herself and attack the NAACP for criticizing her without first calling her to confirm details. [Link](#)

Georgia family defends USDA official (Politico Blog 7/20)

The family involved in a 24-year-old incident that resulted in a Department of Agriculture official resigning Monday night is speaking out on her behalf. Shirley Sherrod stepped down from her post as Georgia director of rural development Monday night, two days after a video surfaced in which she explains to an audience at the NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet in March that she did not do everything she could have to help a struggling farmer because he was white. In the video, Sherrod describes the incident, that took place when she was working with the Georgia field office for the Federation of Southern Cooperative/Land Assistance Fund. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod: Dad was killed by white farmer (CNN Blog 7/23)

Shirley Miller Sherrod has spent most of her life fighting injustice. On the Baker County, Georgia, farm where the Miller family grew corn, peanuts, cotton and cucumbers and raised hogs, cows and goats, oldest daughter Shirley despised the work. "I swore I would never have anything to do with a farm past high school," she said Wednesday with an easy chuckle. "I would talk to the sun as I picked cotton and picked cucumbers and worked out there in that hot field, and [say], 'This is not the life for me.' I didn't want to have anything to do with agriculture ever again." On the night in 1965 when her father, Hosie Miller, a black man and a deacon at Thankful Baptist Church, was shot to death by a white farmer in what ostensibly was a dispute over a few cows, Sherrod - then 17 years old - changed her mind. [Link](#)

Web Pulse: Obama calls Sherrod, another (faked?) BP photo (CNN Blog 7/22)

Didn't you get my texts? - President Obama talked to Shirley Sherrod, the ex-USDA employee who was forced to resign this week based on misleading reports that she made racist remarks. Sherrod received a text message Thursday telling her that Obama had been trying to reach her since Wednesday night. Sherrod called the White House and was asked to call back in 10 minutes, and then she was patched to the president for a seven minute unrecorded chat. The conversation went well, Sherrod said. So what

happens now? Is this all shaping up to be a teachable moment, or is that too irritating a term? [Give Shirley Her Job Back Now! Facebook page is all over that and every other conceivable angle.](#) [Link](#)

Vilsack, White House apologize to former USDA official (CNN Blog 7/21)

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said Wednesday he apologized to Shirley Sherrod for forcing her to resign from her government job in Georgia based on incomplete and misleading reports of a speech she gave. Vilsack told reporters that he alone made the decision regarding Sherrod, with no White House involvement. He spoke to Sherrod earlier Wednesday and said he asked for her forgiveness, which she gave. Vilsack also said he offered Sherrod another job in the department, and she was taking a few days to think about it. "She's a good woman -- she's been put through hell," Vilsack said of Sherrod. He admitted acting too hastily in the case, acknowledging that he was focused on reversing a history of racial discrimination at the agriculture department. [Link](#)

Race and resignation, 24 hours of Shirley Sherrod (CNN Blog 7/21)

Tuesday was all about ex-USDA official Shirley Sherrod, who said she was pressured to quit her job after she was accused of making racist comments. Those remarks were part of a video clip that was posted over the weekend on a conservative blogger's website and subsequently aired on Fox. CNN picked up the story Tuesday morning, telling Sherrod's side of the story, and by Tuesday night there had been a complete 180 in the matter. Those who initially criticized her, including the NAACP, have now said they were duped by the clip. U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said Wednesday that he's reviewing Sherrod's case. [Link](#)

On the Radar: Let's talk about race (CNN Blog 7/21)

Twenty-four hours of Shirley Sherrod – What a difference a day makes for the former U.S. Department of Agriculture official who resigned under pressure after a video clip surfaced of her discussing how she treated a white farmer more than 20 years ago. Initially the comments, given at a recent NAACP dinner, seemed to suggest Sherrod withheld services from the farmer. But Sherrod defended herself on CNN, saying there was more to the story, and the full tape should be shown. The white farmer also defended Sherrod. He called accusations that she's racist "hogwash." And on Wednesday morning, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack pledged to review whether the department had treated Sherrod fairly. Sherrod said that decision is "bittersweet" but hinted that she has moved on and doesn't want to go back to work for the Agriculture Department. [Link](#)

Congressional Black Caucus releases statement on Sherrod firing (CNN Blog 7/21)

The Congressional Black Caucus released the following statement today on the firing of USDA employee Shirley Sherrod: "It is troubling that Shirley Sherrod was asked for her resignation as Georgia State Director for Rural Development at the U.S. Department of Agriculture because of an edited video clip. A full review of the clip demonstrates Ms. Sherrod's personal transformation. She was clearly educating the public about the power of redemption. It is now apparent that Secretary Vilsack did not have all of the facts available to him and overreacted." "The Congressional Black Caucus continues to believe that Ms. Sherrod was unfairly asked to resign, without due process and should be reinstated immediately. There are many individuals still serving in the Department of Agriculture who were responsible for years of discrimination against African American farmers. [Link](#)

White House says review needed of Sherrod firing (CNN Blog 7/21)

A White House official tells CNN a "longer look" now needs to be taken at the circumstances surrounding the firing of USDA official Shirley Sherrod. "We're not sure what the ultimate result will be, but it's clear that with new information through the full speech, a longer look needed to be taken," the official told CNN's Suzanne Malveaux. "The White House contacted the department last night about the case and agreed, based on new evidence, that it should be reviewed." A White House official told CNN Tuesday night that President Obama had been fully briefed after Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack's original decision and fully supported that decision. Vilsack says he's now willing to conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts. [Link](#)

Former USDA official: Department's reconsideration is 'bittersweet' (CNN Blog 7/21)

A black former Agriculture Department official who resigned under pressure after a video clip surfaced of her discussing a white farmer said Wednesday the agency's decision to review her case is "bittersweet," but said she isn't sure she would accept her job back if it is offered. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said

early Wednesday that he will review the case of Shirley Sherrod, who resigned Monday after the video clip first appeared on a conservative website and later on Fox News. In the video, Sherrod, the former USDA director of rural development for Georgia, seems to tell an audience at an NAACP function in March that she did not do her utmost to help a white farmer avoid foreclosure. However, Sherrod later said the clip only shows part of her comments, and that she tells the story of her experience -- from nearly a quarter century ago when she was not a federal employee -- to illustrate the importance of moving beyond race. [Link](#)

Agriculture secretary to review resignation of USDA worker (CNN Blog 7/21)

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said early Wednesday that he will review the case of a former Agriculture Department official who resigned after a video clip surfaced of her discussing a white farmer. "I am of course willing and will conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts to ensure to the American people we are providing services in a fair and equitable manner," Vilsack said in a statement. Shirley Sherrod - an African American - resigned this week under pressure after the video clip first appeared on a conservative website and later on Fox News. In the video, she seemed to say she withheld services from a white farmer. [Link](#)

NAACP: We were 'snookered' by Sherrod tape (CNN Blog 7/20)

The NAACP has retracted its earlier statement condemning statements made by a former Agriculture Department employee, saying it was "snookered by Fox News" and conservative website publisher Andrew Breitbart. "Having reviewed the full tape by Shirley Sherrod, who is the woman who was fired by the Department of Agriculture, and most importantly heard the testimony of the white farmers mentioned in this story, we now believe that the organization that edited the documents did so with the intention of deceiving millions of Americans," the statement from NAACP President Benjamin Jealous says. The organization also urged Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack to reconsider Sherrod's resignation. [Link](#)

Race remarks cost USDA official her job (CNN Blog 7/20)

An African-American Agriculture Department worker resigns over her handling of a white Georgia farmer's case when she worked for a nonprofit group in 1986. It came to light when Shirley Sherrod talked about the case at an NAACP banquet earlier this year. Were her remarks a teaching moment that backfired, or evidence of racism? Sherrod says her comments were taken out of context -- that the point of her story was to unite people. Tony Harris will be talking to Sherrod at 11:00am ET on CNN, and we'll post that interview here. Watch some of her speech and phone interview with CNN's American Morning below, then tell us what you think. We'll share some of your comments on air in the CNN Newsroom, 11:00am - 1:00pm ET. [Link](#)

Obama: Vilsack 'jumped the gun' in firing Sherrod (The Hill Blog 7/22)

In an interview with ABC News on Thursday, President Obama said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack had acted prematurely in firing Shirley Sherrod. Sherrod, who is African-American, was dismissed from the USDA on Monday after a video clip went viral in which she appeared to admit withholding benefits from a white farmer because of his race. The incident has become a political embarrassment to the White House. "He [Vilsack] jumped the gun, partly because we now live in this media culture where something goes up on YouTube or a blog, and everybody scrambles," Obama told ABC. The president apologized to Sherrod by telephone on Thursday. [Link](#)

Burr: Sherrod's firing 'a mistake' (The Hill Blog 7/22)

The Senate's only African-American member on Thursday criticized the Obama administration's firing of Agriculture Department official Shirley Sherrod, but said the incident has been dealt with properly by the White House. Sherrod was fired from her job at the USDA this week by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack for video clips that showed her making racially insensitive comments at an NAACP meeting in Georgia. The clips were later discovered to have been taken out of context by a conservative blogger, and White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs on Wednesday apologized for her firing. "It was a mistake, a real mistake," Burr said of the incident. "But it's been dealt with, and she's been offered a job to reinstate her, which was appropriate." [Link](#)

Black Caucus accuses Vilsack of overreaction (The Hill Blog 7/21)

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack overreacted by forcing the resignation of a Shirley Sherrod, the Congressional Black Caucus said today. "It is now apparent that Secretary Vilsack did not have all of the

facts available to him and overreacted," CBC chairwoman Barbara Lee (D-Calif.) said in a statement. "The Congressional Black Caucus continues to believe that Ms. Sherrod was unfairly asked to resign, without due process and should be reinstated immediately," Lee added. Sherrod was forced out this week after a short video clip of her seemed to suggest she discriminated against a white farmer. The longer, unedited video, however, made clear that the incident took place more than 20 years ago, and Sherrod was recounting it to demonstrate how her views had changed. Vilsack said this morning that he will re-examine the facts surrounding Sherrod's dismissal. [Link](#)

Top House Dem says Sherrod should get job back 'at a minimum' (The Hill Blog 7/21)

The third-ranking House Democrat called Wednesday for the Obama administration to reinstate the job of fired USDA official Shirley Sherrod. Rep. James Clyburn (D-S.C.), the House majority whip and the top-ranking African-American in Congress, said that Sherrod should be offered her job back after being forced to resign after edited video surfaced suggesting that she'd refused to help a white farmer because of racial animus. Full video has surfaced since then showing that Sherrod, who is black, was instead speaking about overcoming racial barriers, prompting the Department of Agriculture and NAACP, among other organizations, to retract their condemnations of Sherrod. "Yes, it must include that, at a minimum," Clyburn said on MSNBC when asked if Sherrod should get her job back. [Link](#)

Vilsack a no-show at rural education summit (The Hill Blog 7/21)

Dogged by a controversy surrounding one of his former employees, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack was a no-show at a rural education summit this morning.

Vilsack had been scheduled to speak at the National Rural Education Summit today, alongside Education Secretary Arne Duncan, FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski, and Smithsonian Institution Secretary G. Wayne Clough. Instead, Deputy Ag Secretary Kathleen Merrigan showed up in his place. A spokesman for the USDA said Vilsack was in Ohio earlier this week, and had originally planned to fly back last night to make today's hearing. But "due to a scheduling conflict he had to come back this morning instead of last night," the spokesman said. The Ag Secretary announced this morning that he would review the firing of Shirley Sherrod, the USDA's Georgia director of rural development. Sherrod was forced to resign this week after video surfaced of her telling an NAACP audience that she once gave less than-complete assistance to a white farmer due to race. [Link](#)

Sowing the Seeds of Race, Reaping the Whirlwind of Racism (Huffington Post 7/22)

Back in June of 2008, I posted several pieces on Huffington suggesting that the Anybody but Clinton (ABC) coalition was pushing Barack Obama into the Democratic Primaries because they realized that his entry would draw black voters to him, and away from Hillary. Until then, black Democrats had been major Clinton supporters, thanks in large part, to their closeness to Bill Clinton, who was nicknamed "the first black president." Blacks make up about 15% of all Democratic voters, and if Hillary had retained their support, she would almost certainly have won the Democratic primaries, with at least 60% of the votes. But Obama's entry gave black voters another alternative, and it was their votes that won him the nomination. During the campaign, Obama supporters played the race card on several occasions--once against Joe Biden, then against Bill Clinton. [Link](#)

Apologizing to Sherrod Step in the Right Direction, but Many Lessons to Be Learned (Huffington Post 7/22)

Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack made the right decision to reconsider the termination of Shirley Sherrod and offer her a new position with the United State Department of Agriculture. His actions show he is a man of integrity...However, there are many lessons to be learned:...The mass media proved completely incapable of handling this latest issue of race and racism in an objective, serious and thoughtful manner...2. The U.S. Department of Agriculture, the agency for whom Sherrod worked, also acted hastily and "in the heat of the moment."...3. This "episode" is another teachable moment for how our media, government and nation grapple with issues of race and racism. [Link](#)

Is Shirley Sherrod the Rosa Parks of Our Time? (Huffington Post 7/22)

No she did not refuse to give up her seat on a bus. Yet, she finds herself in the middle of a racial firestorm started by the NAACP when it adopted a controversial Resolution, answered by the Tea Party (which resulted in one of its leaders Mark Williams being expelled) and now has ended up in the lap of the White House (i.e., President of the United States). Ms. Sherrod, like Ms. Parks is an equally humble, gracious, and polite hardworking black woman from the rural south. Her life story is inspiring and disturbing all at

once because it makes us reflect on a darker time in our nation's history. Her father was murdered by a white man in the south in 1965 over 45 years ago now. The man who did it never answered for his crime. This is a woman who has seen it all. Reared at the height of Jim Crow Segregation, a dedicated daughter, wife and friend Ms. Sherrod now finds herself at the center of a national race firestorm. [Link](#)

Sherrod Scandal: Washington Post Finds It Impossible To Form Any Conclusions On The Incident (Huffington Post 7/21)

The Shirley Sherrod affair is one of those stories that has absolutely no ambiguity to it. Alex Pareene basically captures what happened in the subhed of his authoritative explainer: "Andrew Breitbart lies about a USDA appointee, and a cowardly White House forces her out as a result." That's basically it! We can all see for ourselves that Sherrod's speech, truncated to afford maximum hysteria, was actually a lengthy oration on Confronting Prejudices, and Overcoming Obstacles In Race Relations, and Personal Growth. And it's a pretty compelling story, made all the more so by the fact that when someone in the media finally had the bright idea of contacting the Spooner family -- the ostensible "victims" of "racism" -- they were quick to point out that Sherrod was a friend who saved their farm, she wasn't a racist, and that everyone saying so is an idiot. This is, point blank, some of the least ambiguous shit in the whole wide world! But over at the Washington Post, they've been having this existential crisis of journalism, where no one knows if they are allowed to "have opinions" or "form conclusions" based on "extant immutable facts." [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod and the Right: A Day That Will Live in Infamy (Huffington Post 7/21)

The entire Shirley Sherrod affair is such a disgusting, stomach-churning episode of right-wing lies, propagandists posing as "journalists," and craven political cowardice and gullibility, that it's hard to know who to be most enraged at. Andrew Breitbart, the chief propagandist of the American right who severely edited a videotape of a speech by the Agriculture Department official to falsely label her an anti-white racist? Fox News, several of whose miserable excuses for journalists relentlessly plugged the entirely false story until Sherrod was fired? Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, who had a minion call Sherrod on a cell phone and insist that she pull over to the side of the road and text in her resignation before any of the relevant background facts about the "scandal" emerged? The White House, which, apparently frightened of appearing in any way linked to black racism, stood by the essentially forced resignation even when it became clear that Sherrod's speech was nothing like what Breitbart suggested? [Link](#)

Rachel Maddow: White House 'Inexplicably Keeps Falling For' Fox News Stunts (VIDEO) (Huffington Post 7/21)

...Blasting the White House and Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack for requesting Sherrod's resignation based on a false (or at least out-of-context) story, Maddow said: Dear White House, dear administration: believing conservative spin about what's so wrong with you and then giving into that spin is not an effective defense against that spin. Just buying it and apologizing for it, and doing whatever they want you to do doesn't make the problem of them lying about you go away. In fact, it makes it worse...The huge tide of negative publicity that followed these video tapes and the coverage they got on Fox wall-to-wall was a dishonest political stunt that bears no resemblance to journalism and no resemblance to the actual facts of what happened. But it worked. Means be damned, in the end it worked. [Link](#)

Liberals Miss the Point (Huffington Post 7/21)

The Shirley Sherrod fallout is not a time to point fingers at one another for liberals but rather go on the offensive. In case you missed the story while hidden under some cyclopean rock, Sherrod is the United States Department of Agriculture employee who came under fire for a supposed inflammatory speech given to members of the NAACP earlier this year. Immediately, news outlets alongside the USDA and NAACP pounced by excoriating Sherrod; eventually leading to her ouster. However, it was later discovered that Sherrod was wrongly accused and was simply taken out of context. Moreover, Sherrod was exonerated by Roger and Eloise Spooner; her supposed victims. Now, everyone from the right to the left is calling upon the powers that be to reinstate Sherrod. This is quite a heart warming story of redemption and misunderstanding, yet there is an air of ignorance and perplexity that all point to one singular narrative -- the so called liberals have missed the point. [Link](#)

President Obama Do the Right Thing, Order the Reinstatement of Shirley Sherrod (Huffington Post 7/21)

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack is dithering, waffling, and foot-dragging on what should be a no-brainer. And that's the immediate reinstatement of Shirley Sherrod to her post as Agriculture Department's director of rural development in Georgia. He wronged Sherrod, a dedicated public servant, by grossly overreacting to the phony, doctored, and politically self-serving rightwing connived hit tape of a speech that Sherrod gave to a local NAACP banquet back in March that purported to show her admitting to trashing a white farmer and then refusing to help him. Despite irrefutable proof that this was a lie, a blatant effort to hit back at the NAACP and civil rights leaders for putting the heat on tea party racism, and a grotesque sully of the name and reputation of a hard-working, efficient, and loyal government program administrator, the best Vilsack could say is that he'll conduct a review to ensure that services are provided in a fair and equitable manner. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Scandal: How The White House Is Backing Away From The Decision To Fire Her (Huffington Post 7/21)

So, yesterday, Shirley Sherrod, the USDA's rural development director for the state of Georgia, was sacked because she dared to appear in a video truncated to make her appear to be some racist land-reform zealot. The video was subsequently blasted around the world by Andrew Breitbart, who wanted to mislead people just as fast as he could. Later, it was reported that Sherrod was about the furthest thing from a racist -- which means she wasn't fired for cause, she was fired because everyone panicked in the face of a media scandal that turned out to be non-existent and which unraveled the moment people began the work of diligent verification. Since then, my cynical heart has been tickled to watch the Obama administration frantically back away from the stupid decision to fire Sherrod. I've been led to believe that this was all Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack's call. U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced Sherrod's resignation in a statement, saying the department has "zero tolerance" for discrimination. Sherrod told CNN that Cheryl Cook, deputy undersecretary for Rural Development, called her three times on Monday to eventually demand her resignation on behalf of the White House. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Defended By Diverse Coalition Calling For USDA To Give Her Job Back (VIDEO) (Huffington Post 7/21)

Shirley Sherrod has accomplished a number of things in her career, but she had never planned on uniting Glenn Beck and the NAACP. The former USDA official was allegedly forced out of her job as director of rural development in Georgia after a video surfaced that appeared to show her admitting that race played a factor in a decision to limit help for a white farmer. Sherrod is African American. Her speech was significantly longer than the original clip, which now appears to have been taken significantly out of context. According to Sherrod, she was given no chance to explain herself. "They asked me to resign. And, in fact, they harassed me," she said about a series of phone calls from USDA Deputy Under Secretary Cheryl Cook. Sherrod was in the middle of a long road trip, but pulled over after Cook insisted that she write her resignation via Blackberry. She remembers being told, "You're going to be on Glenn Beck tonight." Sherrod was a political appointee, chosen by President Barack Obama almost exactly a year ago. [Link](#)

Sherrod saga -- snookered and snookereder (San Francisco Chronicle Blog 7/21)

Shirley Sherrod won't be the last person to be pressured out of a job because of something said about race. Her story, meanwhile, shows what happens when a culture is more focused on what people say than what they do. Andrew Breitbart says that he posted the edited NAACP tape of Sherrod not so much to make a statement about Sherrod as to demonstrate that the NAACP has its own "racial elements" -- the very sin of which the group had accused the Tea Party. Problem here is: His treatment of Sherrod simply wasn't fair. The racism charge isn't sticking because it turns out Sherrod helped the white farmer in question. Her actions are what counts. So Ag Secretary Tom Vilsack is squirming over his decision to sack Sherrod without allowing her to explain herself. It's a stain on the Obama administration. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod, race and media: How ideologically slanted media organizations are hurting America (Tampa Bay Blog 7/21)

This is what happens when ideologically-focused noise machines are treated like real news outlets. The sad case of Shirley Sherrod -- a black woman whose story of overcoming her own prejudice was perverted into a false example of racism by a media savvy conservative activist -- provides an important lesson for journalists and news consumers, if we're willing to heed it. Sherrod was busy this morning speaking out on the network morning shows to rescue her reputation, dragged through the gutter over the past day or so thanks to a heavily-edited video of a speech she gave in March at an NAACP banquet, in which the

former USDA official admitted overcoming her own racial prejudices to help a white farmer save his farm from bankruptcy in the 1980s. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Resigns USDA Job After Admitting Use Of Racial Preference During NAACP Banquet (VIDEO) (The Huffington Post 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod, who resigned Monday from the USDA. 756 Shirley Sherrod, a USDA official in Georgia, has resigned after publicly admitting that race played a factor in her decision to limit how much aid would be given to a white farmer. Sherrod, who is African American, made the comments during a local NAACP banquet on March 27, according to information displayed on the video. A clip of her speech first appeared Monday morning on BigGovernment.com and aired that evening on Fox News. Her resignation as the agency's state director of rural development was quickly accepted by U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. He cited a zero-tolerance policy and told CNN that he was working to "reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department." In her controversial speech, Sherrod discussed the first time she was "faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." She claimed that during the conversation, the man "was trying to show me he was superior to me." [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Becomes Obama Political Problem (NPR Blog 7/21)

As soon as much of the available evidence suggested that Shirley Sherrod had become the victim of a rush to judgment by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, it became clear President Barack Obama had a mushrooming political problem on his hands. Sherrod went from being the villain of the piece to a figure drawing great empathy from millions, not the least of which was conservative talk show host Glen Beck. And among those who were most closely watching the president's handling of affair were important members of the president's base, people he could ill afford to alienate: African Americans and liberals. While Obama remains popular, his poll numbers are significantly lower than they were earlier in the year. His support among independents who helped propel him to the presidency has steadily eroded. [Link](#)

Ag Secretary Reviewing Shirley Sherrod Resignation (NPR Blog 7/21)

Now that the NAACP has retracted its denunciation of former USDA official Shirley Sherrod, saying it was "snookered" by conservatives and urging her reinstatement, the pressure is on the Obama Administration to reverse its decision to ask for her resignation. The White House called Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Tuesday night to ask him to review his decision to force out Sherrod because of new information that came to light, according to reports. Vilsack had indicated Tuesday that Sherrod's "resignation" was final. But that was before his later discussion with the White House. [Link](#)

Harkin: Vilsack's action "not the Tom Vilsack that I know." (Des Moines Register Blog 7/22)

Sen. Tom Harkin said today that Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack's premature firing of a USDA official is out of character with the former Iowa governor and fellow Iowa Democrat. "It does not seem like to me to be the Tom Vilsack that I know and have known for 20 years, that he would have said, just based upon what was on a blog that you're going to fire someone," Harkin said during a morning press call. "This doesn't seem like Tom Vilsack." Harkin stopped short of suggesting that the White House was behind the firing, which Vilsack Wednesday reversed himself on. The White House has said it was not involved in Sherrod's firing. Vilsack fired USDA official Shirley Sherrod, who is African American, on Monday apparently after viewing part of an Internet video where she claims to have treated a white farmer differently because of race. [Link](#)

Vilsack says fired employee "put through hell" (Des Moines Register Blog 7/21)

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack publicly and privately apologized to a black former Agriculture department official in Georgia for wrongly firing her and said he had offered her an undisclosed job in Washington. "This is a good woman. She has been put through hell. I could have done and should done a better job," Vilsack said at a late afternoon press conference. He said he improperly made the decision to fire Shirley Sherrod without consulting the White House, although an official there was notified of the move as the firing was being carried out. Vilsack said he decided to dismiss Sherrod while traveling in Ohio after reading the transcript of a portion of a speech she gave in March where she seemed to say that she unfairly treating a white farmer at a previous job in the 1980s. [Link](#)

Vilsack must reinstate Sherrod now! (Des Moines Register Blog)

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack needs to step up to the plate and do right by an employee of his agency who has been grievously wronged by the USDA, the Obama administration, the NAACP, Fox News, Andrew

Breitbart and the whole far right media apparatus. Shirley Sherrod was ordered to resign Monday as rural development director for Georgia. All it took was a conservative web site posting an out of context snippet of a speech Sherrod gave to the NAACP for the whole string of knee-jerk reactions accusing her of racism. Sherrod was talking about her own evolution and struggles with her attitudes as a southern black woman whose father was murdered by a white racist. Andrew Breitbart, a conservative writer, seized on one portion of a powerful story she shared. By the time it made it to Fox News, the damage was done. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod 'Not Sure' She Wants Her Job Back (ABC News Blog 7/21)

Although Secretary Tom Vilsack is reconsidering his decision to oust Shirley Sherrod, she told me she might not even want her job back because she is unsure how she would be treated. "Because of all the publicity surrounding what happened...how would I be treated once I'm back there? I just don't know," she said on "GMA." "I would have to be reassured on that." Sherrod, the Georgia director of rural development for the Department of Agriculture, was forced to resign after Andrew Breitbart, a conservative blogger at Biggovernment.com, released a video of her alleged racist remarks at an NAACP event. "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land. And here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do," she said in the video, describing an incident from 24 years prior. Breitbart posted the video days after the NAACP had denounced members of the Tea Party for what it called racist comments. [Link](#)

Former Agriculture Department Official Denies Racism; Secretary Vilsack Stands By Her Firing (ABC News Blog 7/20)

A former Department of Agriculture official said her termination was an unfair casualty of a larger political spat on race between the Tea Party movement and the NAACP, but Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack Tuesday afternoon stood by his decision to seek her termination based on a controversial anecdote she told earlier this year. On Monday morning, conservative blogger Andrew Breitbart posted a video of Shirley Sherrod, then the US Department of Agriculture's director of rural development for Georgia, along with an essay titled "Video Proof: The NAACP Awards Racism - 2010." [Link](#)

Who Tipped Off Shirley Sherrod Last Week? (TIME Blog 7/22)

A little noticed statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack's press conference yesterday was his admission that Shirley Sherrod tried to alert the USDA last week of the tape's existence... This is rather curious. Did Breitbart actually call Sherrod for comment last week? Did whoever leaked the tape inform Sherrod they were doing so? Ann Coulter, pretty hilariously, suggests Breitbart was set up. I've asked a USDA press secretary to release Sherrod's e-mail warning the department. I will post it if the department opts to release it. The spokesman said the e-mail was also sent to Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Kathleen A. Merrigan, but landed in an inbox that receives messages from the public. Her staff only checks this inbox periodically, the press secretary said. Correspondence between government officials often falls under auspices of the Freedom of Information Act, but I'm not holding my breath that the department will readily offer up the e-mail message. Its very existence exposes a pretty glaring flaw in the department's communication system. [Link](#)

Tom Vilsack Apologizes, Profusely, Profoundly, Completely (TIME Blog 7/21)

Tom Vilsack, the secretary of the Department of Agriculture, just gave a short press conference where he took total responsibility for the Shirley Sherrod debacle. "I didn't take the time I should have as a result a good woman has gone through a very difficult period," said Vilsack, saying he has learned "a very serious lesson." "It was a decision I regret having made in haste," he added. Vilsack said he personally apologized to Sherrod and she accepted his apology. He also reiterated his statement that he received no pressure from the White House to fire Sherrod in the first place. Vilsack also revealed a few new pieces of the puzzle. 1. Shirley Sherrod tried to e-mail Vilsack about the video last Thursday but he never received the message because the e-mail was not addressed properly. Vilsack said the e-mail was also sent to at least one other person at the USDA. It's not clear yet what this means. Did someone warn Sherrod the video was coming? Breitbart? Whoever leaked it to Breitbart? The NAACP? [Link](#)

The Full Shirley Sherrod Speech - UPDATE (TIME Blog 7/21)

For those who have been following the Shirley Sherrod/Andrew Breitbart/NAACP/USDA story today - you might have whiplash! - here's the full text of Sherrod's speech before an NAACP audience in March. It's worth watching in full. UPDATE: Around 2 a.m. this morning, Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack said he would review Sherrod's firing. She said this morning she's not if she wants

to return to the USDA. If you haven't been following the story, get up to speed over at CNN where you can see interviews with the parties involved and read through the events of the day. The theme of Sherrod's speech, which she repeats in various iterations throughout is, "It's not about race. It's about those who have and those who do not." In other words, Sherrod tries to impart to her audience that those who believe America - and the South in particular - is divided because of race miss the point. It's divided, she says, because of income. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod and the Summer's Latest Media Shark Attack (TIME Blog 7/21)

I could tell it was summer yesterday. Not because of the soup-like atmosphere that greets me on opening the door in the morning, or the sweet garbagey fragrance of New York in July, but because the political media was busily living every week like it was Shark Week. The latest example of which was the 24-hour feeding frenzy, freakout and rush to judgment over USDA official Shirley Sherrod. A summary, if you haven't been following the story: Andrew Breitbart's conservative blog, Biggovernment.com, ran an edited video from a speech Sherrod gave at an NAACP meeting, in which she appears to be crowing over her refusal to do as much as she could to help a white farmer, because of his race. Breitbart called the speech both racist itself and proof of the NAACP's hypocrisy, because its officials have recently charged the Tea Party movement with racism. The clip blew up online and the story was played up by Fox News. Other outlets ran with the story, and the NAACP condemned her remarks. In the ensuing firestorm, Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack got Sherrod to resign. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod: A year after beer summit, another story about race (Sun Times Blog 7/21)

The tide is turning for ousted USDA worker Shirley Sherrod. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack is reconsidering her firing. The NAACP apologized for its rush to judgement. At issue: an edited videotape of a speech Sherrod delivered made her remarks seem racist; the whole speech showed something different. The episode--still unfolding on Wednesday and reaching up to a White House cabinet secretary--comes a year after President Obama wrestled with race related issues stemming from the arrest of Harvard professor Skip Gates, leading to a "beer summit" at the White House. Sherrod told NBC's "Today Show," on Wednesday, "You know, that is so hard to take, especially when I kept saying, "Look at the entire thing. Look at my message." And no one would listen. No one would listen." She's not sure she would take her job back: "You know, I am just not sure of how I would be treated there now. That's one I just don't know at this point." [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod and the times we live in (The Guardian Blog 7/21)

We often use metaphors to describe the sometimes surreal twisting of facts in the interest of advancing a partisan point. We talk of a hall of mirrors, things like that. But it's hard to think of another case in which something has so explicitly and precisely been twisted into its opposite. You probably know the Shirley Sherrod story by now. She was giving a talk describing an episode of many years ago in which she, a black woman and agricultural agent, wasn't as fully helpful as she could have been to a white farmer, because she saw lots of black farmers losing their land. This video was circulated by Andrew Breitbart and became a massive story yesterday. And now it turns out that the video that was circulated was edited, leaving out Sherrod's later words: that she was wrong then, that she'd learned from it and grown. [Link](#)

Opinion: Sherrod, Vilsack and the Dangers of Our Clip Culture (AOL News 7/22)

The Shirley Sherrod saga is political theater at the most profound level. It's got layers: nuclear partisanship, racial freight, rich personal narratives -- making it part Greek tragedy, part Southern Gothic... In short, Vilsack allowed himself to become a victim of our cut-and-paste, wrenched-out-of-context, instant judgment, text-happy, BlackBerry-propelled clip culture. Like most of us, he has become accustomed to making quick judgments on partial evidence. (Ironic for an agriculture secretary, the cabinet position that oversees the most patient industry in the country.) How often do all of us read part of an e-mail -- or listen to a portion of a voice mail -- and race dangerously off in the wrong direction? How many of us have had our own mini Vilsack moments? I know I have. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Finally Reaches Obama on the Phone (AOL News 7/22)

Shirley Sherrod played phone tag with President Barack Obama, finally reaching him on the phone today, according to a CNN producer. Sherrod spoke with Obama after he texted her saying he had tried to reach her, said CNN's Julie O'Neill, who was with her. The former USDA official called the president back in 10 minutes, O'Neill said. "The conversation went on for a few minutes," O'Neill said. "She was very, very pleased with the conversation. She gave me a few details afterwards, saying that the president conveyed

that Secretary Vilsack was indeed very, very apologetic and very sincere in that apology. She told NBC this morning she was inclined not to return to the agency, adding: "The secretary said he would e-mail it to me. I have not seen it yet, so before I say no totally, I would like to look at that to weigh it." [Link](#)

Carville, Matalin Engage In On-Air Spat Over Sherrod [VIDEO] (AOL News 7/22)

Everyone, it seems, has an opinion on the firing of USDA official Shirley Sherrod, especially political partisans who are paid to argue it out on live television. Today Republican strategist Mary Matalin and her Democratic-strategist husband, James Carville, both paid contributors to CNN, got into a heated exchange over the take-away from Sherrod's firing. Interviewed by John King, Carville asserted that Sherrod should sue the filmmaker who sent out the edited clip of her speech to an NAACP group that portrayed her as a racist. Matalin countered, albeit tangentially, that the Obama administration bore the ultimate responsibility for Sherrod's firing because of its presumption "that Republicans and conservatives are racist." [Link](#)

Obama calls Sherrod and offers his 'regrets' (AOL News 7/22)

Shirley Sherrod got her wish: President Obama phoned her at 12:35 PM ET this afternoon to offer his own apology for the events that led to her firing from the Agriculture Department this week. According to the White House, the two spoke for about seven minutes. "The president expressed to Ms. Sherrod his regret about the events of the last several days," a White House statement reads. Obama reiterated to Sherrod that Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack was "sincere in his apology" and in his efforts to "rid the USDA of discrimination." According to the White House, Obama told Sherrod that this misfortune can present an opportunity for her to continue her hard work on behalf of those in need, and he hopes that she will do so. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Backlash: Glenn Beck Joins Chorus Calling for Her Re-Hiring (AOL News 7/21)

Shirley Sherrod, the black Agriculture Department official who was forced to resign after allegedly damning but incomplete footage surfaced of a speech she gave at an NAACP conference, suddenly has allies on both ends of the political spectrum. The NAACP, which had initially issued a statement denouncing Sherrod, now wants to see her rehired. But so does conservative Fox News talk show host Glenn Beck, who despite possibly going blind wants it known that he still knows injustice when he sees it, and thinks Sherrod should even get a promotion. The belated support arrived after the full video of Sherrod's speech was released. In it, she began recalling an episode from 24 years ago (when she wasn't working for the USDA), admitting she once did less than she could have to help a white farmer because he was white. That's what led her knee-jerk superiors to call for her resignation. [Link](#)

Administration Apologizes, Offers to Rehire Sherrod (AOL News 7/21)

An embarrassed Obama administration apologized to a black official who was ousted from the U.S. Department of Agriculture in a racial flap, and Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said he had offered Shirley Sherrod a new job at the agency. Vilsack told reporters in Washington that he had apologized to Sherrod and that she accepted. "I started off by extending to her my personal and profound apologies for pain and discomfort that has been caused to her and her family over the course of the last several days," Vilsack said. "She was extraordinarily gracious." He said he had asked her to come back to work at a different position at the USDA. Sherrod told The Associated Press she was considering it. "They did make an offer," she said. "I just told him I need to think about it." The offer came after the White House apologized and said Sherrod had been the victim of a rush to judgment. [Link](#)

Would Shirley Sherrod's Full NAACP Speech Give a Different Impression? (AOL News 7/20)

In the ongoing war over who is more racist -- the NAACP or the tea party -- the right has delivered a blow with revealing footage of a black USDA official, Shirley Sherrod, speaking at an NAACP conference and admitting to doing less than she could have to help a white farmer. On Monday, Sherrod resigned. But she also sought to clarify the record, and her version jibes with the fact that the footage released by the website Big Government was cut off at just about the point where it appeared Sherrod was beginning to disown her own prejudice. She was starting to say how class distinctions trumped racial ones, and that poor blacks and whites should feel solidarity. Just before the segment ends, Sherrod tells the audience: "That's when it was revealed to me that it's about poor, versus those who have. It's not so much about white ... it is about white and black. But it's not, you know, it opened my eyes." [Link](#)

Black USDA Official Resigns in Flap Over White Farmer (AOL News 7/20)

A black USDA official who was pressured to resign over comments she made about not helping a struggling white farmer as much as she could have says the agency didn't know the whole story and succumbed to political pressure. Shirley Sherrod resigned Monday as the USDA's rural development director for Georgia after a clip of the speech was posted online by conservative outlets, biggovernment.com and later FoxNews. [Link](#)

White House's reaction to Sherrod a shock? No, it was predictable (San Francisco Examiner Blog 7/22)

When it's all said and done with l'affair Shirley Sherrod, people screwed up... I respect each of the bloggers I've quoted and think that their criticism of the administration's actions is something to which Team Obama should pay attention. But in all honesty, if there is one word I would use to describe the actions of Vilsack and the White House in canning Shirley Sherrod, it is: *predictable*. The list of people that the Obama administration has thrown under the bus at various points is not small. With every passing day, it gets longer and the reasons for its growth less distinguished. I mean, look at how candidate Obama chose to react to video surfacing that cast light on the scurrilous invective of his former preacher Jeremiah Wright. It was the same move: disown and deride. What about former senator Tom Daschle when tax issues surfaced alongside Daschle's nomination as Secretary of Health and Human Services? Cut and run. And when Van Jones was accused of being and outted as a likely 9-11 truther via an eyebrow raising signature? Off he went without much more than a peep from the President. I mean, has Obama gone to bat for anyone involved in his administration when opponents have launched a negative campaign against them? No one jumps to mind. If this administration has demonstrated one thing consistently, it is that they are perfectly willing to sacrifice the reputation of individual players for the good of its much larger agenda. In some cases, like Wright's, the disownment was invariably the correct course of action. In others, like Daschle and now Sherrod, there is a good deal more skepticism and political calculus at play. [Link](#)

The rest of the story (Arkansas Times Blog 7/20)

The right-wing echo chamber has been beating the drums for a couple of days now about a supposedly racist (black) USDA worker, promptly sacked by Ag Secretary Tom Vilsack on the strength of Fox reporting of her supposedly offensive remarks. The rest of the story is instructive. Hardly what Fox News or the odious Andrew Breitbart reported. The full video apparently will back up her account, in the appropriate fuller context, of what she said and did TWENTY-FOUR YEARS AGO. It is Acorn Faux reporting redux. It occurs to me that Sen. Blanche Lincoln could score some courage points here. No breath being held. [Link](#)

What Next for Sherrod? (The Atlantic 7/22)

It's been quite a week for Shirley Sherrod, who was fired from the U.S. Department of Agriculture for a years-old video that was edited to falsely imply she had made racially insensitive comments... So, although the incident has clearly raised serious questions, there's no need for her to pursue further personal justice... "Asked if she would consider a defamation suit against Breitbart, the conservative blogger who posted the edited clip that got her fired, she said, 'I really think I should. ... 'I don't know a lot about the legal profession but that's one person I'd like to get back at, because he came at me. He didn't go after the NAACP; he came at me,' she went on."...Sherrod "says she wants to hear directly from President Obama that he and his administration are fully committed to fighting discrimination against black farmers. 'I can't say that the president is fully behind me. [Link](#)

White House Concerned About Meeting Leak (The Atlantic 7/22)

Criticism of administration decision making -- that, the White House can handle... The intent of the leaker was to portray Messina and others as tone deaf to the developing storm over Sherrod's raw deal, even though, on Tuesday morning, the full video exonerating her had yet to be circulated and the white farmer who Sherrod had mentioned had not come forward... The leaker also appeared to misconstrue Messina's comments to suggest that the White House had been involved in the decision to fire Sherrod, when in fact, the consultations between the USDA and the White House on Monday night were about the wording of the USDA statement announcing the ouster... Messina declined to comment, and other people in the meeting would only talk on the condition of anonymity, fully aware of the irony of giving a reporter an account of meeting that had already been leaked... One White House official said that colleagues had a good idea of who Smith's source is, though there is no investigation nor round-up of internal e-mails or communications. [Link](#)

On Lacking All Conviction, Cont. (The Atlantic 7/21)

One way of looking at Shirley Sherrod's firing is to classify it with all the other rhetorical fights we've had over the past few years that are more about offense, than practical issues. I think that's wrong, and it misses precisely why it's important to take a stand. Shirley Sherrod brought to the Obama administration a deep understanding of the very issues that the USDA has grappled with for years--discrimination among them. She knew the lay of the South, and had been grappling with the problems of agriculture, literally, all her life. It was in her blood. Firing her robs the administration of a great resource, but more importantly it robs the people who she was appointed to serve. [Link](#)

Who's Dining Out on Jim Messina? (The Atlantic 7/21)

White House officials yesterday afternoon told reporters they did not press Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack to demand the resignation of Shirley Sherrod, but that they stood by the hasty decision; last night, they took credit for pressing Vilsack to rehire her when a fuller video revealed that her remarks had been edited to mean the opposite of what she said. But three Democratic sources said Deputy Chief of Staff Jim Messina singled out the White House's initial response to the incident for praise in the regular 8:30 a.m. staff meeting Tuesday morning. The sources differed on the substance of Messina's praise, but concurred that he had praised the speed of White House communications in response to the flap, which was driven by a misleadingly-edited video posted to Andrew Breitbart's Big Government website. [Link](#)

The White House's Shirley Sherrod Test (The Atlantic 7/20)

Unless there is something we don't know about Shirley Sherrod's job performance, it is safe to say, based on what we now know, that Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack acted on the basis of provisional information that drew him to make a false conclusion about her views and what point she was trying to make. It was a good faith mistake based on the bad faith of others. The White House doesn't like to intervene when racial politics bubbles up, except for the times it does -- like when a black Harvard professor that President Obama knew was involved in a fracas with a white Cambridge police officer. Some of President Obama's friends have had a nagging suspicion that racial discourse in the country is coarser than it was when he took office because, perhaps, people hadn't felt the need to express themselves as honestly as they do now, with a black president in office, with the country having elected a black president to office. The executive branch realizes that the White House is extremely sensitive to the charge that Obama is using his presidency to advance the cause of black people. [Link](#)

Breitbart's Skilled Editing (The Atlantic Blog 7/20)

The quotes that former USDA worker Shirley Sherrod gave on the edited tapes disseminated by Andrew Breitbart are indeed indefensible, but is it not fair to provide some kind of context? To wit: Sherrod said the short video clip excluded the breadth of the story about how she eventually worked with the man over a two-year period to help ward off foreclosure of his farm, and how she eventually became friends with him and his wife. "And I went on to work with many more white farmers," she said. "The story helped me realize that race is not the issue, it's about the people who have and the people who don't. When I speak to groups, I try to speak about getting beyond the issue of race." [Link](#)

The Lynching of Shirley Sherrod (Slate 7/21)

Twenty-four years ago, Shirley Sherrod helped Roger Spooner save his farm. She was black, and he was white, but they were more than that. They were two people working together to keep a South Georgia family on its land. This week, they were flattened into a political cartoon. To score points in a fight between the Tea Party and the NAACP over which side is "racist," Sherrod and Spooner were caricatured: she as a black bigot, he as a white dupe. The nuances of their story were erased...The USDA forced her to resign. Nobody asked her to explain herself or looked at her job performance to see whether she had practiced discrimination. The video was enough. The NAACP, having secured the right of all people to sit at the front of the bus, threw Sherrod under it. In his statement, NAACP President Ben Jealous claimed "she gave no indication she had attempted to right the wrong she had done" to Spooner. [Link](#)

The civil rights heroism of Charles Sherrod (Salon 7/22)

People who care about civil rights and racial reconciliation may eventually thank Andrew Breitbart for bringing Shirley Sherrod the global attention she deserves. Really. Her message of racial healing, her insight that the forces of wealth and injustice have always pit "the haves and the have-nots" against each other, whatever their race, is exactly what's missing in today's Beltway debates about race. What's even

more amazing, but almost completely unexplored in this controversy, is the historic civil rights leadership role of her husband, Charles Sherrod, an early leader of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, who served on the front lines of the nonviolent civil rights movement in the early 1960s. Despite Breitbart's attempt to cast Shirley Sherrod as The, um, Man ("The Woman" doesn't have the same ring), out to keep oppressed white folk down, under our first black racist president, she turned out to be the opposite, an advocate of justice for everybody. [Link](#)

Vilsack offers Shirley Sherrod a new job (Salon 7/21)

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack apologized to Shirley Sherrod for her unnecessary firing. He also offered her an unspecified new job with the USDA. According to CNN, Sherrod will think the job offer over for a few days before making a decision. Vilsack then spoke to the media. He called Sherrod "extraordinarily gracious" in their conversation. He went on to commend her experience "helping individuals in trouble," and said Sherrod could help the USDA "turn the page" on their civil rights troubles. Vilsack promised "a more deliberative process" before making decisions of this magnitude, in the future. He admitted that he was hypersensitive to civil rights issues in the department, because of tens of thousands of claims filed against the USDA. [Link](#)

Sherrod fiasco shows we must be skeptics (Salon 7/21)

If you're one of the people who believed, even for a minute, that former U.S. Agriculture Department employee Shirley Sherrod misused her government position in racist ways, you have plenty of company -- and you may also believe you have a plausible excuse. After all, you were told by Big Media, the Obama administration and the NAACP that it was true. Except, as we've all learned, it wasn't true. It was a brazen lie, pushed initially by the infamous Andrew Breitbart and his allies at Fox News, and given credence via the cravenness of other media organizations, Obama's secretary of agriculture and America's most prominent civil rights organization. No surprise that Fox News leaped aboard the Breitbart wagon: Here was "news" that A) fit the channel's worldview and B) came with video. So what if the video was incomplete. Don't look for even a shred of remorse from Fox News, ever. [Link](#)

Senior White House official praises administration response to Sherrod video (Salon 7/21)

After Shirley Sherrod was unceremoniously and unfairly fired from the Department of Agriculture because of a deceptively edited video posted by conservative outrage-clown Andrew Breitbart, the White House took pains to note that the decision was made by USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack and Tom Vilsack alone. But at a meeting ~~this~~ yesterday morning, one senior White House official praised the embarrassing White House response to Breitbart's smear. Because at least they acted quickly. According to reporting by Ben Smith, White House Deputy Chief of Staff Jim Messina "singled the White House's initial response to the incident out for praise in the regular 8:30 a.m. staff meeting Tuesday morning." Specifically, he "praised the speed of White House communications in response to the flap...." It gets worse. Here's one source's version of Messina's comments: One source, who is unhappy with the administration's handling of the incident, paraphrased Messina's remarks: "We could have waited all day -- we could have had a media circus -- but we took decisive action and it's a good example of how to respond in this atmosphere." [Link](#)

The heroism of Shirley Sherrod (Salon 7/21)

Everyone is presumably aware by now of the facts surrounding the disgusting fraud perpetrated on Shirley Sherrod, engineered by Andrew Breitbart, amplified by Fox News, and meekly submitted to by the Obama administration. Those who aren't can read excellent commentary from Jamelle Bouie, Joan Walsh, and Chris Martinez. Much has been written about the incomparable sleaze of Breitbart, the standard propaganda boost from Fox News, and the typical cowardice of the administration in the face of such attacks. All of that is well established by now and quite unsurprising, so I want to focus on what ought to be the enduring lesson from this ugly episode: the courage of Shirley Sherrod. Just as CNN fired Octavia Nasr for one of the few insightful and interesting observations she ever voiced about the Middle East, Sherrod's speech -- which caused her to be fired -- is simply inspiring in its uncommon candor, courage and wisdom. [Link](#)

Tom Vilsack: Disgrace (Salon 7/21)

In the wake of the grievously unjust firing of Agriculture Department official Shirley Sherrod, it's clear that agency head Tom Vilsack might be a hack, and he's definitely a coward. One day after Andrew Breitbart posted a truncated video of Sherrod's allegedly racist speech before the NAACP, she was out of a job. If

the White House pushed for her exit, as Sherrod claims, then Vilsack appears to have served as a diligent functionary in carrying out the task. If the decision was entirely his own, as Vilsack and the White House maintain, then he's responsible for ending the career of a longtime farm-aid veteran based on an abbreviated video circulated by a discredited conservative provocateur. That level of rash gutlessness is not what you'd expect from a one-time presidential aspirant (even one who dropped out of the race 11 months before the Iowa caucuses). [Link](#)

White House wants it both ways on Sherrod firing (Salon 7/20)

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack issued a statement today explaining that he asked for Georgia rural development director Shirley Sherrod's resignation yesterday because "the controversy surrounding her comments would create situations where her decisions, rightly or wrongly, would be called into question making it difficult for her to bring jobs to Georgia." As Alex Pareene explained, the controversy Vilsack is referring to was whipped up when Andrew Breitbart released an edited video clip of Sherrod, it was mindlessly picked up by other media, and the Obama administration followed suit. But now that Breitbart's story of Sherrod being a racist has been exposed as bogus, the White House is trying to have it both ways: They say they support Vilsack's decision but at the same time had absolutely nothing to do with his making it. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod, scalp for the right wing (Salon 7/20)

Sweaty conservative culture warrior and Internet publisher Andrew Breitbart won yet another scalp today when Shirley Sherrod, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's rural development director for Georgia, was forced to resign for the offense of appearing in an obviously edited video clip that was posted to one of Breitbart's websites. Sherrod was speaking to a Georgia chapter of the NAACP. In the speech, according to Breitbart's characterization, Sherrod is explaining how she refused to help a white farmer as much as she could have because she preferred to help black people. Breitbart: We are in possession of a video from in which Shirley Sherrod, USDA Georgia director of rural development, speaks at the NAACP Freedom Fund dinner in Georgia. In her meandering speech to what appears to be an all-black audience, this federally appointed executive bureaucrat lays out in stark detail that her federal duties are managed through the prism of race and class distinctions. [Link](#)

USDA worker quits over racism charge from video (Salon 7/20)

A black federal worker has resigned from a Georgia agricultural job after a video clip showed her saying she had not helped a farmer as much as she could have because he was white. U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a statement Tuesday he had accepted the resignation of Shirley Sherrod. Vilsack says the USDA has no tolerance for discrimination. Sherrod told the Atlanta-Journal Constitution she was forced out of her job as the USDA's rural development director for Georgia. She said the two-minute, 38-second video posted online Monday misconstrued her message. [Link](#)

The Obama administration's most unlikeable moment yet (The Independent Blog 7/22)

Perhaps you couldn't blame the White House for acting quickly. When the Obama administration heard that video had emerged of an obscure black official in the Agriculture Department cheerily outlining how she had decided not to help a white farmer as much as she might have otherwise because of the colour of his skin, it must have seemed like a crisis waiting to happen: and the received wisdom in these situations, of course, is to get ahead of the story, to kill it before it spirals out of your control, and to change the subject by the time the next news cycle comes around... What's much more striking and worrying is the way the Democratic administration and its allies acted. Sherrod was called three times in the same day by Agriculture Department officials urging her to resign; she was told that she had to quit immediately because the row was "going to be on Glenn Beck tonight". [Link](#)

President Obama Finally Calls Shirley Sherrod (Wonkette 7/22)

"You know, I was reading my newspaper this morning, and it seems Tom Vilsack did something really unfortunate to you, ma'am." Yes, President Obama has finally called Shirley Sherrod. This may seem like a token expression of common decency after what his administration caused her. But for a long time it didn't seem he could do this little thing, as it would somehow "connect" him to this whole controversy, his advisors thought. (Guess what? Barry was already connected anyway! And then he just looked like a jerk and even more cowardly for being afraid of his phone.) So what did they talk about? ...Umm, alright. Sherrod told ABC this morning that she would like to share some of her life experience with Obama if the

president called, experience she said he doesn't have and would benefit to know, but that probably doesn't fit in seven minutes. [Link](#)

USDA Reconsiders Decision On Shirley Sherrod (Technorati 7/22)

On Monday, Shirley Sherrod was forced out of her senior position at the Agriculture Department over her alleged racial comments that took the media by storm... There was one victim in this saga, but many perpetrators, the activist who started this drive, the cable news network who played the clip and talked about it relentlessly, the NAACP, and ultimately the Obama administration – they all have eggs on their face... The Agriculture Secretary, Tom Vilsack told this morning that he would reconsider the department's previous decision asking her to resign. The question is will there be any justice served on them who brought ruin on Shirley? [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Leaves USDA Over Racism Charge (News One 7/20)

A black USDA official in Georgia has resigned after publicly admitting she didn't help a white man trying to save his farm to the "full force" of her power and instead referred him to "one of his own." Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said he had accepted Shirley Sherrod's resignation, saying there was "zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA." [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod: Web, cable drive reckless race story (Baltimore Sun Blog 7/21)

Earlier today, I lamented the feverish, polarizing and dangerous conversation we are now having about race with the Internet and cable TV driving the discussion rather than legacy media. Exhibit A, I said, was the case of Shirley Sherrod, an African-American federal agriculture official denounced by the NAACP and forced to resign by the Obama administration within hours of a heavily-edited tape of her speaking to an NAACP gathering being posted online at the right-wing website breitbart.com. Now take a look at this video from Fox News on Tuesday night to see how utterly out of control this story and the conversation have become within one of the shortest news cycles I have ever seen. And note the way the NAACP and White House reacted with major statements and a firing to what at the time was essentially nothing more than a doctored videotape posted online. Amazing! Not only is the national media discourse dazed, compressed and confused in the world of new media, so is national policy to some extent. No time for independent deliberation, investigation or review. [Link](#)

Vilsack Rethinking Sherrod Firing (Mother Jones 7/21)

The tempest in a tea pot surrounding the firing of Shirley Sherrod, a United States Department of Agriculture official in Georgia, looks set for a new twist today. If you caught so much as a glimpse of the news yesterday, you heard about Sherrod's story: how she was forced to quit by USDA officials, including secretary Tom Vilsack and under-secretary Cheryl Cook, after a video surfaced purportedly showing Sherrod, who is black, talking about how 24 years ago she "withheld help from a white farmer seeking the [USDA's] help in saving his farm." The video showing Sherrod's "racism" went viral, even though, as it turned out, the video had been selectively edited, had taken Sherrod's comments completely out of context, and had flipped Sherrod's remarks to mean the opposite. When interviewed by CNN, the white farmers whom Sherrod had supposedly wronged and discriminated against said the opposite: that Sherrod, their "close friend," had helped save their farm. [Link](#)

Fox host denies network covered Sherrod story; Sherrod calls network 'racist' (The Raw Story 7/21)

Shirley Sherrod, the Department of Agriculture employee forced to resign over misleadingly edited footage showing her making "racist" remarks at an NAACP meeting, has lashed out at Fox News and conservative journalist Andrew Breitbart, accusing their journalistic practices of being a manifestation of racism. "When you look at their reporting, this is just another way of seeing that they are (racist)," Sherrod told MediaMatters' Joe Strupp. Her comments came ahead of Wednesday's apologies to Sherrod from White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs and Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, who took the blame for Sherrod's forced resignation. [Link](#)

Maddow to White House: Giving in to conservative spin 'makes it worse' (The Raw Story 7/21)

MSNBC's Rachel Maddow has some advice for the White House about reacting to conservative media stories: "Believing conservative spin about what's so wrong with you and then giving into that spin, is not an effective defense. In fact, it makes it worse." The Obama administration had asked for the resignation of USDA official Shirley Sherrod after a heavily edited video surfaced Monday on Andrew Breitbart's Big

Government website that appear to show her describing how she had denied help to a white family trying to save their farm. The story was quickly picked up by Fox News as an example of racial discrimination by the Obama administration. The NAACP condemned Sherrod and Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack asked her to resign. After obtaining the unedited video, which showed that Sherrod had been describing an incident 24 years ago in which she did successfully help the white farmers, the NAACP apologized and Vilsack said he is willing to reconsider her firing. [Link](#)

Vilsack reconsidering his firing of Shirley Sherrod. (Think Progress 7/21)

This morning, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that he is now reconsidering his decision to fire Shirley Sherrod, after taking the bait of a deceptively edited video that appeared on BigGovernment.com meant to make the Georgia USDA official appear racist. From Vilsack's statement: I am of course willing and will conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts to ensure to the American people we are providing services in a fair and equitable manner. This certainly isn't a promise that Sherrod will get her job back (despite overwhelming evidence that she was set up and is the victim of injustice), but it's a significant step forward. After all, yesterday afternoon, Vilsack was standing by his decision, saying, "The controversy surrounding her comments would create situations where her decisions, rightly or wrongly, would be called into question making it difficult for her to bring jobs to Georgia." The NAACP has apologized to Sherrod for initially rushing out a statement saying it was "appalled" by her "shameless" actions and has called on Vilsack to reinstate her. [Link](#)

Obama administration may back track on firing employee after fake right wing outrage (American Blog 7/21)

After the Breitbart ACORN scam you would think Democrats might be suspicious of highly edited video footage that is fed to Fox News. The initial reaction by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack to the edited Breitbart video was to force the resignation of Shirley Sherrod so the administration could avoid any problems with the right wing noise machine. It would be encouraging to see Vilsack change course, following a review of the entire story - not the edited version - and re-hire Sherrod. Why is it so often difficult for this administration to work with friends and appease its enemies? Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said Wednesday he will reconsider the department's decision to oust a black employee over racially tinged remarks after learning more about what she said. Vilsack issued a short statement early Wednesday morning after Shirley Sherrod, who until Tuesday was the Agriculture Department's director of rural development in Georgia, said she was pressured to resign because of her comments that she didn't give a white farmer as much help as she could have 24 years ago. [Link](#)

Reinstate Shirley Sherrod (Daily Kos 7/20)

This had better be a trial balloon: Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack this afternoon took responsibility for firing an official, Shirley Sherrod, whose appearance on video recalling her behavior toward a white farmer drew charges of racism, and whose immediate firing drew suggestions that the administration had overreacted to an edited video clip. A White House official told me just now that the White House backs Vilsack's decision -- but that it was Vilsack's alone. The official said the White House -- contrary to the Sherrod's charge -- did not pressure the Department to fire her. Unfortunately, Greg Sargent is hearing similar things. Sorry, but simultaneously saying it wasn't our call' and 'we support the decision' just won't cut it. Firing Shirley Sherrod was a bad decision, motivated by the wrong reasons, and it should be reversed. She should be reinstated, and it's not a close call. [Link](#)

Note to Sherrod: Kick the Tires of Vilsack's Offer of "Unique Opportunity" (TMP 7/22)

Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack has backed up and apologized to the recently resigned/fired USDA Georgia Rural Development Director Shirley Sherrod...It would not be unreasonable to think that the job he has offered involves serving as a sort of USDA "Special Envoy" -- bridging misunderstandings, class differences, or race differences -- a sort of ombudsperson fixer -- among the USDA's constituents and within the Department. If I was in the pickle that Vilsack was in, given that he probably still entertains visions of future political advancement, then I'd offer her some plum-sounding perch...So any time one sees "unique opportunity" as a qualifier before a government job -- particularly when it is being offered to give the perpetrator of a wrong, in this case Secretary Vilsack, a way out of political hell -- then demand "your own budget." Otherwise, the exploitation that began with Shirley Sherrod's inappropriate firing will continue with Shirley Sherrod being hired back -- all to the benefit of risk-averse and opportunistic pols. [Link](#)

Sherrod: 'I Really Think I Should' Sue Breitbart (Talking Points Memo 7/22)

Shirley Sherrod said this morning on CNN that she would like to "get back at" Andrew Breitbart. Asked if she would consider a defamation suit against Breitbart, the conservative blogger who posted the edited clip that got her fired, she said, "I really think I should." "I don't know a lot about the legal profession but that's one person I'd like to get back at, because he came at me. He didn't go after the NAACP; he came at me," she went on... "I can't say that the president is fully behind me, I would hope that he is," she said on Good Morning America. "I would love to talk to him." "He is not someone who has experienced what I have experienced through life, being a person of color. He might need to hear some of what I could say to him," she told me. "I don't know if that would guide him in a way that he deals with others like me, but I at least would like to have the opportunity to talk to him about it." [Link](#)

Point of Clarification (Talking Points Memo Muckraker 7/20)

There's been some confusion today over one aspect of this Breitbart/USDA story that I want to try to clear up. Shirley Sherrod, the USDA official forced out, did an on camera interview with CNN at midday. In the interview, Sherrod described the pressure she came under yesterday from within the USDA to resign her post in light of the Breitbart video. Shortly after that, the Washington Post had a write-up of the interview in which they quote Sherrod as saying, "I got three calls from the White House. At one point they asked me to pull over to the side of the road and do it because you are going to be on Glenn Beck tonight." Now that purported declaration -- that she got three calls from the White House demanding her resignation -- seems off to anyone who follows these things. Sherrod is a low-level official. [Link](#)

Brietbart Speaks (Talking Points Memo 7/20)

Andrew Breitbart, who published the video clip of Shirley Sherrod's speech that led to her forced resignation, tells TPM he doesn't have the entire video either and that the clip came to him from a source already edited. But he's seen enough: "I think the video speaks for itself. The way she's talking about white people ... is conveying a present tense racism in my opinion. But racism is in the eye of the beholder." [Link](#)

NAACP Now 'Conducting Investigation' Into Sherrod Video (Talking Points Memo Muckraker 7/20)

The NAACP, which originally condemned USDA appointee Shirley Sherrod, is now saying it is conducting an investigation of her story and will issue a new statement. "The NAACP is conducting an investigation into the recent revelations about the situation with Ms. Shirley Sherrod, including attempting to speak with Ms. Sherrod, the farmer in question and viewing the full video," the NAACP said in a statement to CNN. "Following a full and comprehensive process, we will issue an updated statement." Sherrod was forced to resign her position as the Georgia director of rural development for the USDA after Big Government posted a video clip of her telling a local NAACP chapter that she had once, before her time at the USDA, not helped a farmer as much as she could have because he was white. [Link](#)

Breitbart On Sherrod's NAACP Speech: 'I Did Not Edit This Thing' (Talking Points memo Muckraker 7/20)

The crux of the Shirley Sherrod controversy is what she said outside of the two-minute video clip posted by Big Government -- whether she was, as she claims, telling a story about how she overcame racial prejudice while helping poor farmers in Georgia, or whether the clip is a good encapsulation of her views. So we asked Andrew Breitbart, the founder of Big Government, why he hasn't posted the full video. "I don't have it," Breitbart told TPMmuckraker in an interview. Breitbart said his source sent him just the edited clips at first, but is in the process of sending the full video. Breitbart said he'll post the full video, if he can get permission from the video production company who filmed it for a local NAACP chapter. He also maintained that he didn't edit the clip and that it was sent to him already edited. [Link](#)

USDA Appointee Forced To Resign After Edited Speech Released By Breitbart (VIDEO) (Talking Points Memo Muckraker 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod, an appointee to the USDA, was forced to resign yesterday after *Big Government* posted a video of a speech Sherrod gave in March. In the video, Sherrod, who is black, recounts how, 24 years ago, she didn't help a white farmer as much as she could. In the speech, given to a local Georgia chapter of the NAACP, Sherrod recounts a time when, while she was working for a land assistance fund, a white farmer came and asked her for help. "What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was, I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," she said. "I

was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough." [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Gets Apologies, Job Offer From Vilsack (Politics Daily 7/21)

Under pressure from both the right and the left, the Obama administration apologized on Wednesday for the capricious ouster of Shirley Sherrod from her Agriculture Department job amid erroneous charges of reverse racism and offered her a promotion. But for a White House that has prided itself on its nuanced approach toward racial politics, as well as its distinct mastery of online media, the question remains as to how the Obama administration could have mishandled the situation so completely. The latest mea culpa came from Sherrod's former boss, Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack. During a news conference Wednesday afternoon to address the controversy, he accepted full responsibility for the ouster of Sherrod and characterized it as a hasty, and ultimately misguided, decision made in the hopes of eradicating intolerance from his department. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Gets a White House Apology, Needs a Book Contract (Politics Daily 7/21)

Shirley Sherrod, I will read your memoir! Most of us had never heard of Sherrod until she was wrongly accused of racism and lost her USDA job over misleading video snippets publicized by the conservative Internet publisher Peter Breitbart. Proving once again that the camera can, too, lie, what we saw on the tape made it look like this African-American civil servant had withheld help from some white farmers it was her job to assist back in 1986. The whole tape showed that's not remotely what happened, though, and one of the farmers vigorously defended her: "We probably wouldn't have (our farm) today if it hadn't been for her leading us in the right direction," Eloise Spooner told CNN. "I wish she could get her job back because she was good to us, I tell you." Now White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs has apologized: "Without a doubt, Miss Sherrod is owed an apology," he said at today's briefing. "I would do so on behalf of this administration." [Link](#)

An Alleged Racist Stance From 1980s Catches Up With USDA Official (Politics Daily 7/20)

A mid-level Agriculture Department official says she was forced to resign over an allegedly racist stance she took 24 years ago before she worked for the federal government. Shirley Sherrod, USDA Georgia state director for rural development, got in trouble over a video clip, aired by a conservative website, from a speech she made on March 27 to the NAACP Freedom Forum, according to The Washington Post. In it, Sherrod, who is African-American can be heard recounting her meeting with a struggling white farmer who came to her for help in 1986. "Here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So, I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough so that when he (went to state or federal officials) he needed to go back and report that I did try to help him." That's what the video clip showed. But Sherrod told CNN on Tuesday there was more to the story. In her March speech, she said she described the decades-old incident with the white farmer because she has since come to realize her mistake. "Working with him helped me realize the issue is not about race, it's about those who have and those who have not," she told the network in a telephone interview. She said she subsequently helped the farmer find a lawyer -- a white lawyer -- to deal with a bankruptcy proceeding, and later struck up a friendship with him and his wife. [Link](#)

NAACP 'appalled' by black USDA official's racial discrimination (Daily Caller 7/20)

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People President Benjamin Todd Jealous said late Monday he was "appalled" by the actions of U.S. Department of Agriculture official Shirley Sherrod, who resigned earlier in the day after video surfaced of her speaking at an NAACP event about discriminating against a white farmer seeking government help. Jealous also promised to look into why members of the audience at an NAACP fundraiser in Georgia this past March reacted, as shown in the video, by nodding and in some cases laughing at Sherrod's remarks. But Jealous distanced the national NAACP from the incident. Coming just days after the NAACP condemned racist elements inside the Tea Party movement, Sherrod's remarks place the storied civil rights organization in an uncomfortable position. "Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race," Jealous said. "We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers." "Her actions were shameful. While she went on to explain in the story that she ultimately realized her mistake, as well as the common predicament of working people of all races, she gave no indication she had attempted to right the wrong she had done to this man," Jealous said (read his full statement below). [Link](#)

In Shirley Sherrod Case, White House Falls for Another Right-Wing 'Scandal' (The Nation 7/21)

Vilsack now says he is studying the case and may re-consider the firing. Sherrod told ABC this morning she's not sure she would accept old job back after all of this. Mike Allen at Politico reports today his chat with White House official about the Sherrod affair: "Not sure what the ultimate result will be, but it's clear that with new information through the full speech, a longer look needed to be taken. The White House contacted the Department last night about the case and agreed, based on new evidence, that it should be reviewed." He also indicated that Vilsack probably won't lose his job over this. After Breitbart posted a portion of a recent speech by Sherrod on his site Big Government yesterday Fox and other rightwing outlets gave it full play, and Bill O'Reilly called for her resignation. Naturally, it turns out that Breitbart didn't even have the full tape. Yet numerous news outlets played it and cited it, without bothering to wonder: Is this a fair sample? And what is Breitbart's track record, anyway? [Link](#)

Former USDA Employee Accused Of Racism: "I Did Not Discriminate" [Video] (IndyPosted 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod quickly lost her job with the U.S. Department of Agriculture after a 2 minute, 38 second video clip surfaced that included a description of racism during a speech. But Sherrod's defending herself, saying the video clip is just that, a clip that was taken out of context, and does not show her entire speech, which was more of a story about racial reconciliation. In the clip, Sherrod can be seen describing herself not doing as much as she could have to help a white farmer avoid foreclosure. She said the farmer acted "superior" to her, so she "did enough" for him, steering him to "one of his own kind" for help, apparently a white lawyer. Sherrod doesn't deny those comments, but told CNN she did not discriminate against the farmer. She said her comments describing the experience with the farmer were taken out of context, and represent only part of the whole story. She says she in fact helped the man, and became good friends with his family. Sherrod adds that the experience she was speaking of happened 24 years ago when she worked at a nonprofit, long before she joined the USDA, and noted she was telling the story to make a point about how everyone should make a greater effort to reach out across racial boundaries. [Link](#)

Andrew Breitbart "Scoop" Causes Tom Vilsack to Fire Shirley Sherrod (Associated Content 7/21)

Andrew Breitbart, the confederate of Matt Drudge and former editor of the "Drudge Report," has proved himself the Master of the "Big Lie" when his "Big Journalism" Web site ran a doctored tape from a 24-year-old NAACP testimonial honoring Shirley Sherrod. The tape allegedly proves that the venerable civil rights organization is racist. The edited tape completely distorted the message Sherrod was trying to make in her remarks at the testimonial. Sherrod, an African-American who worked at for the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Georgia, was forced to resign by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. The USDA said it had zero tolerance for racism, and the Breitbart mash-up made her look like she disliked white people and that had influenced her conduct in her job. The doctored tape has Shirley Sherrod apparently saying at a 1986 NAACP testimonial for her that she had little empathy for white people. [Link](#)

USDA Too Quick to Condemn Remarks in Firing of Shirley Sherrod (Associated Content 7/21)

A U.S Department of Agriculture employee no longer has the job she's held for decades because of an alleged racist comment she made at an NAACP banquet in March, according to a report by the Washington Post. After a video clip was posted on the Internet, both NAACP President Benjamin Jealous and Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack condemned Shirley Sherrod's said her comments were "discrimination" and that they were "appalled by her actions." Sherrod claims that the White House pressured her to resign after a conservative website claimed there was racism in the administration, as Sherrod herself is African American, according to CBS News. Sherrod said in her speech that, over 20 years ago, she could have helped save a white farmer's land, but she didn't feel as if she had done her job correctly. [Link](#)

USDA Official Shirley Sherrod Claims White House Fired Her for Clumsy Remarks (Associated Content 7/21)

Is Shirley Sherrod the victim of an increasingly tense racial environment? Has the "post-racial" presidency reneged on its promises? Can public officials no longer speak honestly? Should Sherrod have her job back? Are the Tea Partiers racist? Yes, yes, yes, yes, and no. Shirley Sherrod was a USDA official speaker at an NAACP banquet on March 27. Apparently, Sherrod was speaking of her early resentment of "white" persons, and how she was eventually able to transcend her racial biases. She was trying to make a point,

however clumsily. Sherrod's speech occurred against a backdrop in which the NAACP took a surprisingly strident and unenlightened turn against the rise of American Tea Parties. Conservatives are rightly angry, for, instead of being engaged upon issues, they are often smeared by the too-facile and hypocritical accusation of racism. It was in this environment and against this hypocrisy that blogger Andrew Breitbart tuned up Sherrod's NAACP appearance in a video that "went viral." [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod's Racist Diatribe Amuses NAACP, Scars Obama's Administration (Associated Content 7/21)

Shirley Sherrod, the Director of Rural Development for the state of Georgia at the United States Department of Agriculture, has resigned under pressure after a video clip surfaced in which she admitted she did not offer full help to a struggling white farmer, and mused that he should go seek the help of "one of his own." The remarks were delivered in front of an NAACP event, and, judging from the video clip, the audience appeared both amused by and approving of Sherrod's remarks. The clip was released by conservative blogger Andrew Breitbart. Breitbart asserts that he released the tape not to destroy Sherrod, but to expose the hypocrisy of the NAACP, which had recently been accusing the Tea Party movement of racism. In an interview with Sean Hannity at Fox News, Breitbart remarked. [Link](#)

Department of Agriculture Employee Shirley Sherrod Resigns Amid Racial Controversy (Associated Content 7/20)

There are a lot of high-profile people who make controversial statements relating to possible racism, and the statements usually come with controversy. Shirley Sherrod, who was an employee of the Department of Agriculture, is just the latest high-profile person to make a controversial statement regarding racism which has led to her resignation. According to the Washington Post, Department of Agriculture employee Shirley Sherrod has resigned due to pressure from the Obama administration over controversial comments she made at an NAACP banquet. The NAACP banquet happened in March, and she talked about how, back in 1986, she did not help a white farmer as much as she could have due to his race. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Resigns (Associated Content 7/20)

Was She Treated Unfairly? Shirley Sherrod, the USDA official who was caught on tape recounting an incident in which she discriminated against a white farmer seeking government help, was obliged to resign from her position because of her remarks. In the meantime, the NAACP, which so recently condemned "racist elements" in the Tea Party, was obliged to condemn the remarks, made before a meeting of NAACP members, who cheered some of the most egregious parts of the story. Having condemned the mote in the eye of the Tea Party, the NAACP was forced to deal with the beam in its own eye. Some are already suggesting that both the Obama administration, which had obliged Shirley Sherrod to resign, and the NAACP, which condemned her remarks, may have acted in haste. Eva Rodriguez of the Washington Post is among those who think that Sherrod was railroaded: [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod update: Shirley Sherrod, former USDA worker, says White House pressured her to resign (videos) (Health and Beauty News 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod, the former USDA Director of Rural Development for the state of Georgia, and black woman, resigned from her position after a video showing her making racist comments was posted online. Though she resigned, Sherrod now says that she received multiple phone calls saying that the White House wanted her to resign her post. Speaking with CNN news, Shirley Sherrod said, "They asked me to resign, and in fact they harassed me as I was driving back to the state office from West Point, Georgia, yesterday. The last call "asked me to pull to the side of the road and do it [resign]." "I don't feel good about it, because I know I didn't do anything wrong. During my time at USDA, I gave it all I had." [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod update: Shirley Sherrod resigns from USDA after racist statements at NAACP Banquet (Health and Beauty News 7/20)

Racism is a two way street and after the NAACP has accused the Tea Party of harboring racists and racist views, allegations have fired back. Shirley Sherrod resigned from her post at the USDA after making racist statements during an NAACP banquet. The website Big Government exposed the story and showed video from the NAACP 20th Annual Banquet. You may view the video in the player embedded below. In the video, taken from March 27, 2010, Shirley Sherrod reveals that she let race play a factor when assisting a white farm owner who was losing his land. Shirley Sherrod explains in the video that the man was trying to show he was 'superior' to her and in return, she did not give the full force of what she could do. She also pointed him in the direction of a 'white' lawyer- one of his own kind, she said. [Link](#)

Will media fall for Breitbart's attempt to spin his spectacular failure? (Media Matters 7/21)

After launching what has now been conclusively shown to be an unfair and false attack on Shirley Sherrod, Andrew Breitbart is scrambling to justify his decision to post the deceptive video. He now says that his blog post -- which smeared Sherrod as racist -- was "not about Shirley Sherrod. It's not about Shirley Sherrod. I can say it 20 times. It's about the NAACP." In fact, there is ample evidence that Breitbart directly went after Sherrod. And if his claim that the NAACP tolerates racism is based on the debunked claim that Sherrod's speech shows she is racist, doesn't his whole excuse fall apart? Well, Breitbart claimed on Fox News last night that the video proves there are racists among the NAACP because "the audience was laughing and applauding as she described how she maltreated the white farmer," and he argued that the audience did not "know that there was going to be a point of redemption" in her story. On Good Morning America today, Breitbart again claimed that his video shows that "at an NAACP event, people are applauding racism." [Link](#)

Fox smears Sherrod as racist, Sherrod cancels Fox interview (Media Matters 7/20)

Late in her program today, Megyn Kelly announced that her interview with former USDA official Shirley Sherrod -- which Kelly had touted throughout the show -- was off. Kelly said that Sherrod had "changed her mind," even after Fox had "offered her a considerable amount of time" to "clear the air" and "tell her story." Boy, I wonder why that happened? Maybe it had something to do with Fox's initial coverage of "her story," in which numerous Fox figures responded to Andrew Breitbart's heavily-edited clip of Sherrod's speech by claiming it was evidence that Sherrod was a racist. FoxNews.com's first report on Sherrod reported her statements made in the clip, but gave no indication that it might have been taken out of context. It reported that Fox was "seeking a response from both the NAACP and the USDA," but not that they had attempted to find the full version of the tape or contact Sherrod herself. [Link](#)

Breitbart's Sherrod narrative unravels (Media Matters 7/20)

Based on what appears to be selectively edited footage, Andrew Breitbart falsely suggested that Shirley Sherrod said that, in her former position with the USDA, she had discriminated against a white farmer. In fact, Sherrod's statements in the video corroborate her statement that the story she was discussing is 24 years old. Moreover, Sherrod says that the video took her remarks out of context to omit that she was actually telling story about her work to get "beyond the issue of race." [Link](#)

Confirmed: Breitbart called Sherrod a racist without having the full tape (Media Matters 7/20)

This afternoon in a Hot Air blog post, Ed Morrissey wrote: [Former USDA official Shirley] Sherrod and others can complain about Fox News and the editing of the tape, but two points should be remembered. First, Andrew Breitbart made it clear to me last night that this was the entirety of the speech he had in his possession. He also wants to find the whole speech and is trying to get it. Are you kidding me? In his post yesterday -- headlined "Video Proof: The NAACP Awards Racism - 2010" -- Breitbart claimed to have "video evidence of racism" on Sherrod's part. He said it showed her describing "how she racially discriminates against a white farmer," and referred to it as her "racist tale." The piece was illustrated with a literal "race card." According to Breitbart: In the first video, Sherrod describes how she racially discriminates against a white farmer. She describes how she is torn over how much she will choose to help him. And, she admits that she doesn't do everything she can for him, because he is white. Eventually, her basic humanity informs that this white man is poor and needs help. But she decides that he should get help from "one of his own kind". She refers him to a white lawyer. [Link](#)

What Can We Learn from the Shirley Sherrod Debacle? (All Voices 7/22)

Prior to yesterday, July 21, 2010, did you have any idea that there were tens of thousands of discrimination cases pending against the USDA? I certainly didn't. Did you know that the White House was taking its lead from the "News" media in making judgments against people on their own team? In hindsight, I probably should have -- but no, I did not. I was raised and educated to believe that our system of government was both founded and run by people with integrity and greatness, who were dedicated to promoting the continuation of a prosperous nation. From Washington to Lincoln to J.F.K., our leaders were touted to be of the highest moral character -- uniquely wise and capable men with visionary insights and the conviction to lead us toward positive outcomes. They were people, who Americans (and the world) had been and would always be able to count upon to further the principles of equality, freedom, and justice -- for all. They were there to serve us, because they felt duty-bound to do so and we had chosen them because we recognized their unquestionable integrity...In consideration of the behaviors of our political,

economic, religious, and communication organizations, I daresay the story also appears to have been more of a fairy tale. [Link](#)

The racism case of Shirley Sherrod - Complete video (All Voices 7/20)

Recently, NAACP clashed with Tea Party members over allegations of racism and racist remarks of the U.S. official Shirley Sherrod. Now, a full video tape has hit the internet in which the Agriculture Department official Shirley Sherrod entertains an NAACP audience with an awful story about how she withdrew her help to a white farmer facing bankruptcy. The video of Shirley Sherrod released on the web forced her to resign from her official post of the department's Georgia Director of Rural Development by the end of Monday. In the video clip, Shirley Sherrod elaborates the whole saga of abusing her power. The black woman Shirley Sherrod claimed that white farmer was showing his superiority over her and later on, she detailed about how she decided his destiny. The act of Shirley Sherrod has been considered as discrimination and has been strongly condemned by the U.S government. Shirley Sherrod took unfair advantage of her position and mistreated a white farmer because of his race, and therefore, don't deserve the post, said NAACP President Ben Jealous. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod: 'They Made Me Quit Because I was Going to be on Glenn Beck' (Big Government 7/20)

The video showed Ms Sherrod, USDA Georgia Director of Rural Development, speaking at an NAACP Freedom Fund dinner in Georgia. Ms Sherrod, who is a federally appointed bureaucrat lays out in shockingly lays out that how race played a part in executing her duties. Sherrod was forced to resign almost immediately after the video was posted. Incredibly, it seems however that her firing was less about what she said in the speech, and more about the story being broadcast on Fox News. In interviews today, Ms Sherrod describes what was behind her speech and how, after the video cuts off, she explains that moment was a turning point in her life where she learned to beyond race. [Link](#)

USDA official resigns over racial comments (Government Executive 7/20)

An Agriculture Department official resigned on Monday over controversial racial remarks she made at a March NAACP banquet, according to various news reports. USDA Georgia State Director of Rural Development Shirley Sherrod told CNN Tuesday that the Obama administration forced her to resign after she described during the March NAACP speech a 1986 encounter with a white farmer in Georgia, whom she said she did not help as much as she could have because of his race. Sherrod, who is African American, was the state's director for the Federation of Southern Cooperatives Land Assistance Fund at the time. Historically, the organization's mission is to provide aid to black farmers. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod: Talks Too Loud (WagerRun 7/20)

As an over all rule, people with positions of power are expected to act and speak with political correctness all the time. However, where one man's idea of being PC ends, another begins. Not always to the good folks with powerful hands agree on what is acceptable. For Shirley Sherrod, she spoke what she thought and has now resigned from her position with the USDA. The reports are that she resigned but the basic information appears that she was really fired. The USDA's only statement is regarding their no-tolerance policy when it comes to racism. The NAACP indicates that the problem was the fact that two farmers of different races were compared with a negative reflection on the black farmer. Shirley Sherrod simply stated that in the present economy, farmers are hurting and that white farmers get less help than black farmers do. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Offered a New Position as Vilsack Apologizes (HULIQ 7/21)

After being scammed by conservative bloggers and Breitbart.com, a news site run by conservative Andrew Breitbart, Agriculture secretary Tom Vilsack said Wednesday that he has apologized to Shirley Sherrod. Sherrod was ousted over remarks about race in a video that was edited to hide the true meaning of her remarks. The changed attitude about Shirley Sherrod comes as the full video was revealed. The Washington Post notes that Andrew Breitbart is unrepentant about his actions and that the incident was a result of "a lie disseminated by Andrew Breitbart, who says that he was trying to point out the hypocrisy of the NAACP and stubbornly stands by his reprehensible action despite being proved wrong." [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Says 'Racial' Comments Were Misinterpreted (HULIQ 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod is the former Georgia director of Rural Development at the USDA. She was forced to resign on Monday after publicly admitting she didn't help a white man some 24 years ago with the "full

force" she had available, but was the punishment fit for the crime? Shirley Sherrod, 62, in an interview with CNN, said the incident, and the comment, have been misconstrued. She made the initial remarks to the NAACP. To CNN, she said: "I was speaking to that group, like I've done many groups, and I tell them about a time when I thought the issue was race and race only. I was telling the story of how working with him helped me to see the issue is not about race. It's about those who have versus those who do not have." [Link](#)

Justice Not Only Obama Department Not Equally Enforcing Law (Heritage Foundation Blog 7/20)

This morning we reviewed the still unfolding New Black Panther Party scandal at the Department of Justice where a whistle blower, testifying under oath, quoted Deputy Assistant Attorney General Julie Fernandes as saying that "the Voting Section will never or will not, at least while she is there, bring any more cases against blacks or other national minorities." In other words, Fernandes has reportedly admitted that the Obama Justice Department is not enforcing the nation's civil rights law equally and in a race-neutral manner. The Obama Justice Department has refused to confirm or deny that Fernandes made this statement. Now Andrew Breitbart has unearthed a very similar statement from another Obama political appointee, this time from the Department of Agriculture. In the video, U.S. Department of Agriculture Director of Rural Development for Georgia Shirley Sherrod tells an NAACP audience . . . First Justice. Now Agriculture. How many other Obama Department's are refusing to enforce our nation's laws equally? [Link](#)

USDA Worker Resigns Over Racism Charge (CBN 7/20)

Accusations of racism have cost federal employee Shirley Sherrod her job at the U.S. Agriculture Department. The charges stem from remarks she made 24 years ago at a meeting for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. She talked about purposely not doing enough to help a white farmer in Georgia. "The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm he took a long time talking, but he was trying to show me he was superior to me. I know what he was doing, but he had come to me for help," she said at that meeting. "But what he didn't know was that while he was talking, all that time trying to show me that he was superior to me, I was trying to decide how much help I was going to give him," she continued. [Link](#)

Forty Acres & a Mule -- Sherrod Style? (American Thinker Blog 7/21)

Shirley Sherrod's quick dismissal from the Obama administration may have had less to do with her comments on race before the NAACP than her long involvement in the aptly named Pigford case, a class action against the US government on behalf of black farmers alleging that the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) had discriminated against black farmers during the period from 1983 through 1997. According to Wikipedia: The plaintiffs settled with the government in 1999. Under the consent decree, all African American farmers would be paid a "virtually automatic" US\$50,000 plus granted certain loan forgiveness and tax offsets. This process was called "Track A". [Link](#)

NAACP meeting calmly listened to racist remarks from black fed official (American Thinker 7/20)

Andrew Breitbart has scored another bullseye, revealing hypocrisy of the highest order on the part of another leftist establishment organization, the NAACP. On March 27 of this year, speaking before an NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet, Shirley Sherrod, the Department of Agriculture director for the State of Georgia -- responsible for over a billion dollars a year in spending -- boasts of denying a white farmer her full efforts because of his race. The audience does not react with shock or disapproval, but rather just sits there. So much for NAACP President Ben Jealous denouncing the tea parties for tolerating racists. Only after Breitbart gave the incriminating video national exposure did the NAACP issue the obligatory denunciation, to prevent further embarrassment. But when nobody was looking, the NAACP audience was totally cool with the racism expressed by their speaker. [Link](#)

Vilsack Must Keep Black Farmers on their Land (Black Redding News Review 7/22)

Secretary Vilsack admitted in a press conference today, "I did not think before I acted."... Unfortunately however, Secretary Vilsack has also thrown Black Farmers under the bus. To date, despite abundant headlines to the contrary, Black Farmers, including the named plaintiffs in *Pigford v. Glickman (1997)*, Lucious Abrams and Cecil Brewington have not even had a meeting with USDA, to settle their discrimination claim. Others who did receive settlements were then harassed by the Internal Revenue Service and had their bank accounts frozen and their Social Security payments offset by any government

payments, including stimulus payments. "The actual so-called settlement of the lawsuit was worse than the discrimination that the USDA has admitted to and discrimination is continuing at this very hour," said *Pigford* plaintiff Black Farmer Eddie Slaughter...The Shirley Sherrod episode shows how quickly legitimate Black interests are thrown under the bus due to fear on the one hand and racial incitement for political purposes on the other hand... Over one decade later, lead plaintiffs on the lawsuit have not even had a hearing on the merits on their claim of discrimination, now admitted by the USDA. Claimants got paid, but actual farmers did not. The result is that over one million black-owned farm acres are at risk of being lost due to acceleration of collection of debt, foreclosure, bankruptcy, and USDA and USDOJ deliberate delay resulting in delinquent notes for Black Farmers. [Link](#)

Newt Gingrich praises NAACP (Black Redding News Review 7/20)

Former Republican House Speaker Newt Gingrich today applauded the NAACP's condemnation of a USDA official's racially insensitive remarks at its organization's event. Shirley Sherrod, USDA Rural Development Georgia State Director, was at the NAACP's 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet when she said she used race as a factor in doing her job. Sherrod has resigned because of her comments, which received strong rebuke from NAACP President Benjamin Todd Jealous. Gingrich told Sirius XM's Joe Madison her forced resignation and Jealous' strong rebuke is "exactly the right attitude," and "was an opportunity for the NAACP to prove that it was opposed to all racism," [Link](#)

Another Win For Andrew Breitbart (National Review Blog 7/20)

The USDA official who admitted to discrimination against a white farmer, exposed in this video on Big Government, has resigned: Days after the NAACP clashed with Tea Party members over allegations of racism, a video has surfaced showing an Agriculture Department official regaling an NAACP audience with a story about how she withheld help to a white farmer facing bankruptcy — video that now has forced the official to resign. Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, is shown in the clip describing "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." Sherrod, who is black, claimed the farmer took a long time trying to show he was "superior" to her. The audience laughed as she described how she determined his fate. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Comments Results in Resignation (Lalate Blog 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod has resigned following her comments about a white farmer. Shirley Sherrod's remarks appeared in a video from BigGovernment.com, dated by the website as March 27. Shirley Sherrod has been the USDA's Georgia director of Rural Development. In the video, Sherrod addresses an NAACP banquet stating "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land — so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough". Late Monday the USDA announced Sherrod had resigned. NAACP President and CEO Benjamin Todd Jealous issued a statement against Sherrod's comments. [Link](#)

USDA Sec. Tom Vilsack Apologizes to Shirley Sherrod, Offers New Job (Mediaite 7/21)

Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack held a press conference this afternoon in which he apologized to Shirley Sherrod for jumping the gun and firing her based on a deceptively-edited video clip that was published by conservative activist Andrew Breitbart. He also revealed that he had discussed a "new opportunity" for Sherrod at the agency, an offer that he says she is now considering. He also took questions from reporters, and did a good job of taking responsibility. Vilsack also stressed that the White House had not pressured him to fire Sherrod (nor to re-hire her), and that if Undersecretary Cheryl Cook had conveyed that to Sherrod, it was a miscommunication. [Link](#)

USDA's Shirley Sherrod Disputes Clip of 'Racist' NAACP Banquet Comments (Mediaite 7/20)

In the latest in a series of racially-charged summer shark-week stories, USDA official Shirley Sherrod has resigned over a Breitbart-promoted YouTube clip that shows a portion of her March 27 speech at an NAACP banquet. In the clip, Sherrod talks about resenting a white farmer's condescending attitude, and as a result, not giving him "the full force of what I could do." The NAACP and the Secretary of Agriculture have weighed in, but there may be more to this story than meets YouTube's 2-minute eye. [Link](#)

USDA Official Resigns After Racial Comments Surface; NAACP Calls Comments "Shameful" (Mediaite 7/20)

An edited two-minute clip of an African American United States Department of Agriculture official has

brought about her resignation after BigGovernment.com published it yesterday. Shirley Sherrod has resigned, the NAACP has condemned her "shameful" comments about withholding help for a white farmer and Sherrod has said she was taken out of context. In the video clip, put out by Andrew Breitbart's site and a speech she gave at a March NAACP banquet, she describes an interaction with a white farmer... [Link](#)

Breitbart-Smeared Shirley Sherrod Not Sure She'd Take Her Job Back (Gawker 7/21)

Shirley Sherrod, the USDA worker whom Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack hastily fired following a deplorable Andrew Breitbart video hit job that made her appear racist, may be offered her job back. Soon. But now she may not even want it. Can you imagine the embarrassment of the Secretary of Agriculture, speaking on behalf of the White House, asking her to take her job back, and her refusing? This would not all play out quite so publicly, but god, what a hot mess: "I am just not sure how I would be treated there," Shirley Sherrod said in a nationally broadcast interview. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said Wednesday he would reconsider the department's decision to oust Sherrod over her comments that she didn't give a white farmer as much help as she could have 24 years ago. [Link](#)

White House Embarrasses Itself over Andrew Breitbart's Race-Baiting (Gawker 7/21)

On Tuesday, Shirley Sherrod, a black USDA employee, resigned, under pressure from the White House, after conservative publisher Andrew Breitbart published a video where she seemed to admit to anti-white discrimination. Except the video shows her saying the exact opposite. Oh, Christ: Andrew Breitbart did a big journalism again. This time, the Sean Penn-obsessed conservative publisher/writer published a longwinded, terribly-edited screed on his website "Big Government" featuring an ugly graphic of a "race card" (Do you see? DO YOU SEE?!?), and—here's the "journalism" bit—a video of a black government employee named Shirley Sherrod describing "how she racially discriminates against a white farmer." That's the video, up above... So, Andrew Breitbart lied and defamed a government employee. And yet: Sherrod was asked to resign from her position as the U.S. Department of Agriculture's director of rural development for Georgia by her boss, Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, apparently without any attempt on the part of Vilsack or the rest of the Obama administration to check up on the origin of the video or the story. And even as the White House attempts to distance itself from her forced resignation, they say they stand by it. [Link](#)

USDA Reconsiders Firing of Black Official Over NAACP Speech (Democracy Now 7/21)

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said today he is reconsidering his department's controversial decision to fire a black USDA official over a speech she gave in March at an NAACP function. Shirley Sherrod was pressured to resign Monday after a right-wing website posted a deceptively edited video of the speech that appeared to show Sherrod admitting she withheld help from a white farmer for racial reasons. What the edited video did not show is Sherrod describing how she ended up going to great lengths to help the farmer save his land. After her ouster, the white farmer, Roger Spooner, appeared on CNN praising Sherrod. Roger Spooner: "I never was treated no better, no nicer and looked after than Shirley. She done—she done a magnificent job. I don't have words—I don't have words to explain it." Shirley Sherrod said her boss at the Department of Agriculture called her on Monday and demanded she resign right away "because you are going to be on "Glenn Beck" tonight. [Link](#)

Andrew Breitbart Perfects 'White Victimology' (Newser 7/20)

Andrew Breitbart has played on the fears of conservative whites to claim another black victim, writes Tom Scocca for Slate. The latest is Shirley Sherrod of the USDA, who had to resign over a 24-year-old video twisted completely out of context. Sherrod—who wasn't a USDA employee at the time—was actually making the case against racism, but no matter. Breitbart's "lie" stands, aided and abetted by Fox News. "Breitbart is rapidly perfecting the 21st-century mau-mau: conservative white people are so afraid of being discriminated against that if you mention the fact that sometimes black people don't like white people—even if you are telling a story about why racism is bad—you are automatically committing a hate crime, against white conservatives," Scocca writes. "After three or four decades of whining about reverse racism, America now has achieved full-blown white victimology." [Link](#)

Farmer's Wife: Fired USDA Official Saved Us (Newser 7/20)

The wife of the white farmer at the heart of the Shirley Sherrod controversy has come forward, saying she considers Sherrod her "friend for life." Backstory: Sherrod lost her job over a video clip in which she said she hadn't done all she could to help the farmer keep his farm because he spoke condescendingly to her.

But the farmer's wife, 82-year-old Eloise Spooner, tells the Atlanta Journal-Constitution that in reality, Sherrod did save their farm and "kept us out of bankruptcy." Sherrod's quote was part of a story about an incident in her past—long before her USDA tenure, when she worked for a Georgia land assistance office—in which she learned to see past race. "She took probably two or three trips with us to Albany just to help us out," says Spooner, who called Sherrod this morning to console her. "She's very sad about it. She told me she was so glad we talked. I just can't believe this is happening to her." [Link](#)

Dear Mr. President: Time To Man Up (Alter Net 7/21)

It hurts me that they didn't even try to attempt to see what is happening here, they didn't care." Shirley Sherrod – on her forced resignation from the USDA within hours airing of a heavily edited video of Sherrod speaking at an NAACP event by right wing media, in an attempt to portray her and the NAACP as racist. The full video of Sherrod's speech showed otherwise. Mr. President, With all due respect, it's time to man up. It is time, way past time for you to grow into the job you were elected to do, and promised to do. It is time to stand up and be the man we hope we elected. It is time to justify that hope, and the trust that was placed in you. It is time to pick up the mantle of history that has been entrusted to you and prove yourself worthy of carrying it forward. Too much is at stake now. Too many people are beginning to think their faith in you was misplaced. What's worse is you are proving them right. [Link](#)

White House Falls Into Panic Mode (Newsmax 7/21)

The Obama White House, rocked by plummeting approval numbers and the on-again, off-again firing of a USDA employee for racially charged statements that apparently were taken out of context, is now operating in full-fledged "panic" mode according to commentators across the political spectrum. A late-night call from the White House on Tuesday directed Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack to reconsider the resignation of Shirley Sherrod, the USDA's director of rural development in Georgia. That forced an embarrassing reversal for both Vilsack and the White House, who had spent Tuesday defending their decision to force Sherrod out of office, even as evidence mounted that her remarks at a March NAACP meeting actually were intended as a lesson on the importance of racial reconciliation. Sherrod, who says her remarks had been selectively edited and taken out of context, told CNN that the White House "harassed" her to resign because the controversy was "going to be on Glenn Beck tonight." [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod of USDA resigns (Buzz Tab 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod, USDA's black employee has resigned from her post on Monday in the wake of outburst of a video at conservative media outlets in which Shirley Sherrod is shown telling one of the audience that she had not given a white farmer the full force of what I could do to help him save his family farm. Tom Vilsack, the Agriculture Secretary said that he had accepted Shirley Sherrod's resignation. Shirley Sherrod was working as USDA's State Director of Rural Development for Georgia. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said he had accepted the resignation of Shirley Sherrod, the department's state director of rural development for Georgia. Tom Vilsack further added that in USDA, they are following a zero tolerance for discrimination. He said that being Secretary Agriculture he condemns any discriminatory act against any person. He further added that at USDA, they are working hard for past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history and they are taking fairness and equality as a serious matter at USDA. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Has Officially Resigned From Her Job Due To Racial Preference! (Moms Word Blog 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod, who is known as a USDA official in Georgia, has finally resigned after publicly admitting that race played a factor in her decision to limit how much aid would be given to a white farmer. Sherrod, who is African American, made the comments during an NAACP banquet on March 27, according to the information in the video above. In fact a clip of her speech was being aired on BigGovernment.com and also Fox News Monday morning. Sherrod said during the now famous speech about the first time she was "faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." She claims that during the conversation, the man "was trying to show me he was superior to me." "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland," Sherrod told the crowd. "And here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land." [Link](#)

Acorn, Part 2: USDA Employee "Racial" Remarks Mess (Gothamist 7/21)

Shirley SherrodThe White House is dealing with fallout after Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack (by way of his underlings) allegedly pressured black USDA employee Shirley Sherrod to resign after a video clip surfaced. In the clip, Sherrod, speaking at a NAACP event in Georgia, said she didn't help a struggling

farmer with the "the full force of what I could do." The NAACP first supported her resignation, saying, "We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers," but then actually reviewed the full video that showed Sherrod explaining she how realized it wasn't about being being white or black, "But you know, God will show you things. ... You realize that the struggle is really about poor people," and helped the farmer as much as she could. Now Vilsack is reportedly reconsidering the resignation—not that Sherrod necessarily wants it back. The initial video was posted by Andrew Breitbart on his Biggovernment.com website, as part of his campaign to get the NAACP to stop calling the Tea Party "racist." [Link](#)

*Sarah Misailidis
Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
(202) 720-4691
Sarah.Misailidis@oc.usda.gov*

Berge, John

From: Williamson, Todd
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 10:10 AM
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Berge, John; O'Brien, Doug
Subject: CNN Hunt news package

<http://www.cnn.com/video/#/video/us/2010/07/23/henry.sherrod.mystery.woman.cnn?hpt=C2>

Not sure if you all have seen this...I don't think CNN has run this on air yet

C. Todd Williamson, III
Office of Congressional Relations
U.S. Department of Agriculture
(202) 720-7095

Berge, John

From: The Office of the Secretary
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 3:45 PM
To: ALL-USDA-2K
Subject: Message from Secretary Vilsack

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250**

Many of you have contacted me to offer your support, and for those comments, I am appreciative. This has been a very difficult week for many of us at USDA because of a decision I made regarding the employment of Shirley Sherrod. For that, I want to apologize to all of you.

I reacted too quickly. I should have taken the time to listen and learn.

I apologized to Mrs. Sherrod on Wednesday and told her I was sorry for any pain this caused her and her family. Thankfully, she graciously accepted my apology. I also offered her a unique opportunity to continue her service in federal government at USDA and I am hopeful that she accepts.

As we all have learned, Mrs. Sherrod has a compelling story to tell. She and her family endured discrimination and overcame adversity. Fighting to advance justice and equality, she has helped farmers who were struggling to keep their land, fought for women in need of social and economic justice, and also for African-American men and women who faced discrimination. With all that she has seen, endured and accomplished, it would be invaluable to have her experience, commitment and record of service at USDA.

We continue to make important progress correcting USDA's record on civil rights, but obviously, there is still a lot more work to do. You have heard me talk about my commitment to fairness and equality through the last 18 months, and I ask that you continue working with me to correct injustices of the past.

Thank you for your commitment to USDA and your continued service to the American people.

Tom Vilsack

Secretary of Agriculture

Berge, John

From: Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 4:15 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; 'Justin, DeJong'; Chan, Stephanie; Purchia, Liz
Cc: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Subject: Today's flagged Shirley Sherrod clips

Sherrod fallout: Obama says forced ouster wrong (AP 7/23)

President Barack Obama has ordered a more patient, deliberative style of governance from his aides and Cabinet members in the wake of a convulsive week surrounding the ouster of Agriculture Department official Shirley Sherrod. After telling Sherrod he regretted her forced resignation over racial remarks she made to an NAACP audience, Obama said in a nationally broadcast network interview he believes Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack "jumped the gun" in sacking the veteran Georgian federal worker. A furor erupted this week over a conservative blogger's posting of portions of a speech Sherrod gave in which she told of giving short shrift attention 24 years ago to the pleas for financial aid by a poor white farmer. Sherrod is black, and the operator of the website BigGovernment.com posted a portion of her speech. The blogger, Andrew Breitbart, said he did so to illustrate racism within the NAACP, which earlier accused the tea party of having racist elements. [Link](#)

Van Jones on Sherrod: A Teachable Moment (Wall Street Journal Blog 7/23)

Former Obama administration green jobs czar Van Jones weighed in on the Shirley Sherrod affair today. His message: It can happen to me. It can happen to her. It can happen to anyone... Jones, however, was quick to note that there was a difference between his situation and Sherrod's—namely that his personal politics were considerably more radical and thus easier to malign. "I had a much more colorful life than Ms. Sherrod," he said. "I mean, let's be honest: I was distinguishable as a radical leftist in the Bay Area. You've got to get up early, you've got to work weekends to be distinguishable as a leftist in the Bay Area." [Link](#)

Coulter: No "Post-Racial America" Under Obama (CBS 7/23)

To some the election of 2008 signified that we were living in a "post-racial America." But the events of this past week in which the Obama administration fired a black USDA employee for allegedly making racist remarks, and then apologized to her when it was revealed that a right-wing website had posted an edited video that took her comments out of context, indicate that is not quite the case... "I don't think it has been 'post-racial' for a second with this administration," Coulter said on "The Early Show."... "You know, they're openly saying, 'We're in trouble, we need to distract from what's going on. Let's just randomly call the conservative racist.' Liberals use this all the time to distract from what's going on," she said. [Link](#)

Opinion: Basu: Democrats could learn from GOP defiance (Des Moines Register 7/23)

What does Shirley Sherrod have in common with Joycelyn Elders, Henry Foster and Lani Guinier? All were hired, or were on their way to being hired, by Democratic administrations before being sacrificed in a rush to judgment in response to scurrilous political attacks... Democrats do not protect their own the way Republicans do. They run scared. The speed in throwing Sherrod under the bus has painful echoes from the past... One can sympathize with the Obama administration for the constant barrage of fire from those determined it fail. But unless it shows more backbone and refuses to cave, it can only expect attacks to escalate. [Link](#)

Barack Obama, The National NAACP, and Chickensh*t Liberalism (Huffington Post 7/23)

A lot of words have already been spilled about Shirley Sherrod's firing by the Obama administration after a libelous report on a right-wing web site and Fox News... What's most shameful is that so-called liberals and progressives like the NAACP national office and the Obama administration would be so frightened of the right that they wouldn't wait even a single 24-hour cable news cycle to investigate whether Shirley Sherrod's hateful accusers were telling the truth, and instead jumped to condemn her and deprive her of her livelihood... Today these chickensh*t liberals run for cover at the first sign of incoming fire from the rightwing media, abandoning fighters like Van Jones, thousands of poor anonymous ACORN members, and now Shirley Sherrod. They seem to have forgotten what every school kid learns on the playground--If you

don't stand up to bullies, you just encourage their continued bullying... Not only should President Obama give Shirley Sherrod a Medal of Freedom and a meaningful job in his administration helping poor farmers. He should give Van Jones back his position helping generate green jobs. He should tell Congress that he'll veto any supplemental funding bill that pays to help poor farmers in Afghanistan but doesn't pay to help poor farmers in America. [Link](#)

Editorial: Weak-kneed administration suckered by conservative hit piece (The Seattle Times 7/22)

ALL of the shame that attends the despicable treatment of a U.S. Department of Agriculture employee falls on a politically skittish Obama administration and the epically weak-kneed performance of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. Shirley Sherrod had shared a deeply personal story at a NAACP event about her early days working through a nonprofit with poor farmers. The taped speech was maliciously edited and aired by a conservative producer as a hit piece. The journalistic bolus excreted by Andrew Breitbart was circulated by the usual hacks on FOX News. President Obama's minions were rattled, and did not vet the entire 43-minute speech. They were scared and lazy, and Sherrod suffered for it. Her speech was an intensely personal tale of growth, maturity and religious insight. As a young black woman, she had longed to flee the South, but when her father was murdered by white men, who were never charged, her prayers led her to stay to help others. [Link](#)

The Jester, the Coward, and the Employee (Vanity Fair 7/23)

One shouldn't waste time being angry with Andrew Breitbart and his corny antics, which led to the dismissal of Agricultural Department employee Shirley Sherrod. Were you surprised? Really? Angry? Why? This is who he is; this is what he does. There was some momentary comedy when this bug-eyed maniac proposed that Roger and Eloise Spooner, the couple who were the subject of Shirley Sherrod's speech, were merely plants and lying when they defended Ms. Sherrod in a televised interview. Watching Breitbart attempt to challenge CNN's John King on the veracity of the Spooner's statements was trippy. He was like a hyperactive child reeling from the effects of one of those odd energy drinks as his words spurted forth. It's nothing to get upset about—Breitbart was just being his sweet self. While his deluded foaming is an interesting example of freedom of speech and its awesome power, it speaks volumes to its weight and the responsibility required to carry it. Some can hack it, some not so much. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod's case exposes ugly media flaws (Guardian 7/23)

When Shirley Sherrod spoke at an NAACP event and shared a 24-year-old story of overcoming her prejudices, little did she realise the same speech would come back to in a new, highly edited form, putting her at the centre of a national controversy, costing her a job at the department of agriculture and almost ruining her reputation... The clip showed Sherrod, who at the time was the director for rural development in Georgia... Of course, that can only happen if the White House allows itself to be pushed around by overblown, or in this case false, stories. Yet, that is what the White House is doing. It seems like the White House is so afraid of conservatives now that it is constantly on high alert for anything that may come from the right and catch them off guard. But its efforts to respond quickly – hastily – often end up making the White House look foolish... This case is also a sad indictment on partisan politics and the nature of the political battle between right and left, which is being reduced to dirty tricks... Both the NAACP and the White House's reactions also reveal sensitivities to race-related discussions in this so-called "age of Obama", particularly since it has been suggested – again by rightwing commentators – that the president favours black people and minorities over white people. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod: Proof that a week is a long time in politics (The Independent 7/23)

It began, like so many political brouhahas these days, with a video posted on a website – a clip from a speech by a mid-level black official of the US Department of Agriculture in which she mused on an incident from a quarter of a century ago, long before she joined the federal government... That afternoon she was travelling when Cheryl Cook, a deputy undersecretary at the USDA called to inform her that the White House, no less, wanted her out, because her comments were causing a furore on the cable networks. [Link](#)

Some find irony in Shirley Sherrod's USDA incident (Washington Post 7/23)

There is a glaring irony in the wake of Shirley Sherrod's firing and subsequent reinstatement offer, say those who know her in Georgia. She lost her job in a matter of hours under the suspicion of racism, but officials in the Department of Agriculture who were found to have withheld loans from Sherrod and her husband's farming cooperative were never fired. "Discrimination happens in USDA. . . . And it's there

because the agency never did deal with the people who caused it," Sherrod said Thursday morning on the "Today" show. "No one lost their job because they discriminated against black farmers, Hispanic farmers, Native American farmers, women farmers. . . . Those individuals . . . some have retired, but many of them are still there." [Link](#)

Political appointees like Sherrod deserve due process (Washington Post 7/23)

Contrary to folklore, federal employees can be fired, as demonstrated by the sorry situation involving Shirley Sherrod... Irene West, a Rockville resident who said she spent 43 years in federal service, said in an e-mail: "That's what they did to employees they wanted to put on the shelf . . . give them a title that sounds like a promotion, i.e., Special Assistant or Senior Advisor to the Secretary, etc., and stick them in an office with no staff or supervisory responsibilities and, most of the time, with nothing to do." [Link](#)

Who had the worst week in Washington? Tom Vilsack. (Washington Post 7/23)

Remember that old adage that the secretary of agriculture is meant to be seen but not heard? (You know that one, right?) Tom Vilsack broke that rule this week with his dismissal of, doubling down on dismissal of, apology to and attempted rehiring of (it reads like the 12 stages of grief) a midlevel Department of Agriculture employee named Shirley Sherrod. The story -- in short -- goes like this. On Monday, conservative commentator Andrew Breitbart surfaced a video featuring Sherrod, the department's director of rural development in Georgia, making comments about her reluctance to aid a white farmer because of his race. Sherrod, who is black, was quickly asked to step aside by Vilsack, who said the episode complicated his attempts to "turn the page on the sordid civil rights record at USDA." [Link](#)

Persistent Issue of Race Is in the Spotlight, Again (NY Times 7/23)

It was exactly one year ago on Thursday that President Obama plunged into a thicket of racial politics by declaring that a white police officer in Cambridge, Mass., had "acted stupidly" in arresting a black Harvard University professor in his own home. Suddenly, the president whose election suggested the promise of a postracial future was thrust into the wounds of the past. Not much has changed. Mr. Obama sought Thursday to tamp down yet another racial uproar, this one over his administration's mishandling of the case of Shirley Sherrod, a black Agriculture Department official who was dismissed based on a video clip of remarks — taken out of context — that appeared to suggest she had discriminated against white farmers. One day after Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack apologized profusely to Ms. Sherrod and offered her a new job working on race relations for the agency, Mr. Obama offered his own apology. [Link](#)

The Shirley Sherrod affair; helping homeless vets in L.A.; the U.S. pavilion at the World Expo in Shanghai (LA Times 7/23)

It's hard to decide whose conduct in the entire Shirley Sherrod affair is most reprehensible. There's Andrew Breitbart, who in his lust for another liberal scalp posts an obviously edited video for the purpose of destroying this woman, and when caught has the audacity to claim he had no such intention. Then there are all the TV talking heads, especially on Fox News, who immediately ran with Breitbart's lie and dialed up the hateful rhetoric. My vote, however, goes to the Obama administration. Sadly, it is becoming more and more apparent that this administration is unwilling to stand up to the right-wing noise machine, as evidenced by the "shoot first, ask questions later" treatment Sherrod received. [Link](#)

It's a family affair (The Economist Blog 7/23)

MAYBE it's the heat in Washington during July that addles the noodles when it comes to matters of race. Yesterday was a year to the day that Barack Obama aired his view that a white cop had acted "stupidly" when arresting Henry Louis Gates, the professor of black history, for trying to break into his own home. The resulting backlash from Gatesgate, and the broad conclusion that Mr Obama had rushed to judgment before knowing the facts, gave rise to a beer summit at the White House involving the police office and Mr Gates. I don't know whether Shirley Sherrod prefers a wine spritzer to beer, but the Oval Office catering division might want to look into it. By now you all know the story of Ms Sherrod, the former and perhaps future USDA official who lost her job as a result of an edited video that sort of suggested she was racist, but in fact showed her describing a situation that, in the end, transcended race. [Link](#)

Editorial: Out of context— Shirley Sherrod's amazing, and ridiculous, journey through the media mixmaster (Chron 7/23)

Shirley Sherrod's head must still be spinning. In the past week she's experienced two distinctly different kinds of fame, shape shifting in public perception from banished villain to civil rights heroine... It

prompted a denunciation of Sherrod from the NAACP and resulted in Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack summarily canning her. Sherrod told CNN she received calls from her superiors as she was driving to work demanding her immediate resignation, supposedly at the direction of the White House... The Department of Agriculture bureaucracy has a long history of discrimination against minority farmers, the legacy of which continues in the form of lawsuits by plaintiffs claiming they were unfairly denied farm loans. While the government has paid black farmers nearly a billion dollars to settle suits, no such arrangement has been reached with more than a hundred Hispanic farmers and ranchers, many from Texas, who filed a class action suit, *Garcia v. Vilsack*. [Link](#)

Obama official sacked and rehired in US race row sparked by video (Belfast Telegraph 7/23)

It began, like so many political brouhahas, with a video on a website — a clip from a speech by a black official of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) in which she mused on an incident from a quarter of a century ago, long before she joined the government. But in the space of a couple of news cycles, Shirley Sherrod's life story was rewritten — twice... That afternoon she was travelling when Cheryl Cook, a deputy undersecretary at the USDA called to inform her that the White House, no less, wanted her out, because her comments were causing a furore on the cable networks. [Link](#)

New Obama-Administration Policy: No More Impulsive Firings (New York Magazine 7/23)

President Obama shared his thoughts on the Shirley Sherrod brouhaha for the first time on Good Morning America today, reiterating Robert Gibbs's contention that the "media culture" is sometimes just too powerful to resist. [Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack] jumped the gun, partly because we now live in this media culture where something goes up on YouTube or a blog and everybody scrambles. And I've told my team and I told my agencies that we have to make sure that we're focusing on doing the right thing instead of what looks to be politically necessary at that very moment. We have to take our time and — and think these issues through. [Link](#)

Editorial: Another rush to judgment (New York Post 7/23)

A phone call yesterday from President Obama to fired Department of Agriculture staffer Shirley Sherrod may finally bring an embarrassing -- and illuminating -- episode to an end. On Monday, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack canned Sherrod based on a passage in a videotaped speech she delivered to a Georgia NAACP chapter in March. The excerpt made Sherrod, who is black, look like a racist who didn't want to help white farmers. In fact, she was making a sophisticated point, sharing the story of her father's unpunished murder at the hands of a white man -- and confronting her own biases over the years. Too bad no one in the administration bothered to view the whole tape -- until after Sherrod was fired. Then came the furious backtracking: The White House apologized; Vilsack offered Sherrod a new job; Obama called. [Link](#)

Sherrod fallout twists White House message from rah-rah to race (CNN 7/23)

It was supposed to be a good week for the White House. President Obama would celebrate the passage of Wall Street reform, and Democrats would move toward the midterms with some wind at their backs. But on a day the president signed the landmark legislation, the narrative from the White House was more contrite than laudatory. White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs apologized on behalf of the administration for what former Agriculture Department employee Shirley Sherrod had been through this week and that, to his knowledge, no one from the White House ordered her ouster. Questions about Sherrod dominated the media briefings in a week the administration hoped would be focused on the most sweeping overhaul of the financial system since the New Deal. [Link](#)

Berge, John

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:00 PM
To: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Subject: Re: URGENT

Yes I think so.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----
From: Harden, Krysta
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John
Sent: Mon Jul 19 14:56:54 2010
Subject: Re: URGENT

Should you or I share with the Secy?

----- Original Message -----
From: Mather, Chris
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 14:34:25 2010
Subject: URGENT

This is horrible. Video just posted on Hotair.com.

The NAACP is about to learn one of the most basic of all lessons in life – those who live in glass houses should avoid provoking a stone-throwing war. After the civil-rights organization threatened to issue a condemnation of Tea Party activism by equating it with racism (a position from which they ultimately retreated), Andrew Breitbart announced that he would publish at least one video of the NAACP itself cheering racism. Breitbart delivers on that promise today at Big Government, showing USDA official Shirley Sherrod explain to an appreciative NAACP audience in July 2009 how she deliberately withheld information from a white farmer in Georgia trying to save his land and his business:

-----Original Message-----
From: Maloney, Wayne
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 1:56 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Zaina, Lisa
Subject: FW: Georgia
Importance: High

Chris,

I was just informed of a video of the Georgia State Director that was posted on the Internet earlier this afternoon. It speaks for itself and you need to watch it right away.

I have discussed this with Tim McNeilly. He has instructed the PIC and the State Director not to respond to media without checking with us first. We have not been contacted by any media outlet but expect that we will.

Tim has been asked by me to draft a statement for our review to be issued if necessary.

Wayne
###

Georgia PIC just called to alert us to a campaign underway involving Shirley Sherrod vs. the Tea Party people. I understand that this may have been brought to your attention already, but in case it hasn't..... The PIC is looking for guidance if (and I think there will be) media contact regarding the below video.

<http://hotair.com/archives/2010/07/19/breitbart-hits-naacp-with-promised-video-of-racism/>

Looking for guidance on how you would like to prepare and handle any inquiries that result.

Thanks.

Timothy J. McNeilly | Director, Legislative and Public Affairs Rural Development U.S.
Department of Agriculture 1400 Independence Ave., S.W. | Washington, D.C. 20250
Phone: 202.720.1019 | Fax: 202.690.4083

www.rurdev.usda.gov

"Committed to the future of rural communities"

"Estamos dedicados al futuro de las comunidades rurales"

Berge, John

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:18 PM
To: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Subject: RE: URGENT

Justin knows.

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:16 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John
Subject: Re: URGENT

Doug and I will talk to the Secy right after this stop. Should I share with Justin.

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:11:55 2010
Subject: Re: URGENT

I have.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John; Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:06:33 2010
Subject: Re: URGENT

We need to make sure someone has seen the video. I am quick to jump to conclusions but want to be certain it is what is said to be before I tell the Secy.

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:03:05 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT

Just showed it to Carole - she is meeting with Kevin.

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:02 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John
Subject: Re: URGENT

Good

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:00:42 2010
Subject: Re: URGENT

I sent to Ross and Jett
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----
From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 14:51:24 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT

Is WH or Kevin aware of this?

-----Original Message-----
From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 2:44 PM
To: Berge, John; Mather, Chris
Subject: Re: URGENT



----- Original Message -----
From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 14:42:27 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT



-----Original Message-----
From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 2:39 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John
Subject: Re: URGENT

Terrible. What can I do to help?

----- Original Message -----
From: Mather, Chris
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 14:34:25 2010
Subject: URGENT

This is horrible. Video just posted on Hotair.com.

The NAACP is about to learn one of the most basic of all lessons in life – those who live in glass houses should avoid provoking a stone-throwing war. After the civil-rights organization threatened to issue a condemnation of Tea Party activism by equating it with racism (a position from which they ultimately retreated), Andrew Breitbart announced that he would publish at least one video of the NAACP itself cheering racism. Breitbart delivers on that promise today at Big Government, showing USDA official Shirley Sherrod explain to an appreciative NAACP audience in July 2009 how she deliberately withheld information from a white farmer in Georgia trying to save his land and his business:

-----Original Message-----
From: Maloney, Wayne

Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 1:56 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Zaina, Lisa
Subject: FW: Georgia
Importance: High

Chris,

I was just informed of a video of the Georgia State Director that was posted on the Internet earlier this afternoon. It speaks for itself and you need to watch it right away.

I have discussed this with Tim McNeilly. He has instructed the PIC and the State Director not to respond to media without checking with us first. We have not been contacted by any media outlet but expect that we will.

Tim has been asked by me to draft a statement for our review to be issued if necessary.

Wayne
###

Georgia PIC just called to alert us to a campaign underway involving Shirley Sherrod vs. the Tea Party people. I understand that this may have been brought to your attention already, but in case it hasn't..... The PIC is looking for guidance if (and I think there will be) media contact regarding the below video.

<http://hotair.com/archives/2010/07/19/breitbart-hits-naacp-with-promised-video-of-racism/>

Looking for guidance on how you would like to prepare and handle any inquiries that result.

Thanks.

Timothy J. McNeilly | Director, Legislative and Public Affairs Rural Development U.S.
Department of Agriculture 1400 Independence Ave., S.W. | Washington, D.C. 20250
Phone: 202.720.1019 | Fax: 202.690.4083

www.rurdev.usda.gov

"Committed to the future of rural communities"

"Estamos dedicados al futuro de las comunidades rurales"

Berge, John

From: May, Tina
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:31 PM
To: Berge, John; Blue, Rebecca
Subject: Re: URGENT

Let us know what we can do to help/when your ready to reach out to delegation.

----- Original Message -----
From: Berge, John
To: May, Tina; Blue, Rebecca
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:58:43 2010
Subject: FW: URGENT

SHITSTORM!! FYI. See below.

-----Original Message-----
From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:40 PM
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Jett, Carole
Subject: Re: URGENT

I need to tell WH comms.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----
From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:28:52 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT

Please keep us posted on his reaction. We need to know when to reach out to the GA delegation.

-----Original Message-----
From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:16 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John
Subject: Re: URGENT

Doug and I will talk to the Secy right after this stop. Should I share with Justin.

----- Original Message -----
From: Mather, Chris
To: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:11:55 2010
Subject: Re: URGENT

I have.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----
From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John; Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:06:33 2010

Subject: Re: URGENT

We need to make sure someone has seen the video. I am quick to jump to conclusions but want to be certain it is what is said to be before I tell the Secy.

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:03:05 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT

Just showed it to Carole - she is meeting with Kevin.

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:02 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John
Subject: Re: URGENT

Good

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:00:42 2010
Subject: Re: URGENT

I sent to Ross and Jett
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 14:51:24 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT

Is WH or Kevin aware of this?

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 2:44 PM
To: Berge, John; Mather, Chris
Subject: Re: URGENT

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 14:42:27 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 2:39 PM

To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John
Subject: Re: URGENT

Terrible. What can I do to help?

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 14:34:25 2010
Subject: URGENT

This is horrible. Video just posted on Hotair.com.

The NAACP is about to learn one of the most basic of all lessons in life – those who live in glass houses should avoid provoking a stone-throwing war. After the civil-rights organization threatened to issue a condemnation of Tea Party activism by equating it with racism (a position from which they ultimately retreated), Andrew Breitbart announced that he would publish at least one video of the NAACP itself cheering racism. Breitbart delivers on that promise today at Big Government, showing USDA official Shirley Sherrod explain to an appreciative NAACP audience in July 2009 how she deliberately withheld information from a white farmer in Georgia trying to save his land and his business:

-----Original Message-----

From: Maloney, Wayne
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 1:56 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Zaina, Lisa
Subject: FW: Georgia
Importance: High

Chris,

I was just informed of a video of the Georgia State Director that was posted on the Internet earlier this afternoon. It speaks for itself and you need to watch it right away.

I have discussed this with Tim McNeilly. He has instructed the PIC and the State Director not to respond to media without checking with us first. We have not been contacted by any media outlet but expect that we will.

Tim has been asked by me to draft a statement for our review to be issued if necessary.

Wayne
###

Georgia PIC just called to alert us to a campaign underway involving Shirley Sherrod vs. the Tea Party people. I understand that this may have been brought to your attention already, but in case it hasn't..... The PIC is looking for guidance if (and I think there will be) media contact regarding the below video.

<http://hotair.com/archives/2010/07/19/breitbart-hits-naacp-with-promised-video-of-racism/>

Looking for guidance on how you would like to prepare and handle any inquiries that result.

Thanks.

Timothy J. McNeilly | Director, Legislative and Public Affairs Rural Development U.S.
Department of Agriculture 1400 Independence Ave., S.W. | Washington, D.C. 20250
Phone: 202.720.1019 | Fax: 202.690.4083

www.rurdev.usda.gov

"Committed to the future of rural communities"

"Estamos dedicados al futuro de las comunidades rurales"

Berge, John

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:08 PM
To: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Maloney, Wayne
Subject: RE: Fox News (Ron Mitchell): Shirley Sherrod Video

Looping Wayne-

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chun@oc.usda.gov*

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:14 PM
To: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Subject: RE: Fox News (Ron Mitchell): Shirley Sherrod Video

Looping in John and Krysta-

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:13 PM
To: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris
Subject: Fox News (Ron Mitchell): Shirley Sherrod Video

Bill O'Reilly show will be mentioning this tonight. They would like USDA statement on the video. Who else should I be looping in on these inquiries?

Fox News- Ron Mitchell
NY 212-301-3697
Ron.mitchell@foxnews.com

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

Berge, John

From: Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:28 PM
To: Berge, John; Gonzales, Oscar; Williamson, Todd
Subject: RE: continue to stand by

Got it.

Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

From: Berge, John
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:27 PM
To: Hannigan, Erin; Gonzales, Oscar; Williamson, Todd
Subject: RE: continue to stand by

Bishop and Chambliss, but we need to call everyone as we will have up to date information.

From: Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:27 PM
To: Berge, John; Gonzales, Oscar; Williamson, Todd
Subject: RE: continue to stand by

Ok.

Do you know who the folks are that Krysta is reaching out to? Should I assume she is calling Martha Scott at Senate Ag?

Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

From: Berge, John
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:24 PM
To: Hannigan, Erin; Gonzales, Oscar; Williamson, Todd
Subject: RE: continue to stand by

LD or CoS

Staff Directors.

From: Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:24 PM
To: Berge, John; Gonzales, Oscar; Williamson, Todd
Subject: RE: continue to stand by

Thanks.

What level of staff do you want to reach out to? Ag LA, LD, CoS?

As for the appropriators and authorizers, do you have a preference? Should we call our usual RD contact or the Staff Directors?

Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

From: Berge, John
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:19 PM
To: Gonzales, Oscar; Hannigan, Erin; Williamson, Todd
Subject: continue to stand by
Importance: High

Will have statement momentarily.

Assignments:

Erin and Todd you split the delegation.

Oscar – you call the Gov and State Commissioner of ag.

Erin you call appropriators (majority/minority); Todd you call authorizers

John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

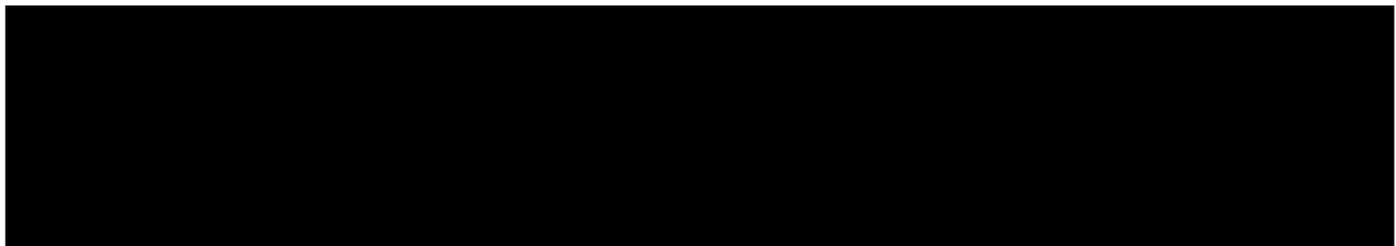
Berge, John

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:52 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Fw:

Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 17:17:38 2010



Berge, John

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:00 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Re: Hey

[REDACTED]

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 17:58:28 2010
Subject: RE: Hey

[REDACTED]

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:58 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Re: Hey

[REDACTED]

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 17:53:39 2010
Subject: RE: Hey

[REDACTED]

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:53 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Hey

[REDACTED]

Berge, John

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:17 PM
To: Mather, Chris; [REDACTED] Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Misailidis, Sarah; Maloney, Wayne; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Subject: FOX News: Video Shows USDA Official Saying She Didn't Give 'Full Force' of Help to White Farmer

Fox: Video Shows USDA Official Saying She Didn't Give 'Full Force' of Help to White Farmer

Days after the NAACP clashed with Tea Party members over allegations of racism, a video has surfaced showing an Agriculture Department official regaling an NAACP audience with a story about how she withheld help to a white farmer facing bankruptcy.

Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, **is shown in the clip** describing "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." Sherrod, who is black, claimed the farmer took a long time trying to show he was "superior" to her. The audience laughed as she described how she determined his fate. "He had to come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," she said. "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land -- so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough."

Sherrod explained that at the time, she assumed the state or national Department of Agriculture referred him to her. In order to ensure that the farmer could report back that she was indeed helpful, she said she took him to see "one of his own" -- a white lawyer.

"I figured that if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him," she said.

The video clip was first posted by BigGovernment.com. The clip is dated March 27 from an NAACP Freedom Fund banquet.

FoxNews.com is seeking a response from both the NAACP and the USDA. The clip adds to the firestorm of debate over the NAACP's decision to approve a resolution at its convention last week accusing some Tea Party activists of racism -- a charge Tea Party leaders deny.

In a second clip from the same event posted online, Sherrod appeared to urge black job seekers to find work at the Department of Agriculture because the federal government won't lay people off.

"There are jobs at USDA and many times there are no people of color to fill those jobs because we shy away from agriculture. We hear the word agriculture and think, why are we working in the fields?" she said. "You've heard of a lot of layoffs. Have you heard of anybody in the federal government losing their job? That's all I need to say."

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

Berge, John

From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:44 PM
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Subject: Re: Statements

Yes she was emplotteded

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Washo, Kevin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:41:57 2010
Subject: RE: Statements

I don't think so. Looks like a hotel. We don't know.

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:42 PM
To: Washo, Kevin; Berge, John
Subject: Statements

Was Shirley at USDA when she made the statement?

Berge, John

From: Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:51 PM
To: Berge, John; Williamson, Todd; Gonzales, Oscar
Subject: RE: For your calls tonight...

Okay- we will begin calls now. I don't anticipate most (if any) offices are still answering calls. Should we email them asking them to call us immediately?

Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

From: Berge, John
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:47 PM
To: Hannigan, Erin; Williamson, Todd; Gonzales, Oscar
Subject: For your calls tonight...
Importance: High

Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.

You are cleared for takeoff – make these calls now. Report back to me outcomes. Call CoS. Thanks.

John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 7:33 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Re: Rural Development State Director

Good
Erin's email to MSP is enough since I called earlier

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 19:32:19 2010
Subject: Fw: Rural Development State Director

Fyi.

From: Gonzales, Oscar
To: Berge, John
Cc: Yezak, Jennifer
Sent: Mon Jul 19 19:28:43 2010
Subject: FW: Rural Development State Director

John, I was able to connect and speak directly with the Governor's Washington D.C. office. Lee Anne who serves as the Federal Affairs Director will notify the appropriate individuals in her office.

As for Ag Commissioner Irvin, I left him a voice message asking him to call the IGA office.

-Oscar

From: Gonzales, Oscar
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 7:21 PM
To: 'GA-GOVERNOR (lfoster@gov.state.ga.us)'
Cc: Yezak, Jennifer
Subject: Rural Development State Director

Lee Anne, thank you very much for returning my phone call. Below is the statement issued by Secretary Vilsack regarding Shirley Sherrod, Rural Development's State Director in Georgia.

"Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously."

Berge, John

From: Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 8:48 PM
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Thanks.

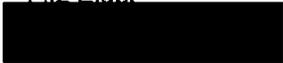
From: Berge, John
To: Hannigan, Erin; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 20:47:18 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Will call in am.

From: Hannigan, Erin
To: Berge, John
Sent: Mon Jul 19 20:42:08 2010
Subject: Fw: Georgia Rural Development State Director

From Fitz.

From: Elder, Fitzhugh (Appropriations)
To: Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 20:36:04 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director
What led to this?

Fitz Elder


From: Hannigan, Erin <Erin.Hannigan@osec.usda.gov>
To: Elder, Fitzhugh (Appropriations)
Sent: Mon Jul 19 19:41:21 2010
Subject: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Fitz,

Secretary Vilsack has issued the following statement with regards to Shirley Sherrod, the State Director of Rural Development in Georgia:

"Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously."

Erin Hannigan

Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

Berge, John

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:01 AM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Boo

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 06:44:33 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

On MSNBC Morning Joe right now.

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John; Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 06:38:16 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Ok. I saw the story on FOX not good

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 21:41:28 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Yes. Am planning on it. Need to determine proper answers for his questions too.

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Hannigan, Erin; Berge, John
Sent: Mon Jul 19 21:39:48 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Berge can you call Fitz tomorrow? And if so Erin let him know tonight?

From: Hannigan, Erin
To: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Sent: Mon Jul 19 21:23:09 2010
Subject: Fw: Georgia Rural Development State Director

More from Fitz.

From: Elder, Fitzhugh (Appropriations)
To: Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 21:21:10 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Erin,

Can you tell me if USDA, under Secretary Vilsack, has accepted any other resignations or has it terminated any other RD State Director or FSA SED for similar reasons? What are the terms of Ms. Sherrod's resignation? Has USDA identified the producer she discriminated against? Are they offering any assistance to that individual? What is USDA's policy when discrimination has occurred? Has this been referred to the DoJ? Will it be? Will USDA provide any training to the federal employees in Georgia to make sure they understand the law and their responsibilities?

Fitz Elder


From: Hannigan, Erin <Erin.Hannigan@osec.usda.gov>
To: Elder, Fitzhugh (Appropriations)
Sent: Mon Jul 19 19:41:21 2010
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Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

Berge, John

From: Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:21 AM
To: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Subject: RE: Georgia Rural Development State Director

No- I emailed Phyllis last night and also tried to call yesterday but have not heard back.

Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:18 AM
To: Hannigan, Erin; Berge, John
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Have we heard from Bishop?

From: Hannigan, Erin
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:03:07 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

There's a clip in the Atlanta newspaper that includes an interview done yesterday with her.

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 06:44:33 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

On MSNBC Morning Joe right now.

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John; Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 06:38:16 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

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From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 21:41:28 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Yes. Am planning on it. Need to determine proper answers for his questions too.

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Hannigan, Erin; Berge, John
Sent: Mon Jul 19 21:39:48 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

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From: Hannigan, Erin
To: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Sent: Mon Jul 19 21:23:09 2010
Subject: Fw: Georgia Rural Development State Director

More from Fitz.

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To: Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 21:21:10 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director
Erin,

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Fitz Elder
[REDACTED] direct

From: Hannigan, Erin <Erin.Hannigan@osec.usda.gov>
To: Elder, Fitzhugh (Appropriations)
Sent: Mon Jul 19 19:41:21 2010
Subject: Georgia Rural Development State Director

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Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture

202.720.7095

Berge, John

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:39 AM
To: 'marthascott_poindexter@agriculture.senate.gov'
Cc: Berge, John
Subject: Hey

If you have questions re Shirley Sherrod and the issue of the day, feel free to call me or John Berge. I am traveling but on my cell... 

KH

Berge, John

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:43 AM
To: 'sanford.bishop@mail.house.gov'
Cc: Berge, John
Subject: Good Morning

Please feel free to call me if you have additional questions re the RD Director issue. We want to make sure you have all the information you need.

I am copying my Deputy John Berge who is in office and be of help as well. I am traveling with the Secretary but available by cell at  KH

Berge, John

From: Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:47 AM
To: Berge, John
Subject: RE: Georgia Rural Development State Director

205-W

Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:47 AM
To: Hannigan, Erin
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Yes. Where is mock hearing?

From: Hannigan, Erin
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:45:02 2010
Subject: RE: Georgia Rural Development State Director
John, would you be able to try and reach out? Their office is not open yet and I've got a mock hearing with Dallas at 8am before we head to his hearing.

Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:38 AM
To: Berge, John; Hannigan, Erin
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Please reach out to Phylis and or Michael Reed this am. If the Congressman needs to talk with me or the Secy just let me know. Thanks.

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Hannigan, Erin

Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:20:31 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

I have not.

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Hannigan, Erin; Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:17:42 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Have we heard from Bishop?

From: Hannigan, Erin
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:03:07 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

There's a clip in the Atlanta newspaper that includes an interview done yesterday with her.

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 06:44:33 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

On MSNBC Morning Joe right now.

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John; Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 06:38:16 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Ok. I saw the story on FOX not good

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 21:41:28 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Yes. Am planning on it. Need to determine proper answers for his questions too.

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Hannigan, Erin; Berge, John
Sent: Mon Jul 19 21:39:48 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Berge can you call Fitz tomorrow? And if so Erin let him know tonight?

From: Hannigan, Erin
To: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Sent: Mon Jul 19 21:23:09 2010
Subject: Fw: Georgia Rural Development State Director

More from Fitz.

From: Elder, Fitzhugh (Appropriations)
To: Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 21:21:10 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director
Erin,

Can you tell me if USDA, under Secretary Vilsack, has accepted any other resignations or has it terminated any other RD State Director or FSA SED for similar reasons? What are the terms of Ms. Sherrod's resignation? Has USDA identified the producer she discriminated against? Are they offering any assistance to that individual? What is USDA's policy when discrimination has occurred? Has this been referred to the DoJ? Will it be? Will USDA provide any training to the federal employees in Georgia to make sure they understand the law and their responsibilities?

Fitz Elder

 direct

From: Hannigan, Erin <Erin.Hannigan@osec.usda.gov>
To: Elder, Fitzhugh (Appropriations)
Sent: Mon Jul 19 19:41:21 2010
Subject: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Fitz,

Secretary Vilsack has issued the following statement with regards to Shirley Sherrod, the State Director of Rural Development in Georgia:

"Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously."

Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

Berge, John

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:40 AM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Re: GA

Sounds good

From: Berge, John
To: phyllis.hallmon@mail.house.gov
Cc: Williams, Janice; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:37:44 2010
Subject: GA

Phyllis – I'd like to try to touch base with you as soon as possible this morning to discuss the GA RD situation. Krysta reached out to Congressman Bishop, but I wanted to be sure you had any questions that you might have answered. If you cannot reach me at the number direct below, I can be reached through my assistant Janice at 202-720-7095.

John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:55 AM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Re: we need to chat about TPs

Let's hammer out this am. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] En route now.
Chris Mather

From: Berge, John
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:39:13 2010
Subject: we need to chat about TPs
For my calls with the hill and your chats with media – want to make sure we're on the same page. Does S have talkers in case he is asked?

John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:59 AM
To: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Subject: Fw: NAACP Statement on Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

Chris Mather

From: Stephanie Chan
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:50:30 2010
Subject: NAACP Statement on Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

fyi-

NAACP Statement on Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

by Publius

July 19, 2010

(BALTIMORE, MD) NAACP President and CEO Benjamin Todd Jealous issued the following statement today after learning of the resignation of Shirley Sherrod of the United States Department of Agriculture:

“Since our founding in 1909, the NAACP has been a multi-racial, multi-faith organization that— while generally rooted in African American communities— fights to end racial discrimination against all Americans.

We concur with US Agriculture Secretary Vilsack in accepting the resignation of Shirley Sherrod for her remarks at a local NAACP Freedom Fund banquet.

Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race.

We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers.

Her actions were shameful. While she went on to explain in the story that she ultimately realized her mistake, as well as the common predicament of working people of all races, she gave no indication she had attempted to right the wrong she had done to this man.

The reaction from many in the audience is disturbing. We will be looking into the behavior of NAACP representatives at this local event and take any appropriate action.

We thank those who brought this to our national office’s attention, as there are hundreds of local fundraising dinners each year.

Sherrod’s behavior is even more intolerable in light of the US Department of Agriculture’s well documented history of denying opportunities to African American, Latino, Asian American, and Native American farmers,

as well as female farmers of all races. Currently, justice for many of these farmers is being held up by Congress. We would hope all who share our outrage at Sherrod's statements would join us in pushing for these cases to be remedied.

The NAACP will continue to advance the ideals of America and fight for freedom, justice and fairness for all Americans."

Founded in 1909, the NAACP is the nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization. Its members throughout the United States and the world are the premier advocates for civil rights in their communities, conducting voter mobilization and monitoring equal opportunity in the public and private sectors.

--

Stephanie Chan


Berge, John

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:02 AM
To: [REDACTED] Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah; Berge, John; Washo, Kevin; Harden, Krysta
Subject: Re: FOX Transcript: On Shirley Sherrod

FOX is actually bolstering our decision.
Chris Mather

From: Stephanie Chan
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:58:08 2010
Subject: FOX Transcript: On Shirley Sherrod
Station:
Date:

Fox News

07/20/2010 06:09:41 - 6:19:41 AM

a speech, a usda official and from there on in, it kind of went bad.

that's the least of it, brian. just last week, the naacp, what did they do? they condemned the tea party as having elements that were racist and yet, fast forward to, as brian said, in march, an naacp gathering and there's an official from barack obama's united states department of agriculture mang a speh to the naacp that sure sounded racist.

so she admits there that because a farmer was white, she doesn't extend the full helping hand to him as she's touting this in this anecdote as if this is a feather in her cap somehow for her to be congratulated. it's really a shocking admission and furthermore, what is also shocking is that the people then in the audience if we played the tape longer, you don't hear any boos. you don't hear any gasps. you see some people nodding.

she was bragging that she withheld this farmer that was facing bankruptcy, held back all she could do. she said the white farmer spent a long time explaining how he was superior to her. earlier, she struggled with job and later came around and realize essentially that was wrong. not enough to impress agriculture secretary tom vilsack who basically sacked her calling her actions shameful.

no kidding and then the naacp suddenly in a pickle, you know what do they do? there's a woman at one of our gatherings. what they did is they condemned it. they have issued this statement and say the reaction from many in the audience is disturbing. we will look into the behavior of naacp representatives at this local event and take any appropriate action. what's interesting, though, is this happened in march, right?

uh-huh.

why wasn't the naacp which was there? it was their meeting. why weren't they appalled in march? why did they have to wait until it was blasted all over the internet?

i don't know. yeah. didn't know about it until it was -- seone must have taped it. that doesn't look like the most sophisticated taping job i've ever seen. it looks like a cell phone.

it is outrageous. perhaps everybody needs a refresher course of what racism looks like.

Stephanie Chan



Berge, John

From: Blue, Rebecca
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:04 AM
To: Berge, John
Cc: May, Tina; Hannigan, Erin
Subject: Sherrod - CNN

Just an FYI Sherrod called into CNN to "set the record straight."

Rebecca Blue
Office of Congressional Relations
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Rebecca.Blue@osec.usda.gov
202-720-7095

Berge, John

From: Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:06 AM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Where are you?

I want to talk to you quickly before we leave. I'm listening to CNN right now and am concerned.

Berge, John

From: McFarland, Lilia
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:18 AM
To: Berge, John
Subject: FW: Georgia Rural Development State Director

This is what Erin sent. Will check in with you before 11 a.m.

Lilia McFarland
Office of Congressional Relations
U.S. Department of Agriculture
(202) 720-9259
lilia.mcfarland@osec.usda.gov

From: Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:16 AM
To: McFarland, Lilia
Subject: Fw: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Fyi- the secretarys statement on this in case ed gets asked.

From: Hannigan, Erin
To: 'nicole.scott@mail.house.gov'
Sent: Mon Jul 19 19:38:56 2010
Subject: Georgia Rural Development State Director
Nicole,

Secretary Vilsack has issued the following statement with regards to Shirley Sherrod, the State Director of Rural Development in Georgia:

"Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously."

Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

Berge, John

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:37 AM
To: Diephouse, Greg; Berge, John
Cc: Aten, David -USDA
Subject: Re: Emails

We sent to press last night. Will send.
Chris Mather

From: Diephouse, Greg
To: Berge, John; Mather, Chris
Cc: Aten, David -USDA
Sent: Tue Jul 20 09:19:18 2010
Subject: Emails

Getting some emails (3 so far) coming from members of the public regarding Shirley Sherrod. I think our best response is to send an email back from the AG SEC account. Is there a written statement from the Secretary yet?

Greg Diephouse
Director
Office of the Executive Secretariat
USDA - 202-720-7100

Berge, John

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:38 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Subject: CNN (John Roberts, 10 a.m. deadline); Shirley Sherrod

FYI- CNN is updating the story in 20 minutes and want to know if we have an updated statement, if we were aware of the context of her remarks and if we knew the story was from over 20 yrs ago.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Roberts, John [mailto:John.Roberts@turner.com]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:34 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Stephanie - John Roberts at CNN here..

Stephanie,
Wondering if you have any updated statement on Shirley Sherrod.....I'm going back on CNN at 10am to update the story.

Was USDA aware of the full context of her remarks before it asked for her resignation? Did USDA know the story was 24 years old?

Thanks very much,
John Roberts
Anchor/American Morning
CNN

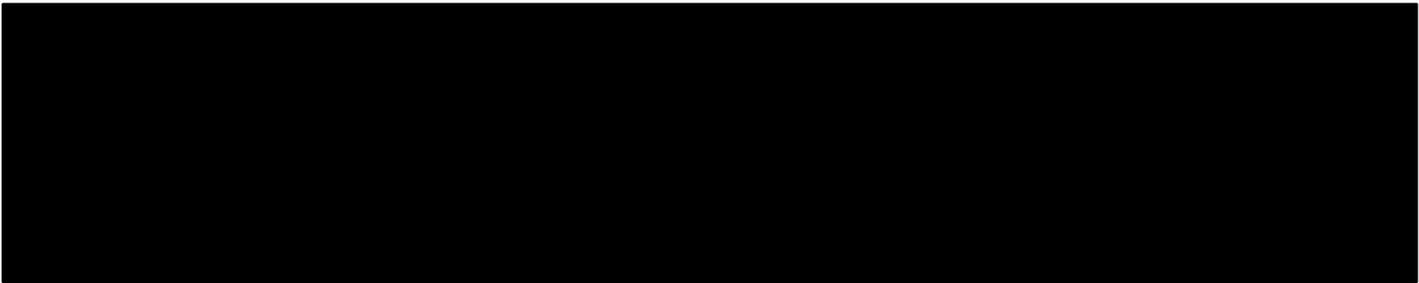
Berge, John

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:05 AM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Fw:

Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tue Jul 20 09:45:55 2010



Chris Mather

Berge, John

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:22 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Subject: Politico (Daniel Strauss): Request Shirley Sharrod Statement

This is just an FYI, I have forwarded last night's statement to him.

Politico- Daniel Strauss
dstrauss@politico.com

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

Berge, John

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:33 AM
To: Berge, John
Subject: RE: FOX: Gingrich Responds to Discrimination at USDA
Attachments: image001.gif

Got it.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:33 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: FW: FOX: Gingrich Responds to Discrimination at USDA

Make sure to watch FOX – see comment below about new video. We should have interns in press shop watching all four TVs. This is Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:30 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: FOX: Gingrich Responds to Discrimination at USDA

Gingrich Responds to Discrimination at USDA

Tuesday, July 20, 2010

FOX NEWS

ADVERTISEMENT

This is a rush transcript from "Hannity," July 19, 2010. This copy may not be in its final form and may be updated.

SEAN HANNITY, HOST: And this is a Fox News alert. An Obama administration official resigned just a short time ago after she was caught on tape appearing to tell an audience that she had used her position to racially discriminate against white farmers.

Now the woman, Shirley Sherrod, was the Georgia state director at the Department of Agricultural. Now the president's Agricultural Secretary Tom Vilsack just released a statement saying the USDA has a zero tolerance policy against discrimination.

Here's part of the shocking video that ignited this controversy.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

SHIRLEY SHERROD, FORMER USDA GA STATE DIRECTOR: The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking but he was trying to show me he was superior to me.

I know what he was doing. But he had come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him.

(END OF VIDEO CLIP)

HANNITY: Now details on the official sudden resignation are still coming in. We'll have more on this story including more video coming up in this hour. That's all straight ahead.

But also, meanwhile the debate in Washington raged today over whether or not unemployment insurance should be extended yet again for American struggling to find work. Now earlier President Obama addressed the issue from the Rose Garden.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA: It's time to stop holding workers laid off in this recession hostage to Washington politics. It's time to do what is right. Not for the next election, but for the middle class.

We've got to stop blocking emergency relief for Americans who are out of work. We've got to extend unemployment insurance.

(END OF VIDEO CLIP)

HANNITY: All right, now the president did not bother to mention that the only reason the extension may be necessary is because his stimulus was a complete and utter failure.

Now since the recovery plan was passed more than three million Americans have lost their jobs.

Now this morning the GOP leader in the House came out swinging saying, quote, "The president knows Republicans support extending unemployment insurance and doing it in a fiscally responsible way by cutting spending elsewhere in the \$3 trillion federal budget."

But the White House isn't interested in finding a way to actually pay for the extension. It's a whole lot easier to simply drive America deeper into debt.

And joining me now with analysis is the former speaker of the House, Fox News contributor, co-host of the documentary along with his wife Calista, "Nine Days That Changed the World," which you can find at Newt.org, is former speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich.

Mr. Speaker, welcome back.

NEWT GINGRICH, FORMER SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE: It's good to be with you.

HANNITY: All right. A lot — a lot obviously going on here. The — this woman on tape saying these racially charged things that she didn't want to help farmers, in particular white farmer. That she said she wanted him to go out and deal with one of his own and she put him in touch with a white lawyer.

Just the latest in a series of racial incidents. What do you think of this?

GINGRICH: Well, let me say, first of all, Secretary Vilsack did exactly the right thing. I mean I often disagree with this administration. But firing her after that kind of viciously racist attitude was exactly the right thing to do. And the fact that we have to be genuinely colorblind.

You know you can't be a black racist any more than you can be a white racist. And I just think it'd be good for those of us who are often critical of the administration to recognize that here's a case where Secretary Vilsack did exactly the right thing, moved very promptly, and fired somebody who frankly shouldn't be serving the American people because they clearly had a set of attitudes inappropriate for a federal official.

HANNITY: All right, my only thing is they weren't the ones that caught it. It was on Breitbart.com and it happened some time ago. So it's interesting that it took the new media to expose this.

Here's my next question, though. There's another twist to the story, and that is that, this was — these comments were made at an NAACP banquet. Now in light of the NAACP accusing the Tea Party of being a racist movement last week, do you think the NAACP should be held to account for the very standard they were demanding from the Tea Party?

GINGRICH: Of course. Clearly the national — and I suspect, Sean, if you contact them — the national leadership of the NAACP — I'm sure will feel honor-bound to apologize for having had that kind of a racist comment said at a meeting I suspect they didn't know about it, just as I suspect Secretary Vilsack didn't.

But now that it's there and it's clearly obvious, because it's on tape, I would hope that national NAACP would apologize for having that kind of racist comment at one of their meetings.

HANNITY: Well, I've tried to reach out to Ben Jealous. He has yet to return my phone call and he's invited on this program if he would like to discuss it. I'd like to have him on.

But it's interesting. A lot of people contacted me last week. Apparently you had sent out a tweet. By the way I'm glad that you are up on tweeting, which by the way, I have a Twitter account as well at @SeanHannity.

But you have your own Twitter account. And you offered to basically broker a meeting —

GINGRICH: No, no.

HANNITY: Well, hang on.

GINGRICH: No, I — no, I didn't say that. That was a misinterpretation by the Huffington Post.

HANNITY: OK.

GINGRICH: What I said was —

HANNITY: I didn't read the tweet. Go ahead.

GINGRICH: Right. But what I said was local Tea Party groups — because Tea Parties don't have a hierarchy. They don't have a national organization. Local Tea Party groups ought to reach out to local NAACP chapters and offer to have joint town hall meetings.

For example, about job creation. I mean there's a clear difference between job creators and job killers. It would be great to get Americans of all backgrounds in the same room talking about whether they ought to follow policies that you and I believe in which create jobs.

And I suspect most African-Americans at the local level in the local NAACP chapter would be surprised at how much they have in common with Tea Party members, a number of whom, by the way, are African-American, Latino and Asians. They're not — the Tea Parties are not white organizations. They're open to all Americans.

So my point was, if somebody wants to start a conversation, instead of yelling at them, what if we invite them in the room and let's have a conversation about America's future together.

And I'm told by Adam Waldeck at American Solutions who coordinates this that a number of local Tea Party groups are reaching out to local NAACP chapters on their own to have this kind of a dialogue.

HANNITY: I don't know what the right answer is. But I would find it very hard to sit down with the NAACP back in 2000. They ran this James Byrd ad when George Bush supported the death penalty for the person — the people responsible for that James Byrd dragging death.

You can't have a worse penalty. And that ad was particularly hard hitting. It was as if my father was killed all over again, if you remember that ad. And then in this particular case, this happened with this woman at this NAACP banquet.

I'm not saying not to have a dialogue. I am saying you can also talk about their associations. They've been — Ben Jealous was at a meeting with Louis Farrakhan. Should we not have certain standards prior to any meeting?

GINGRICH: Yes. We can also say let's agree that we should condemn racism wherever it occurs. Now we hope that the NAACP will apply that standard to somebody who is at one of its banquets.

But I think it's good for the country to see that we are not afraid to reach out and talk to people and to try to focus the conversation in a positive way. African-American unemployment is higher under the Obama administration than under any administration in a very long time.

African-Americans want their schools to work so their children go to college and not to prison. We have lots of things you and I could talk about in local meetings. And I said local meetings where local people get together.

And I think you'd find that at the local level, not the professional, you know, left-wing activist level. At the local level there are an awful lot of very decent people in the NAACP who would suddenly find out they have an awful lot in common with their local Tea Party neighbors.

HANNITY: But I found the chart — the things that were said about the Tea Party so inaccurate, so over-the-top, so lacking in evidence, it is almost hard to begin a dialogue when everything is predicated on false charges and a false statement.

I didn't even bring up the issue of the New Black Panther Party and the Department of Justice and Eric Holder. What did you —

GINGRICH: Well, look —

HANNITY: Go ahead.

GINGRICH: First of all, Eric Holder should resign for national security reasons. He should certainly resign over the racism inherent in the Black Panther case. I mean I'm happy to say that Eric Holder shouldn't be attorney general and is not doing the job correctly.

But I'd certainly go back to your point for a second, Sean. Maybe this makes me different, OK? The New York Times often runs editorials that are totally dishonest. Their attack on the Arizona state law, for example — on immigration — was a totally dishonest attack.

I still talk to New York Times reporters all the time. I think it's important to reach out. It's important to try to be positive.

HANNITY: By the way, just for the record I do not return the calls of anybody from The New York Times. They don't call anymore because I won't return their calls.

GINGRICH: Now our audience — now our audience can see the difference in our two styles.

HANNITY: Yes, well — look, what do I know? I made — perhaps you're right.

Look, I'm not saying we ought not have a dialogue. I think a dialogue is important. But I think a dialogue has got to be — the foundation of which has got to start in a fair way.

GINGRICH: Right.

HANNITY: And it's almost like if you begin a dialogue with OK, the Tea Party is racist, the Tea Party, you know — the Tea Party members uttered these racial epithets when there's no evidence, seems to me that you're starting out at a decided disadvantage.

GINGRICH: Sure.

HANNITY: If you don't demand honesty up front and an apology before the dialogue begins.

GINGRICH: Well, I like to — I think we have a nice test that came on your show tonight. Do they have the courage — the NAACP — to apologize for the racism in this person's comments at an NAACP banquet? Pretty good test.

HANNITY: All right. We'll come back. We have a lot more with former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, coming up after the break.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

HANNITY: And we continue now with former Speaker of the House, Fox News contributor, Newt Gingrich is with us.

All right, Mr. Speaker, we had the NAACP. We had what they said about the Tea Party. I think obviously an attempt — they support the Democratic Party — 106 days out of an election to energize the base.

The president. He went out and he'd started referring to the GOP as being the party of the rich because he says Republicans don't want to extend unemployment benefits. The reality is Republicans do support extending unemployment benefits. They want it paid for. They've already supported an extension for 99 weeks.

And by the way, the president doesn't need any Republican votes to pass the bill anyway. So is this — is this what we can expect for the next 106 days?

GINGRICH: Sure. Look, if you watch what Harry Reid is trying to do to Sharron Angle in Nevada. What you're going to see everywhere in the country is desperately dishonest, and I think consistently demagogue attacks, because they know that if there's any kind of a fair fight they're going to get badly defeated.

The president sadly is the opposite of Ronald Reagan. Ronald Reagan led by telling the American people the truth, by rallying them to the facts and by encouraging their better instincts.

The president seems to have a really unusual desire to divide the country and a really deep need to blame somebody else for his own failures. And as a result, you get this kind of Rose Garden comment.

HANNITY: Yes.

GINGRICH: The fact is, if this president cared about getting money to the unemployed, all he has to agree to is a one percent reduction in his budget across the board and that would pay for —

HANNITY: Yes.

GINGRICH: — everything he wants to send. But he does — what he wants to do is borrow from your children and your grandchildren so that we will pay interest on the debt forever, so that he can send out money that is unpaid for, that increases the federal deficit even beyond the already gigantic amounts.

HANNITY: All right, so —

GINGRICH: And I think that's just fundamentally, morally wrong.

HANNITY: So what you're saying for the next 106 days we can expect a ton of class warfare rhetoric, demagoguery as you just pointed out, and demonization, et cetera, character assassination, maybe some supportive groups playing the race card because they can't run on their record? That's what the next 106 days are going to be like? This is going to be all we see?

GINGRICH: Look — I think the Democratic Party counterattack — to use the language you just kind of packaged nicely. If you assume dishonesty, distortion and demagoguery, you have a reasonably good idea what Harry Reid's campaign is going to be like.

Because of the election choice in Nevada at 14.5 percent unemployment is between a job killing Harry Reid record and a job creating Sharron Angle proposal. He's going to get beat so badly that you won't even be able to see him.

Therefore he is — he's raising — he just went to Canada to raise money from trial lawyers in an international meeting.

HANNITY: All right, so —

GINGRICH: This guy is going to pour on negative ads. Every Democrat in the country will imitate Harry Reid.

HANNITY: Yes. I agree and I have a friend of mine running for Congress and he's already experiencing it. Guy votes with Nancy Pelosi 99 percent of the time, the only thing he wants to do is attack you and me and Mark Levin and anybody else, which is interesting.

The question is, will this tactic be successful?

GINGRICH: No. No.

HANNITY: And — and how do you recommend — you're great at politics. How do you recommend Republicans counter that?

GINGRICH: First of all, Sean.

HANNITY: Yes?

GINGRICH: If you voted 99 percent with Nancy Pelosi —

HANNITY: Yes?

GINGRICH: Wouldn't you want to be attacking all day every day?

HANNITY: Yes.

GINGRICH: I mean do you want to defend that record?

HANNITY: No.

GINGRICH: I — I was out last week in — for Brad Zaun in Des Moines. His opponent voted 98 percent with Nancy Pelosi and all he has to say is, you know, San Francisco doesn't deserve an Iowa representative. Iowa needs an Iowa representative. And that's the whole campaign.

HANNITY: I think that's the whole campaign. I agree.

GINGRICH: I believe the key to the fall election is very simple. There are job creators and there are job killers. We absolute proof that from the time Pelosi and Reid took over in January of 2007 the Democratic Congress has been killing jobs. It continues to kill jobs. This economy is not going to recover. We just saw a — we just saw a huge oil rig leave the Gulf to go to Egypt with high paying jobs. We had a company announce over the weekend — think about this quote — "because of political instability in the United States, we are moving our rig to the Congo —

HANNITY: Yes.

GINGRICH: ...to drill for oil." So the president is exporting jobs. He's doing a great job of creating jobs for China. The president has done a great job creating jobs for Egypt and the Congo. He just isn't doing a great job creating jobs for Americans.

HANNITY: No, we're losing those jobs. All right, but then —

GINGRICH: So that's the choice. You want to be job creator or a job killer. If you want to be a job killer, vote Democrat. If you want a job creator, vote Republican. I think that's the fall campaign.

HANNITY: All right. I agree with you. Don't think that I didn't notice you dropped in Des Moines, Iowa, and your latest trip to the great state of Iowa. And in between I know you snuck in a trip to New Hampshire. And I think I saw your schedule, you're going back to South Carolina.

GINGRICH: I was in South Carolina Friday a week ago —

HANNITY: Now hang on a second. Now wait a minute, we've been friends a long time. You have given more direct answers to people in the liberal media than to me. I want to know what's Newt Gingrich's plan.

GINGRICH: Our plan is for Calista and me to sit down with our family in February or March.

HANNITY: That's not the answer I want.

GINGRICH: And make a decision. But I promise you, Sean —

HANNITY: Well, how come —

(CROSSTALK)

GINGRICH: Because they printed the same thing I've said to you for nine months. What can I tell you? But I think it had — because it had AP Des Moines.

HANNITY: Yes.

GINGRICH: It suddenly got bigger coverage. I mean if it had said AP Long Island it wouldn't had been the same effect.

HANNITY: It would said, Newt and Hannity, it probably wouldn't had been the same. But then again maybe they're mad at me at The New York Times because I don't respond to their phone calls. You do.

GINGRICH: Yes, I guessed that could be the whole problem.

HANNITY: That's could be the whole thing right there. All right.

GINGRICH: But I promise you in February or March, I'll be on the show. We'll talk about it.

HANNITY: And you'll announce here, either way?

GINGRICH: Well I'll certainly talk about it.

(LAUGHTER)

HANNITY: I love being able to pin you down. All right. Former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich.

— Watch "Hannity" weeknights at 9 p.m. ET!

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell:

Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:48 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb
Subject: FYI- CNN just told me that the Farmer's wife apparently backs Shirley's story

Just FYI- Karrah Kaplan at CNN (She sent those transcripts over first thing in the morning) just informed me that apparently the farmer's wife backs Shirley's story.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

Berge, John

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:55 AM
To: Berge, John; Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin
Cc: JIC4, OC -USDA; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: RE: FOX: Gingrich Responds to Discrimination at USDA
Attachments: image001.gif

*11 a.m. ET

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:55 AM
To: Berge, John; Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin
Cc: JIC4, OC -USDA; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: RE: FOX: Gingrich Responds to Discrimination at USDA

Also, CNN will be doing a phone interview with her at 1:00pm ET.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:49 AM
To: Berge, John; Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin
Cc: JIC4, OC -USDA; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: RE: FOX: Gingrich Responds to Discrimination at USDA

FYI- FOX just said that she would be interviewed at 1:30 this afternoon.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:33 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: FW: FOX: Gingrich Responds to Discrimination at USDA

Make sure to watch FOX – see comment below about new video. We should have interns in press shop watching all four TVs. This is Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:30 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: FOX: Gingrich Responds to Discrimination at USDA

Gingrich Responds to Discrimination at USDA

Tuesday, July 20, 2010

FOX NEWS

ADVERTISEMENT

This is a rush transcript from "Hannity," July 19, 2010. This copy may not be in its final form and may be updated.

SEAN HANNITY, HOST: And this is a Fox News alert. An Obama administration official resigned just a short time ago after she was caught on tape appearing to tell an audience that she had used her position to racially discriminate against white farmers.

Now the woman, Shirley Sherrod, was the Georgia state director at the Department of Agricultural. Now the president's Agricultural Secretary Tom Vilsack just released a statement saying the USDA has a zero tolerance policy against discrimination.

Here's part of the shocking video that ignited this controversy.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

SHIRLEY SHERROD, FORMER USDA GA STATE DIRECTOR: The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking but he was trying to show me he was superior to me.

I know what he was doing. But he had come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him.

(END OF VIDEO CLIP)

HANNITY: Now details on the official sudden resignation are still coming in. We'll have more on this story including more video coming up in this hour. That's all straight ahead.

But also, meanwhile the debate in Washington raged today over whether or not unemployment insurance should be extended yet again for American struggling to find work. Now earlier President Obama addressed the issue from the Rose Garden.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA: It's time to stop holding workers laid off in this recession hostage to Washington politics. It's time to do what is right. Not for the next election, but for the middle class.

We've got to stop blocking emergency relief for Americans who are out of work. We've got to extend unemployment insurance.

(END OF VIDEO CLIP)

HANNITY: All right, now the president did not bother to mention that the only reason the extension may be necessary is because his stimulus was a complete and utter failure.

Now since the recovery plan was passed more than three million Americans have lost their jobs.

Now this morning the GOP leader in the House came out swinging saying, quote, "The president knows Republicans support extending unemployment insurance and doing it in a fiscally responsible way by cutting spending elsewhere in the \$3 trillion federal budget."

But the White House isn't interested in finding a way to actually pay for the extension. It's a whole lot easier to simply drive America deeper into debt.

And joining me now with analysis is the former speaker of the House, Fox News contributor, co-host of the documentary along with his wife Calista, "Nine Days That Changed the World," which you can find at Newt.org, is former speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich.

Mr. Speaker, welcome back.

NEWT GINGRICH, FORMER SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE: It's good to be with you.

HANNITY: All right. A lot — a lot obviously going on here. The — this woman on tape saying these racially charged things that she didn't want to help farmers, in particular white farmer. That she said she wanted him to go out and deal with one of his own and she put him in touch with a white lawyer.

Just the latest in a series of racial incidents. What do you think of this?

GINGRICH: Well, let me say, first of all, Secretary Vilsack did exactly the right thing. I mean I often disagree with this administration. But firing her after that kind of viciously racist attitude was exactly the right thing to do. And the fact that we have to be genuinely colorblind.

You know you can't be a black racist any more than you can be a white racist. And I just think it'd be good for those of us who are often critical of the administration to recognize that here's a case where Secretary Vilsack did exactly the right thing, moved very promptly, and fired somebody who frankly shouldn't be serving the American people because they clearly had a set of attitudes inappropriate for a federal official.

HANNITY: All right, my only thing is they weren't the ones that caught it. It was on Breitbart.com and it happened some time ago. So it's interesting that it took the new media to expose this.

Here's my next question, though. There's another twist to the story, and that is that, this was — these comments were made at an NAACP banquet. Now in light of the NAACP accusing the Tea Party of being a racist movement last week, do you think the NAACP should be held to account for the very standard they were demanding from the Tea Party?

GINGRICH: Of course. Clearly the national — and I suspect, Sean, if you contact them — the national leadership of the NAACP — I'm sure will feel honor-bound to apologize for having had that kind of a racist comment said at a meeting I suspect they didn't know about it, just as I suspect Secretary Vilsack didn't.

But now that it's there and it's clearly obvious, because it's on tape, I would hope that national NAACP would apologize for having that kind of racist comment at one of their meetings.

HANNITY: Well, I've tried to reach out to Ben Jealous. He has yet to return my phone call and he's invited on this program if he would like to discuss it. I'd like to have him on.

But it's interesting. A lot of people contacted me last week. Apparently you had sent out a tweet. By the way I'm glad that you are up on tweeting, which by the way, I have a Twitter account as well at @SeanHannity.

But you have your own Twitter account. And you offered to basically broker a meeting —

GINGRICH: No, no.

HANNITY: Well, hang on.

GINGRICH: No, I — no, I didn't say that. That was a misinterpretation by the Huffington Post.

HANNITY: OK.

GINGRICH: What I said was —

HANNITY: I didn't read the tweet. Go ahead.

GINGRICH: Right. But what I said was local Tea Party groups — because Tea Parties don't have a hierarchy. They don't have a national organization. Local Tea Party groups ought to reach out to local NAACP chapters and offer to have joint town hall meetings.

For example, about job creation. I mean there's a clear difference between job creators and job killers. It would be great to get Americans of all backgrounds in the same room talking about whether they ought to follow policies that you and I believe in which create jobs.

And I suspect most African-Americans at the local level in the local NAACP chapter would be surprised at how much they have in common with Tea Party members, a number of whom, by the way, are African-American, Latino and Asians. They're not — the Tea Parties are not white organizations. They're open to all Americans.

So my point was, if somebody wants to start a conversation, instead of yelling at them, what if we invite them in the room and let's have a conversation about America's future together.

And I'm told by Adam Waldeck at American Solutions who coordinates this that a number of local Tea Party groups are reaching out to local NAACP chapters on their own to have this kind of a dialogue.

HANNITY: I don't know what the right answer is. But I would find it very hard to sit down with the NAACP back in 2000. They ran this James Byrd ad when George Bush supported the death penalty for the person — the people responsible for that James Byrd dragging death.

You can't have a worse penalty. And that ad was particularly hard hitting. It was as if my father was killed all over again, if you remember that ad. And then in this particular case, this happened with this woman at this NAACP banquet.

I'm not saying not to have a dialogue. I am saying you can also talk about their associations. They've been — Ben Jealous was at a meeting with Louis Farrakhan. Should we not have certain standards prior to any meeting?

GINGRICH: Yes. We can also say let's agree that we should condemn racism wherever it occurs. Now we hope that the NAACP will apply that standard to somebody who is at one of its banquets.

But I think it's good for the country to see that we are not afraid to reach out and talk to people and to try to focus the conversation in a positive way. African-American unemployment is higher under the Obama administration than under any administration in a very long time.

African-Americans want their schools to work so their children go to college and not to prison. We have lots of things you and I could talk about in local meetings. And I said local meetings where local people get together.

And I think you'd find that at the local level, not the professional, you know, left-wing activist level. At the local level there are an awful lot of very decent people in the NAACP who would suddenly find out they have an awful lot in common with their local Tea Party neighbors.

HANNITY: But I found the chart — the things that were said about the Tea Party so inaccurate, so over-the-top, so lacking in evidence, it is almost hard to begin a dialogue when everything is predicated on false charges and a false statement.

I didn't even bring up the issue of the New Black Panther Party and the Department of Justice and Eric Holder. What did you —

GINGRICH: Well, look —

HANNITY: Go ahead.

GINGRICH: First of all, Eric Holder should resign for national security reasons. He should certainly resign over the racism inherent in the Black Panther case. I mean I'm happy to say that Eric Holder shouldn't be attorney general and is not doing the job correctly.

But I'd certainly go back to your point for a second, Sean. Maybe this makes me different, OK? The New York Times often runs editorials that are totally dishonest. Their attack on the Arizona state law, for example — on immigration — was a totally dishonest attack.

I still talk to New York Times reporters all the time. I think it's important to reach out. It's important to try to be positive.

HANNITY: By the way, just for the record I do not return the calls of anybody from The New York Times. They don't call anymore because I won't return their calls.

GINGRICH: Now our audience — now our audience can see the difference in our two styles.

HANNITY: Yes, well — look, what do I know? I made — perhaps you're right.

Look, I'm not saying we ought not have a dialogue. I think a dialogue is important. But I think a dialogue has got to be — the foundation of which has got to start in a fair way.

GINGRICH: Right.

HANNITY: And it's almost like if you begin a dialogue with OK, the Tea Party is racist, the Tea Party, you know — the Tea Party members uttered these racial epithets when there's no evidence, seems to me that you're starting out at a decided disadvantage.

GINGRICH: Sure.

HANNITY: If you don't demand honesty up front and an apology before the dialogue begins.

GINGRICH: Well, I like to — I think we have a nice test that came on your show tonight. Do they have the courage — the NAACP — to apologize for the racism in this person's comments at an NAACP banquet? Pretty good test.

HANNITY: All right. We'll come back. We have a lot more with former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, coming up after the break.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

HANNITY: And we continue now with former Speaker of the House, Fox News contributor, Newt Gingrich is with us.

All right, Mr. Speaker, we had the NAACP. We had what they said about the Tea Party. I think obviously an attempt — they support the Democratic Party — 106 days out of an election to energize the base.

The president. He went out and he'd started referring to the GOP as being the party of the rich because he says Republicans don't want to extend unemployment benefits. The reality is Republicans do support extending unemployment benefits. They want it paid for. They've already supported an extension for 99 weeks.

And by the way, the president doesn't need any Republican votes to pass the bill anyway. So is this — is this what we can expect for the next 106 days?

GINGRICH: Sure. Look, if you watch what Harry Reid is trying to do to Sharron Angle in Nevada. What you're going to see everywhere in the country is desperately dishonest, and I think consistently demagogue attacks, because they know that if there's any kind of a fair fight they're going to get badly defeated.

The president sadly is the opposite of Ronald Reagan. Ronald Reagan led by telling the American people the truth, by rallying them to the facts and by encouraging their better instincts.

The president seems to have a really unusual desire to divide the country and a really deep need to blame somebody else for his own failures. And as a result, you get this kind of Rose Garden comment.

HANNITY: Yes.

GINGRICH: The fact is, if this president cared about getting money to the unemployed, all he has to agree to is a one percent reduction in his budget across the board and that would pay for —

HANNITY: Yes.

GINGRICH: — everything he wants to send. But he does — what he wants to do is borrow from your children and your grandchildren so that we will pay interest on the debt forever, so that he can send out money that is unpaid for, that increases the federal deficit even beyond the already gigantic amounts.

HANNITY: All right, so —

GINGRICH: And I think that's just fundamentally, morally wrong.

HANNITY: So what you're saying for the next 106 days we can expect a ton of class warfare rhetoric, demagoguery as you just pointed out, and demonization, et cetera, character assassination, maybe some supportive groups playing the race card because they can't run on their record? That's what's the next 106 days are going to be like? This is going to be all we see?

GINGRICH: Look — I think the Democratic Party counterattack — to use the language you just kind of packaged nicely. If you assume dishonesty, distortion and demagoguery, you have a reasonably good idea what Harry Reid's campaign is going to be like.

Because of the election choice in Nevada at 14.5 percent unemployment is between a job killing Harry Reid record and a job creating Sharron Angle proposal. He's going to get beat so badly that you won't even be able to see him.

Therefore he is — he's raising — he just went to Canada to raise money from trial lawyers in an international meeting.

HANNITY: All right, so —

GINGRICH: This guy is going to pour on negative ads. Every Democrat in the country will imitate Harry Reid.

HANNITY: Yes. I agree and I have a friend of mine running for Congress and he's already experiencing it. Guy votes with Nancy Pelosi 99 percent of the time, the only thing he wants to do is attack you and me and Mark Levin and anybody else, which is interesting.

The question is, will this tactic be successful?

GINGRICH: No. No.

HANNITY: And — and how do you recommend — you're great at politics. How do you recommend Republicans counter that?

GINGRICH: First of all, Sean.

HANNITY: Yes?

GINGRICH: If you voted 99 percent with Nancy Pelosi —

HANNITY: Yes?

GINGRICH: Wouldn't you want to be attacking all day every day?

HANNITY: Yes.

GINGRICH: I mean do you want to defend that record?

HANNITY: No.

GINGRICH: I — I was out last week in — for Brad Zaun in Des Moines. His opponent voted 98 percent with Nancy Pelosi and all he has to say is, you know, San Francisco doesn't deserve an Iowa representative. Iowa needs an Iowa representative. And that's the whole campaign.

HANNITY: I think that's the whole campaign. I agree.

GINGRICH: I believe the key to the fall election is very simple. There are job creators and there are job killers. We absolute proof that from the time Pelosi and Reid took over in January of 2007 the Democratic Congress has been killing jobs. It continues to kill jobs. This economy is not going to recover. We just saw a — we just saw a huge oil rig leave the Gulf to go to Egypt with high paying jobs. We had a company announce over the weekend — think about this quote — "because of political instability in the United States, we are moving our rig to the Congo —

HANNITY: Yes.

GINGRICH: ...to drill for oil." So the president is exporting jobs. He's doing a great job of creating jobs for China. The president has done a great job creating jobs for Egypt and the Congo. He just isn't doing a great job creating jobs for Americans.

HANNITY: No, we're losing those jobs. All right, but then —

GINGRICH: So that's the choice. You want to be job creator or a job killer. If you want to be a job killer, vote Democrat. If you want a job creator, vote Republican. I think that's the fall campaign.

HANNITY: All right. I agree with you. Don't think that I didn't notice you dropped in Des Moines, Iowa, and your latest trip to the great state of Iowa. And in between I know you snuck in a trip to New Hampshire. And I think I saw your schedule, you're going back to South Carolina.

GINGRICH: I was in South Carolina Friday a week ago —

HANNITY: Now hang on a second. Now wait a minute, we've been friends a long time. You have given more direct answers to people in the liberal media than to me. I want to know what's Newt Gingrich's plan.

GINGRICH: Our plan is for Calista and me to sit down with our family in February or March.

HANNITY: That's not the answer I want.

GINGRICH: And make a decision. But I promise you, Sean —

HANNITY: Well, how come —

(CROSSTALK)

GINGRICH: Because they printed the same thing I've said to you for nine months. What can I tell you? But I think it had — because it had AP Des Moines.

HANNITY: Yes.

GINGRICH: It suddenly got bigger coverage. I mean if it had said AP Long Island it wouldn't had been the same effect.

HANNITY: It would said, Newt and Hannity, it probably wouldn't had been the same. But then again maybe they're mad at me at The New York Times because I don't respond to their phone calls. You do.

GINGRICH: Yes, I guessed that could be the whole problem.

HANNITY: That's could be the whole thing right there. All right.

GINGRICH: But I promise you in February or March, I'll be on the show. We'll talk about it.

HANNITY: And you'll announce here, either way?

GINGRICH: Well I'll certainly talk about it.

(LAUGHTER)

HANNITY: I love being able to pin you down. All right. Former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich.

— Watch "Hannity" weeknights at 9 p.m. ET!

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

Berge, John

From: Weaver, Caleb
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:04 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: Dallas' Hearing

No GA questions at hearing or by reporters afterward. Hearing was uneventful.

Returning to USDA now.

----- Original Message -----

From: Weaver, Caleb
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 10:13:45 2010
Subject: Dallas' Hearing

Just getting started, but only two reporters present - Alan Bjerga and Ellyn Ferguson.

Berge, John

From: Gonzales, Oscar
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:12 AM
To: Berge, John
Subject: National Black Conference of State Legislators

John:

Here is contact information for key leadership at the National Black Conference of State Legislators (NBCSL).

Rep. Calvin Smyre (D-Georgia House of Reps)

President
706-649-5533 office
calvinsmyre@synovus.com

Lakimba DeSadier
Executive Director
202-624-5457 office
[REDACTED] cell
lakimba@nbcsl.org

Rep. Helen Miller (D-Iowa House of Reps)

Chair of NBCSL Agriculture Committee
[REDACTED] cell
helen.miller@legis.state.ia.us

Berge, John

From: Ansari, Muneeb
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:15 AM
To: Berge, John
Subject: sherrod is on cnn

Muneeb Ansari
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture


Berge, John

From: Silverman, Steve
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:21 AM
To: Berge, John
Subject: RE: Can you call me when you receive this this morning?

thanks

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:54 AM
To: Silverman, Steve
Cc: Jett, Carole
Subject: Re: Can you call me when you receive this this morning?

I think we're okay.

From: Silverman, Steve
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 10:46:14 2010
Subject: RE: Can you call me when you receive this this morning?
For some reason, I'm just now seeing this. I understand Fred is in your office. Let me know if you need me to participate as well. I'm here for another hour. Thanks

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:33 AM
To: Silverman, Steve
Cc: Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta
Subject: Can you call me when you receive this this morning?

[REDACTED] but have a pressing series of questions related to the GA situation. My numbers follow:

[REDACTED]
Office (Janice can find me) – 202-720-7095

John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@oscc.usda.gov

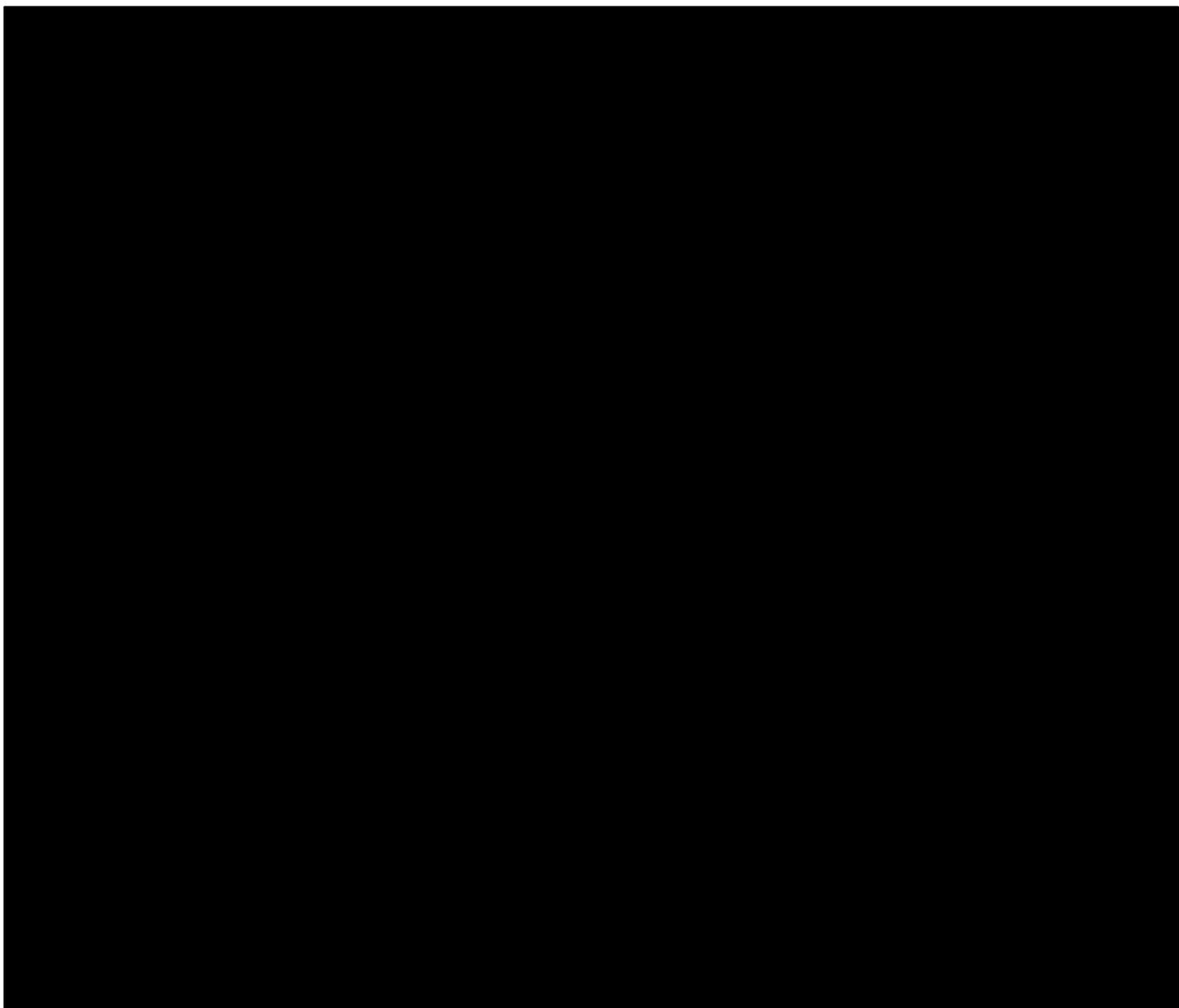
Berge, John

From: Cluthe, Sally
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:55 AM
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Subject: RE: Employee Email

Only to you two:



From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:34 AM
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Jett, Carole; Hannigan, Erin; Williamson, Todd; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Cluthe, Sally
Subject: RE: Employee Email

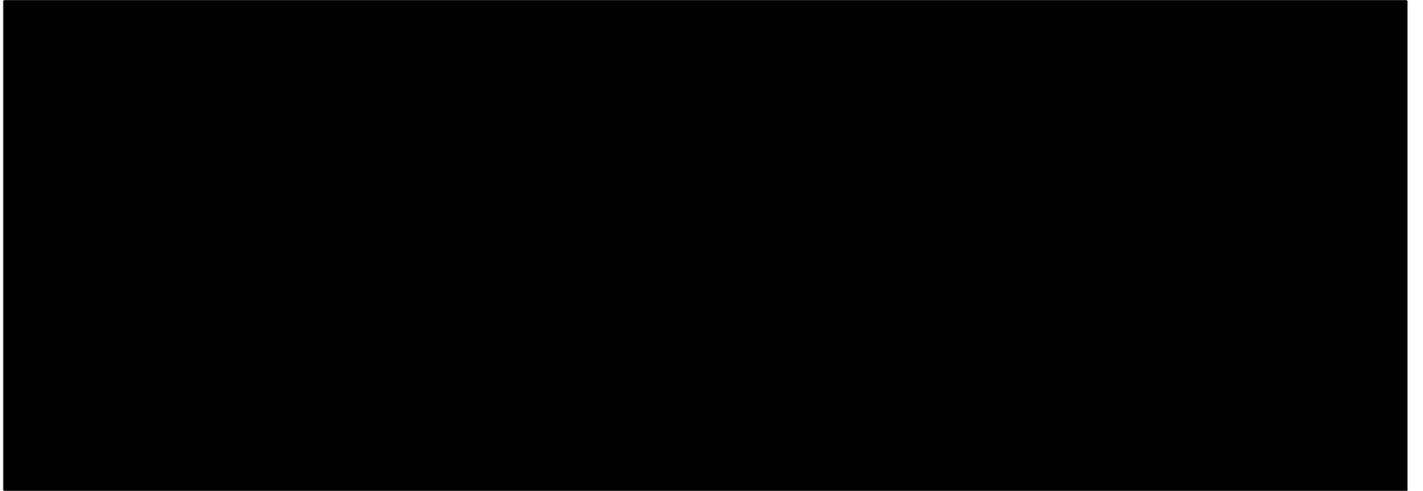




John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:23 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Cc: Berge, John



Berge, John

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:38 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: NPR All Things Considered (Chelsea Jone): Interview with Secretary on Shirley Sherrod Video

Yes. Take off Jett and Ross as well.
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 12:34:46 2010
Subject: NPR All Things Considered (Chelsea Jone): Interview with Secretary on Shirley Sherrod Video
Just making sure the rest of the group saw this request for an interview with the Secretary

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:25 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Cc: Mather, Chris
Subject: Fw: All Things Considered interview with Secretary Vilsack?

From: CJones@npr.org
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 12:19:58 2010
Subject: All Things Considered interview with Secretary Vilsack?
Hi Justin,

Chelsea Jones here from NPR's *All Things Considered*...we're interested in an interview with the Secretary today about the Shirley Sherrod/NAACP video. Is he commenting at all on this? If so, let me know.

Thanks so much,

Chelsea

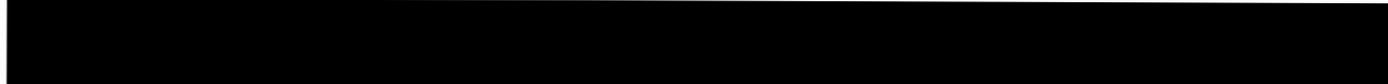
NPR | Chelsea Jones | *All Things Considered* | cjones@npr.org | 202 513 2108

Berge, John

From: Williamson, Todd
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:53 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Sure thing
C. Todd Williamson, III
Office of Congressional Relations
U.S. Department of Agriculture

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Hannigan, Erin; Williamson, Todd
Sent: Tue Jul 20 12:33:24 2010
Subject: RE: Georgia Rural Development State Director



From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:18 AM
To: Berge, John; Hannigan, Erin
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director



From: Berge, John
To: Hannigan, Erin; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 11:16:42 2010
Subject: RE: Georgia Rural Development State Director
Fitz now asking about the amount of money that the Southern Cooperatives receives and for what – just out of curiosity – how do we communicate to grant recipients as to what is acceptable and what is not. How shall I proceed?

From: Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 9:23 PM
To: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Subject: Fw: Georgia Rural Development State Director

More from Fitz.

From: Elder, Fitzhugh (Appropriations)
To: Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 21:21:10 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director
Erin,

Can you tell me if USDA, under Secretary Vilsack, has accepted any other resignations or has it terminated any other RD State Director or FSA SED for similar reasons? What are the terms of Ms. Sherrod's resignation? Has USDA identified the producer she discriminated against? Are they offering any assistance to that individual? What is USDA's policy when

discrimination has occurred? Has this been referred to the DoJ? Will it be? Will USDA provide any training to the federal employees in Georgia to make sure they understand the law and their responsibilities?

Fitz Elder

direct

From: Hannigan, Erin <Erin.Hannigan@osec.usda.gov>
To: Elder, Fitzhugh (Appropriations)
Sent: Mon Jul 19 19:41:21 2010
Subject: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Fitz,

Secretary Vilsack has issued the following statement with regards to Shirley Sherrod, the State Director of Rural Development in Georgia:

"Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously."

Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

Berge, John

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:54 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: RE: can you resend me a clean copy of the S statement on Sherrod?

sent!

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:53 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: can you resend me a clean copy of the S statement on Sherrod?

John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@csec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:05 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Subject: CBS Evening News (Christina Ruffini): request to interview Shirley Sherrod

Importance: High

FYI-

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Ruffini, Christina [mailto:RuffiniC@cbsnews.com]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:03 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Cc: Taylor, Allyson Ross
Subject: Shirley Sherrod ON CAMERA INTERVIEW REQUEST - CBS TONIGHT
Importance: High

Dear Ms. Chan,

I was told to email you our request for someone who could speak to the Shirley Sherrod case. We would like to do an on camera interview. Because this is for the broadcast tonight, it would need to tape before 4:30/5:00 pm.

Thank you very much for your time and please let us know.

Sincerely,

Christina Ruffini
CBS Evening News
Washington D.C.
Office: 202 457 4385
Cell: [REDACTED]

Berge, John

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:07 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Subject: AP (Mary Clare Jalonick): Interview with Cheryl Cook

Looping Krysta and John-

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED] Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:59 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Fw: any chance

Ap inquiry below

----- Original Message -----

From: Jalonick, Mary Clare <mjalonick@ap.org>
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 12:57:40 2010
Subject: any chance

I can talk to Cheryl Cook on this?

Mary Clare Jalonick
The Associated Press
202-641-9461 (office)
[REDACTED] (cell)
Twitter: MCJalonick

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[IP_US_DISC]

msk dccc60c6d2c3a6438f0cf467d9a4938

Berge, John

From: Harris, Jane Anna (Agriculture) [JaneAnna_Harris@agriculture.senate.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:07 PM
To: Berge, John; Hannigan, Erin
Cc: Williamson, Todd
Subject: RE: georgia

Thank you.

Jane Anna Harris
Senate Agriculture Committee
202-224-2035

From: Berge, John [mailto:John.Berge@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:48 PM
To: Hannigan, Erin; Harris, Jane Anna (Agriculture)
Cc: Williamson, Todd
Subject: RE: georgia

Jane Anna – just got this far through my emails. Yes, we became aware yesterday when it started circulating. Let me know if you have additional questions.

From: Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:27 AM
To: Berge, John
Cc: Williamson, Todd
Subject: Fw: georgia

From: Harris, Jane Anna (Agriculture)
To: Williamson, Todd; Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 10:15:47 2010
Subject: georgia
Todd and Erin-

I've gotten the statement from the Secretary accepting Shirley Sherrod's resignation in Georgia. Did the Department just become aware of this video yesterday, when it started circulating the web? That seems to be when it first surfaced to everyone, but just checking. thank you so much.

Jane Anna Harris
Professional Staff | Senate Agriculture Committee
328-A Russell Building | Washington, DC 20510
T: 202-224-2035 | F: 202-224-1725
janeanna_harris@agriculture.senate.gov

Berge, John

From: The Office of the Secretary
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:14 PM
To: ALL-USDA-2K
Subject: Message from Secretary Vilsack

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250**

Dear employee:

Some of you may have seen the news stories about USDA today. I want to reiterate my commitment and that of the leadership at USDA to civil rights. We all must work to ensure that we are treating our customers and employees equally and fairly and we all should have zero tolerance for discrimination.

I also want to remind all of you that you have a unique and important individual responsibility to represent this sentiment in your official actions, statements, and public presentations. We are lucky to have the opportunity to work for the American people and we owe it to them to instill confidence in our leadership. Our words and actions matter.

We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and I thank you for your service and efforts to achieve this goal,

Secretary Vilsack

Berge, John

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:19 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: CNN Campbell Brown (Allison Gilbert): Interview request for Secretary tonight, resignation details

Justin verify you got this and can tell S
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 13:16:33 2010
Subject: RE: CNN Campbell Brown (Allison Gilbert): Interview request for Secretary tonight, resignation details
FYI- CNN will be sending a truck to an Ohio Event

She also has additions to her query-

Also, just in terms of reporting, can you tell me who actually fired Shirley Sherrod? Was it the Secretary himself? And, when did it happen? Last night? This morning? In person? Over the phone?

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:24 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Subject: CNN Campbell Brown (Allison Gilbert): Interview request for Secretary tonight re: Shirley Sherrod

FYI- CNN is requesting a live interview with Secretary Vilsack tonight at 8 p.m. for the Campbell Brown show (it's one of her last shows).

CNN: Allison Gilbert
212-275-8080
Allison.gilbert@turner.com

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

Berge, John

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:20 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Cc: Weaver, Caleb
Subject: Re: CNN Campbell Brown (Allison Gilbert): Interview request for Secretary tonight, resignation details

Copy that

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 13:16:33 2010
Subject: RE: CNN Campbell Brown (Allison Gilbert): Interview request for Secretary tonight, resignation details
FYI- CNN will be sending a truck to an Ohio Event

She also has additions to her query-

Also, just in terms of reporting, can you tell me who actually fired Shirley Sherrod? Was it the Secretary himself? And, when did it happen? Last night? This morning? In person? Over the phone?

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
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Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:24 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Subject: CNN Campbell Brown (Allison Gilbert): Interview request for Secretary tonight re: Shirley Sherrod

FYI- CNN is requesting a live interview with Secretary Vilsack tonight at 8 p.m. for the Campbell Brown show (it's one of her last shows).

CNN: Allison Gilbert
212-275-8080
Allison.gilbert@turner.com

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

Berge, John

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:26 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Subject: RE: Atlanta NPR Stn (Charles Edwards): Interview on Shirley Sherrod

Looping Krysta-

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:26 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Harless, Angela -USDA; Berge, John
Subject: Atlanta NPR Stn (Charles Edwards): Interview on Shirley Sherrod

FYI on another request

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Charles Edwards [mailto:cedwards@pba.org]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:22 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Shirley Sherrod

WORKING ON A 3 PM DEADLINE

Name: Charles Edwards
Organization : 90.1 FM WABE in Atlanta (NPR)
Contact: [REDACTED]

I would like to do a phone interview about why Mrs. Sherrod no longer works for the department.

Thanks!

-Charles Edwards

Berge, John

From: Pearson, Dexter (Agriculture) [Dexter_Pearson@agriculture.senate.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:42 PM
To: Berge, John
Cc: Mather, Chris
Subject: RE: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod

Thanks for the information.

So you guys don't have much more than this at this point?

dp

Dexter L. Pearson
Professional Staff
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry
Chairman Blanche L. Lincoln
328A Senate Russell Building
Washington, DC 20510
P: 202-224-2035
F: 202-228-2125

From: Berge, John [mailto:John.Berge@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:56 PM
To: Pearson, Dexter (Agriculture)
Cc: Mather, Chris
Subject: FW: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod

Dexter – attached are our talking points and below is the Secretary's statement that he issued.

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:54 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod

Please see below for statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack regarding Shirley Sherrod's resignation yesterday:

Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture*

Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:54 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Subject: CNN NewsroomAM w/Tony Harris (Diane Durham): Interview with Cheryl Cook tomorrow

FYI-CNN Newsroom AM with Tony Harris is interested in interviewing Cheryl Cook tomorrow morning between 11-12 p.m.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:44 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: FW: CNN NewsroomAM w/Tony Harris...

From: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:41 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole
Subject: FW: CNN NewsroomAM w/Tony Harris...

Chris, is this program on the list to receive a call from OC?

From: Durham, Diane [mailto:Diane.Durham@turner.com]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:33 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: CNN NewsroomAM w/Tony Harris...

Ms. Cook, CNN NewsroomAM w/Tony Harris is requesting a live interview as soon as possible with you regarding Shirley Sherrod's dismissal. Please call me so we might discuss the possibility of this interview. Thank you.

Diane Durham
Editorial Producer/NewsroomAM
404-827-4102

[REDACTED] cell

Berge, John

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:12 PM
To: Berge, John; Chan, Stephanie; Harden, Krysta; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: FOX America Live w/ Megan Kelley (Megan Brown): Interview with USDA rep before 3 p.m. today

Nope. Still watching it.

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:11 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: FOX America Live w/ Megan Kelley (Megan Brown): Interview with USDA rep before 3 p.m. today

Did they ever run the extended tape?

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:05 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Subject: FOX America Live w/ Megan Kelley (Megan Brown): Interview with USDA rep before 3 p.m. today

FYI- Fox America Live with Megan Kelley is hoping for an interview with someone in the next 50 minutes or so. I mentioned that it was very short notice and that we're inundated with requests.

FOX America Live w/ Megan Kelley- Megan Brown
646-852-9917
megan.brown@foxnews.com

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

Berge, John

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:17 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Open Media Inquiries

FYI- Please see below for open inquiries. Quite a few CNN requests

- FOX NY (Steven Page, page@foxnews.com, [REDACTED]): Statement request – DONE
- Politico (Daniel Strauss): dstrauss@politico.com, [REDACTED] Statement request – DONE
- AgriPulse (Sarah Wyant): Shirley Sherrod details – PENDING
- AP (Mary Clare Jalonick): CNN is blowing the story up, request interview with Cheryl Cook – PENDING
- NBC (Jay Blackman, Jay.Blackman@nbcuni.com): Interview request – PENDING
- NBC Ed Schultz (Barbara Fant, barbara.fant@nbcuni.com): Interview request with Secretary on accepting resignation, 5 min interview- PENDING
- Washington Post (Ed O'Keefe, ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com): Why did Sec accept resignation? Was she forced to leave? Did she have opportunity to explain herself? Should other USDA officials expect the same? - PENDING
- ABC World News Tonight (Jake Tapper, [REDACTED] jake.tapper@abc.com): Interview request with secretary, details on story. - PENDING
- Fox News (Ron Mitchell, Ron.mitchell@foxnews.com): Shirley Sherrod Video, Glen Beck interview- PENDING
- FOX (Judd Berger, Judd.berger@foxnews.com, [REDACTED]): What happened last night? Based on what she told journal constitution. NAACP pulled statement from site? - PENDING
- FOX America Live Megan Kelley (Megan Brown, [REDACTED] megan.brown@foxnews.com): Interview request in the next 40 min. - PENDING
- FOX (Abigail Emerson, Abigail.emerson@foxnews.com, [REDACTED] 1 p.m.): Duties of Georgia State Director- PENDING
- CBS Evening News (Christina Ruffini, [REDACTED] [RuffiniC@cbsnews.com]): request to interview Shirley – PENDING
- CNN America Morning (Karrah Kaplan, 'Karrah.Kaplan@turner.com'): Updated statement, general info- PENDING
- CNN America Morning (John Roberts, John.Roberts@turner.com): Statement/Update, Was USDA aware of the full context of her statements? Did USDA know story was 24 yrs old. - PENDING
- CNN Campbell Brown (Allison Gilbert, Allison.gilbert@turner.com): Interview request for Secretary tonight re: Shirley Sherrod, resignation details- PENDING
- CNN Situation Room (Brad Hodges, [REDACTED] brad.hodges@turner.com; lisa.sylvester@turner.com): Statement/Interview on Shirley Sherrod – PENDING
- CNN Network booking (Sarah Baker, [REDACTED] Sarah.Baker@cnn.com): Statement request – PENDING
- CNN Newsroom AM w/Tony Harris (Diane Durham, [REDACTED] Diane.Durham@turner.com): Interview with Cheryl Cook tomorrow - PENDING
- CNN Newsroom with Kyra Phillips (Nyja Green 'nyja.greene@turner.com'): Updated statement, interview request - PENDING
- The takeaway (Samantha Fields, samantha.a.fields@gmail.com) request to hev Shirley interview – PENDING
- ABC Atlanta Affiliate (Rebecca Lynstrom, [REDACTED] Rebecca.lindstrom@wsbtv.com): Interview with local rep on story. Statement request - PENDING
- NPR All things Considered (Chelsea Jones | cjones@npr.org, [REDACTED] Secretary Interview on NAACP video - PENDING
- Reuters (David Beasley, [REDACTED] Statement request, USDA response to Shirley's calls from WH- PENDING

- Asylum.com/Mediaite.com (Tommy Christopher, [REDACTED] Shirley Sherrod statement request, why fire before get full story? – PENDING
- Joe Madison (Darrell Greene, [REDACTED] 730, 745, 9am and 10 am (15 min slots). - PENDING
- Afro American newspaper [REDACTED] Request for statement - PENDING
- Talking Points Memo (Rachel Slajda, rachel@talkingpointsmemo.com [REDACTED] How did video come to USDA attn, is she resigning because of Glenn Beck story? Have we seen full video? - PENDING
- Atlanta NPR Stn (Charles Edwards cedwards@pba.org [REDACTED] Interview on Shirley Sherrod- PENDING

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov [REDACTED]*

Berge, John

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:32 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: ABC News (Jake Tapper): Interview with Secretary re:Shirley Sherrod

FYI- Jake just send this snippet-

I am told that WH didn't tell Vilsack to ask Sherodd to resign, that he did it on his own.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:51 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Subject: ABC News (Jake Tapper): Interview with Secretary re:Shirley Sharrod

FYI- ABC thinks they may do a story on this and are requesting an on-camera interview with the Secretary and would like to know if we can give additional comments on the story because it is more nuanced than originally portrayed (I already sent him the statement).

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Tapper, Jake [<mailto:Jake.Tapper@abc.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:43 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Please call asap [REDACTED]

Jake Tapper
[REDACTED]

ABC News

Berge, John

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:46 PM
To: Berge, John; Cluthe, Sally
Subject: Re: Need numbers and times for others

On with Bishop now.

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Cluthe, Sally
Sent: Tue Jul 20 14:45:03 2010
Subject: Re: Need numbers and times for others

Let us know how we can follow up if necessary.

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Cluthe, Sally; Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 14:43:07 2010
Subject: Re: Need numbers and times for others

From: Cluthe, Sally
To: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 14:40:10 2010
Subject: RE: Need numbers and times for others

James Clyburn – Scheduler – Alexandra Russell – 225-3315

Cong. Clyburn is available at 2:30pm.

Please call 202-226-3210 (Whip Office). Kelly Sheraton will connect the call from there.

Sanford Bishop – Scheduler – Martina Morgan – 225-3631

Cong. Bishop is available at anytime. His cell # is [REDACTED] Martina ([REDACTED]) is happy to help make this happen anytime if needed.

John Lewis – Scheduler – Jacob Gillison – 225-3801

Spoke with Jacob. Waiting to hear back.

David Scott – Scheduler – Angie Borja – 225-2939

Spoke with Angie. Waiting to hear back.

I gave Krysta's cell # - Cong. is going to step out of his mark-up.

Hank Johnson – Scheduler – Ebony Simpson – 225-1605

Cong. Johnson is in the District. His primary is TODAY.

His cell # is [REDACTED]

Barbara Lee (Chairwoman) – Scheduler – ~~Allyson Freeman – 225-2665;~~

Tatiana Kalinga – 202-225-2661

On hold as I type this...

John Conyers – Scheduler – 225-5126

Bennie Thompson – Scheduler – Andrea Lee – 225-5876

GK Butterfield – Scheduler – Darnise Nelson – 225-3101

Maxine Waters – Scheduler – Angela Master – 225-2201

Sheila Jackson-Lee – Scheduler – 225-3816

Association of Black Legislators:

Rep. Calvin Smyre (D-Georgia House of Reps)

President

706-649-5533 office

calvinsmyre@synovus.com

Lakimba DeSadier

Executive Director

202-624-5457 office

[REDACTED] cell

lakimba@nbcsl.org

Rep. Helen Miller (D-Iowa House of Reps)

Chair of NBCSL Agriculture Committee

[REDACTED] cell

helen.miller@legis.state.ia.us



-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta

Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:35 PM

To: Berge, John

Cc: Cluthe, Sally

Subject: Need numbers and times for others

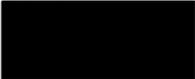
Besides Clyburn and Bishop

Berge, John

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:17 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Harless, Angela -USDA; Berge, John; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Subject: ABC Good Morning America (Katie Bosland): Interview with Secretary tomorrow morning

FYI- GMA is interested in interviewing the secretary tomorrow morning-

Hi Chris and Stephanie-

My name is Katie Bosland and I am a producer with ABC News / Good Morning America with George Stephanopoulos and Robin Roberts. I wanted to reach out to see if Secretary Vilsack would be available in the morning to come on the show to talk with George? We will be covering and talking about the Agriculture Director's resignation and would welcome the opportunity to have the Secretary on the show and hear his thoughts on the matter. Is there a number where I can best reach you. I am reachable via cell at 

Hope to speak soon and take care—

Katie Bosland

Katie Bosland | Segment Producer | ABC News, *Good Morning America* | Katie.Bosland@abc.com | 202.222.7331

Berge, John

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:25 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Re: Shirley Sherrod comments

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 15:19:27 2010
Subject: Re: Shirley Sherrod comments

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 14:27:34 2010
Subject: Fw: Shirley Sherrod comments

From: Clarke, Carlisle (Agriculture)
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 14:25:13 2010
Subject: Shirley Sherrod comments

Hey Krysta – do y'all have an official release or any briefing materials on the Shirley Sherrod situation? We haven't gotten any press requests or anything yet, but I wanted to make sure we were up to speed.

Thanks!

Carlisle S. Clarke

U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
Ranking Member Saxby Chambliss
328-A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
(202) 224-2035

Berge, John

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:39 PM
Subject: Statement by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack

Statement by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack

Yesterday, I asked for and accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation for two reasons. First, for the past 18 months, we have been working to turn the page on the sordid civil rights record at USDA and this controversy could make it more difficult to move forward on correcting injustices. Second, state rural development directors make many decisions and are often called to use their discretion. The controversy surrounding her comments would create situations where her decisions, rightly or wrongly, would be called into question making it difficult for her to bring jobs to Georgia.

Our policy is clear. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA and we strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have a duty to ensure that when we provide services to the American people we do so in an equitable manner. But equally important is our duty to instill confidence in the American people that we are fair service providers.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

Berge, John

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:51 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Harden, Krysta
Subject: RE: Anderson Cooper (Ben Finley): Interview with Cheryl Cook

reporter just sent me details-

I'm following up with a message I just left for you on behalf of CNN's Anderson Cooper. I'd like to request an interview for Anderson with Cheryl Cook and was hoping we could coordinate this today. The focus of the interview would be the USDA's decision to release Sheryl Sherrod from her duties and if they plan on reconsidering their decision in the near future, etc.

Could you let me know if this might be possible? We'd really like the opportunity to include Ms. Cook's viewpoints on this story today.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:50 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Harden, Krysta
Subject: Anderson Cooper (Ben Finley): Interview with Cheryl Cook

FYI-

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Ross, Lori -USDA
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:42 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: media inquiry

Ben Finley

CNN

Re: Interview request with Cheryl Cook on behalf of Anderson Cooper
212-275-8209 ben.finley@turner.com

Berge, John

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:53 PM
To: Cluthe, Sally
Cc: Berge, John
Subject: Re: Status of calls

Ok good

From: Cluthe, Sally
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 15:51:53 2010
Subject: RE: Status of calls
Rev. Jackson is on a plane and lands at 5pm PDT (8pm EDT).
I gave his office Doug & Krysta's cell #s.

FYI – Mr. Shelly Davis usually travels with him. His # is [REDACTED]
I've already left a message for Shelly.

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:47 PM
To: Cluthe, Sally
Cc: Berge, John
Subject: Re: Status of calls

You are wonderful

From: Cluthe, Sally
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 15:45:05 2010
Subject: RE: Status of calls
I have a couple but I am trying to track him down first so you don't have to ☺

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:45 PM
To: Cluthe, Sally
Cc: Berge, John
Subject: Re: Status of calls

Do not have Jesse Jackson's number

From: Cluthe, Sally
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 15:42:21 2010
Subject: RE: Status of calls

Do I need to call or do you have the #?

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:42 PM
To: Cluthe, Sally
Cc: Berge, John
Subject: Re: Status of calls

[REDACTED]

From: Cluthe, Sally
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 15:38:35 2010
Subject: RE: Status of calls

[REDACTED]

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:35 PM
To: Cluthe, Sally
Cc: Berge, John
Subject: Re: Status of calls

Good work Sally! We have a few outstanding that can happen after 5 and Mr Lewis whenever we can.

From: Cluthe, Sally
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 15:31:52 2010
Subject: Status of calls

Not completed:

John Lewis – Scheduler – Jacob Gillison – 225-3801

- Spoke with Jacob. Emailed Jacob – no response. Waiting to hear back.

Hank Johnson – Scheduler – Ebony Simpson – 225-1605

- Cong. Johnson is in the District. His primary is TODAY.
- His cell # is [REDACTED]

Barbara Lee (Chairwoman) – Scheduler – Tatiana Kalinga – 202-225-2661

- TBD – Office isn't responding.

John Conyers – Scheduler – 225-5126

- In the District – Cynthia Martin (CoS) will connect the call. **Anytime before 6pm today.**

Scheduled:

4:15pm

Maxine Waters - Scheduler – Angela Master – 225-2201

- **Available around 4:15pm – has Doug O'Brien's cell # & Krysta's cell #**

5:00pm

Bennie Thompson – Scheduler – Andrea Lee – 225-5876

- **S to call at 5pm**

5:15pm

Sheila Jackson-Lee – Scheduler – 225-3816

- **Available at 5:15pm. Call 202-225-3816**

Completed:

James Clyburn

Sanford Bishop

David Scott

GK Butterfield

Berge, John

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:06 PM
To: Cluthe, Sally
Cc: Berge, John
Subject: Re: Phone Call with Sec. Tom Vilsack

The S will be in the middle of the meeting here after 5 would be better. Doing interview with CNN now

From: Cluthe, Sally
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:02:16 2010
Subject: FW: Phone Call with Sec. Tom Vilsack
Update from John Lewis....

From: Gillison, Jacob [mailto:Jacob.Gillison@mail.house.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:58 PM
To: Cluthe, Sally
Subject: RE: Phone Call with Sec. Tom Vilsack

He's in a meeting and when he's done I will inform him and hopefully make this happen... 20 mins?

Jacob

From: Cluthe, Sally [mailto:Sally.Cluthe@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:48 PM
To: Gillison, Jacob
Subject: Phone Call with Sec. Tom Vilsack

Hi Jacob –

Thank you for taking my call earlier today. Sec. Vilsack is currently in the car and was hoping to find a time to speak with the Congressman.

Would there be any time in the next hour or so?

Thanks again,
Sally

Sally Cluthe
Director of Scheduling and Advance
Office of the Secretary
United States Department of Agriculture
Washington, DC
Phone: 202-720-3631
Fax: 202-690-2400
www.usda.gov

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copying of this message or portion thereof is strictly prohibited. If you have received this message in error, please reply immediately to the sender and delete this message. Thank you.

Berge, John

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:38 PM
To: Berge, John; Mather, Chris
Subject: Statement by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack

Statement by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack

Yesterday, I asked for and accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation for two reasons. First, for the past 18 months, we have been working to turn the page on the sordid civil rights record at USDA and this controversy could make it more difficult to move forward on correcting injustices. Second, state rural development directors make many decisions and are often called to use their discretion. The controversy surrounding her comments would create situations where her decisions, rightly or wrongly, would be called into question making it difficult for her to bring jobs to Georgia.

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Berge, John

From: Jeanquart, Bobbi
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:10 PM
To: Williamson, Todd
Cc: Berge, John
Subject: RE: Georgia Rural Development State Director

[REDACTED]

I won't get more facts on this until tomorrow – I would like to talk with you on this in the morning – or tonight – I am here for awhile.

Roberta Jeanquart
Office of Assistant Secretary for Administration
bobbi.jeanquart@osec.usda.gov
Phone 202-720-3805
Cell [REDACTED]

From: Williamson, Todd
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 5:24 PM
To: Jeanquart, Bobbi
Cc: Berge, John
Subject: FW: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Bobbi,

[REDACTED]

Thanks,

C. Todd Williamson, III
Office of Congressional Relations
U.S. Department of Agriculture
(202) 720-7095

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:33 PM

To: Harden, Krysta; Hannigan, Erin; Williamson, Todd
Subject: RE: Georgia Rural Development State Director

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:18 AM
To: Berge, John; Hannigan, Erin
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

[REDACTED]

From: Berge, John
To: Hannigan, Erin; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 11:16:42 2010
Subject: RE: Georgia Rural Development State Director

[REDACTED]

From: Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 9:23 PM
To: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Subject: Fw: Georgia Rural Development State Director

More from Fitz.

From: Elder, Fitzhugh (Appropriations)
To: Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 21:21:10 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director
Erin,

Can you tell me if USDA, under Secretary Vilsack, has accepted any other resignations or has it terminated any other RD State Director or FSA SED for similar reasons? What are the terms of Ms. Sherrod's resignation? Has USDA identified the producer she discriminated against? Are they offering any assistance to that individual? What is USDA's policy when discrimination has occurred? Has this been referred to the DoJ? Will it be? Will USDA provide any training to the federal employees in Georgia to make sure they understand the law and their responsibilities?

Fitz Elder
[REDACTED] direct

From: Hannigan, Erin <Erin.Hannigan@osec.usda.gov>
To: Elder, Fitzhugh (Appropriations)
Sent: Mon Jul 19 19:41:21 2010
Subject: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Fitz,

Secretary Vilsack has issued the following statement with regards to Shirley Sherrod, the State Director of Rural Development in Georgia:

"Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously."

**Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095**

Berge, John

From: Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:30 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Justin, DeJong; Chan, Stephanie; Purchia, Liz
Cc: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Subject: Shirley Sherrod summary clips packet
Attachments: 7.20.10_ShirleySherrodclips.doc; image001.jpg

Please see below and attached. I will update in the morning. Thank you.



USDA Clips

Tuesday, July 20, 2010

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Rural Development clips

USDA worker pressured to resign over race comments (AP 7/20)

The Obama administration is standing by its quick decision to oust a black Agriculture Department employee over racially tinged remarks at an NAACP banquet in Georgia, despite evidence that her remarks were misconstrued and growing calls for USDA to reconsider.

Shirley Sherrod, who until Tuesday was the Agriculture Department's director of rural development in Georgia, says the administration caved to political pressure by pushing her to resign for saying that she didn't give a white farmer as much help as she could have 24 years ago, when she worked for a nonprofit group. Sherrod says her remarks, delivered in March at a local NAACP banquet in Georgia, were part of a story about racial reconciliation, not racism. The white farming family that was the subject of the story stood by Sherrod and said she should keep her job. [Link](#)

USDA worker resigns over racism charge from video (AP 7/20)

A black employee who resigned from the Agriculture Department over comments at a Georgia NAACP meeting said Tuesday the White House forced her out of her job over a manufactured racial controversy. Shirley Sherrod, who until Tuesday was USDA's director of rural development in Georgia, said she was on the road Monday when USDA deputy undersecretary Cheryl Cook called her and told her the White House wanted her to resign. "They called me twice," Sherrod told The Associated Press in an interview. "The last time they asked me to pull over the side of the road and submit my resignation on my Blackberry, and that's what I did." A USDA spokesman would not comment on whether the White House was involved, but Secretary Tom Vilsack issued a statement saying the agency has no tolerance for discrimination. [Link](#)

USDA worker quits over racism charge from video (AP 7/20)

A black federal worker has resigned from a Georgia agricultural job after a video clip showed her saying she had not helped a farmer as much as she could have because he was white. U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a statement Tuesday he had accepted the resignation of Shirley Sherrod. Vilsack says the USDA has no tolerance for discrimination. Sherrod told the Atlanta-Journal Constitution she was forced out of her job as the USDA's rural development director for Georgia. She said the two-minute, 38-second

video posted online Monday misconstrued her message. Sherrod's taped remarks were from a local meeting of the civil rights group NAACP. National NAACP President Benjamin Todd Jealous welcomed the resignation because the group opposes racism of all kinds. [Link](#)

Dismissed employee blames media (UPI 7/20)

An employee of the U.S. Department of Agriculture says she lost her job because the media misconstrued a speech she gave at an NAACP banquet. Shirley Sherrod, who was forced out as the USDA's rural development director for Georgia, is seen on a video admitting she didn't do everything she could to help a white farmer who needed aid, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported Tuesday. What the media didn't report, Sherrod says, was that the incident she was relating on the video happened 24 years ago when she was working for another organization, not the federal government. Also left out, Sherrod says, is the part where she says she was trying to figure out how to help someone who was condescending. [Link](#)

Ex-USDA official insists she was told White House wanted her to quit (CNN 7/20)

While officials say the White House didn't ask for Shirley Sherrod's resignation, the former black Agriculture Department employee insisted Tuesday that the push for her to step down came from the Obama administration. But Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack said he asked her to resign without interacting with the White House. "When I saw the statements and the context of the statements, I determined that it would make it difficult for her to do her job as a rural development director, and compromise our capacity to close the chapter on civil rights cases, I didn't want anything to jeopardize her job in terms of getting the job done and getting people to work in Georgia," Vilsack said. [Link](#)

Former USDA employee says White House pressured her to resign (CNN 7/20)

A black former Agriculture Department employee, who resigned after a video clip surfaced of her discussing a white farmer, insisted Tuesday she "went all out" to help the man keep his farm and said she resigned under pressure from the Obama administration. Shirley Sherrod, who resigned Monday as the department's director of rural development for Georgia, told CNN she had four calls telling her the White House wanted her to resign. "They asked me to resign, and in fact they harassed me as I was driving back to the state office from West Point, Georgia, yesterday," she said. The last call "asked me to pull to the side of the road and do it [resign]," she said. [Link](#)

Ex-worker: USDA 'wasn't interested in hearing the truth' (CNN 7/20)

A former USDA employee who resigned after a video surfaced of her talking about a white farmer told CNN on Tuesday that the administration "wasn't interested in hearing the truth." Shirley Sherrod, who resigned Monday as the department's state director of rural development for Georgia, told CNN she had four calls telling her the White House wanted her to resign. She said she was driving at the time, and the last call asked her to pull to the side of the road and offer her resignation. Sherrod's resignation came after media outlets aired the video, in which she tells an audience she did not give the white farmer "the full force of what I could do" to help him avoid foreclosure. [Link](#)

USDA employee says statements on white farmer misconstrued (CNN 7/20)

A black Agriculture Department employee who resigned after a video clip showed her talking about a white farmer said Tuesday her remarks were taken out of context. Shirley Sherrod, the department's former state director of rural development for Georgia, told CNN on Tuesday the incident she discusses in the clip took place more than two decades ago -- and she recounted it to an audience to make the point that people should move beyond race. "I was speaking to that group, like I've done many groups, and I tell them about a time when I thought the issue was race and race only," Sherrod told CNN's "American Morning" from her home in Albany, Georgia. The incident took place in 1986, while she worked for a nonprofit and before she worked for the USDA, she said. "I was telling the story of how working with him helped me to see the issue is not about race. It's about those who have versus those who do not have." [Link](#)

NAACP: We were 'snookered' by Sherrod tape (CNN Blog 7/20)

The NAACP has retracted its earlier statement condemning statements made by a former Agriculture Department employee, saying it was "snookered by Fox News" and conservative website publisher Andrew Breitbart. "Having reviewed the full tape by Shirley Sherrod, who is the woman who was fired by the Department of Agriculture, and most importantly heard the testimony of the white farmers mentioned in this story, we now believe that the organization that edited the documents did so with the intention of

deceiving millions of Americans," the statement from NAACP President Benjamin Jealous says. The organization also urged Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack to reconsider Sherrod's resignation. [Link](#)

Race remarks cost USDA official her job (CNN Blog 7/20)

An African-American Agriculture Department worker resigns over her handling of a white Georgia farmer's case when she worked for a nonprofit group in 1986. It came to light when Shirley Sherrod talked about the case at an NAACP banquet earlier this year. Were her remarks a teaching moment that backfired, or evidence of racism? Sherrod says her comments were taken out of context – that the point of her story was to unite people. Tony Harris will be talking to Sherrod at 11:00am ET on CNN, and we'll post that interview here. Watch some of her speech and phone interview with CNN's American Morning below, then tell us what you think. We'll share some of your comments on air in the CNN Newsroom, 11:00am – 1:00pm ET. [Link](#)

Why Was Shirley Sherrod Fired? (Fox News – Glenn Beck 7/20)

Let me show you the comments from Shirley Sherrod, the USDA's director of rural development in Georgia. Back in March, while addressing the NAACP, she said this about helping a white farmer: (BEGIN VIDEO CLIP) SHIRLEY SHERROD, FORMER USDA OFFICIAL: I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough. So that when he, I assumed the Department of Agriculture had sent him to me, either that or the Georgia Department of Agriculture, and he needed to go back and report that I did try to help him. [Link](#)

Forcing Ga. Official to Resign Over YouTube Clip was the Right Call, Agriculture Chief Says (Fox News 7/20)

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack on Tuesday stood by his decision to demand the resignation of a Georgia official over a controversial YouTube clip, though the ex-official claimed afterward that the Obama administration never gave her a chance to tell her side of the story. Shirley Sherrod, the department's ex-Georgia director of Rural Development, said the White House forced her out after the video surfaced showing her telling a story about how she withheld help to a white farmer in trouble. But she claimed the video omitted key context and that the administration just got scared. "They were not interested in hearing the truth. No one wanted to hear the truth," she said in a television interview Tuesday morning. [Link](#)

Ex-Ag Official Says Video Showing 'White Farmer' Story Excludes Key Context (Fox News 7/20)

The Department of Agriculture official who resigned Monday night over comments she made at an NAACP dinner in March is claiming that the video clip that caused the firestorm excluded critical context. Shirley Sherrod said the Obama administration got scared after the YouTube clip surfaced. In the video, the department's ex-Georgia director of Rural Development is shown telling the story about how she withheld help to a white farmer in trouble. But Sherrod, in an interview overnight with The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, said she was telling a story about events that happened 24 years when she was working for a local non-profit group. [Link](#)

Video Shows USDA Official Saying She Didn't Give 'Full Force' of Help to White Farmer (FOX News 7/20)

Days after the NAACP clashed with Tea Party members over allegations of racism, a video has surfaced showing an Agriculture Department official regaling an NAACP audience with a story about how she withheld help to a white farmer facing bankruptcy -- video that now has forced the official to resign. Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, is shown in the clip describing "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." Sherrod, who is black, claimed the farmer took a long time trying to show he was "superior" to her. The audience laughed as she described how she determined his fate... "There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person," Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a written statement. "We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously. [Link](#)

Gingrich Responds to Discrimination at USDA (Fox News 7/20)

SEAN HANNITY, HOST: And this is a Fox News alert. An Obama administration official resigned just a short time ago after she was caught on tape appearing to tell an audience that she had used her position to racially discriminate against white farmers. Now the woman, Shirley Sherrod, was the Georgia state director at the Department of Agricultural. Now the president's Agricultural Secretary Tom Vilsack just released a statement saying the USDA has a zero tolerance policy against discrimination. Here's part of the shocking video that ignited this controversy. (BEGIN VIDEO CLIP) SHIRLEY SHERROD, FORMER USDA GA STATE DIRECTOR: The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking but he was trying to show me he was superior to me. I know what he was doing. But he had come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him. [Request Story](#)

Black USDA official resigns after admitting she only 'did enough' for white farmer (MSNBC 7/20)

A black USDA official in Georgia has resigned after publicly admitting she didn't help a white man trying to save his farm to the "full force" of her power and instead referred him to "one of his own." Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said he had accepted Shirley Sherrod's resignation, saying there was "zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA." The NAACP, which recently condemned racism in tea party groups, also issued a statement Monday night saying: "Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race." [Link](#)

Morning Joe (MSNBC 7/20)

Well, another story of reverse discrimination comes out today. This one is really interesting. I'm thinking that this woman regrets this comment. a USDA official in Georgia has resigned after I YouTube clip shows her admitting that race helped determine how much aid would be given to a white farmer. You're not supposed to do that, are you? I mean, I'm not --it's probably not a good idea. for being so stupid. It's not even -- well, how about you just don't do it. Anyway, the state's director of rural development apparently made the comments during an NAACP banquet in March. Take a listen. The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking, but he was trying to show me he was superior to me. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time to show me he was superior to me was i was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him. I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So, I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. [Request Story](#)

Shirley Sherrod: White House Forced My Resignation (CBS 7/20)

The Department of Agriculture employee who resigned after a controversy erupted over recent remarks she made is now saying that the White House forced her resignation. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, however, is taking responsibility for the resignation, and the White House reportedly says it had no part in his decision. Shirley Sherrod, the USDA's former director of rural development in Georgia, said USDA deputy undersecretary Cheryl Cook called her Monday and said the White House wanted her to resign, the Associated Press reports. "They called me twice," Sherrod told the AP, noting that she was driving when she received the calls. "The last time they asked me to pull over the side of the road and submit my resignation on my Blackberry, and that's what I did." [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Resigns Over USDA Race Remark Furor (CBS News 7/20)

A high-ranking black employee of the U.S. Department of Agriculture has resigned after remarks she made about race were distributed by conservative web sites and aired on Fox News. A video clip of Shirley Sherrod, the USDA's Georgia State Director of Rural Development, was circulated by conservative blogger Andrew Breitbart and his site, biggovernment.com, in which Sherrod talked of withholding help to a white man facing the loss of his family farm. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack released a statement Tuesday saying he had accepted Sherrod's resignation, and added that the department has no tolerance for discrimination. [Link](#)

USDA worker quits over 1986 racial incident (The Washington Post 7/20)

A U.S. Agriculture Department official from Georgia resigned late Monday after she was caught on tape admitting that she had not helped a farmer as much as she could have because he was white. Shirley Sherrod, USDA state director of rural development, made the remarks on March 27 at an NAACP Freedom Fund banquet. Her videotaped remarks surfaced on YouTube on Monday. Agriculture Secretary Tom

Vilsack accepted Sherrod's resignation, saying, "There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously." NAACP President and Benjamin Jealous called Sherrod's actions shameful and agreed with the decision to fire her. [Link](#)

White House official: We didn't push for Sherrod's firing (Washington Post 7/20)

A White House official insists that the White House didn't pressure Shirley Sherrod to resign, or pressure USDA chief Tom Vilsack to fire her, over the Andrew Breitbart video allegedly showing her claiming she didn't help a white farmer 24 years ago because of racial reasons. "We did not pressure USDA or Ms. Sherrod," the White House official emails me. Ben Smith was told something similar. Separately, Vilsack, who fired Sherrod while declaring zero tolerance for "discrimination," released a statement that seemed to take ownership of the firing, without quite clarifying whether the White House had any role: Yesterday, I asked for and accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation for two reasons. First, for the past 18 months, we have been working to turn the page on the sordid civil rights record at USDA and this controversy could make it more difficult to move forward on correcting injustices. [Link](#)

Did White House fire woman on strength of bogus Breitbart video? (Washington Post 7/20)

By now you've heard about the story burning up the right: A U.S. Agriculture Department official says the USDA forced her to resign because Andrew Breitbart posted a video of her supposedly describing how she didn't help a white farmer 24 years ago because of racial reasons. The woman has now said the video is bogus and that she said nothing of the kind, and she's hinted that the White House urged her firing. So the question is this: Did the White House have this woman fired before the facts were known, all in response to what may prove to be a Breitbart-manufactured racial controversy? If so, this would illustrate an appalling White House willingness to "jump" when Breitbart says "how high," as Digby put it in a scorching post today. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod: Racist or scapegoat? (Washington Post 7/20)

Were the administration and the NAACP too hasty in their reactions to Shirley Sherrod, the Department of Agriculture employee who resigned (i.e., was fired) for allegedly racist comments? A video clip posted online Monday shows Sherrod delivering a speech at a March NAACP banquet, where she talks about her failure to help a white farmer who was in danger of losing his farm. Her suggestion: If he'd been black, she would have moved heaven and earth to help him. "There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, in accepting Sherrod's resignation. The NAACP, which last week accused the Tea Party of racism, rushed out a searing condemnation of Sherrod: "We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers," said NAACP president Benjamin Jealous. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod: Sacrificial lamb on the altar of race (Washington Post Blog 7/20)

As teachable moments in the minefield of race in America go, the case of Shirley Sherrod is a big one. When I first saw the video clip this morning, I was astonished. There was a black agriculture department official, Sherrod, boasting about how she used her federal position to deny help to a white farmer. Oh yeah. She needed to go. Or so I thought. As the day wore on and the truth was revealed, my heart sank. The videotape that caused a firestorm had been selectively edited. Sherrod was relating a story of redemption from 1986 when she worked for a non-profit in Georgia. Sure, she didn't want to help the white man before her too much because he displayed what she called a superior attitude towards her. But Sherrod went on to talk about how she spent the next two years trying to help the man save his farm. Sherrod said she learned from that experience. That it wasn't so much about black and white as it was about helping the poor. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod: Racist or scapegoat? (Washington Post Blog 7/20)

Were the administration and the NAACP too hasty in their reactions to Shirley Sherrod, the Department of Agriculture employee who resigned (i.e., was fired) for allegedly racist comments? A video clip posted online Monday shows Sherrod delivering a speech at a March NAACP banquet, where she talks about her failure to help a white farmer who was in danger of losing his farm. Her suggestion: If he'd been black, she would have moved heaven and earth to help him. "There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person," said Agriculture Secretary Tom

Vilsack, in accepting Sherrod's resignation. The NAACP, which last week accused the Tea Party of racism, rushed out a searing condemnation of Sherrod: "We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers," said NAACP president Benjamin Jealous. [Link](#)

An Ag official's bum racism rap (Chicago Tribune Blog 7/20)

Did Shirley Sherrod get a bum rap? The USDA's rural development director lost her job after a video turned up in which she appears to confess to having discriminated years ago against a white farmer who came to her for help. In the clip from a speech she made in March at a local NAACP banquet, Sherrod, who is black, appears to tell the crowd she didn't do everything she could to help a white farmer whom she said was condescending when he came to her for aid – at least not at first. "What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was, I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," Sherrod said in the video, recorded March 27 in Douglas in southeast Georgia. The trouble is that the clip does not show what the late, great Paul Harvey used to call "the rest of the story." [Link](#)

USDA Official Resigns in Racial Flap (TIME 7/20)

A U.S. Department of Agriculture official who is African American has resigned after a tape of discriminatory comments she made at an NAACP event was posted to the web. Shirley Sherrod, who had been Georgia's state director of rural development told CNN the video, first shown by conservative web publisher Andrew Breitbart, was taken out of context. In the clip, Sherrod describes how in 1986 she didn't offer her "full force" of help to a white farmer. Sherrod told CNN that at the time of the incident, she was not working for the USDA, but for a nonprofit organization and that she had been trying to help the farmer who had been foreclosed on. "I was telling the story of how working with him helped me to see the issue is not about race," she said "It's about those who have versus those who do not have." [Link](#)

Ex-USDA Official's Tale Just Another Racial Landmine Example (NPR 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod is getting her 15 minutes of fame and what a 15 minutes it is. She, of course, is the black woman, a former U.S. Agriculture Department official forced to resign because of what sounded like an admission that, more than two decades ago, long before she at the USDA but still working in a farmer-assistance program, she didn't help a white farmer in danger of losing his farm to the fullest extent possible because of race. A video of Sherrod making the statement went into heavy rotation on conservative media outlets like Breitbart.com and Fox News. Sherrod has been called a racist; the Obama Administration has been accused of harboring same. [Link](#)

Couple says fired USDA official helped save their land; USDA won't rehire (Atlanta Journal Constitution 7/20)

Despite being defended by the white farmer she allegedly discriminated against, former U.S. Department of Agriculture official Shirley Sherrod will not get her job back. Sherrod "kept us out of bankruptcy," said Eloise Spooner, 82. She and her husband Roger Sooner, who own a farm in Iron City, located in southwest Georgia, approached Sherrod in 1986 -- when she worked with the Georgia field office for the Federation of Southern Cooperative/Land Assistance Fund -- seeking assistance. Sherrod, who is black, was asked to resign Monday night by USDA Deputy Under Secretary Cheryl Cook after videotaped comments she made in March at a local NAACP banquet surfaced on the web indicating that she did not work as hard as she could on behalf of white farmers. [Link](#)

Farmer's wife says fired USDA official helped save their land (Atlanta Journal Constitution 7/20)

The wife of the white farmer allegedly discriminated against by the USDA's rural development director for Georgia said Shirley Sherrod "kept us out of bankruptcy." Eloise Spooner, 82, awoke Tuesday to discover that Sherrod had lost her job after videotaped comments she made in March at a local NAACP banquet surfaced on the web. Sherrod, who is black, told the crowd she didn't do everything she could to help a white farmer whom she said was condescending when he came to her for aid. She said the video was selectively edited but regardless U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack was adamant that she resign. [Link](#)

Resigned USDA official says racial story misconstrued (Atlanta Journal Constitution 7/20)

The USDA's rural development director for Georgia says she was forced out of her federally appointed job after a "snippet" of a speech she gave in March appeared to show her admission to only half-heartedly aiding a struggling white farmer because of his race. But in a phone interview from her home in Albany early Tuesday morning, Shirley Sherrod told the Atlanta-Journal Constitution that the two-minute, 38-second video posted online Monday by biggovernment.com and reported on by FoxNews.com and the AJC completely misconstrued the message she was trying to convey. Sherrod, 62, insisted her statements in the video were not racist. "For Fox to take a spin on this like they have done, and know it's not the truth ... it's very upsetting," she said. [Link](#)

In the curious case of Shirley Sherrod, let's see the whole tape (Atlanta Journal Constitution Blog 7/20)

A couple of folks in comments yesterday brought up the case of USDA official Shirley Sherrod, a black woman caught on tape at an NAACP meeting here in Georgia apparently bragging about being less than diligent in helping a white farmer. The folks at Big Government posted a portion of her speech as part of the running feud between the NAACP and the Tea Party over which organization is more racist. By the end of the day Monday, Sherrod had been forced to resign her post, and NAACP President Ben Jealous had released a statement agreeing with the forced resignation: "Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race. [Link](#)

Sherrod blames NAACP for firing (Politico 7/20)

The Agriculture Department official who has resigned after a video surfaced showing her saying she withheld assistance from a white farmer insisted on Tuesday that she really lost her job over the tea party's clash with the NAACP. A video of Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of rural development, telling an NAACP audience that she didn't give a white farmer the "full force" of what she could provide, went viral Tuesday and prompted Sherrod to leave the department. The NAACP condemned Sherrod's comments in a statement, calling them "shameful." Asked about the NAACP's actions during an interview with CNN on Tuesday, Sherrod said the only reason the video surfaced was in response to an NAACP resolution accusing the tea party of using "racist" tactics. "They got into a fight with the tea party, and all of this came out as a result of that," Sherrod said. [Link](#)

NAACP: Breitbart 'snookered' us (Politico Blog 7/20)

NAACP President Ben Jealous on Tuesday said the organization had been "snookered" into condemning former Agriculture Department official Shirley Sherrod. Sherrod was fired Monday after a video — posted on one of Andrew Breitbart's conservative sites — showed Sherrod saying she had not given a white farmer her "full force." On Tuesday, the family of the Georgia farmer Sherrod was speaking of in the video came forward to defend her. Additionally, Sherrod took to CNN to defend herself and attack the NAACP for criticizing her without first calling her to confirm details. [Link](#)

Georgia family defends USDA official (Politico Blog 7/20)

The family involved in a 24-year-old incident that resulted in a Department of Agriculture official resigning Monday night is speaking out on her behalf. Shirley Sherrod stepped down from her post as Georgia director of rural development Monday night, two days after a video surfaced in which she explains to an audience at the NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet in March that she did not do everything she could have to help a struggling farmer because he was white. In the video, Sherrod describes the incident, that took place when she was working with the Georgia field office for the Federation of Southern Cooperative/Land Assistance Fund. [Link](#)

Fired Ag Department employee says Obama White House wanted her out (USA Today 7/20)

The Obama White House has been dragged into the controversy over an U.S. Agriculture Department employee fired for comments about a white farmer. Shirley Sherrod, a black woman who was the USDA's director of rural development in Georgia, told the Associated Press that a department official said the White House wanted her resignation. "They called me twice," Sherrod said, referring to the Ag Department. "The last time they asked me to pull over the side of the road and submit my resignation on my Blackberry, and that's what I did." Sherrod told CNN the White House was worried about more attacks from Fox conservative commentator Glenn Beck. [Link](#)

Former Agriculture Department Official Denies Racism; Secretary Vilsack Stands By Her Firing (ABC News Blog 7/20)

A former Department of Agriculture official said her termination was an unfair casualty of a larger political spat on race between the Tea Party movement and the NAACP, but Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack Tuesday afternoon stood by his decision to seek her termination based on a controversial anecdote she told earlier this year. On Monday morning, conservative blogger Andrew Breitbart posted a video of Shirley Sherrod, then the US Department of Agriculture's director of rural development for Georgia, along with an essay titled "Video Proof: The NAACP Awards Racism - 2010." [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Resigns USDA Job After Admitting Use Of Racial Preference During NAACP Banquet (VIDEO) (The Huffington Post 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod, who resigned Monday from the USDA. 756 Shirley Sherrod, a USDA official in Georgia, has resigned after publicly admitting that race played a factor in her decision to limit how much aid would be given to a white farmer. Sherrod, who is African American, made the comments during a local NAACP banquet on March 27, according to information displayed on the video. A clip of her speech first appeared Monday morning on BigGovernment.com and aired that evening on Fox News. Her resignation as the agency's state director of rural development was quickly accepted by U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. He cited a zero-tolerance policy and told CNN that he was working to "reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department." In her controversial speech, Sherrod discussed the first time she was "faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." She claimed that during the conversation, the man "was trying to show me he was superior to me." [Link](#)

Would Shirley Sherrod's Full NAACP Speech Give a Different Impression? (AOL News 7/20)

In the ongoing war over who is more racist -- the NAACP or the tea party -- the right has delivered a blow with revealing footage of a black USDA official, Shirley Sherrod, speaking at an NAACP conference and admitting to doing less than she could have to help a white farmer. On Monday, Sherrod resigned. But she also sought to clarify the record, and her version jibes with the fact that the footage released by the website Big Government was cut off at just about the point where it appeared Sherrod was beginning to disown her own prejudice. She was starting to say how class distinctions trumped racial ones, and that poor blacks and whites should feel solidarity. Just before the segment ends, Sherrod tells the audience: "That's when it was revealed to me that it's about poor, versus those who have. It's not so much about white ... it is about white and black. But it's not, you know, it opened my eyes." [Link](#)

Black USDA Official Resigns in Flap Over White Farmer (AOL News 7/20)

A black USDA official who was pressured to resign over comments she made about not helping a struggling white farmer as much as she could have says the agency didn't know the whole story and succumbed to political pressure. Shirley Sherrod resigned Monday as the USDA's rural development director for Georgia after a clip of the speech was posted online by conservative outlets, biggovernment.com and later FoxNews. [Link](#)

NAACP Slams Shirley Sherrod's Actions As 'Shameful' (My Fox New York 7/20)

The actions of a black U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) official who admitted withholding help to a white farmer facing bankruptcy were late Monday described as "shameful" by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, was exposed in a video recorded at an NAACP banquet describing "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." Sherrod claimed the farmer took a long time trying to show he was "superior" to her. "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land -- so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough," she said in the video. The Agriculture Department announced Monday, shortly after FOXNews.com published its initial report on the video, that Sherrod had resigned. [Link](#)

Ga. USDA Official Resigns Over Comments (My Fox Atlanta 7/19)

Racially charged comments have led to the abrupt resignation of an agriculture department official. Shirley Sherrod was the top official who oversaw rural development in the state of Georgia. According to FOX News, Sherrod, the director of the USDA's rural development agency, resigned over comments she made at an NAACP meeting. FOX News obtained taped comments from an NAACP meeting that took place in Douglas, Georgia in March. According to FOX News, Sherrod is seen talking about how she withheld help

to a white farmer who was facing bankruptcy. "I didn't give him the full force of what I could do, I did enough," Sherrod said during the meeting. In the video, Sherrod said she was struggling with the fact so many black people have lost their farmland and she was faced with having to help a white person save their land. Sherrod said she took him to see a white lawyer. "I figured if I took him to one of them his own kind, [they] would take care of him," said Sherrod. According to FOX News, the agriculture department announced Monday that Sherrod had resigned. [Link](#)

Georgia's Rural Development Director resigns (Fox 31 7/20)

A black USDA worker has resigned after a video of her making racist remarks has surfaced. US Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced Monday he has accepted the resignation of Georgia's Rural Development Director Shirley Sherrod, who lives in Albany. Here is a comment Sherrod made about helping a white farmer during her speech at the NAACP's 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet in March. "So many black people had lost their farm land and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough" says Sherrod. National NAACP President Benjamin Todd Jealous welcomed the resignation because the group opposes racism of all kinds. Sherrod is married to a prominent Civil Rights Activist in Albany. [Link](#)

USDA big quits in bias-boast shock (The New York Post 7/20)

A black official in the US Agriculture Department resigned yesterday after a video surfaced of her bragging to the NAACP that she didn't do everything she could to help a white farmer facing bankruptcy. Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, told the audience at a March banquet in Atlanta that she claimed the man felt "superior" to her, according to FoxNews.com. "He had come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was talking all that time, trying to show me he was superior to me, was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," Sherrod said. "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land -- so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do." "I did enough," she said. [Link](#)

White House forced me to resign over fabricated racial controversy (NY Daily News 7/20)

One strike and she was out. A black employee who resigned from the Agriculture Department on Monday said the White House forced her out after remarks that she says have sparked a fabricated racial controversy. Shirley Sherrod, the former Georgia director of Rural Development, said she received a phone call from the USDA's deputy undersecretary Cheryl Cook on Monday while she was in a car. Cook told her that the White House wanted her to call it quits. "They called me twice," Sherrod told the Associated Press. "The last time they asked me to pull over the side of the road and submit my resignation on my Blackberry, and that's what I did." [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod's Disappearing Act: Not So Fast (Washington Examiner 7/20)

My oh my, that happened quickly. Perhaps too quickly. Until yesterday, Shirley Sherrod was Georgia Director of Rural Development for the USDA. Earlier in the day at Big Government, Andrew Breitbart put up a video that exposed Ms. Sherrod as someone all too willing to discriminate based on race. Within hours of the video's release, USDA Director Tom Vilsack announced Sherrod's recognition, and in the process issued an exceptionally strong condemnation ("We are appalled by her actions ... Her actions were shameful ... she gave no indication she had attempted to right the wrong she had done to this man"). The NAACP, at whose Freedom Fund Banquet Sherrod spoke of her discriminatory posture, and at which the audience seemed to indicate approval of her outlook, followed a short time later, virtually echoing Vilsack. [Link](#)

BREAKING: Racist Obama administration member resigns (Manhattan Conservative Examiner 7/19)

Shirley Sherrod of the USDA's Georgia Rural Development office has resigned following the airing of overtly racist remarks she made in a speech before—of all organizations—the NAACP. At a local NAACP meeting in March of 2010, Sherrod boasted of withholding assistance to a farmer based on the color of his skin, which happened to be white. Sherrod (surprise!) is black. In her comments, which are captured in the video below, Sherrod freely admits to "struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land." She further confesses to abusing her position by refusing to "give him the full force of what I could do." The remarks

conclude with a racist gem: "I took him to a white lawyer... I figured that if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him." [Link](#)

USDA Official Implicated in NAACP Racism Flap (Buckeye Ag Network 7/20)

Days after the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) denounced the Conservative Tea Party movement on allegations of racism, the organization was itself implicated in charges of racism involving a USDA official. In a video released at BigGovernment.com, USDA's Director of Rural Development in Georgia Shirley Sherrod was depicted acknowledging discriminating against white farmers. The video, of a speech Sherrod gave to the NAACP's Freedom Fund banquet in March of this year, stirred quite a controversy on the internet this week, forcing Sherrod's resignation from the department Monday. Sherrod's remarks in the NAACP speech indicated that she "didn't give [a white farmer] the full force of what I could do," because "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land." [Link](#)

The rest of the story (Arkansas Times Blog 7/20)

The right-wing echo chamber has been beating the drums for a couple of days now about a supposedly racist (black) USDA worker, promptly sacked by Ag Secretary Tom Vilsack on the strength of Fox reporting of her supposedly offensive remarks. The rest of the story is instructive. Hardly what Fox News or the odious Andrew Breitbart reported. The full video apparently will back up her account, in the appropriate fuller context, of what she said and did TWENTY-FOUR YEARS AGO. It is Acorn Faux reporting redux. It occurs to me that Sen. Blanche Lincoln could score some courage points here. No breath being held. [Link](#)

Breitbart's Skilled Editing (The Atlantic Blog 7/20)

The quotes that former USDA worker Shirley Sherrod gave on the edited tapes disseminated by Andrew Breitbart are indeed indefensible, but is it not fair to provide some kind of context? To wit: Sherrod said the short video clip excluded the breadth of the story about how she eventually worked with the man over a two-year period to help ward off foreclosure of his farm, and how she eventually became friends with him and his wife. "And I went on to work with many more white farmers," she said. "The story helped me realize that race is not the issue, it's about the people who have and the people who don't. When I speak to groups, I try to speak about getting beyond the issue of race." [Link](#)

White House wants it both ways on Sherrod firing (Salon 7/20)

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack issued a statement today explaining that he asked for Georgia rural development director Shirley Sherrod's resignation yesterday because "the controversy surrounding her comments would create situations where her decisions, rightly or wrongly, would be called into question making it difficult for her to bring jobs to Georgia." As Alex Pareene explained, the controversy Vilsack is referring to was whipped up when Andrew Breitbart released an edited video clip of Sherrod, it was mindlessly picked up by other media, and the Obama administration followed suit. But now that Breitbart's story of Sherrod being a racist has been exposed as bogus, the White House is trying to have it both ways: They say they support Vilsack's decision but at the same time had absolutely nothing to do with his making it. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod, scalp for the right wing (Salon 7/20)

Sweaty conservative culture warrior and Internet publisher Andrew Breitbart won yet another scalp today when Shirley Sherrod, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's rural development director for Georgia, was forced to resign for the offense of appearing in an obviously edited video clip that was posted to one of Breitbart's websites. Sherrod was speaking to a Georgia chapter of the NAACP. In the speech, according to Breitbart's characterization, Sherrod is explaining how she refused to help a white farmer as much as she could have because she preferred to help black people. Breitbart: We are in possession of a video from in which Shirley Sherrod, USDA Georgia director of rural development, speaks at the NAACP Freedom Fund dinner in Georgia. In her meandering speech to what appears to be an all-black audience, this federally appointed executive bureaucrat lays out in stark detail that her federal duties are managed through the prism of race and class distinctions. [Link](#)

USDA worker quits over racism charge from video (Salon 7/20)

A black federal worker has resigned from a Georgia agricultural job after a video clip showed her saying she had not helped a farmer as much as she could have because he was white. U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a statement Tuesday he had accepted the resignation of Shirley Sherrod. Vilsack says

the USDA has no tolerance for discrimination. Sherrod told the Atlanta-Journal Constitution she was forced out of her job as the USDA's rural development director for Georgia. She said the two-minute, 38-second video posted online Monday misconstrued her message. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod: It just hurt (WALB 7/20)

An Albany woman who fought for civil rights says she's unfairly labeled a racist. 62-year-old Shirley Sherrod is in our nation's headlines, following her resignation as Rural Development Director for the USDA. She says she was forced to quit her job Monday after video of a speech to the NAACP became public. In the video, Sherrod talks about helping a white farmer back in the 80's. Shirley Sherrod should be at her office in Athens. Instead she's in her Albany living room under fire for what's been called racial comments, upset she was forced to pull over and resign late yesterday afternoon. "You know it just hurt," she said. This land has been owned by 87-year-old Roger Spooner of Iron City and his family for decades, in part thanks to the help Shirley Sherrod gave the Spooners in the 80's. [Link](#)

State-level USDA official resigned after accused of racism (Headliner Watch 7/20)

A state-level U.S. Department of Agriculture official resigned officially after she was accused of racism. She was found speaking of not providing enough help to a white in a video. Shirley Sherrod, the former Georgia director of Rural Development, southeast Georgia, said a white farmer was "struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land." "What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was, I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," Sherrod said she said she decided to hold back the assistance, and sent the white farmer to a "white attorney", because "if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him." But Sherrod on Tuesday claimed that the video was manipulated and blamed Fox News. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Leaves USDA Over Racism Charge (News One 7/20)

A black USDA official in Georgia has resigned after publicly admitting she didn't help a white man trying to save his farm to the "full force" of her power and instead referred him to "one of his own." Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said he had accepted Shirley Sherrod's resignation, saying there was "zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA." [Link](#)

Reinstate Shirley Sherrod (Daily Kos 7/20)

This had better be a trial balloon: Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack this afternoon took responsibility for firing an official, Shirley Sherrod, whose appearance on video recalling her behavior toward a white farmer drew charges of racism, and whose immediate firing drew suggestions that the administration had over-reacted to an edited video clip. A White House official told me just now that the White House backs Vilsack's decision -- but that it was Vilsack's alone. The official said the White House -- contrary to the Sherrod's charge -- did not pressure the Department to fire her. Unfortunately, Greg Sargent is hearing similar things. Sorry, but simultaneously saying it wasn't our call' and 'we support the decision' just won't cut it. Firing Shirley Sherrod was a bad decision, motivated by the wrong reasons, and it should be reversed. She should be reinstated, and it's not a close call. [Link](#)

Point of Clarification (TPM Muckraker 7/20)

There's been some confusion today over one aspect of this Breitbart/USDA story that I want to try to clear up. Shirley Sherrod, the USDA official forced out, did an on camera interview with CNN at midday. In the interview, Sherrod described the pressure she came under yesterday from within the USDA to resign her post in light of the Breitbart video. Shortly after that, the Washington Post had a write-up of the interview in which they quote Sherrod as saying, "I got three calls from the White House. At one point they asked me to pull over to the side of the road and do it because you are going to be on Glenn Beck tonight." Now that purported declaration -- that she got three calls from the White House demanding her resignation -- seems off to anyone who follows these things. Sherrod is a low-level official. [Link](#)

Brietbart Speaks (Talking Points Memo 7/20)

Andrew Breitbart, who published the video clip of Shirley Sherrod's speech that led to her forced resignation, tells TPM he doesn't have the entire video either and that the clip came to him from a source already edited. But he's seen enough: "I think the video speaks for itself. The way she's talking about white people ... is conveying a present tense racism in my opinion. But racism is in the eye of the beholder." [Link](#)

NAACP Now 'Conducting Investigation' Into Sherrod Video (Talking Points Memo Muckraker 7/20)

The NAACP, which originally condemned USDA appointee Shirley Sherrod, is now saying it is conducting an investigation of her story and will issue a new statement. "The NAACP is conducting an investigation into the recent revelations about the situation with Ms. Shirley Sherrod, including attempting to speak with Ms. Sherrod, the farmer in question and viewing the full video," the NAACP said in a statement to CNN. "Following a full and comprehensive process, we will issue an updated statement." Sherrod was forced to resign her position as the Georgia director of rural development for the USDA after Big Government posted a video clip of her telling a local NAACP chapter that she had once, before her time at the USDA, not helped a farmer as much as she could have because he was white. [Link](#)

Breitbart On Sherrod's NAACP Speech: 'I Did Not Edit This Thing' (Talking Points memo Muckraker 7/20)

The crux of the Shirley Sherrod controversy is what she said outside of the two-minute video clip posted by Big Government -- whether she was, as she claims, telling a story about how she overcame racial prejudice while helping poor farmers in Georgia, or whether the clip is a good encapsulation of her views. So we asked Andrew Breitbart, the founder of Big Government, why he hasn't posted the full video. "I don't have it," Breitbart told TPMmuckraker in an interview. Breitbart said his source sent him just the edited clips at first, but is in the process of sending the full video. Breitbart said he'll post the full video, if he can get permission from the video production company who filmed it for a local NAACP chapter. He also maintained that he didn't edit the clip and that it was sent to him already edited. [Link](#)

USDA Appointee Forced To Resign After Edited Speech Released By Breitbart (VIDEO) (Talking Points Memo Muckraker 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod, an appointee to the USDA, was forced to resign yesterday after *Big Government* posted a video of a speech Sherrod gave in March. In the video, Sherrod, who is black, recounts how, 24 years ago, she didn't help a white farmer as much as she could. In the speech, given to a local Georgia chapter of the NAACP, Sherrod recounts a time when, while she was working for a land assistance fund, a white farmer came and asked her for help. "What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was, I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," she said. "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough." [Link](#)

An Alleged Racist Stance From 1980s Catches Up With USDA Official (Politics Daily 7/20)

A mid-level Agriculture Department official says she was forced to resign over an allegedly racist stance she took 24 years ago before she worked for the federal government. Shirley Sherrod, USDA Georgia state director for rural development, got in trouble over a video clip, aired by a conservative website, from a speech she made on March 27 to the NAACP Freedom Forum, according to The Washington Post. In it, Sherrod, who is African-American can be heard recounting her meeting with a struggling white farmer who came to her for help in 1986. "Here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So, I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough so that when he (went to state or federal officials) he needed to go back and report that I did try to help him." That's what the video clip showed. But Sherrod told CNN on Tuesday there was more to the story. In her March speech, she said she described the decades-old incident with the white farmer because she has since come to realize her mistake. "Working with him helped me realize the issue is not about race, it's about those who have and those who have not," she told the network in a telephone interview. She said she subsequently helped the farmer find a lawyer -- a white lawyer -- to deal with a bankruptcy proceeding, and later struck up a friendship with him and his wife. [Link](#)

NAACP 'appalled' by black USDA official's racial discrimination (Daily Caller 7/20)

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People President Benjamin Todd Jealous said late Monday he was "appalled" by the actions of U.S. Department of Agriculture official Shirley Sherrod, who resigned earlier in the day after video surfaced of her speaking at an NAACP event about discriminating against a white farmer seeking government help. Jealous also promised to look into why members of the audience at an NAACP fundraiser in Georgia this past March reacted, as shown in the video, by nodding and in some cases laughing at Sherrod's remarks. But Jealous distanced the national NAACP from the

incident. Coming just days after the NAACP condemned racist elements inside the Tea Party movement, Sherrod's remarks place the storied civil rights organization in an uncomfortable position. "Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race," Jealous said. "We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers." "Her actions were shameful. While she went on to explain in the story that she ultimately realized her mistake, as well as the common predicament of working people of all races, she gave no indication she had attempted to right the wrong she had done to this man," Jealous said (read his full statement below). [Link](#)

Former USDA Employee Accused Of Racism: "I Did Not Discriminate" [Video] (IndyPosted 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod quickly lost her job with the U.S. Department of Agriculture after a 2 minute, 38 second video clip surfaced that included a description of racism during a speech. But Sherrod's defending herself, saying the video clip is just that, a clip that was taken out of context, and does not show her entire speech, which was more of a story about racial reconciliation. In the clip, Sherrod can be seen describing herself not doing as much as she could have to help a white farmer avoid foreclosure. She said the farmer acted "superior" to her, so she "did enough" for him, steering him to "one of his own kind" for help, apparently a white lawyer. Sherrod doesn't deny those comments, but told CNN she did not discriminate against the farmer. She said her comments describing the experience with the farmer were taken out of context, and represent only part of the whole story. She says she in fact helped the man, and became good friends with his family. Sherrod adds that the experience she was speaking of happened 24 years ago when she worked at a nonprofit, long before she joined the USDA, and noted she was telling the story to make a point about how everyone should make a greater effort to reach out across racial boundaries. [Link](#)

Department of Agriculture Employee Shirley Sherrod Resigns Amid Racial Controversy (Associated Content 7/20)

There are a lot of high-profile people who make controversial statements relating to possible racism, and the statements usually come with controversy. Shirley Sherrod, who was an employee of the Department of Agriculture, is just the latest high-profile person to make a controversial statement regarding racism which has led to her resignation. According to the Washington Post, Department of Agriculture employee Shirley Sherrod has resigned due to pressure from the Obama administration over controversial comments she made at an NAACP banquet. The NAACP banquet happened in March, and she talked about how, back in 1986, she did not help a white farmer as much as she could have due to his race. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Resigns (Associated Content 7/20)

Was She Treated Unfairly? Shirley Sherrod, the USDA official who was caught on tape recounting an incident in which she discriminated against a white farmer seeking government help, was obliged to resign from her position because of her remarks. In the meantime, the NAACP, which so recently condemned "racist elements" in the Tea Party, was obliged to condemn the remarks, made before a meeting of NAACP members, who cheered some of the most egregious parts of the story. Having condemned the mote in the eye of the Tea Party, the NAACP was forced to deal with the beam in its own eye. Some are already suggesting that both the Obama administration, which had obliged Shirley Sherrod to resign, and the NAACP, which condemned her remarks, may have acted in haste. Eva Rodriguez of the Washington Post is among those who think that Sherrod was railroaded: [Link](#)

Get ready for another phony race story on FOX News (Milwaukee Journal Sentinel 7/20)

I'm sure the folks at FOX News will do as much with the resignation of Shirley Sherrod as they did with the fake outrage over the New Black Panther Party. Sherrod, who worked for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, was forced to resign after being accused of discriminating against a white farmer. A video of a talk she gave to black farmers that went viral on right-wing blogs seemed to suggest she admitted not helping the white farmer as much as she could have. But it turns out, the farmer's wife told CNN Sherrod did help her husband and did the best she could to help save their farm. Sherrod thinks she was forced to resign because of the recent political backlash over an NAACP statement condemning racism in the Tea Party Movement. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod update: Shirley Sherrod, former USDA worker, says White House pressured her to resign (videos) (Health and Beauty News 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod, the former USDA Director of Rural Development for the state of Georgia, and black woman, resigned from her position after a video showing her making racist comments was posted online. Though she resigned, Sherrod now says that she received multiple phone calls saying that the White House wanted her to resign her post. Speaking with CNN news, Shirley Sherrod said, "They asked me to resign, and in fact they harassed me as I was driving back to the state office from West Point, Georgia, yesterday. The last call "asked me to pull to the side of the road and do it [resign]." "I don't feel good about it, because I know I didn't do anything wrong. During my time at USDA, I gave it all I had." [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod update: Shirley Sherrod resigns from USDA after racist statements at NAACP Banquet (Health and Beauty News 7/20)

Racism is a two way street and after the NAACP has accused the Tea Party of harboring racists and racist views, allegations have fired back. Shirley Sherrod resigned from her post at the USDA after making racist statements during an NAACP banquet. The website Big Government exposed the story and showed video from the NAACP 20th Annual Banquet. You may view the video in the player embedded below. In the video, taken from March 27, 2010, Shirley Sherrod reveals that she let race play a factor when assisting a white farm owner who was losing his land. Shirley Sherrod explains in the video that the man was trying to show he was 'superior' to her and in return, she did not give the full force of what she could do. She also pointed him in the direction of a 'white' lawyer- one of his own kind, she said. [Link](#)

Fox smears Sherrod as racist, Sherrod cancels Fox interview (Media Matters 7/20)

Late in her program today, Megyn Kelly announced that her interview with former USDA official Shirley Sherrod -- which Kelly had touted throughout the show -- was off. Kelly said that Sherrod had "changed her mind," even after Fox had "offered her a considerable amount of time" to "clear the air" and "tell her story." Boy, I wonder why that happened? Maybe it had something to do with Fox's initial coverage of "her story," in which numerous Fox figures responded to Andrew Breitbart's heavily-edited clip of Sherrod's speech by claiming it was evidence that Sherrod was a racist. FoxNews.com's first report on Sherrod reported her statements made in the clip, but gave no indication that it might have been taken out of context. It reported that Fox was "seeking a response from both the NAACP and the USDA," but not that they had attempted to find the full version of the tape or contact Sherrod herself. [Link](#)

Breitbart's Sherrod narrative unravels (Media Matters 7/20)

Based on what appears to be selectively edited footage, Andrew Breitbart falsely suggested that Shirley Sherrod said that, in her former position with the USDA, she had discriminated against a white farmer. In fact, Sherrod's statements in the video corroborate her statement that the story she was discussing is 24 years old. Moreover, Sherrod says that the video took her remarks out of context to omit that she was actually telling story about her work to get "beyond the issue of race." [Link](#)

Confirmed: Breitbart called Sherrod a racist without having the full tape (Media Matters 7/20)

This afternoon in a Hot Air blog post, Ed Morrissey wrote: [Former USDA official Shirley] Sherrod and others can complain about Fox News and the editing of the tape, but two points should be remembered. First, Andrew Breitbart made it clear to me last night that this was the entirety of the speech he had in his possession. He also wants to find the whole speech and is trying to get it. Are you kidding me? In his post yesterday -- headlined "Video Proof: The NAACP Awards Racism - 2010" -- Breitbart claimed to have "video evidence of racism" on Sherrod's part. He said it showed her describing "how she racially discriminates against a white farmer," and referred to it as her "racist tale." The piece was illustrated with a literal "race card." According to Breitbart: In the first video, Sherrod describes how she racially discriminates against a white farmer. She describes how she is torn over how much she will choose to help him. And, she admits that she doesn't do everything she can for him, because he is white. Eventually, her basic humanity informs that this white man is poor and needs help. But she decides that he should get help from "one of his own kind". She refers him to a white lawyer. [Link](#)

The racism case of Shirley Sherrod - Complete video (allvoices 7/20)

Recently, NAACP clashed with Tea Party members over allegations of racism and racist remarks of the U.S. official Shirley Sherrod. Now, a full video tape has hit the internet in which the Agriculture Department official Shirley Sherrod entertains an NAACP audience with an awful story about how she withdrew her help to a white farmer facing bankruptcy. The video of Shirley Sherrod released on the web forced her to resign from her official post of the department's Georgia Director of Rural Development by the end of Monday. In the video clip, Shirley Sherrod elaborates the whole saga of abusing her power. The

black woman Shirley Sherrod claimed that white farmer was showing his superiority over her and later on, she detailed about how she decided his destiny. The act of Shirley Sherrod has been considered as discrimination and has been strongly condemned by the U.S government. Shirley Sherrod took unfair advantage of her position and mistreated a white farmer because of his race, and therefore, don't deserve the post, said NAACP President Ben Jealous. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod: 'They Made Me Quit Because I was Going to be on Glenn Beck' (Big Government 7/20)

The video showed Ms Sherrod, USDA Georgia Director of Rural Development, speaking at an NAACP Freedom Fund dinner in Georgia. Ms Sherrod, who is a federally appointed bureaucrat lays out in shockingly lays out that how race played a part in executing her duties. Sherrod was forced to resign almost immediately after the video was posted. Incredibly, it seems however that her firing was less about what she said in the speech, and more about the story being broadcast on Fox News. In interviews today, Ms Sherrod describes what was behind her speech and how, after the video cuts off, she explains that moment was a turning point in her life where she learned to beyond race. [Link](#)

USDA official resigns over racial comments (Government Executive 7/20)

An Agriculture Department official resigned on Monday over controversial racial remarks she made at a March NAACP banquet, according to various news reports. USDA Georgia State Director of Rural Development Shirley Sherrod told CNN Tuesday that the Obama administration forced her to resign after she described during the March NAACP speech a 1986 encounter with a white farmer in Georgia, whom she said she did not help as much as she could have because of his race. Sherrod, who is African American, was the state's director for the Federation of Southern Cooperatives Land Assistance Fund at the time. Historically, the organization's mission is to provide aid to black farmers. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod: Talks Too Loud (WagerRun 7/20)

As an over all rule, people with positions of power are expected to act and speak with political correctness all the time. However, where one man's idea of being PC ends, another begins. Not always to the good folks with powerful hands agree on what is acceptable. For Shirley Sherrod, she spoke what she thought and has now resigned from her position with the USDA. The reports are that she resigned but the basic information appears that she was really fired. The USDA's only statement is regarding their no-tolerance policy when it comes to racism. The NAACP indicates that the problem was the fact that two farmers of different races were compared with a negative reflection on the black farmer. Shirley Sherrod simply stated that in the present economy, farmers are hurting and that white farmers get less help than black farmers do. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Says 'Racial' Comments Were Misinterpreted (HULIQ 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod is the former Georgia director of Rural Development at the USDA. She was forced to resign on Monday after publicly admitting she didn't help a white man some 24 years ago with the "full force" she had available, but was the punishment fit for the crime? Shirley Sherrod, 62, in an interview with CNN, said the incident, and the comment, have been misconstrued. She made the initial remarks to the NAACP. To CNN, she said: "I was speaking to that group, like I've done many groups, and I tell them about a time when I thought the issue was race and race only. I was telling the story of how working with him helped me to see the issue is not about race. It's about those who have versus those who do not have." [Link](#)

Justice Not Only Obama Department Not Equally Enforcing Law (Heritage Foundation Blog 7/20)

This morning we reviewed the still unfolding New Black Panther Party scandal at the Department of Justice where a whistle blower, testifying under oath, quoted Deputy Assistant Attorney General Julie Fernandes as saying that "the Voting Section will never or will not, at least while she is there, bring any more cases against blacks or other national minorities." In other words, Fernandes has reportedly admitted that the Obama Justice Department is not enforcing the nation's civil rights law equally and in a race-neutral manner. The Obama Justice Department has refused to confirm or deny that Fernandes made this statement. Now Andrew Breitbart has unearthed a very similar statement from another Obama political appointee, this time from the Department of Agriculture. In the video, U.S. Department of Agriculture Director of Rural Development for Georgia Shirley Sherrod tells an NAACP audience . . . First Justice. Now Agriculture. How many other Obama Department's are refusing to enforce our nation's laws equally? [Link](#)

USDA Worker Resigns Over Racism Charge (CBN 7/20)

Accusations of racism have cost federal employee Shirley Sherrod her job at the U.S. Agriculture Department. The charges stem from remarks she made 24 years ago at a meeting for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. She talked about purposely not doing enough to help a white farmer in Georgia. "The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm he took a long time talking, but he was trying to show me he was superior to me. I know what he was doing, but he had come to me for help," she said at that meeting. "But what he didn't know was that while he was talking, all that time trying to show me that he was superior to me, I was trying to decide how much help I was going to give him," she continued. [Link](#)

NAACP meeting calmly listened to racist remarks from black fed official (American Thinker 7/20)

Andrew Breitbart has scored another bullseye, revealing hypocrisy of the highest order on the part of another leftist establishment organization, the NAACP. On March 27 of this year, speaking before an NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet, Shirley Sherrod, the Department of Agriculture director for the State of Georgia -- responsible for over a billion dollars a year in spending -- boasts of denying a white farmer her full efforts because of his race. The audience does not react with shock or disapproval, but rather just sits there. So much for NAACP President Ben Jealous denouncing the tea parties for tolerating racists. Only after Breitbart gave the incriminating video national exposure did the NAACP issue the obligatory denunciation, to prevent further embarrassment. But when nobody was looking, the NAACP audience was totally cool with the racism expressed by their speaker. [Link](#)

Newt Gingrich praises NAACP (Black Redding News Review 7/20)

Former Republican House Speaker Newt Gingrich today applauded the NAACP's condemnation of a USDA official's racially insensitive remarks at its organization's event. Shirley Sherrod, USDA Rural Development Georgia State Director, was at the NAACP's 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet when she said she used race as a factor in doing her job. Sherrod has resigned because of her comments, which received strong rebuke from NAACP President Benjamin Todd Jealous. Gingrich told Sirius XM's Joe Madison her forced resignation and Jealous' strong rebuke is "exactly the right attitude," and "was an opportunity for the NAACP to prove that it was opposed to all racism," [Link](#)

Former USDA official tells her side of racial controversy (Federal Times 7/20)

CNN has an interview with Shirley Sherrod, an Agriculture Department official who stepped down yesterday after a video surfaced where she describes a 1986 incident where she didn't help a white farmer as much as she could because of his race. The NAACP applauded her resignation, but Sherrod — who was USDA's director of rural development in Georgia — said the comments in the video don't tell the whole story, and said the incident took place before she joined USDA. What do you think? Did Sherrod cross the line? Or is this a puffed-up controversy? [Link](#)

Another Win For Andrew Breitbart (National Review Blog 7/20)

The USDA official who admitted to discrimination against a white farmer, exposed in this video on Big Government, has resigned: Days after the NAACP clashed with Tea Party members over allegations of racism, a video has surfaced showing an Agriculture Department official regaling an NAACP audience with a story about how she withheld help to a white farmer facing bankruptcy — video that now has forced the official to resign. Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, is shown in the clip describing "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." Sherrod, who is black, claimed the farmer took a long time trying to show he was "superior" to her. The audience laughed as she described how she determined his fate. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Comments Results in Resignation (Lalate Blog 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod has resigned following her comments about a white farmer. Shirley Sherrod's remarks appeared in a video from BigGovernment.com, dated by the website as March 27. Shirley Sherrod has been the USDA's Georgia director of Rural Development. In the video, Sherrod addresses an NAACP banquet stating "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land — so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did

enough". Late Monday the USDA announced Sherrod had resigned. NAACP President and CEO Benjamin Todd Jealous issued a statement against Sherrod's comments. [Link](#)

USDA's Shirley Sherrod Disputes Clip of 'Racist' NAACP Banquet Comments (Mediaite 7/20)

In the latest in a series of racially-charged summer shark-week stories, USDA official Shirley Sherrod has resigned over a Breitbart-promoted YouTube clip that shows a portion of her March 27 speech at an NAACP banquet. In the clip, Sherrod talks about resenting a white farmer's condescending attitude, and as a result, not giving him "the full force of what I could do." The NAACP and the Secretary of Agriculture have weighed in, but there may be more to this story than meets YouTube's 2-minute eye. [Link](#)

USDA Official Resigns After Racial Comments Surface; NAACP Calls Comments "Shameful" (Mediaite 7/20)

An edited two-minute clip of an African American United States Department of Agriculture official has brought about her resignation after BigGovernment.com published it yesterday. Shirley Sherrod has resigned, the NAACP has condemned her "shameful" comments about withholding help for a white farmer and Sherrod has said she was taken out of context. In the video clip, put out by Andrew Breitbart's site and a speech she gave at a March NAACP banquet, she describes an interaction with a white farmer... [Link](#)

Andrew Breitbart Perfects 'White Victimology' (Newser 7/20)

Andrew Breitbart has played on the fears of conservative whites to claim another black victim, writes Tom Scocca for Slate. The latest is Shirley Sherrod of the USDA, who had to resign over a 24-year-old video twisted completely out of context. Sherrod—who wasn't a USDA employee at the time—was actually making the case against racism, but no matter. Breitbart's "lie" stands, aided and abetted by Fox News. "Breitbart is rapidly perfecting the 21st-century mau-mau: conservative white people are so afraid of being discriminated against that if you mention the fact that sometimes black people don't like white people—even if you are telling a story about why racism is bad—you are automatically committing a hate crime, against white conservatives," Scocca writes. "After three or four decades of whining about reverse racism, America now has achieved full-blown white victimology." [Link](#)

Farmer's Wife: Fired USDA Official Saved Us (Newser 7/20)

The wife of the white farmer at the heart of the Shirley Sherrod controversy has come forward, saying she considers Sherrod her "friend for life." Backstory: Sherrod lost her job over a video clip in which she said she hadn't done all she could to help the farmer keep his farm because he spoke condescendingly to her. But the farmer's wife, 82-year-old Eloise Spooner, tells the Atlanta Journal-Constitution that in reality, Sherrod did save their farm and "kept us out of bankruptcy." Sherrod's quote was part of a story about an incident in her past—long before her USDA tenure, when she worked for a Georgia land assistance office—in which she learned to see past race. "She took probably two or three trips with us to Albany just to help us out," says Spooner, who called Sherrod this morning to console her. "She's very sad about it. She told me she was so glad we talked. I just can't believe this is happening to her." [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod of USDA resigns (Buzz Tab 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod, USDA's black employee has resigned from her post on Monday in the wake of outburst of a video at conservative media outlets in which Shirley Sherrod is shown telling one of the audience that she had not given a white farmer the full force of what I could do to help him save his family farm. Tom Vilsack, the Agriculture Secretary said that he had accepted Shirley Sherrod's resignation. Shirley Sherrod was working as USDA's State Director of Rural Development for Georgia. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said he had accepted the resignation of Shirley Sherrod, the department's state director of rural development for Georgia. Tom Vilsack further added that in USDA, they are following a zero tolerance for discrimination. He said that being Secretary Agriculture he condemns any discriminatory act against any person. He further added that at USDA, they are working hard for past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history and they are taking fairness and equality as a serious matter at USDA. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Has Officially Resigned From Her Job Due To Racial Preference! (Moms Word Blog 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod, who is known as a USDA official in Georgia, has finally resigned after publicly admitting that race played a factor in her decision to limit how much aid would be given to a white farmer. Sherrod, who is African American, made the comments during an NAACP banquet on March 27, according to the

information in the video above. In fact a clip of her speech was being aired on BigGovernment.com and also Fox News Monday morning. Sherrod said during the now famous speech about the first time she was "faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." She claims that during the conversation, the man "was trying to show me he was superior to me." "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland," Sherrod told the crowd. "And here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land." [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod (Commonwealth Magazine 7/20 2:25)

Shirley Sherrod should get her job back (though I wonder whether she even wants it at this point), and Tom Vilsack should publicly apologize to this woman. It's scandalous that anyone in this administration would push someone to resign based on a Fox News/Andrew Breitbart report without conducting a full investigation to ascertain the real facts. The NAACP should also be ashamed [for condemning Sherrod before it bothered to get her story]. As for Breitbart and Fox, we already know they have no shame.

UPDATES: Vilsack doubles down on stupid. Breitbart admits he hasn't even seen the whole video. What a sorry, sordid episode. [Link](#)

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Berge, John

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:14 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Re: Hey

Will do

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:54:48 2010
Subject: Re: Hey

Just missed you. Try again?

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:48:50 2010
Subject: Re: Hey

Is okay - just have a bit of new information.

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John; Jett, Carole; Mather, Chris
Cc: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:38:16 2010
Subject: Hey

I will. Sorry I cannot call just feel like I need to be in the room

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Jett, Carole; Mather, Chris
Cc: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:35:52 2010
Subject: Re: Jesse Jackson

Keep us posted.

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Jett, Carole; Mather, Chris
Cc: Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:35:15 2010
Subject: Re: Jesse Jackson

Rahm calling Secy now

----- Original Message -----

From: Jett, Carole
To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Cc: Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:27:36 2010
Subject: Re: Jesse Jackson

Looping in Mather.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA


----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: O'Brien, Doug
Cc: Berge, John; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:15:32 2010
Subject: Re: Jesse Jackson

Secy talking with The Rev now

----- Original Message -----

From: O'Brien, Doug
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 19:49:19 2010
Subject: Jesse Jackson

John Mitchell with rev jackson just called my number.

He can connect the secr to rev jackson anytime. I think he expects it tonight.


Berge, John

From: Stephanie Chan [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:08 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: FOX O'Reilly Factor Transcript

We aren't the focus of this story. DOJ gets more heat on this one as it's more 'newsworthy.'

Station: Fox News O'Reilly Factor

Date: 07/20/2010 20:12:46 - 8:22:46 PM

bill: continuing now with the lead story agricultural department shirley sherrod being forced to resign because of remarks. this comes on the heels of black panther voting place crimes. and justice department official the case was dropped because of race. ~~joining us from washington kirsten powers~~ who last week questioned the importance of the panther situation. ask you what i asked colmes of all the stories that i listed that the networks news felt that it should not cover, do you see anything news worthy about any of them? should any of them been covered by the network news?

i'm with alan pretty much on the acorn thing. i think that was news story. i don't know that it was something that should have consumed day after day but certainly something to talk about. i think on -- i would say all of the other ones i doot think are news worthy except on the new black panther case i think that there was some legitimate questions that should be asked but i don't think that frankly there were a lot of answers that, you know, i question a lot of the answers that were giv and the conclusions that have been drawn. and i think that there is probably more to look into it in terms of the motivations of this whistleblower in terms of what is going on at the commission.

bill: look, as i told colmes ~~i want to hear shirley sherrod's story. i want all the facts t be uncovered here.~~ that's what we do here. let's run down the stories. you think that van jones, a man personally known to the obamas who is appointed to a job that is fairly serious, developing environmental jobs for americans, it comes out that is he a marxist and that he believes that 9/11 might have been an inside job. this is a high-ranking official in the white house. ~~you don't think this is -- rates network-news coverage, kirsten?~~

~~no, i don't.~~

bill: you don't?

no. the world is a messy place, bill there are people all over the place who sometimes say whacky things.

bill: that's true and i pointed that out.

yeah.

but you don't believe that the american public has a right to know who the green caesar is and what his background is? they don't have a right to know that? they shouldn't be told by the press.

i suppose they have a right to go. if they want to go a look in the blagg spear it's all over the place. in terms whether it's a news story for you or for like katie couric is a different story.

bill: look, my job is to tell the folks what's going on in the country. and there you have an administration official

with this background that is wildly radical and you don't think that rises to a national story? i'm just stunned. all right, let's go with the black panther situation.

okay. all right. here we have a story that per collated around for a year. covered it and let it go. justice department guy comes out and quits says he was -- the justice department doesn't want to cover black on white situations. this is what the man tells fox news. this is what he says. you don't think the network news should cover that? i actually said it is a legitimate question. he should be asked about it.

bill: he was asked about it. he couldn't have been clearer.

it went way beyond asking him about it. it turned into this jab against the department of justice. if you look at it, he actually didn't quite say what you just said. he has made two accusations. one is he doesn't think the obama administration went far enough in terms of what they did because they actually did get an injunction. he just didn't think it was broad enough. they didn't -- they decided that they didn't think there was a case against the new black black panther party because there was no other incident beyond this one incident.

he was clear in front of the civil rights commission that this sting was racially motivated. but, look, i don't want to debate the case because you have to believe whatever you want. but then you have got cbs, abc, and nbc sitting there going, you know what? that's really not news worthy. we're not going to tell that -- we're not going to tell the american people that a justice department guy quits and makes an accusation that this case wasn't prosecuted because of race. come on, come on.

bill, like i said, i think there is a legitimate question there and he should have been questioned.

bill: we're talking about news coverage. it was blacked out. it was blacked out by network news.

i think that they probably know that this guy is a long-time conservative activist.

bill: they know. they are like colmes.

and you have to question that and you need more than that.

bill: to then do a story on that.

exactly. i agree with that.

bill: impeach his credibility. but you have just said to me van jones is not worth telling the american people about.

no, definitely not.

bill: black panthers not.

that's not what i said. i didn't say that about black panthers. i said do a story on it i just.

bill: now we have the guy in charge of medicare and medicaid much, the biggest entitlement in the country, right?

right.

most huge, trillions of dollars. he is in charge. he gets sneaked in, all right? sneaked in while congress is in

recess. all right? and he says, you know what? we're going to use the health care bill to redistribute income. they don't cover it, kirsten. that's insane.

that's not what he said though, bill.

bill: yes, he did. we have it on tape in london.

he believes -- okay. he believes, a, something that's very offensive to you that the british healthcare system is a good healthcare system.

bill: not offensive to me. it's not offensive to me.

then he believes, in i guess, redistribution of wealth.

bill: yeah. that's what i just said.

no. you said he was going to use the health care bill to redistribute wealth.

bill: that's what he wants to do.

how can he do that? he can't add a public option to that.

bill: it doesn't matter what he can do. it's a matter of who he is and the american public.

exactly. that's exactly.

bill: the american public has a right to know.

who he is.

bill: who is serving them. who they are.

this is my issue. but, bill, this is my issue. is that that's what this is what this is about. these are character assassinations against people.

bill: no, they are not.

basically saying i don't think you are of the kind of person who should be in power.

bill: you tell who they are and let the audience decide that.

if i ever, for some reason, decide to go back into government and go into the obama administration, you could do segments on me every night about what a loon i am because of all my crazy liberal ideas.

bill: that's not correct.

it is correct.

bill: no, it's not.

i believe in a lot of things that you think are crazy.

bill: kirsten, i have got to go. you can cover these stories any way you want to cover them. what we are looking at is a complete news blackout of the story by the network news.

as well as it should be.

bill: that is the biggest journalistic scandal in the history of the republic.

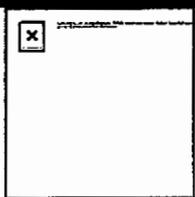
no, it's not.

bill: thank you very much. we appreciate it?

thank you.

--

Stephanic Chan



Berge, John

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:55 PM
To: Berge, John; Cluthe, Sally; Mather, Chris
Subject: Re: Towns

Ok just let me know with number

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Cluthe, Sally; Mather, Chris
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:45:49 2010
Subject: Towns

I have a call into Chairman Towns Staff Director Ron Stroman, and offered up a call with him and the Secretary this evening by voicemail.

I also called CBC E.D. Patrice Willoughby and left a message that in case there was followup from Chairwoman Lee, she could call me directly.

Left them both my cell and direct line.

John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@oscc.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:55 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Cc: JIC4, OC -USDA
Subject: RE: CNN Transcript: Reading of USDA Statement

We are working on it ☺

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:53 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Subject: Re: CNN Transcript: Reading of USDA Statement

Do we have transcript of the segment the secretary aired?

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:48:50 2010
Subject: Re: CNN Transcript: Reading of USDA Statement

Btw, cnn is taping the meeting (open press). But it is not going on satellite live.

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:36:17 2010
Subject: CNN Transcript: Reading of USDA Statement
Station: CNN
Date: 07/20/2010 15:43:25 - 3:53:25 PM

shirley sherrord has said that the department of agriculture was pressured by the white house to ask her to resign. that's essentially what she told my colleague, tony harris, earlier today. we've been waiting for government to respond to her accusations and we just got that in, in the form of a statement. we expect we might get more. but here's the first statement as i read it to you, literally fresh off the press. this is from tom vilsack, agriculture secretary from the united states of america. yesterday, i asked for and accepted ms. sherrord's resignation for two reasons. first, for the past 18 months we have been working to turn a page on the sordid civil rights record at the usd and that controversy could make it more difficult to move forward. second, state directors are often called to use their discretion. the controversy surrounding her comments would create situations where her situations, rightly or wrongly, would be called into question, making it difficult for her to bring jobs to georgia. now, remember, ms. sherrord is saying here on cnn, if you took it in context, if you listen to the totality of what i actually said in this speech and not just the edited portions of it, you would understand that i was trying to make a point that says discrimination is not good. but the usda, her boss, tom vilsack, secretary of agriculture, does not appear to be buying that or even giving her reconsideration. why? let me read on. our policy is clear, he writes, there is zero tolerance for discrimination at usda and we strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. we have a duty to ensure that when we provide services to the american people, we do so in an equitable manner. but equally important is our duty to instill confidence in the american people that we are fair service providers. this comes from a stephanie chan, press secretary, press assistant office of communication, u.s. department of agriculture. says here a statement by agriculture

secretary tom vilsack. just got this. it's the reaction to the accusation from shirley sherrod saying, look, i was taken out of context. if you listen to me in totality, you will understand i was trying to say something else. reconsider your decision. we just reported the naacp is apparently reconsidering. we'll hear from them soon. as far as the government goes, it doesn't look like they are. we'll be right back. granola nut clusters 100% natural nuts and granola in bite sized clusters. it's a little bit of nature... a little bit better. and nature approves. granola nut clusters from nature valley. dan malloy has helped my business expand and created a lot of jobs. green jobs and high tech jobs and i have a job because of dan malloy dan malloy has put a lot of people to work helping create jobs that was my job as mayor of stamford and i'll do the same as governor by investing in high tech and clean energy holding down property taxes and lowering electric rates so people want to live here and businesses can afford to stay here that's how we'll turn connecticut's economy around dan malloy has got the experience that money can't buy approve this message i'm dan malloy and i

we're getting a lot of people talking about this shirley sherrod story. a lot of you saying, she's falsely accused. some of you saying, no, she should have been fired. so back and forth we go. we'll continue bringing you the details. they are still coming in, folks.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

Berge, John

From: Weaver, Caleb
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:35 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris
Cc: Chan, Stephanie; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; O'Brien, Doug
Subject: RE: Cnn interview

They've already put it on the air.

Caleb Weaver
Press Secretary
USDA
O: 202-720-0622
C: [REDACTED]
caleb.weaver@oc.usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:34 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; O'Brien, Doug
Subject: Cnn interview

Cnn crew was on farm when we arrived. Secretary did interview hitting key points that this was about making sure usda wasn't distracted from correcting injustices of the past, and that it is important that we are singularly focused on job creation and that this could cause people to question and undermine decisions in georgia. He said he doesn't believe she is racist, this was about poor word choice. He was asked about wh involvement and he said he didn't talk to anyone at wh, that he took action after learning about the situation.

Berge, John

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:38 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Subject: Re: CNN Transcript: Reading of USDA Statement

Cable loves the back and forth.

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:36:17 2010
Subject: CNN Transcript: Reading of USDA Statement
Station: CNN
Date: 07/20/2010 15:43:25 - 3:53:25 PM

shirley sherrod has said that the department of agriculture was pressured by the white house to ask her to resign. that's essentially what she told my colleague, tony harris, earlier today. we've been waiting for government to respond to her accusations and we just got that in, in the form of a statement. we expect we might get more. but here's the first statement as i read it to you, literally fresh off the press. this is from tom vilsack, agriculture secretary from the united states of america. yesterday, i asked for and accepted ms. sherrod's resignation for two reasons. first, for the past 18 months we have been working to turn a page on the sordid civil rights record at the usd and that controversy could make it more difficult to move forward. second, state directors are often called to use their discretion. the controversy surrounding her comments would create situations where her situations, rightly or wrongly, would be called into question, making it difficult for her to bring jobs to georgia. now, remember, ms. sherrod is saying here on cnn, if you took it in context, if you listen to the totality of what i actually said in this speech and not just the edited portions of it, you would understand that i was trying to make a point that says discrimination is not good. but the usda, her boss, tom vilsack, secretary of agriculture, does not appear to be buying that or even giving her reconsideration. why? let me read on. our policy is clear, he writes, there is zero tolerance for discrimination at usda and we strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. we have a duty to ensure that when we provide services to the american people, we do so in an equitable manner. but equally important is our duty to instill confidence in the american people that we are fair service providers. this comes from a stephanie chan, press secretary, press assistant office of communication, u.s. department of agriculture. says here a statement by agriculture secretary tom vilsack. just got this. it's the reaction to the accusation from shirley sherrod saying, look, i was taken out of context. if you listen to me in totality, you will understand i was trying to say something else. reconsider your decision. we just reported the naacp is apparently reconsidering. we'll hear from them soon. as far as the government goes, it doesn't look like they are. we'll be right back. granola nut clusters 100% natural nuts and granola in bite sized clusters. it's a little bit of nature... a little bit better. and nature approves. granola nut clusters from nature valley. dan malloy has helped my business expand and created a lot of jobs. green jobs and high tech jobs and i have a job because of dan malloy dan malloy has put a lot of people to work helping create jobs that was my job as mayor of stamford and i'll do the same as governor by investing in high tech and clean energy holding down property taxes and lowering electric rates so people want to live here and businesses can afford to stay here that's how we'll turn connecticut's economy around dan malloy has got the experience that money can't buy approve this message i'm dan malloy and i

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Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

Berge, John

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:39 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Subject: Re: CNN Transcript: Reading of USDA Statement

Btw stephanie chan is now famous.

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:36:17 2010
Subject: CNN Transcript: Reading of USDA Statement
Station: CNN
Date: 07/20/2010 15:43:25 - 3:53:25 PM

shirley sherrod has said that the department of agriculture was pressured by the white house to ask her to resign. that's essentially what she told my colleague, tony harris, earlier today. we've been waiting for government to respond to her accusations and we just got that in, in the form of a statement. we expect we might get more. but here's the first statement as i read it to you, literally fresh off the press. this is from tom vilsack, agriculture secretary from the united states of america. yesterday, i asked for and accepted ms. sherrod's resignation for two reasons. first, for the past 18 months we have been working to turn a page on the sordid civil rights record at the usd and that controversy could make it more difficult to move forward. second, state directors are often called to use their discretion. the controversy surrounding her comments would create situations where her situations, rightly or wrongly, would be called into question, making it difficult for her to bring jobs to georgia. now, remember, ms. sherrod is saying here on cnn, if you took it in context, if you listen to the totality of what i actually said in this speech and not just the edited portions of it, you would understand that i was trying to make a point that says discrimination is not good. but the usda, her boss, tom vilsack, secretary of agriculture, does not appear to be buying that or even giving her reconsideration. why? let me read on. our policy is clear, he writes, there is zero tolerance for discrimination at usda and we strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. we have a duty to ensure that when we provide services to the american people, we do so in an equitable manner. but equally important is our duty to instill confidence in the american people that we are fair service providers. this comes from a stephanie chan, press secretary, press assistant office of communication, u.s. department of agriculture. says here a statement by agriculture secretary tom vilsack. just got this. it's the reaction to the accusation from shirley sherrod saying, look, i was taken out of context. if you listen to me in totality, you will understand i was trying to say something else. reconsider your decision. we just reported the naacp is apparently reconsidering. we'll hear from them soon. as far as the government goes, it doesn't look like they are. we'll be right back. granola nut clusters 100% natural nuts and granola in bite sized clusters. it's a little bit of nature... a little bit better. and nature approves. granola nut clusters from nature valley. dan malloy has helped my business expand and created a lot of jobs. green jobs and high tech jobs and i have a job because of dan malloy dan malloy has put a lot of people to work helping create jobs that was my job as mayor of stamford and i'll do the same as governor by investing in high tech and clean energy holding down property taxes and lowering electric rates so people want to live here and businesses can afford to stay here that's how we'll turn connecticut's economy around dan malloy has got the experience that money can't buy approve this message i'm dan malloy and i

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Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

Berge, John

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:39 PM
To: Berge, John; Mather, Chris
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie; Harden, Krysta; O'Brien, Doug
Subject: Re: Cnn interview

Very creepy.

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie; Harden, Krysta; O'Brien, Doug
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:35:30 2010
Subject: RE: Cnn interview

Running it with Shirley on the phone. Shirley reacting real time. Creepy.

-----Original Message-----

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:34 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; O'Brien, Doug
Subject: Cnn interview

Cnn crew was on farm when we arrived. Secretary did interview hitting key points that this was about making sure usda wasn't distracted from correcting injustices of the past, and that it is important that we are singularly focused on job creation and that this could cause people to question and undermine decisions in georgia. He said he doesn't believe she is racist, this was about poor word choice. He was asked about wh involvement and he said he didn't talk to anyone at wh, that he took action after learning about the situation.

Berge, John

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:42 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; O'Brien, Doug
Subject: Re: Cnn interview

----- Original Message -----

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; O'Brien, Doug
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:34:18 2010
Subject: Cnn interview

Cnn crew was on farm when we arrived. Secretary did interview hitting key points that this was about making sure usda wasn't distracted from correcting injustices of the past, and that it is important that we are singularly focused on job creation and that this could cause people to question and undermine decisions in georgia. He said he doesn't believe she is racist, this was about poor word choice. He was asked about wh involvement and he said he didn't talk to anyone at wh, that he took action after learning about the situation.

Berge, John

From: Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:02 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: RE: hey

She started by saying how much she liked Secretary Vilsack and respected him, etc. MSNBC then talked about how she was unfairly treated and everyone jumped to conclusions. Then when pressed about the truth behind the story and whether or not the Secretary should reconsider the resignation, she said that she thought it did warrant reconsideration.

This was moments after NAACP's updated statement was released.

Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:59 PM
To: Hannigan, Erin
Subject: Re: hey

What did she say?

From: Hannigan, Erin
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 18:58:02 2010
Subject: RE: hey
Msnbc- Sheila Jackson Lee. Are you still in the office?

Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:58 PM
To: Hannigan, Erin
Subject: Re: hey

No. Who was the member - what channel?

From: Hannigan, Erin
To: Berge, John

Sent: Tue Jul 20 18:54:21 2010

Subject: hey

Did you see the most recent interview that included a member of congress weighing in on this?

Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 2:44 PM
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Subject: RE: URGENT

-----Original Message-----

From: Berge, John
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 2:42 PM
To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Subject: RE: URGENT

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 2:39 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John
Subject: Re: URGENT

Terrible. What can I do to help?

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 14:34:25 2010
Subject: URGENT

This is horrible. Video just posted on Hotair.com.

The NAACP is about to learn one of the most basic of all lessons in life – those who live in glass houses should avoid provoking a stone-throwing war. After the civil-rights organization threatened to issue a condemnation of Tea Party activism by equating it with racism (a position from which they ultimately retreated), Andrew Breitbart announced that he would publish at least one video of the NAACP itself cheering racism. Breitbart delivers on that promise today at Big Government, showing USDA official Shirley Sherrod explain to an appreciative NAACP audience in July 2009 how she deliberately withheld information from a white farmer in Georgia trying to save his land and his business:

-----Original Message-----

From: Maloney, Wayne
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 1:56 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Zaina, Lisa
Subject: FW: Georgia
Importance: High

Chris,

I was just informed of a video of the Georgia State Director that was posted on the Internet earlier this afternoon. It speaks for itself and you need to watch it right away.

I have discussed this with Tim McNeilly. He has instructed the PIC and the State Director not to respond to media without checking with us first. We have not been contacted by any media outlet but expect that we will.

Tim has been asked by me to draft a statement for our review to be issued if necessary.

Wayne
###

Georgia PIC just called to alert us to a campaign underway involving Shirley Sherrod vs. the Tea Party people. I understand that this may have been brought to your attention already, but in case it hasn't..... The PIC is looking for guidance if (and I think there will be) media contact regarding the below video.

<http://hotair.com/archives/2010/07/19/breitbart-hits-naacp-with-promised-video-of-racism/>

Looking for guidance on how you would like to prepare and handle any inquiries that result.

Thanks.

Timothy J. McNeilly | Director, Legislative and Public Affairs Rural Development U.S.
Department of Agriculture 1400 Independence Ave., S.W. | Washington, D.C. 20250
Phone: 202.720.1019 | Fax: 202.690.4083

www.rurdev.usda.gov

"Committed to the future of rural communities"

"Estamos dedicados al futuro de las comunidades rurales"

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:59 PM
To: May, Tina; Blue, Rebecca
Subject: FW: URGENT

SHITSTORM!! FYI. See below.

-----Original Message-----

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:40 PM
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Jett, Carole
Subject: Re: URGENT

I need to tell WH comms.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:28:52 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT

Please keep us posted on his reaction. We need to know when to reach out to the GA delegation.

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:16 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John
Subject: Re: URGENT

Doug and I will talk to the Secy right after this stop. Should I share with Justin.

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:11:55 2010
Subject: Re: URGENT

I have.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John; Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:06:33 2010
Subject: Re: URGENT

We need to make sure someone has seen the video. I am quick to jump to conclusions but want to be certain it is what is said to be before I tell the Secy.

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris

Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:03:05 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT

Just showed it to Carole - she is meeting with Kevin.

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:02 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John
Subject: Re: URGENT

Good

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:00:42 2010
Subject: Re: URGENT

I sent to Ross and Jett
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 14:51:24 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT

Is WH or Kevin aware of this?

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 2:44 PM
To: Berge, John; Mather, Chris
Subject: Re: URGENT

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 14:42:27 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 2:39 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John
Subject: Re: URGENT

Terrible. What can I do to help?

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 14:34:25 2010
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To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Zaina, Lisa
Subject: FW: Georgia
Importance: High

Chris,

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Thanks.

Timothy J. McNeilly | Director, Legislative and Public Affairs Rural Development U.S.
Department of Agriculture 1400 Independence Ave., S.W. | Washington, D.C. 20250
Phone: 202.720.1019 | Fax: 202.690.4083

www.rurdev.usda.gov

"Committed to the future of rural communities"

"Estamos dedicados al futuro de las comunidades rurales"

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:19 PM
To: Gonzales, Oscar; Hannigan, Erin; Williamson, Todd
Subject: continue to stand by

Importance: High

Will have statement momentarily.

Assignments:

Erin and Todd you split the delegation.

Oscar – you call the Gov and State Commissioner of ag.

Erin you call appropriators (majority/minority); Todd you call authorizers

John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:24 PM
To: Hannigan, Erin; Gonzales, Oscar; Williamson, Todd
Subject: RE: continue to stand by

LD or CoS

Staff Directors.

From: Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:24 PM
To: Berge, John; Gonzales, Oscar; Williamson, Todd
Subject: RE: continue to stand by

Thanks.

What level of staff do you want to reach out to? Ag LA, LD, CoS?

As for the appropriators and authorizers, do you have a preference? Should we call our usual RD contact or the Staff Directors?

Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

From: Berge, John
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Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:27 PM
To: Hannigan, Erin; Gonzales, Oscar; Williamson, Todd
Subject: RE: continue to stand by

Bishop and Chambliss, but we need to call everyone as we will have up to date information.

From: Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:27 PM
To: Berge, John; Gonzales, Oscar; Williamson, Todd
Subject: RE: continue to stand by

Ok.

Do you know who the folks are that Krysta is reaching out to? Should I assume she is calling Martha Scott at Senate Ag?

Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

From: Berge, John
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:24 PM
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Staff Directors.

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Subject: RE: continue to stand by

Thanks.

What level of staff do you want to reach out to? Ag LA, LD, CoS?

As for the appropriators and authorizers, do you have a preference? Should we call our usual RD contact or the Staff Directors?

Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

From: Berge, John
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:19 PM
To: Gonzales, Oscar; Hannigan, Erin; Williamson, Todd
Subject: continue to stand by
Importance: High

Will have statement momentarily.

Assignments:

Erin and Todd you split the delegation.

Oscar – you call the Gov and State Commissioner of ag.

Erin you call appropriators (majority/minority); Todd you call authorizers

John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

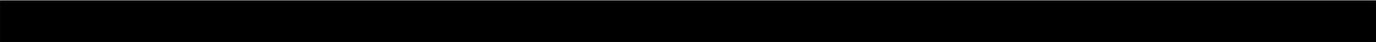
Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:54 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: RE: Hey



-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:53 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Hey



Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:58 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: RE: Hey

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:58 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Re: Hey

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 17:53:39 2010
Subject: RE: Hey

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:53 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Hey

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:29 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: RE: GA delegation

Erin, Todd and I are calling. Oscar is doing the State Government folks. We are calling, leaving messages if necessary, and following up with email.

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:28 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: GA delegation

Are you calling everyone.

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:31 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: RE: Heads up to

We can, but it is important to note that WH Comm said that the WH might be calling them.

-----Original Message-----

From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:31 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Re: Heads up to

Can you call them?
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA
202-409-7911

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Jett, Carole; Berge, John
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:28:40 2010
Subject: Heads up to

The NAACP, the Secy

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:38 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: Re: GA delegation

I don't think its necessary. We're working through CoS'

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:36:58 2010
Subject: Re: GA delegation

I have Bishop's cell if needed

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:28:50 2010
Subject: RE: GA delegation

Erin, Todd and I are calling. Oscar is doing the State Government folks. We are calling, leaving messages if necessary, and following up with email.

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:28 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: GA delegation

Are you calling everyone.

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:39 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: RE: GA delegation

NAACP was reached out to by WH OPE (public engagement).

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:39 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Re: GA delegation

Ok good

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:37:48 2010
Subject: Re: GA delegation

I don't think its necessary. We're working through CoS'

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
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Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:36:58 2010
Subject: Re: GA delegation

I have Bishop's cell if needed

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Subject: RE: GA delegation

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-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:28 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: GA delegation

Are you calling everyone.

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:43 PM
To: Harden, Krysta; Washo, Kevin
Subject: RE: Statements

Sorry - she was an employee.

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:42 PM
To: Washo, Kevin; Berge, John
Subject: Statements

Was Shirley at USDA when she made the statement?

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:47 PM
To: Hannigan, Erin; Williamson, Todd; Gonzales, Oscar
Subject: For your calls tonight..

Importance: High

Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.

You are cleared for takeoff – make these calls now. Report back to me outcomes. Call CoS. Thanks.

John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 7:00 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: Fw:

Fyi

----- Original Message -----

From: Washo, Kevin
To: Jett, Carole; Mather, Chris; Berge, John
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:58:12 2010
Subject: Fw:

----- Original Message -----

From: Cook, Cheryl
To: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:56:14 2010
Subject: FW:

-----Original Message-----

From: Sherrod, Shirley - Athens, GA [mailto:shirley.sherrod@ga.usda.gov]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:55 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject:

Cheryl

I feel so disappointed that the Secretary and President let a misrepresentation of my words on the part of th Tea Party be the reason to ask me to resign

Please look at the tape and see that I use the story from 1986 to show people that the issue is not about race but about those who have v ersus those who do not

I used everything and everyone I could to help me to save that white farmers land. That family has the land because of what I did. He became a very good friend. I went on to help save many other white land owners thru the years

I submit my resignation but in doing so want to put the administration on notice that I will get the whole story out.

My whole life speaks for my commitment to fairness whether white or black.

Shirley sherrod

Sent using BlackBerry

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 7:32 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: Fw: Rural Development State Director

Fyi.

From: Gonzales, Oscar
To: Berge, John
Cc: Yezak, Jennifer
Sent: Mon Jul 19 19:28:43 2010
Subject: FW: Rural Development State Director

John, I was able to connect and speak directly with the Governor's Washington D.C. office. Lee Anne who serves as the Federal Affairs Director will notify the appropriate individuals in her office.

As for Ag Commissioner Irvin, I left him a voice message asking him to call the IGA office.

-Oscar

From: Gonzales, Oscar
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 7:21 PM
To: 'GA-GOVERNOR (lfoster@gov.state.ga.us)'
Cc: Yezak, Jennifer
Subject: Rural Development State Director

Lee Anne, thank you very much for returning my phone call. Below is the statement issued by Secretary Vilsack regarding Shirley Sherrod, Rural Development's State Director in Georgia.

"Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously."

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 7:34 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: Re: Rural Development State Director

Cool.

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John
Sent: Mon Jul 19 19:33:27 2010
Subject: Re: Rural Development State Director

Good
Erin's email to MSP is enough since I called earlier

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 19:32:19 2010
Subject: Fw: Rural Development State Director

Fyi.

From: Gonzales, Oscar
To: Berge, John
Cc: Yezak, Jennifer
Sent: Mon Jul 19 19:28:43 2010
Subject: FW: Rural Development State Director
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Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 8:47 PM
To: Hannigan, Erin; Harden, Krysta
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Will call in am.

From: Hannigan, Erin
To: Berge, John
Sent: Mon Jul 19 20:42:08 2010
Subject: Fw: Georgia Rural Development State Director

From Fitz.

From: Elder, Fitzhugh (Appropriations)
To: Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 20:36:04 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director
What led to this?

Fitz Elder
[REDACTED] direct

From: Hannigan, Erin <Erin.Hannigan@osec.usda.gov>
To: Elder, Fitzhugh (Appropriations)
Sent: Mon Jul 19 19:41:21 2010
Subject: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Fitz,

Secretary Vilsack has issued the following statement with regards to Shirley Sherrod, the State Director of Rural Development in Georgia:

"Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously."

Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 9:41 PM
To: Harden, Krysta; Hannigan, Erin
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Yes. Am planning on it. Need to determine proper answers for his questions too.

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Hannigan, Erin; Berge, John
Sent: Mon Jul 19 21:39:48 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Berge can you call Fitz tomorrow? And if so Erin let him know tonight?

From: Hannigan, Erin
To: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Sent: Mon Jul 19 21:23:09 2010
Subject: Fw: Georgia Rural Development State Director

More from Fitz.

From: Elder, Fitzhugh (Appropriations)
To: Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 21:21:10 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director
Erin,

Can you tell me if USDA, under Secretary Vilsack, has accepted any other resignations or has it terminated any other RD State Director or FSA SED for similar reasons? What are the terms of Ms. Sherrod's resignation? Has USDA identified the producer she discriminated against? Are they offering any assistance to that individual? What is USDA's policy when discrimination has occurred? Has this been referred to the DoJ? Will it be? Will USDA provide any training to the federal employees in Georgia to make sure they understand the law and their responsibilities?

Fitz Elder
[REDACTED] direct

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Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:45 AM
To: Harden, Krysta; Hannigan, Erin
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

On MSNBC Morning Joe right now.

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John; Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 06:38:16 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Ok. I saw the story on FOX not good

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 21:41:28 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Yes. Am planning on it. Need to determine proper answers for his questions too.

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Hannigan, Erin; Berge, John
Sent: Mon Jul 19 21:39:48 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

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direct

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Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:45 AM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: Fw: Georgia Rural Development State Director

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 06:44:33 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

On MSNBC Morning Joe right now.

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John; Hannigan, Erin
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From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Hannigan, Erin
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Fitz Elder

direct

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Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:10 AM
To: Jett, Carole; Mather, Chris; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Harden, Krysta
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: Sherrod story

I'll be in at 8 or a little before.

----- Original Message -----

From: Jett, Carole
To: Mather, Chris; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:08:52 2010
Subject: Re: Sherrod story

Call me anytime

[REDACTED]
I will be in around 8:15
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA
[REDACTED]

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Cc: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 00:00:47 2010
Subject: Sherrod story

CNN just called me, after reaching out to WH. To squash day two stories, I think we need to consider what happens if this has legs tomorrow, early am if possible. We should not say any more that could create another story BUT, press will look elsewhere, and I fear there are people the could albiet wrongly keep story going. How early can we talk.
Chris Mather

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:21 AM
To: Harden, Krysta; Hannigan, Erin
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

I have not.

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Hannigan, Erin; Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:17:42 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Have we heard from Bishop?

From: Hannigan, Erin
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:03:07 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

There's a clip in the Atlanta newspaper that includes an interview done yesterday with her.

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 06:44:33 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

On MSNBC Morning Joe right now.

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[REDACTED] direct

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Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:47 AM
To: Hannigan, Erin
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Yes. Where is mock hearing?

From: Hannigan, Erin
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:45:02 2010
Subject: RE: Georgia Rural Development State Director
John, would you be able to try and reach out? Their office is not open yet and I've got a mock hearing with Dallas at 8am before we head to his hearing.

Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:38 AM
To: Berge, John; Hannigan, Erin
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Please reach out to Phylis and or Michael Reed this am. If the Congressman needs to talk with me or the Secy just let me know. Thanks.

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:20:31 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

I have not.

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Hannigan, Erin; Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:17:42 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Have we heard from Bishop?

From: Hannigan, Erin
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta

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To: Harden, Krysta; Hannigan, Erin
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Fitz Elder
[REDACTED] direct

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To: Elder, Fitzhugh (Appropriations)
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Subject: Georgia Rural Development State Director

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Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:21 AM
To: Williams, Janice; Williamson, Todd; Allen, Julie -USDA
Subject: Need phone numbers for

Bishop's CoS

Fitz on the staff of ag approps

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:31 AM
To: Harden, Krysta

Have a message into Fitz.

Do you have a direct line for Phyllis?

John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:32 AM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: RE:

Cool. Sending her a note asking her to call me now.

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:32 AM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Re:

No on Phyllis

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:30:51 2010
Subject:
Have a message into Fitz.

Do you have a direct line for Phyllis?

John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:38 AM
To: phyllis.hallmon@mail.house.gov
Cc: Williams, Janice; Harden, Krysta
Subject: GA

Phyllis – I'd like to try to touch base with you as soon as possible this morning to discuss the GA RD situation. Krysta reached out to Congressman Bishop, but I wanted to be sure you had any questions that you might have answered. If you cannot reach me at the number direct below, I can be reached through my assistant Janice at 202-720-7095.

John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:38 AM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: Who is acting SD in GA?

John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:39 AM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: we need to chat about TPs

For my calls with the hill and your chats with media – want to make sure we're on the same page. Does S have talkers in case he is asked?

John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:43 AM
To: McFarland, Lilia
Subject: Re: Quick TPS for Ed on Issue

When do you leave?

From: McFarland, Lilia
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:40:34 2010
Subject: Quick TPS for Ed on Issue
Hey –

Do we have quick TPS that would be appropriate for Ed on this issue we're dealing with in Georgia? He testifies before House Ag right after Dallas and I'm worried he'll get a leftover question on this.

Lilia McFarland
Office of Congressional Relations
U.S. Department of Agriculture
(202) 720-9259
lilia.mcfarland@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:59 AM
To: McFarland, Lilia
Subject: Re: Quick TPS for Ed on Issue

See me by 11.

From: McFarland, Lilia
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:50:57 2010
Subject: RE: Quick TPS for Ed on Issue
12:15, so we have time.

Lilia McFarland
Office of Congressional Relations
U.S. Department of Agriculture
(202) 720-9259
lilia.mcfarland@osec.usda.gov

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:43 AM
To: McFarland, Lilia
Subject: Re: Quick TPS for Ed on Issue

When do you leave?

From: McFarland, Lilia
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:40:34 2010
Subject: Quick TPS for Ed on Issue
Hey –

Do we have quick TPS that would be appropriate for Ed on this issue we're dealing with in Georgia? He testifies before House Ag right after Dallas and I'm worried he'll get a leftover question on this.

Lilia McFarland
Office of Congressional Relations
U.S. Department of Agriculture
(202) 720-9259
lilia.mcfarland@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:02 AM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: Re: we need to chat about TPs

I'm in Pearlie's office.

From: Mather, Chris
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:54:47 2010
Subject: Re: we need to chat about TPs

Let's hammer out this am. I did not send anything because he knows what he wants to say. There are two clear talking points. En route now.
Chris Mather

From: Berge, John
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:39:13 2010
Subject: we need to chat about TPs

For my calls with the hill and your chats with media – want to make sure we're on the same page. Does S have talkers in case he is asked?

John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:07 AM
To: Hannigan, Erin

When do you leave?

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:22 AM
To: Hannigan, Erin
Subject: Re: Where are you?

Pearlie's office. Come now - Chris and I are here.

----- Original Message -----

From: Hannigan, Erin
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 09:06:02 2010
Subject: Where are you?

I want to talk to you quickly before we leave. I'm listening to CNN right now and am concerned.

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:22 AM
To: Blue, Rebecca
Cc: May, Tina; Hannigan, Erin
Subject: Re: Sherrod - CNN

Got the transcript.

From: Blue, Rebecca
To: Berge, John
Cc: May, Tina; Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 09:04:22 2010
Subject: Sherrod - CNN

Just an FYI Sherrod called into CNN to "set the record straight."

Rebecca Blue
Office of Congressional Relations
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Rebecca.Blue@osec.usda.gov
202-720-7095

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:24 AM
To: Hannigan, Erin
Subject: Re: Where are you?

Emails are behind - just got this. Are you all cool? Caleb is with you.

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 09:22:07 2010
Subject: Re: Where are you?

Pearlie's office. Come now - Chris and I are here.

----- Original Message -----

From: Hannigan, Erin
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 09:06:02 2010
Subject: Where are you?

I want to talk to you quickly before we leave. I'm listening to CNN right now and am concerned.

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:15 AM
To: Jett, Carole; Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Washo, Kevin
Subject: Draft email from Secretary



John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:33 AM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: FW: FOX: Gingrich Responds to Discrimination at USDA

GINGRICH: Well, let me say, first of all, Secretary Vilsack did exactly the right thing. I mean I often disagree with this administration. But firing her after that kind of viciously racist attitude was exactly the right thing to do. And the fact that we have to be genuinely colorblind.

You know you can't be a black racist any more than you can be a white racist. And I just think it'd be good for those of us who are often critical of the administration to recognize that here's a case where Secretary Vilsack did exactly the right thing, moved very promptly, and fired somebody who frankly shouldn't be serving the American people because they clearly had a set of attitudes inappropriate for a federal official.

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:30 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: FOX: Gingrich Responds to Discrimination at USDA

Gingrich Responds to Discrimination at USDA

Tuesday, July 20, 2010

FOX NEWS

ADVERTISEMENT

This is a rush transcript from "Hannity," July 19, 2010. This copy may not be in its final form and may be updated.

SEAN HANNITY, HOST: And this is a Fox News alert. An Obama administration official resigned just a short time ago after she was caught on tape appearing to tell an audience that she had used her position to racially discriminate against white farmers.

Now the woman, Shirley Sherrod, was the Georgia state director at the Department of Agricultural. Now the president's Agricultural Secretary Tom Vilsack just released a statement saying the USDA has a zero tolerance policy against discrimination.

Here's part of the shocking video that ignited this controversy.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

SHIRLEY SHERROD, FORMER USDA GA STATE DIRECTOR: The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking but he was trying to show me he was superior to me.

I know what he was doing. But he had come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him.

(END OF VIDEO CLIP)

HANNITY: Now details on the official sudden resignation are still coming in. We'll have more on this story including more video coming up in this hour. That's all straight ahead.

But also, meanwhile the debate in Washington raged today over whether or not unemployment insurance should be extended yet again for American struggling to find work. Now earlier President Obama addressed the issue from the Rose Garden.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA: It's time to stop holding workers laid off in this recession hostage to Washington politics. It's time to do what is right. Not for the next election, but for the middle class.

We've got to stop blocking emergency relief for Americans who are out of work. We've got to extend unemployment insurance.

(END OF VIDEO CLIP)

HANNITY: All right, now the president did not bother to mention that the only reason the extension may be necessary is because his stimulus was a complete and utter failure.

Now since the recovery plan was passed more than three million Americans have lost their jobs.

Now this morning the GOP leader in the House came out swinging saying, quote, "The president knows Republicans support extending unemployment insurance and doing it in a fiscally responsible way by cutting spending elsewhere in the \$3 trillion federal budget."

But the White House isn't interested in finding a way to actually pay for the extension. It's a whole lot easier to simply drive America deeper into debt.

And joining me now with analysis is the former speaker of the House, Fox News contributor, co-host of the documentary along with his wife Calista, "Nine Days That Changed the World," which you can find at Newt.org, is former speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich.

Mr. Speaker, welcome back.

NEWT GINGRICH, FORMER SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE: It's good to be with you.

HANNITY: All right. A lot — a lot obviously going on here. The — this woman on tape saying these racially charged things that she didn't want to help farmers, in particular white farmer. That she said she wanted him to go out and deal with one of his own and she put him in touch with a white lawyer.

Just the latest in a series of racial incidents. What do you think of this?

GINGRICH: Well, let me say, first of all, Secretary Vilsack did exactly the right thing. I mean I often disagree with this administration. But firing her after that kind of viciously racist attitude was exactly the right thing to do. And the fact that we have to be genuinely colorblind.

You know you can't be a black racist any more than you can be a white racist. And I just think it'd be good for those of us who are often critical of the administration to recognize that here's a case where Secretary Vilsack did exactly the right thing, moved very promptly, and fired somebody who frankly shouldn't be serving the American people because they clearly had a set of attitudes inappropriate for a federal official.

HANNITY: All right, my only thing is they weren't the ones that caught it. It was on Breitbart.com and it happened some time ago. So it's interesting that it took the new media to expose this.

Here's my next question, though. There's another twist to the story, and that is that, this was — these comments were made at an NAACP banquet. Now in light of the NAACP accusing the Tea Party of being a racist movement last week, do you think the NAACP should be held to account for the very standard they were demanding from the Tea Party?

GINGRICH: Of course. Clearly the national — and I suspect, Sean, if you contact them — the national leadership of the NAACP — I'm sure will feel honor-bound to apologize for having had that kind of a racist comment said at a meeting I suspect they didn't know about it, just as I suspect Secretary Vilsack didn't.

But now that it's there and it's clearly obvious, because it's on tape, I would hope that national NAACP would apologize for having that kind of racist comment at one of their meetings.

HANNITY: Well, I've tried to reach out to Ben Jealous. He has yet to return my phone call and he's invited on this program if he would like to discuss it. I'd like to have him on.

But it's interesting. A lot of people contacted me last week. Apparently you had sent out a tweet. By the way I'm glad that you are up on tweeting, which by the way, I have a Twitter account as well at @SeanHannity.

But you have your own Twitter account. And you offered to basically broker a meeting —

GINGRICH: No, no.

HANNITY: Well, hang on.

GINGRICH: No, I — no, I didn't say that. That was a misinterpretation by the Huffington Post.

HANNITY: OK.

GINGRICH: What I said was —

HANNITY: I didn't read the tweet. Go ahead.

GINGRICH: Right. But what I said was local Tea Party groups — because Tea Parties don't have a hierarchy. They don't have a national organization. Local Tea Party groups ought to reach out to local NAACP chapters and offer to have joint town hall meetings.

For example, about job creation. I mean there's a clear difference between job creators and job killers. It would be great to get Americans of all backgrounds in the same room talking about whether they ought to follow policies that you and I believe in which create jobs.

And I suspect most African-Americans at the local level in the local NAACP chapter would be surprised at how much they have in common with Tea Party members, a number of whom, by the way, are African-American, Latino and Asians. They're not — the Tea Parties are not white organizations. They're open to all Americans.

So my point was, if somebody wants to start a conversation, instead of yelling at them, what if we invite them in the room and let's have a conversation about America's future together.

And I'm told by Adam Waldeck at American Solutions who coordinates this that a number of local Tea Party groups are reaching out to local NAACP chapters on their own to have this kind of a dialogue.

HANNITY: I don't know what the right answer is. But I would find it very hard to sit down with the NAACP back in 2000. They ran this James Byrd ad when George Bush supported the death penalty for the person — the people responsible for that James Byrd dragging death.

You can't have a worse penalty. And that ad was particularly hard hitting. It was as if my father was killed all over again, if you remember that ad. And then in this particular case, this happened with this woman at this NAACP banquet.

I'm not saying not to have a dialogue. I am saying you can also talk about their associations. They've been — Ben Jealous was at a meeting with Louis Farrakhan. Should we not have certain standards prior to any meeting?

GINGRICH: Yes. We can also say let's agree that we should condemn racism wherever it occurs. Now we hope that the NAACP will apply that standard to somebody who is at one of its banquets.

But I think it's good for the country to see that we are not afraid to reach out and talk to people and to try to focus the conversation in a positive way. African-American unemployment is higher under the Obama administration than under any administration in a very long time.

African-Americans want their schools to work so their children go to college and not to prison. We have lots of things you and I could talk about in local meetings. And I said local meetings where local people get together.

And I think you'd find that at the local level, not the professional, you know, left-wing activist level. At the local level there are an awful lot of very decent people in the NAACP who would suddenly find out they have an awful lot in common with their local Tea Party neighbors.

HANNITY: But I found the chart — the things that were said about the Tea Party so inaccurate, so over-the-top, so lacking in evidence, it is almost hard to begin a dialogue when everything is predicated on false charges and a false statement.

I didn't even bring up the issue of the New Black Panther Party and the Department of Justice and Eric Holder. What did you —

GINGRICH: Well, look —

HANNITY: Go ahead.

GINGRICH: First of all, Eric Holder should resign for national security reasons. He should certainly resign over the racism inherent in the Black Panther case. I mean I'm happy to say that Eric Holder shouldn't be attorney general and is not doing the job correctly.

But I'd certainly go back to your point for a second, Sean. Maybe this makes me different, OK? The New York Times often runs editorials that are totally dishonest. Their attack on the Arizona state law, for example — on immigration — was a totally dishonest attack.

I still talk to New York Times reporters all the time. I think it's important to reach out. It's important to try to be positive.

HANNITY: By the way, just for the record I do not return the calls of anybody from The New York Times. They don't call anymore because I won't return their calls.

GINGRICH: Now our audience — now our audience can see the difference in our two styles.

HANNITY: Yes, well — look, what do I know? I made — perhaps you're right.

Look, I'm not saying we ought not have a dialogue. I think a dialogue is important. But I think a dialogue has got to be — the foundation of which has got to start in a fair way.

GINGRICH: Right.

HANNITY: And it's almost like if you begin a dialogue with OK, the Tea Party is racist, the Tea Party, you know — the Tea Party members uttered these racial epithets when there's no evidence, seems to me that you're starting out at a decided disadvantage.

GINGRICH: Sure.

HANNITY: If you don't demand honesty up front and an apology before the dialogue begins.

GINGRICH: Well, I like to — I think we have a nice test that came on your show tonight. Do they have the courage — the NAACP — to apologize for the racism in this person's comments at an NAACP banquet? Pretty good test.

HANNITY: All right. We'll come back. We have a lot more with former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, coming up after the break.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

HANNITY: And we continue now with former Speaker of the House, Fox News contributor, Newt Gingrich is with us.

All right, Mr. Speaker, we had the NAACP. We had what they said about the Tea Party. I think obviously an attempt — they support the Democratic Party — 106 days out of an election to energize the base.

The president. He went out and he'd started referring to the GOP as being the party of the rich because he says Republicans don't want to extend unemployment benefits. The reality is Republicans do support extending unemployment benefits. They want it paid for. They've already supported an extension for 99 weeks.

And by the way, the president doesn't need any Republican votes to pass the bill anyway. So is this — is this what we can expect for the next 106 days?

GINGRICH: Sure. Look, if you watch what Harry Reid is trying to do to Sharron Angle in Nevada. What you're going to see everywhere in the country is desperately dishonest, and I think consistently demagogue attacks, because they know that if there's any kind of a fair fight they're going to get badly defeated.

The president sadly is the opposite of Ronald Reagan. Ronald Reagan led by telling the American people the truth, by rallying them to the facts and by encouraging their better instincts.

The president seems to have a really unusual desire to divide the country and a really deep need to blame somebody else for his own failures. And as a result, you get this kind of Rose Garden comment.

HANNITY: Yes.

GINGRICH: The fact is, if this president cared about getting money to the unemployed, all he has to agree to is a one percent reduction in his budget across the board and that would pay for —

HANNITY: Yes.

GINGRICH: — everything he wants to send. But he does — what he wants to do is borrow from your children and your grandchildren so that we will pay interest on the debt forever, so that he can send out money that is unpaid for, that increases the federal deficit even beyond the already gigantic amounts.

HANNITY: All right, so —

GINGRICH: And I think that's just fundamentally, morally wrong.

HANNITY: So what you're saying for the next 106 days we can expect a ton of class warfare rhetoric, demagoguery as you just pointed out, and demonization, et cetera, character assassination, maybe some supportive groups playing the race card because they can't run on their record? That's what's the next 106 days are going to be like? This is going to be all we see?

GINGRICH: Look — I think the Democratic Party counterattack — to use the language you just kind of packaged nicely. If you assume dishonesty, distortion and demagoguery, you have a reasonably good idea what Harry Reid's campaign is going to be like.

Because of the election choice in Nevada at 14.5 percent unemployment is between a job killing Harry Reid record and a job creating Sharron Angle proposal. He's going to get beat so badly that you won't even be able to see him.

Therefore he is — he's raising — he just went to Canada to raise money from trial lawyers in an international meeting.

HANNITY: All right, so —

GINGRICH: This guy is going to pour on negative ads. Every Democrat in the country will imitate Harry Reid.

HANNITY: Yes. I agree and I have a friend of mine running for Congress and he's already experiencing it. Guy votes with Nancy Pelosi 99 percent of the time, the only thing he wants to do is attack you and me and Mark Levin and anybody else, which is interesting.

The question is, will this tactic be successful?

GINGRICH: No. No.

HANNITY: And — and how do you recommend — you're great at politics. How do you recommend Republicans counter that?

GINGRICH: First of all, Sean.

HANNITY: Yes?

GINGRICH: If you voted 99 percent with Nancy Pelosi —

HANNITY: Yes?

GINGRICH: Wouldn't you want to be attacking all day every day?

HANNITY: Yes.

GINGRICH: I mean do you want to defend that record?

HANNITY: No.

GINGRICH: I — I was out last week in — for Brad Zaun in Des Moines. His opponent voted 98 percent with Nancy Pelosi and all he has to say is, you know, San Francisco doesn't deserve an Iowa representative. Iowa needs an Iowa representative. And that's the whole campaign.

HANNITY: I think that's the whole campaign. I agree.

GINGRICH: I believe the key to the fall election is very simple. There are job creators and there are job killers. We absolute proof that from the time Pelosi and Reid took over in January of 2007 the Democratic Congress has been killing jobs. It continues to kill jobs. This economy is not going to recover. We just saw a — we just saw a huge oil rig leave the Gulf to go to Egypt with high paying jobs. We had a company announce over the weekend — think about this quote — "because of political instability in the United States, we are moving our rig to the Congo —

HANNITY: Yes.

GINGRICH: ...to drill for oil." So the president is exporting jobs. He's doing a great job of creating jobs for China. The president has done a great job creating jobs for Egypt and the Congo. He just isn't doing a great job creating jobs for Americans.

HANNITY: No, we're losing those jobs. All right, but then —

GINGRICH: So that's the choice. You want to be job creator or a job killer. If you want to be a job killer, vote Democrat. If you want a job creator, vote Republican. I think that's the fall campaign.

HANNITY: All right. I agree with you. Don't think that I didn't notice you dropped in Des Moines, Iowa, and your latest trip to the great state of Iowa. And in between I know you snuck in a trip to New Hampshire. And I think I saw your schedule, you're going back to South Carolina.

GINGRICH: I was in South Carolina Friday a week ago —

HANNITY: Now hang on a second. Now wait a minute, we've been friends a long time. You have given more direct answers to people in the liberal media than to me. I want to know what's Newt Gingrich's plan.

GINGRICH: Our plan is for Calista and me to sit down with our family in February or March.

HANNITY: That's not the answer I want.

GINGRICH: And make a decision. But I promise you, Sean —

HANNITY: Well, how come —

(CROSSTALK)

GINGRICH: Because they printed the same thing I've said to you for nine months. What can I tell you? But I think it had — because it had AP Des Moines.

HANNITY: Yes.

GINGRICH: It suddenly got bigger coverage. I mean if it had said AP Long Island it wouldn't had been the same effect.

HANNITY: It would said, Newt and Hannity, it probably wouldn't had been the same. But then again maybe they're mad at me at The New York Times because I don't respond to their phone calls. You do.

GINGRICH: Yes, I guessed that could be the whole problem.

HANNITY: That's could be the whole thing right there. All right.

GINGRICH: But I promise you in February or March, I'll be on the show. We'll talk about it.

HANNITY: And you'll announce here, either way?

GINGRICH: Well I'll certainly talk about it.

(LAUGHTER)

HANNITY: I love being able to pin you down. All right. Former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich.

— *Watch "Hannity" weeknights at 9 p.m. ET!*

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:54 AM
To: Silverman, Steve
Cc: Jett, Carole
Subject: Re: Can you call me when you receive this this morning?

I think we're okay.

From: Silverman, Steve
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 10:46:14 2010
Subject: RE: Can you call me when you receive this this morning?
For some reason, I'm just now seeing this. I understand Fred is in your office. Let me know if you need me to participate as well. I'm here for another hour. Thanks

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:33 AM
To: Silverman, Steve
Cc: Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta
Subject: Can you call me when you receive this this morning?

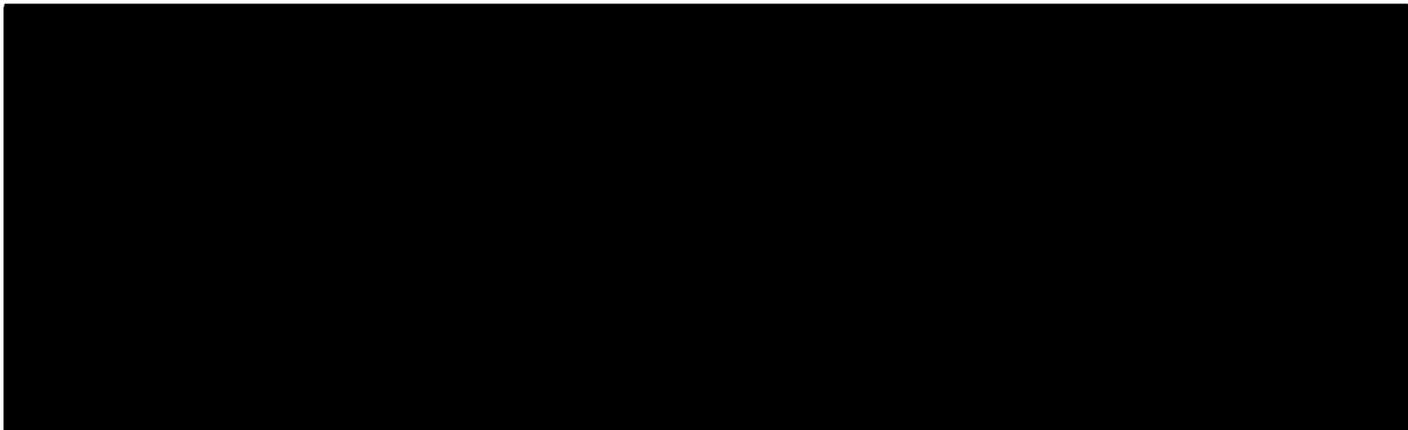
I'm sorry to interrupt your time with your mom, but have a pressing series of questions related to the GA situation. My numbers follow:

Cell - [REDACTED]
Direct - [REDACTED]
Office (Janice can find me) - 202-720-7095

John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:57 AM
To: Mather, Chris



John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osee.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:57 AM
To: Mather, Chris



John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:17 AM
To: Hannigan, Erin; Harden, Krysta
Subject: RE: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Fitz now asking about the amount of money that the Southern Cooperatives receives and for what – just out of curiosity – how do we communicate to grant recipients as to what is acceptable and what is not. How shall I proceed?

From: Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 9:23 PM
To: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Subject: Fw: Georgia Rural Development State Director

More from Fitz.

From: Elder, Fitzhugh (Appropriations)
To: Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 21:21:10 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director
Erin,

Can you tell me if USDA, under Secretary Vilsack, has accepted any other resignations or has it terminated any other RD State Director or FSA SED for similar reasons? What are the terms of Ms. Sherrod's resignation? Has USDA identified the producer she discriminated against? Are they offering any assistance to that individual? What is USDA's policy when discrimination has occurred? Has this been referred to the DoJ? Will it be? Will USDA provide any training to the federal employees in Georgia to make sure they understand the law and their responsibilities?

Fitz Elder
[REDACTED] direct

From: Hannigan, Erin <Erin.Hannigan@osec.usda.gov>
To: Elder, Fitzhugh (Appropriations)
Sent: Mon Jul 19 19:41:21 2010
Subject: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Fitz,

Secretary Vilsack has issued the following statement with regards to Shirley Sherrod, the State Director of Rural Development in Georgia:

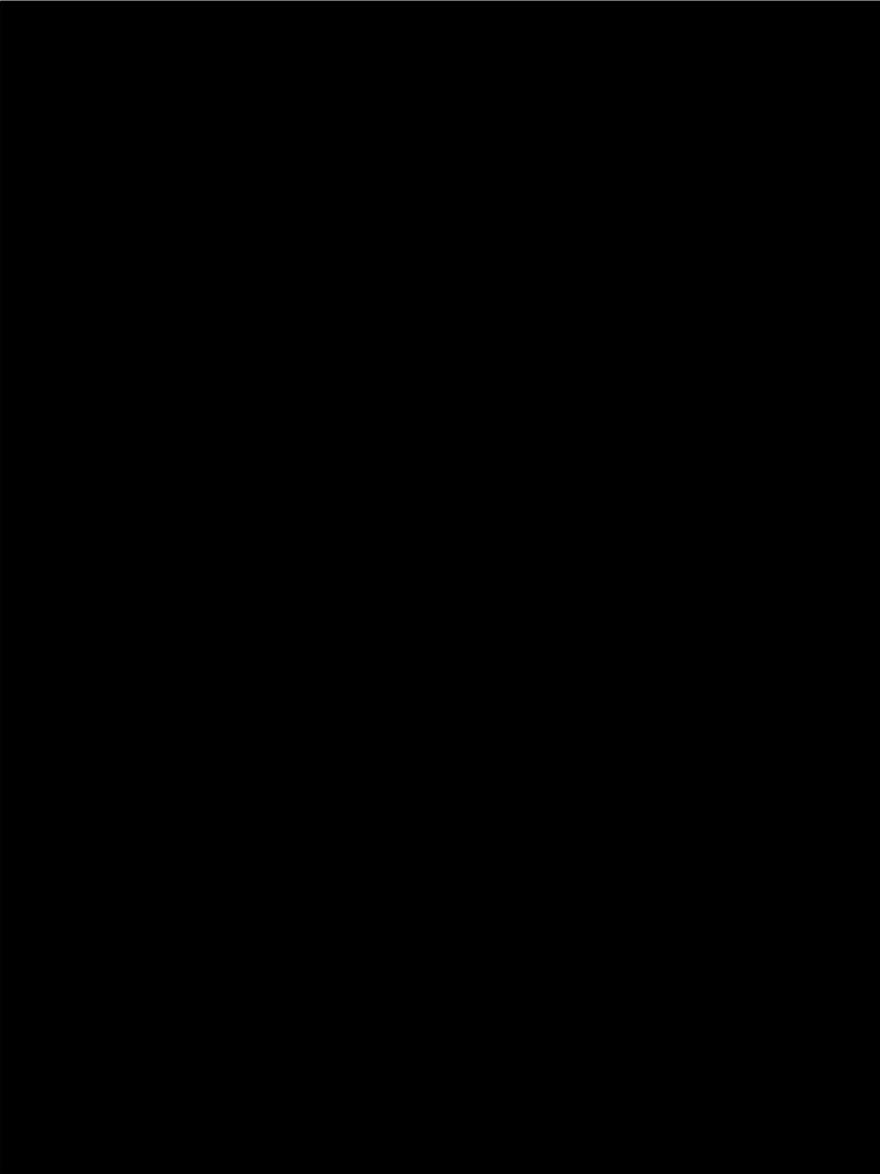
"Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously."

Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations

United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:34 AM
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Jett, Carole; Hannigan, Erin; Williamson, Todd; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Cluthe, Sally
Subject: RE: Employee Email



John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:57 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin
Subject: Re: Guidance for inquiries

My office?

From: Mather, Chris
To: Jett, Carole; Berge, John; Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 11:45:52 2010
Subject: Re: Guidance for inquiries

Where
Chris Mather

From: Jett, Carole
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 11:28:23 2010
Subject: Re: Guidance for inquiries

Let's get back together.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA
[REDACTED]

From: Mather, Chris
To: Jett, Carole; Berge, John; Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 11:25:34 2010
Subject: Guidance for inquiries

Do we need to tell people where to send inquiries?

Chris Mather

Director of Communications

USDA

1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 402A

Washington, DC 20250

202-690-0060

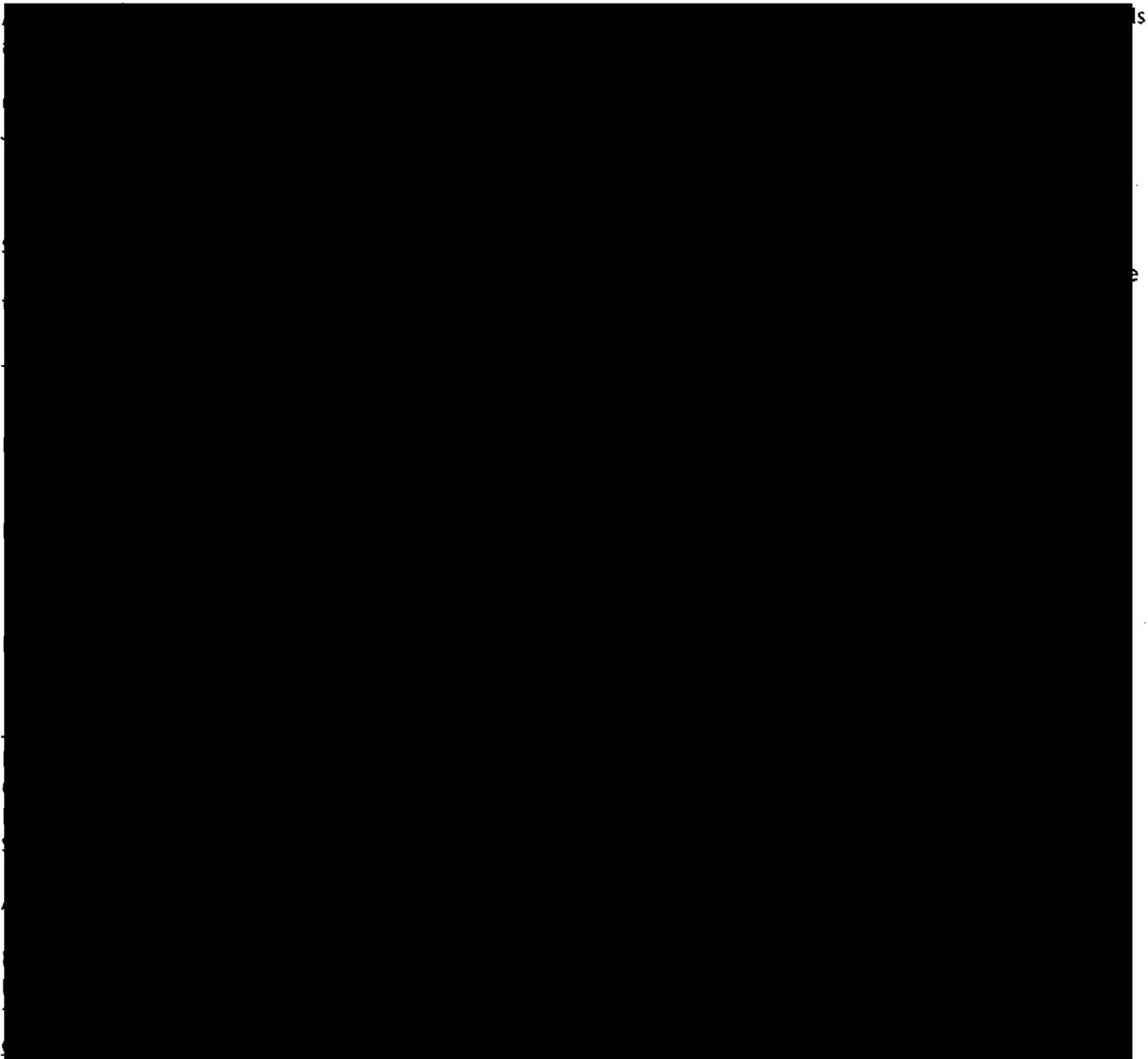
chris.mather@usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:25 PM
To: Cluthe, Sally; Harden, Krysta
Subject: RE: Quick Update

Thanks Sally.

From: Cluthe, Sally
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:24 PM
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Subject: Quick Update





John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:33 PM
To: Harden, Krysta; Hannigan, Erin; Williamson, Todd
Subject: RE: Georgia Rural Development State Director

[REDACTED]

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:18 AM
To: Berge, John; Hannigan, Erin
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

[REDACTED]

From: Berge, John
To: Hannigan, Erin; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 11:16:42 2010
Subject: RE: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Fitz now asking about the amount of money that the Southern Cooperatives receives and for what – just out of curiosity – how do we communicate to grant recipients as to what is acceptable and what is not. How shall I proceed?

From: Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 9:23 PM
To: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Subject: Fw: Georgia Rural Development State Director

More from Fitz.

From: Elder, Fitzhugh (Appropriations)
To: Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 21:21:10 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Erin,

Can you tell me if USDA, under Secretary Vilsack, has accepted any other resignations or has it terminated any other RD State Director or FSA SED for similar reasons? What are the terms of Ms. Sherrod's resignation? Has USDA identified the producer she discriminated against? Are they offering any assistance to that individual? What is USDA's policy when discrimination has occurred? Has this been referred to the DoJ? Will it be? Will USDA provide any training to the federal employees in Georgia to make sure they understand the law and their responsibilities?

Fitz Elder
[REDACTED] direct

From: Hannigan, Erin <Erin.Hannigan@osec.usda.gov>
To: Elder, Fitzhugh (Appropriations)

Sent: Mon Jul 19 19:41:21 2010

Subject: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Fitz,

Secretary Vilsack has issued the following statement with regards to Shirley Sherrod, the State Director of Rural Development in Georgia:

“Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod’s resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.”

Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:38 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: in case he's interested...

Ben Jealous – Wendy Hamilton whamilton@NAACPNET.org

Hillary Shelton - Adam Lee alee@NAACPNET.org

Marc Morial (Urban League) – Maria Fernandez [REDACTED] mariafernandez@nul.org

John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:48 PM
To: Hannigan, Erin; janeanna_harris@agriculture.senate.gov
Cc: Williamson, Todd
Subject: RE: georgia

Jane Anna – just got this far through my emails. Yes, we became aware yesterday when it started circulating. Let me know if you have additional questions.

From: Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:27 AM
To: Berge, John
Cc: Williamson, Todd
Subject: Fw: georgia

From: Harris, Jane Anna (Agriculture)
To: Williamson, Todd; Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 10:15:47 2010
Subject: georgia

Todd and Erin-

I've gotten the statement from the Secretary accepting Shirley Sherrod's resignation in Georgia. Did the Department just become aware of this video yesterday, when it started circulating the web? That seems to be when it first surfaced to everyone, but just checking. thank you so much.

Jane Anna Harris
Professional Staff | Senate Agriculture Committee
328-A Russell Building | Washington, DC 20510
T: 202-224-2035 | F: 202-224-1725
janeanna_harris@agriculture.senate.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:53 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: can you resend me a clean copy of the S statement on Sherrod?

John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:54 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: RE: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod

Thanks.

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:54 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod

Please see below for statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack regarding Shirley Sherrod's resignation yesterday:

Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:56 PM
To: dexter_pearson@agriculture.senate.gov
Cc: Mather, Chris
Subject: FW: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod
Attachments: Talking Points Sherrod.docx

Dexter – attached are our talking points and below is the Secretary's statement that he issued.

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:54 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod

Please see below for statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack regarding Shirley Sherrod's resignation yesterday:

Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:17 PM
To: Mather, Chris

Shirley Sherrod: Racist or scapegoat?



Were the administration and the NAACP too hasty in their reactions to Shirley Sherrod, the Department of Agriculture employee who resigned (i.e., was fired) for allegedly racist comments?

A [video clip](#) posted online Monday shows Sherrod delivering a speech at a March NAACP banquet, where she talks about her failure to help a white farmer who was in danger of losing his farm. Her suggestion: If he'd been black, she would have moved heaven and earth to help him. "There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, in accepting Sherrod's resignation. The NAACP, which last week accused the Tea Party of racism, rushed out a searing condemnation of Sherrod: "We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers," said NAACP president Benjamin Jealous.

But I'm not so sure that this apparently quick and sharp rush to judgment was fair. The incident Sherrod recounts occurred more than 20 years ago, before she was employed by the federal government and while she worked for a Georgia organization that assisted farmers. One of the online snippets shows her all but saying she was wrong and explaining that the episode helped her to understand that race should not have played a role in the matter. Sherrod has since told [CNN](#) and the [Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#) that she worked for some two years to help the white man save his farm and that she and the man's family ultimately became friends. The wife of the white farmer, who is deceased, has apparently confirmed Sherrod's version of events.

Did the Ag Department fully vet this matter before ordering Sherrod's removal? Did the White House or its political operatives have a hand in this personnel decision? Was Sherrod allowed to fully tell her side of the story before being axed? I'd like some answers.

By Eva Rodriguez | July 20, 2010; 12:38 PM ET
Categories: [Rodriguez](#) | Tags: [Eva Rodriguez](#)

John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:30 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris
Subject: RE: Atlanta NPR Stn (Charles Edwards): Interview on Shirley Sherrod

Extended video?

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:26 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Subject: RE: Atlanta NPR Stn (Charles Edwards): Interview on Shirley Sherrod

Looping Krysta-

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:26 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Harless, Angela -USDA; Berge, John
Subject: Atlanta NPR Stn (Charles Edwards): Interview on Shirley Sherrod

FYI on another request

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Charles Edwards [mailto:cedwards@pba.org]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:22 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Shirley Sherrod

WORKING ON A 3 PM DEADLINE

Name: Charles Edwards
Organization : 90.1 FM WABE in Atlanta (NPR)
Contact: [REDACTED]

I would like to do a phone interview about why Mrs. Sherrod no longer works for the department.

Thanks!

-Charles Edwards

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:43 PM
To: Pearson, Dexter (Agriculture)
Cc: Mather, Chris
Subject: RE: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod

Correct.

From: Pearson, Dexter (Agriculture) [mailto:Dexter_Pearson@agriculture.senate.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:42 PM
To: Berge, John
Cc: Mather, Chris
Subject: RE: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod

Thanks for the information.

So you guys don't have much more than this at this point?

dp

Dexter L. Pearson
Professional Staff
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry
Chairman Blanche L. Lincoln
328A Senate Russell Building
Washington, DC 20510
P: 202-224-2035
F: 202-228-2125

From: Berge, John [mailto:John.Berge@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:56 PM
To: Pearson, Dexter (Agriculture)
Cc: Mather, Chris
Subject: FW: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod

Dexter – attached are our talking points and below is the Secretary's statement that he issued.

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:54 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod

Please see below for statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack regarding Shirley Sherrod's resignation yesterday:

Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered

civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]

Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:11 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: FOX America Live w/ Megan Kelley (Megan Brown): Interview with USDA rep before 3 p.m. today

Did they ever run the extended tape?

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:05 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Subject: FOX America Live w/ Megan Kelley (Megan Brown): Interview with USDA rep before 3 p.m. today

FYI- Fox America Live with Megan Kelley is hoping for an interview with someone in the next 50 minutes or so. I mentioned that it was very short notice and that we're inundated with requests.

FOX America Live w/ Megan Kelley- Megan Brown


megan.brown@foxnews.com

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: 
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:12 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole
Subject: RE: Can we huddle - WH just called.

Yep - where?

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:12 PM
To: Berge, John; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole
Subject: Can we huddle - WH just called.

Chris Mather
Director of Communications
USDA
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 402A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0060
chris.mather@usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:18 PM
To: Harden, Krysta; Cluthe, Sally
Subject: Fw: Quick Update

Resending.

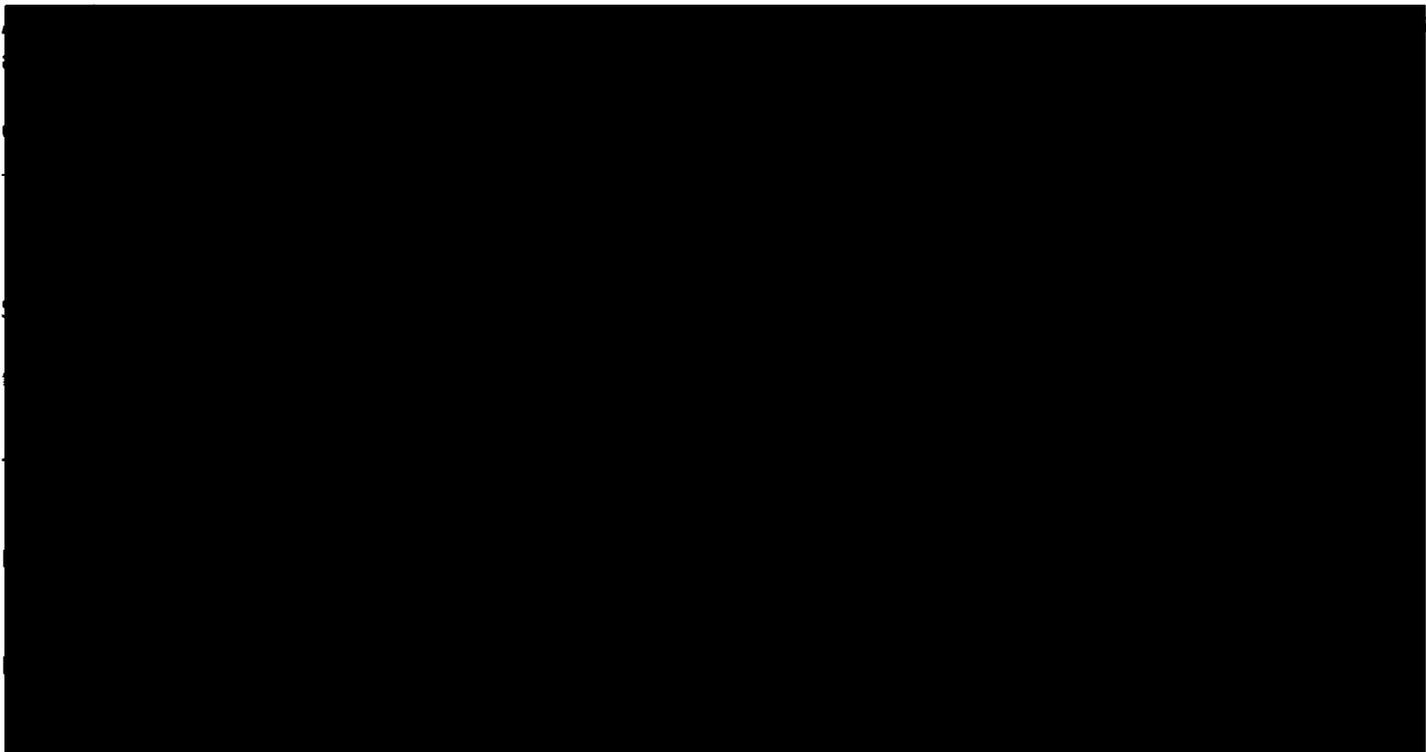
From: Cluthe, Sally
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 12:28:02 2010
Subject: RE: Quick Update
Krysta – will you make sure S does the 2:30pm call?

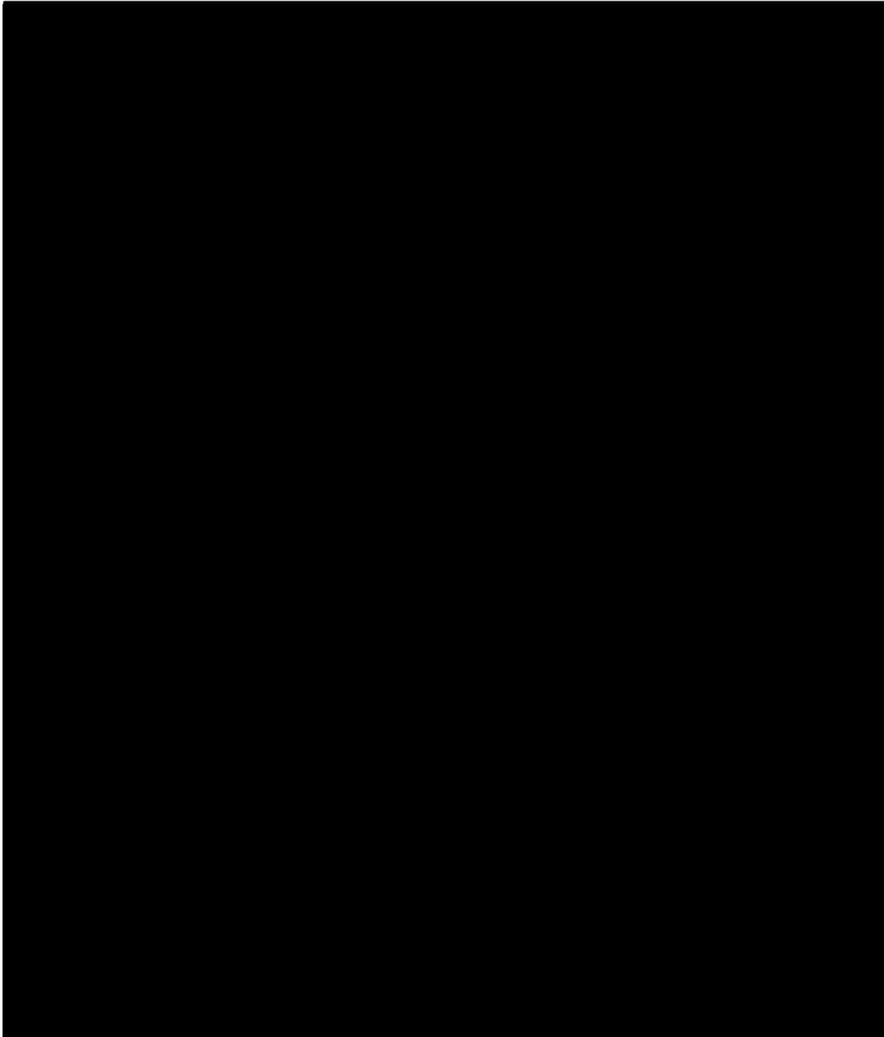
Thanks

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:25 PM
To: Cluthe, Sally; Harden, Krysta
Subject: RE: Quick Update

Thanks Sally.

From: Cluthe, Sally
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:24 PM
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Subject: Quick Update





John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:18 PM
To: Harden, Krysta; Jett, Carole
Subject: Re: Just left message for Cheryl

Good.

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Jett, Carole
Cc: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 14:17:19 2010
Subject: Just left message for Cheryl

Just told her to hang in there

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:28 PM
To: Maisel, Chad; May, Tina
Subject: On phone with S

Am going to be late or won't be there at all.

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:28 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Mather, Chris
Subject: Re: Shirley Sherrod comments

[REDACTED]

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 14:27:34 2010
Subject: Fw: Shirley Sherrod comments

[REDACTED]

From: Clarke, Carlisle (Agriculture)
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 14:25:13 2010
Subject: Shirley Sherrod comments

Hey Krysta – do y'all have an official release or any briefing materials on the Shirley Sherrod situation? We haven't gotten any press requests or anything yet, but I wanted to make sure we were up to speed.

Thanks!

Carlisle S. Clarke

U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
Ranking Member Saxby Chambliss
328-A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
(202) 224-2035

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:36 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Cluthe, Sally
Subject: Re: Need numbers and times for others

Sally - you're on it?

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John
Cc: Cluthe, Sally
Sent: Tue Jul 20 14:34:36 2010
Subject: Need numbers and times for others

Besides Clyburn and Bishop

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:43 PM
To: Harden, Krysta; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Cc: Cluthe, Sally
Subject: Re: On with Clyburn now

Keep us posted.

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Cc: Cluthe, Sally
Sent: Tue Jul 20 14:39:48 2010
Subject: On with Clyburn now

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:45 PM
To: Harden, Krysta; Cluthe, Sally
Subject: Re: Need numbers and times for others

Let us know how we can follow up if necessary.

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Cluthe, Sally; Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 14:43:07 2010
Subject: Re: Need numbers and times for others

Just talked to Clyburn. He was supportive. The S will call Bishop now. Not sure about others

From: Cluthe, Sally
To: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 14:40:10 2010
Subject: RE: Need numbers and times for others

James Clyburn – Scheduler – Alexandra Russell – 225-3315

Cong. Clyburn is available at 2:30pm.

Please call 202-226-3210 (Whip Office). Kelly Sheraton will connect the call from there.

Sanford Bishop – Scheduler – Martina Morgan – 225-3631

Cong. Bishop is available at anytime. His cell # [REDACTED] Martina (202-225-3631) is happy to help make this happen anytime if needed.

John Lewis – Scheduler – Jacob Gillison – 225-3801

Spoke with Jacob. Waiting to hear back.

David Scott – Scheduler – Angie Borja – 225-2939

Spoke with Angie. Waiting to hear back.

I gave Krysta's cell # - Cong. is going to step out of his mark-up.

Hank Johnson – Scheduler – Ebony Simpson – 225-1605

Cong. Johnson is in the District. **His primary is TODAY.**

His cell # is [REDACTED]

Barbara Lee (Chairwoman) – Scheduler – ~~Allyson Feeman – 225-2665;~~

Tatiana Kalinga – 202-225-2661

On hold as I type this...

John Conyers – Scheduler – 225-5126

Bennie Thompson – Scheduler – Andrea Lee – 225-5876

GK Butterfield – Scheduler – Darnise Nelson – 225-3101

Maxine Waters – Scheduler – Angela Master – 225-2201

Sheila Jackson-Lee – Scheduler – 225-3816

Association of Black Legislators:

Rep. Calvin Smyre (D-Georgia House of Reps)

President

706-649-5533 office

calvinsmyre@synovus.com

Lakimba DeSadier

Executive Director

202-624-5457 office

cell

lakimba@nbcsl.org

Rep. Helen Miller (D-Iowa House of Reps)

Chair of NBCSL Agriculture Committee

cell

helen.miller@legis.state.ia.us

He may potentially want to reach out to Jesse Jackson and/or Al Sharpton

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta

Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:35 PM

To: Berge, John
Cc: Cluthe, Sally
Subject: Need numbers and times for others

Besides Clyburn and Bishop

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:19 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: Re: Shirley Sherrod comments

[REDACTED]

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 14:27:34 2010
Subject: Fw: Shirley Sherrod comments

[REDACTED]

From: Clarke, Carlisle (Agriculture)
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 14:25:13 2010
Subject: Shirley Sherrod comments

Hey Krysta – do y'all have an official release or any briefing materials on the Shirley Sherrod situation? We haven't gotten any press requests or anything yet, but I wanted to make sure we were up to speed.

Thanks!

Carlisle S. Clarke

U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
Ranking Member Saxby Chambliss
328-A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
(202) 224-2035

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:37 PM
To: May, Tina; Harden, Krysta
Subject: Spoke with MSP

Providing talkers and statement(s) to her later.

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:46 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Washo, Kevin
Subject: Re: Hey

Rural Directors are Schedule C Presidential Appointees. Their appointments go through Presidential Personnel.

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 15:43:55 2010
Subject: Hey

Just to confirm that Rural Directors are appointed by the Pres not just the Secy.

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:47 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Washo, Kevin
Subject: Re: Hey

CNN just read new statement.

----- Original Message -----
From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 15:45:50 2010
Subject: Re: Hey

Rural Directors are Schedule C Presidential Appointees. Their appointments go through Presidential Personnel.

----- Original Message -----
From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 15:43:55 2010
Subject: Hey

Just to confirm that Rural Directors are appointed by the Pres not just the Secy.

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:06 PM
To: marthascott_poindexter@agriculture.senate.gov
Cc: Harden, Krysta
Subject: GA
Attachments: Talking Points Sherrod.docx

The Secretary just issued this statement in re: the situation in GA, and the talking points that we are using are attached.

Yesterday, I asked for and accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation for two reasons. First, for the past 18 months, we have been working to turn the page on the sordid civil rights record at USDA and this controversy could make it more difficult to move forward on correcting injustices. Second, state rural development directors make many decisions and are often called to use their discretion. The controversy surrounding her comments would create situations where her decisions, rightly or wrongly, would be called into question making it difficult for her to bring jobs to Georgia.

Our policy is clear. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA and we strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have a duty to ensure that when we provide services to the American people we do so in an equitable manner. But equally important is our duty to instill confidence in the American people that we are fair service providers.

John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:27 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: Fw: Chairman Towns

I can handle this, unless you/secretary wants to call.

----- Original Message -----

From: Wilson, Denise R. <[REDACTED]>
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:21:22 2010
Subject: Chairman Towns

His staff director, Ron Stroman just called. Towns wants to be briefed on Shirley Sherrod.
Ron's number is [REDACTED]

Denise Wilson

Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:35 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie; Harden, Krysta; O'Brien, Doug
Subject: RE: Cnn interview

I need to talk to Krysta - have her call my cell. 

-----Original Message-----

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:34 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; O'Brien, Doug
Subject: Cnn interview

Cnn crew was on farm when we arrived. Secretary did interview hitting key points that this was about making sure usda wasn't distracted from correcting injustices of the past, and that it is important that we are singularly focused on job creation and that this could cause people to question and undermine decisions in georgia. He said he doesn't believe she is racist, this was about poor word choice. He was asked about wh involvement and he said he didn't talk to anyone at wh, that he took action after learning about the situation.

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:36 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie; Harden, Krysta; O'Brien, Doug
Subject: RE: Cnn interview

Running it with Shirley on the phone. Shirley reacting real time. Creepy.

-----Original Message-----

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:34 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; O'Brien, Doug
Subject: Cnn interview

Cnn crew was on farm when we arrived. Secretary did interview hitting key points that this was about making sure usda wasn't distracted from correcting injustices of the past, and that it is important that we are singularly focused on job creation and that this could cause people to question and undermine decisions in georgia. He said he doesn't believe she is racist, this was about poor word choice. He was asked about wh involvement and he said he didn't talk to anyone at wh, that he took action after learning about the situation.

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:46 PM
To: Harden, Krysta; Cluthe, Sally; Mather, Chris
Subject: Towns

I have a call into Chairman Towns Staff Director Ron Stroman, and offered up a call with him and the Secretary this evening by voicemail.

I also called CBC E.D. Patrice Willoughby and left a message that in case there was followup from Chairwoman Lee, she could call me directly.

Left them both my cell and direct line.

John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 5:11 PM
To: Harden, Krysta; Cluthe, Sally
Subject: Fw: Chairman Towns

[REDACTED] Numbers below.

From: Wilson, Denise R.
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 17:07:00 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns
[REDACTED] Towns mobile

[REDACTED] Ron mobile
Denise Wilson
Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

From: Berge, John <John.Berge@osec.usda.gov>
To: Wilson, Denise R.
Sent: Tue Jul 20 17:03:09 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns

Concur, and that is what I offered on voicemail, but need best number for later tonight. S is in OH travelling and won't be available to call until after 6 or 630 EDT. Do you have a good number?

From: Wilson, Denise R.
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:58:25 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns
Maybe the secretary should just put in a call to Towns. Maybe Towns/ Ron feel left out on the calls.
Denise Wilson
Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

From: Wilson, Denise R.
To: 'John.Berge@osec.usda.gov' <John.Berge@osec.usda.gov>
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:48:12 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns

Good. Not sure why Ron wants to make an issue of this without the facts
Denise Wilson
Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

From: Berge, John <John.Berge@osec.usda.gov>
To: Wilson, Denise R.
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:37:37 2010
Subject: RE: Chairman Towns

They are speaking at 515.

From: Wilson, Denise R. [mailto:]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:31 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns

Did he speak with Barbara Lee
Denise Wilson
Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

From: Berge, John <John.Berge@osec.usda.gov>
To: Wilson, Denise R.
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:29:27 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns

The opposite. The Secretary spoke with several members of the CBC today who were all supportive.

From: Wilson, Denise R.
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:28:00 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns
Ron is way too wound up on this. He's saying the CBC will be all over this. What have you heard?
Denise Wilson
Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

From: Berge, John <John.Berge@osec.usda.gov>
To: Wilson, Denise R.
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:26:03 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns

Got it and will follow up.

----- Original Message -----

From: Wilson, Denise R. < >
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:21:22 2010
Subject: Chairman Towns

His staff director, Ron Stroman just called. Towns wants to be briefed on Shirley Sherrod.
Ron's number is
Denise Wilson
Special Assistant to the President

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 5:11 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin
Subject: Re:

Don't know.

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin; Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 17:07:37 2010

Did Shirley ever send us whole tape?
Chris Mather

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:08 PM
To: [REDACTED] Cluthe, Sally
Subject: Re: My battery died on my work email

Towns

----- Original Message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: Cluthe, Sally
Cc: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 17:53:47 2010
Subject: Re: My battery died on my work email

Calling Chairman Conyers now.
Who besides Mr Lewis am I missing?
Sent from my Verizon Wireless BlackBerry

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Date: Tue, 20 Jul 2010 21:52:04
To: Cluthe, Sally<Sally.Cluthe@osec.usda.gov>
Reply-To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: My battery died on my work email

No called Doug's phone but he was still in round table. Should we call him?

-----Original Message-----

From: Cluthe, Sally
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Berge, John
Sent: Jul 20, 2010 5:46 PM
Subject: RE: My battery died on my work email

Did he speak with John Lewis?

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 5:46 PM
To: Cluthe, Sally
Cc: Berge, John
Subject: My battery died on my work email

If you need me use this address.
S just talked with Thompson, tried Lee again, talking with towns now Sent from my Verizon Wireless BlackBerry

Sent from my Verizon Wireless BlackBerry

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:37 PM
To: 'brian_baenig@agriculture.senate.gov'; 'robert_holifield@agriculture.senate.gov'
Subject: Fw: GA
Attachments: Talking Points Sherrod.docx

Gentleman-sorry for the delay on this. I thought they had been sent to you earlier. Also sending the Statement from the Secretary.

From: Berge, John
To: marthascott_poindexter@agriculture.senate.gov
Cc: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:05:54 2010
Subject: GA

The Secretary just issued this statement in re: the situation in GA, and the talking points that we are using are attached.

Yesterday, I asked for and accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation for two reasons. First, for the past 18 months, we have been working to turn the page on the sordid civil rights record at USDA and this controversy could make it more difficult to move forward on correcting injustices. Second, state rural development directors make many decisions and are often called to use their discretion. The controversy surrounding her comments would create situations where her decisions, rightly or wrongly, would be called into question making it difficult for her to bring jobs to Georgia.

Our policy is clear. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA and we strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have a duty to ensure that when we provide services to the American people we do so in an equitable manner. But equally important is our duty to instill confidence in the American people that we are fair service providers.

John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:40 PM
To: 'robert_holifield@agriculture.senate.gov'; 'brian_baenig@agriculture.senate.gov'
Subject: Fw: Statement by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack

From: Mather, Chris
To: Berge, John; Mather, Chris
Sent: Tue Jul 20 18:38:13 2010
Subject: Statement by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack

Statement by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack

Yesterday, I asked for and accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation for two reasons. First, for the past 18 months, we have been working to turn the page on the sordid civil rights record at USDA and this controversy could make it more difficult to move forward on correcting injustices. Second, state rural development directors make many decisions and are often called to use their discretion. The controversy surrounding her comments would create situations where her decisions, rightly or wrongly, would be called into question making it difficult for her to bring jobs to Georgia.

Our policy is clear. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA and we strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have a duty to ensure that when we provide services to the American people we do so in an equitable manner. But equally important is our duty to instill confidence in the American people that we are fair service providers.

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:48 PM
To: [REDACTED]

S called Ben Jealous just after you gave us the number - FYI.

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:58 PM
To: Hannigan, Erin
Subject: Re: hey

No. Who was the member - what channel?

From: Hannigan, Erin
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 18:54:21 2010
Subject: hey

Did you see the most recent interview that included a member of congress weighing in on this?

Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:59 PM
To: Hannigan, Erin
Subject: Re: hey

What did she say?

From: Hannigan, Erin
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 18:58:02 2010
Subject: RE: hey
Msnbc- Sheila Jackson Lee. Are you still in the office?

Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:58 PM
To: Hannigan, Erin
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Sent: Tue Jul 20 18:54:21 2010
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Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:00 PM
To: Harden, Krysta

Did he talk to Jackson-Lee?

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:00 PM
To: Hannigan, Erin
Subject: Re: hey

I'm in mathers office. I'm here.

From: Berge, John
To: Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 18:59:18 2010
Subject: Re: hey

What did she say?

From: Hannigan, Erin
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 18:58:02 2010
Subject: RE: hey
Msnbc- Sheila Jackson Lee. Are you still in the office?

Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

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Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:58 PM
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Sent: Tue Jul 20 18:54:21 2010
Subject: hey
Did you see the most recent interview that included a member of congress weighing in on this?

Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:02 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: Fw: hey

Fyi

From: Hannigan, Erin
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 19:01:37 2010
Subject: RE: hey

She started by saying how much she liked Secretary Vilsack and respected him, etc. MSNBC then talked about how she was unfairly treated and everyone jumped to conclusions. Then when pressed about the truth behind the story and whether or not the Secretary should reconsider the resignation, she said that she thought it did warrant reconsideration.

This was moments after NAACP's updated statement was released.

Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:59 PM
To: Hannigan, Erin
Subject: Re: hey

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To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 18:58:02 2010
Subject: RE: hey
Msnbc- Sheila Jackson Lee. Are you still in the office?

Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:58 PM
To: Hannigan, Erin
Subject: Re: hey

No. Who was the member - what channel?

From: Hannigan, Erin

To: Berge, John

Sent: Tue Jul 20 18:54:21 2010

Subject: hey

Did you see the most recent interview that included a member of congress weighing in on this?

Erin Hannigan

Office of Congressional Relations

United States Department of Agriculture

202.720.7095

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:06 PM
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Mather, Chris
Subject: Fw: hey

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 19:02:24 2010
Subject: Fw: hey

Fyi

From: Hannigan, Erin
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 19:01:37 2010
Subject: RE: hey

She started by saying how much she liked Secretary Vilsack and respected him, etc. MSNBC then talked about how she was unfairly treated and everyone jumped to conclusions. Then when pressed about the truth behind the story and whether or not the Secretary should reconsider the resignation, she said that she thought it did warrant reconsideration.

This was moments after NAACP's updated statement was released.

Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:59 PM
To: Hannigan, Erin
Subject: Re: hey

What did she say?

From: Hannigan, Erin
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 18:58:02 2010
Subject: RE: hey
Msnbc- Sheila Jackson Lee. Are you still in the office?

Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:58 PM
To: Hannigan, Erin
Subject: Re: hey

No. Who was the member - what channel?

From: Hannigan, Erin
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 18:54:21 2010
Subject: hey
Did you see the most recent interview that included a member of congress weighing in on this?

Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:11 PM
To: Jeanquart, Bobbi; Williamson, Todd
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Thanks

From: Jeanquart, Bobbi
To: Williamson, Todd
Cc: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 19:09:56 2010
Subject: RE: Georgia Rural Development State Director



Roberta Jeanquart
Office of Assistant Secretary for Administration
bobbi.jeanquart@osec.usda.gov
Phone 202-720-3805
Cell 

From: Williamson, Todd
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 5:24 PM
To: Jeanquart, Bobbi
Cc: Berge, John
Subject: FW: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Bobbi,



C. Todd Williamson, III

Office of Congressional Relations
U.S. Department of Agriculture
(202) 720-7095

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:33 PM
To: Harden, Krysta; Hannigan, Erin; Williamson, Todd
Subject: RE: Georgia Rural Development State Director

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:18 AM
To: Berge, John; Hannigan, Erlin
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

[REDACTED]

From: Berge, John
To: Hannigan, Erin; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 11:16:42 2010
Subject: RE: Georgia Rural Development State Director

From: Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 9:23 PM
To: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Subject: Fw: Georgia Rural Development State Director

More from Fitz.

From: Elder, Fitzhugh (Appropriations)
To: Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 21:21:10 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director
Erin,

Can you tell me if USDA, under Secretary Vilsack, has accepted any other resignations or has it terminated any other RD State Director or FSA SED for similar reasons? What are the terms of Ms. Sherrod's resignation? Has USDA identified the producer she discriminated against? Are they offering any assistance to that individual? What is USDA's policy when discrimination has occurred? Has this been referred to the DoJ? Will it be? Will USDA provide any training to the federal employees in Georgia to make sure they understand the law and their responsibilities?

Fitz Elder
[REDACTED] direct

From: Hannigan, Erin <Erin.Hannigan@osec.usda.gov>
To: Elder, Fitzhugh (Appropriations)
Sent: Mon Jul 19 19:41:21 2010
Subject: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Fitz,

Secretary Vilsack has issued the following statement with regards to Shirley Sherrod, the State Director of Rural Development in Georgia:

"Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously."

Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:39 PM
To: Jett, Carole

Is S calling NAACP again?

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:54 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Hey

Ok. Can you talk?

----- Original Message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 19:49:05 2010
Subject: Hey

S took my bb to read stories. Will let you what he wants to do next.
Sent from my Verizon Wireless BlackBerry

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:56 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re:

He may call again.

From: Joe Leonard
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 19:54:43 2010
Subject: Re:
Thank you John.....

Sent from my iPhone

On Jul 20, 2010, at 6:47 PM, "Berge, John" <John.Berge@osec.usda.gov> wrote:

S called Ben Jealous just after you gave us the number - FYI.

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:02 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Hey

Ok

----- Original Message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:02:04 2010
Subject: Re: Hey

Not yet Secy is on phone

-----Original Message-----

From: Berge, John
To: [REDACTED]
Sent: Jul 20, 2010 7:53 PM
Subject: Re: Hey

Ok. Can you talk?

----- Original Message -----

From: [REDACTED]
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 19:49:05 2010
Subject: Hey

S took my bb to read stories. Will let you what he wants to do next.
Sent from my Verizon Wireless BlackBerry

Sent from my Verizon Wireless BlackBerry

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:11 PM
To: Mather, Chris

Call my cell



Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:18 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: Re: Jesse Jackson

Need to talk to you

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: O'Brien, Doug
Cc: Berge, John; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:15:32 2010
Subject: Re: Jesse Jackson

Secy talking with The Rev now

----- Original Message -----

From: O'Brien, Doug
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 19:49:19 2010
Subject: Jesse Jackson

John Mitchell with rev jackson just called my number.

He can connect the secr to rev jackson anytime. I think he expects it tonight.



Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:36 PM
To: Harden, Krysta; Jett, Carole; Mather, Chris
Cc: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: Re: Jesse Jackson

Keep us posted.

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Jett, Carole; Mather, Chris
Cc: Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:35:15 2010
Subject: Re: Jesse Jackson

Rahm calling Secy now

----- Original Message -----

From: Jett, Carole
To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Cc: Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:27:36 2010
Subject: Re: Jesse Jackson

Looping in Mather.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA
[REDACTED]

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: O'Brien, Doug
Cc: Berge, John; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:15:32 2010
Subject: Re: Jesse Jackson

Secy talking with The Rev now

----- Original Message -----

From: O'Brien, Doug
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 19:49:19 2010
Subject: Jesse Jackson

John Mitchell with rev jackson just called my number.

He can connect the secr to rev jackson anytime. I think he expects it tonight.
[REDACTED]

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:49 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: Re: Hey

Is okay - just hhave a bit of new information.

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John; Jett, Carole; Mather, Chris
Cc: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:38:16 2010
Subject: Hey

I will. Sorry I cannot call just feel like I need to be in the room

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Jett, Carole; Mather, Chris
Cc: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:35:52 2010
Subject: Re: Jesse Jackson

Keep us posted.

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Jett, Carole; Mather, Chris
Cc: Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:35:15 2010
Subject: Re: Jesse Jackson

Rahm calling Secy now

----- Original Message -----

From: Jett, Carole
To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Cc: Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:27:36 2010
Subject: Re: Jesse Jackson

Looping in Mather.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA
[REDACTED]

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: O'Brien, Doug
Cc: Berge, John; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:15:32 2010
Subject: Re: Jesse Jackson

Secy talking with The Rev now

----- Original Message -----

From: O'Brien, Doug

To: Harden, Krysta

Sent: Tue Jul 20 19:49:19 2010

Subject: Jesse Jackson

John Mitchell with rev jackson just called my number.

He can connect the secr to rev jackson anytime. I think he expects it tonight.

██████████

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:55 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: Re: Hey

Just missed you. Try again?

----- Original Message -----
From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:48:50 2010
Subject: Re: Hey

Is okay - just hhave a bit of new information.

----- Original Message -----
From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John; Jett, Carole; Mather, Chris
Cc: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:38:16 2010
Subject: Hey

I will. Sorry I cannot call just feel like I need to be in the room

----- Original Message -----
From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Jett, Carole; Mather, Chris
Cc: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:35:52 2010
Subject: Re: Jesse Jackson

Keep us posted.

----- Original Message -----
From: Harden, Krysta
To: Jett, Carole; Mather, Chris
Cc: Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:35:15 2010
Subject: Re: Jesse Jackson

Rahm calling Secy now

----- Original Message -----
From: Jett, Carole
To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Cc: Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:27:36 2010
Subject: Re: Jesse Jackson

Looping in Mather.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA
[REDACTED]

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta

To: O'Brien, Doug

Cc: Berge, John; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:15:32 2010

Subject: Re: Jesse Jackson

Secy talking with The Rev now

----- Original Message -----

From: O'Brien, Doug

To: Harden, Krysta

Sent: Tue Jul 20 19:49:19 2010

Subject: Jesse Jackson

John Mitchell with rev jackson just called my number.

He can connect the secr to rev jackson anytime. I think he expects it tonight.

██████████

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:42 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: Re: Hey

Good. Can you talk?

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Mather, Chris
Sent: Tue Jul 20 21:38:35 2010
Subject: Hey

Secy just talked with Chris Lu and others at WH. He is talking with Gibbs now. Justin is here as well as Doug.

He us telling them about the email he has not seen.

Chad is going to the office to get the email. Charlie has not seen it either.

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:48 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: Re: Please call me

Just tried twice.

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:38:53 2010
Subject: Please call me

Chris Mather

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:01 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: Re: Hey

[REDACTED]

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:42:16 2010
Subject: Hey

[REDACTED]

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:07 PM
To: Mather, Chris

Call me back!

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:12 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: Re: Hey

Thanks. Will look forward to it, and will prepare to send in morning.

----- Original Message -----
From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 23:11:02 2010
Subject: Re: Hey



----- Original Message -----
From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 23:01:22 2010
Subject: Re: Hey



----- Original Message -----
From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:42:16 2010
Subject: Hey



Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:13 PM
To: Harden, Krysta; Washo, Kevin
Subject: Re: Hey

Thank you.

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Washo, Kevin
Cc: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 23:12:44 2010
Subject: Hey



Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:14 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: Re: Hey

Should have it out well before then.

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 23:13:24 2010
Subject: Re: Hey

Ok. If plane is on time will be there about 9:30

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 23:12:08 2010
Subject: Re: Hey

Thanks. Will look forward to it, and will prepare to send in morning.

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 23:11:02 2010
Subject: Re: Hey

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 23:01:22 2010
Subject: Re: Hey

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:42:16 2010
Subject: Hey

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:52 PM
To: Mather, Chris

Missed you again. Avail now.

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:43 AM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: Re: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

Will go out this am.

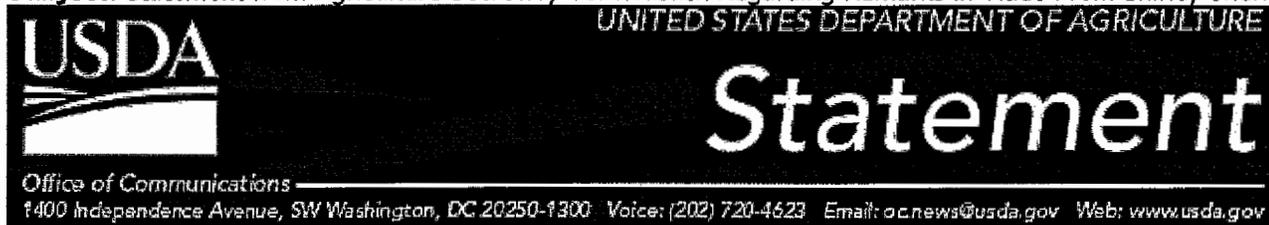
From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John
Sent: Wed Jul 21 05:33:20 2010
Subject: Fw: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

Please share as we discussed

From: Mather, Chris
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wed Jul 21 05:17:54 2010
Subject: Fw: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

This went at 2
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wed Jul 21 02:07:06 2010
Subject: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod



Release No. PENDING

Contact:
USDA Office of Communications
(202) 720-4623

Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

WASHINGTON, July 21, 2010 - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack tonight released the following statement in response to the release of remarks in video from Shirley Sherrod:

"I am of course willing and will conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts to ensure to the American people we are providing services in a fair and equitable manner."

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice), or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]

Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:45 AM
To: May, Tina
Subject: Fw: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

Official (sort of) copy.

From: Mather, Chris
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wed Jul 21 05:17:54 2010
Subject: Fw: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

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Stephanie Chan

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U.S. Department of Agriculture

Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]

Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

Berge, John

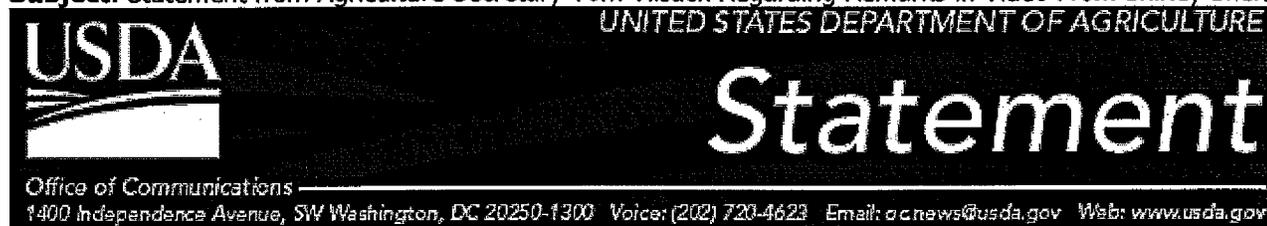
From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:49 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Harden, Krysta
Subject: Re: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

Just got this. BB is messed up. Sending to hill in about an hour.

From: Mather, Chris
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wed Jul 21 05:17:54 2010
Subject: Fw: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

This went at 2
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wed Jul 21 02:07:06 2010
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Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:58 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fw: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

Fyi

From: Berge, John
To: Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wed Jul 21 06:49:15 2010
Subject: Re: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

Just got this. BB is messed up. Sending to hill in about an hour.

From: Mather, Chris
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wed Jul 21 05:17:54 2010
Subject: Fw: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

This went at 2
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wed Jul 21 02:07:06 2010
Subject: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod



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Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:01 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin
Subject: Re:

20 mins or so

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin; Berge, John
Sent: Wed Jul 21 06:58:03 2010

When are you guys in?
Chris Mather

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:30 AM
To: Harden, Krysta; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Cluthe, Sally
Subject: RE: Meeting this am

Got it. Sending notifications now. Do you want entire CBC or just those he called?

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:24 AM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Cluthe, Sally
Cc: Berge, John
Subject: Meeting this am

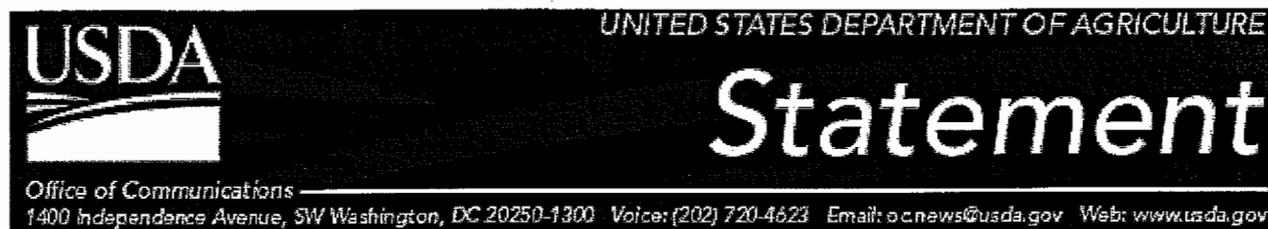
The Secy wants to meet with the group this am when we get back. KH

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:48 AM
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Subject: GA

Good Morning -

Secretary Vilsack issued the following statement late last evening in reference to the situation in Georgia.



Release No. PENDING

Contact:
USDA Office of Communications
(202) 720-4623

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John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:50 AM
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

Notifications went out a few mins ago. GA delegation, authorizers, appropriators, CBC members he talked with or was to talk with.

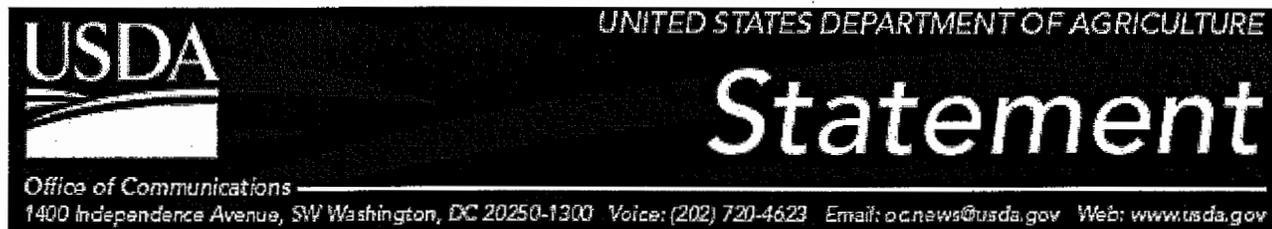
John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:54 AM
Subject: GA

Good Morning -

Secretary Vilsack issued the following statement late last evening in reference to the situation in Georgia.



Release No. PENDING

Contact:
USDA Office of Communications
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**Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video
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John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:56 AM
Subject: FW: GA

Good Morning -

Secretary Vilsack issued the following statement late last evening in reference to the situation in Georgia.



Release No. PENDING

Contact:
USDA Office of Communications
(202) 720-4623

**Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video
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John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 8:04 AM
To: ron.stroman@mail.house.gov
Cc: Harden, Krysta

Ron – obviously we're still in motion here. Will follow-up when we are prepared to brief.

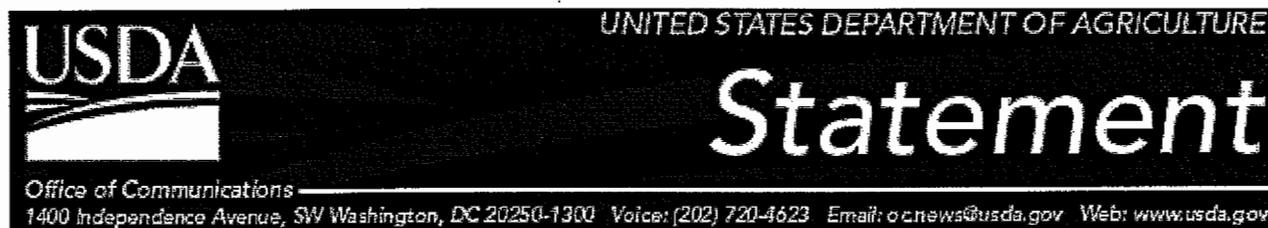
John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 8:08 AM
Subject: GA

Good Morning -

Secretary Vilsack issued the following statement late last evening in reference to the situation in Georgia.



Release No. PENDING

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USDA Office of Communications
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John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

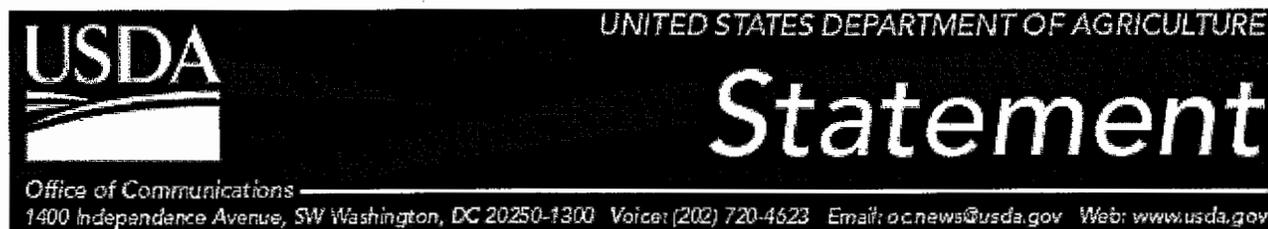
From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 8:17 AM
To: Yezak, Jennifer; Gonzales, Oscar
Subject: Fw: GA

Please send to GA Gov and GA State Ag Commision.

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wed Jul 21 08:08:26 2010
Subject: GA

Good Morning -

Secretary Vilsack issued the following statement late last evening in reference to the situation in Georgia.



Release No. PENDING

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**Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video
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John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary

Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 8:28 AM
To: Yezak, Jennifer; Gonzales, Oscar
Subject: RE: GA

Thanks.

From: Yezak, Jennifer
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 8:28 AM
To: Berge, John; Gonzales, Oscar
Subject: Re: GA

John, we'll email it to Gov and Ag Commissioner.

Jennifer

From: Berge, John
To: Yezak, Jennifer; Gonzales, Oscar
Sent: Wed Jul 21 08:17:25 2010
Subject: Fw: GA

Please send to GA Gov and GA State Ag Commision.

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wed Jul 21 08:08:26 2010
Subject: GA

Good Morning -

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USDA Office of Communications
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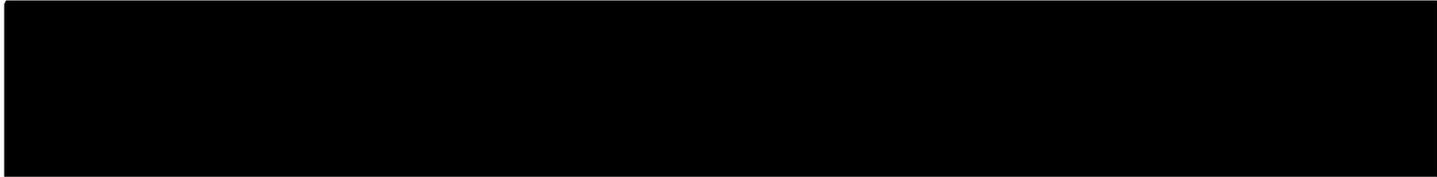
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John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 8:46 AM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Harden, Krysta; Jett, Carole
Cc: May, Tina
Subject: Update on Dallas Hearing



John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

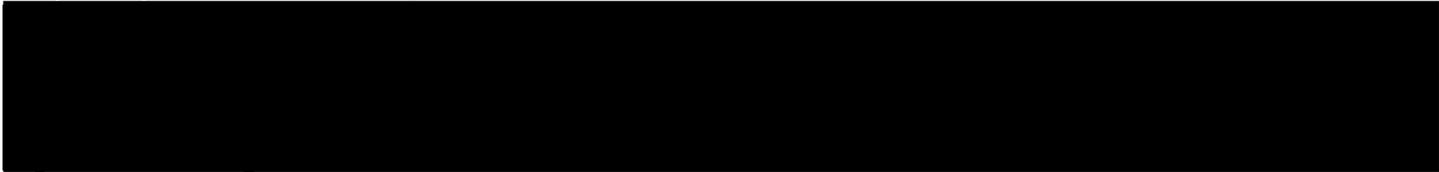
From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:06 AM
To: Harden, Krysta; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole
Cc: May, Tina
Subject: RE: Update on Dallas Hearing

You must have landed?

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:03 AM
To: Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole
Cc: May, Tina
Subject: Re: Update on Dallas Hearing

Good

From: Berge, John
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Harden, Krysta; Jett, Carole
Cc: May, Tina
Sent: Wed Jul 21 08:46:18 2010
Subject: Update on Dallas Hearing



John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:06 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Harden, Krysta
Subject: RE:

That's how it reads on Politico too.

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:04 AM
To: Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Subject:

CNN reporting that WH asked TV to reconsider and therefore we did

Chris Mather
Director of Communications
USDA
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 402A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0060
chris.mather@usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:07 AM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: RE:

"Senior official"

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:04 AM
To: Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Subject:

CNN reporting that WH asked TV to reconsider and therefore we did

Chris Mather
Director of Communications
USDA
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 402A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0060
chris.mather@usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:07 AM
To: May, Tina; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Harden, Krysta; Jett, Carole
Subject: RE: Update on Dallas Hearing

Thanks Tina.

From: May, Tina
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:06 AM
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Jett, Carole
Subject: Re: Update on Dallas Hearing

From: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Jett, Carole
Cc: May, Tina
Sent: Wed Jul 21 08:48:41 2010
Subject: Re: Update on Dallas Hearing

Good.
Karen Ross
Chief of Staff
Office of the Secretary

From: Berge, John
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Harden, Krysta; Jett, Carole
Cc: May, Tina
Sent: Wed Jul 21 08:46:18 2010
Subject: Update on Dallas Hearing

John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:09 AM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: RE:

Said WH Senior Official on the Politico or CNN or somewhere.

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:08 AM
To: Berge, John
Subject: RE:

They said WH

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:07 AM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: RE:

"Senior official"

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:04 AM
To: Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Subject:

CNN reporting that WH asked TV to reconsider and therefore we did

Chris Mather
Director of Communications
USDA
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 402A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0060
chris.mather@usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:12 AM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: RE: we got clips today?

AP

The White House called the Agriculture Department Tuesday night after more information about Sherrod's remarks emerged, a White House official said. The official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the call, said the White House and the department agreed that the case should be reviewed based on the new evidence.

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:11 AM
To: Berge, John
Subject: RE: we got clips today?

Working on it

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 8:49 AM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: we got clips today?

Didn't get them.

John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:56 AM
To: Hannigan, Erin
Subject: Re: Jackson

Not til now.

From: Hannigan, Erin
To: Berge, John
Sent: Wed Jul 21 09:54:36 2010
Subject: Jackson
Have you seen this?

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/07/21/AR2010072102398.html>

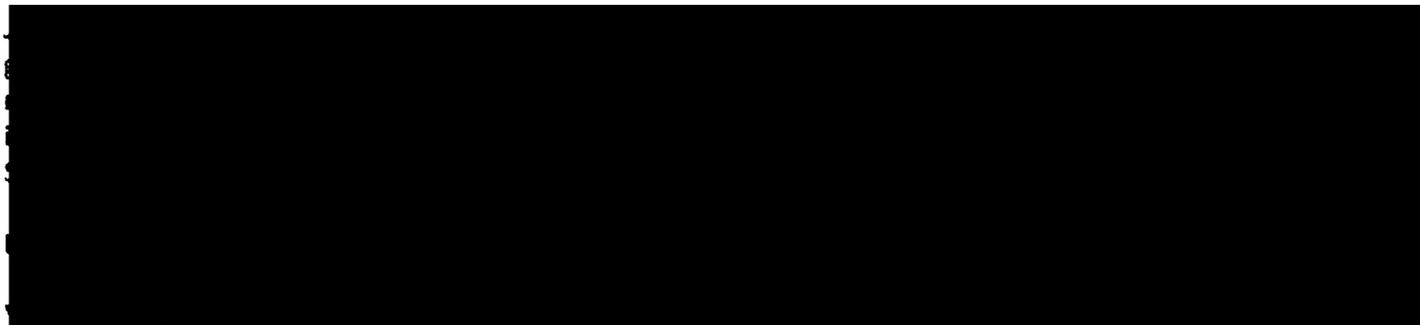
Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:58 AM
To: McFarland, Lilia; Harden, Krysta
Cc: Church, Chris; Williamson, Todd
Subject: Re: Bishop

You and Chris should go.

From: McFarland, Lilia
To: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Cc: Church, Chris; Williamson, Todd
Sent: Wed Jul 21 10:29:14 2010
Subject: Bishop
Dear Krysta and John,



Lilia McFarland
Office of Congressional Relations
U.S. Department of Agriculture
(202) 720-9259
lilia.mcfarland@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:40 AM
To: Wilson, Denise R.; Harden, Krysta
Subject: RE: CBC NEWS: CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

Got it.

From: Wilson, Denise R. [mailto: [REDACTED]]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:39 AM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Fw: CBC NEWS: CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

FYI
Denise Wilson
Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

From: Schwoeffermann, Irene (CBC) < [REDACTED] >
Sent: Wed Jul 21 10:46:38 2010
Subject: CBC NEWS: CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

Trouble viewing this press release? [Click here.](#)



CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS

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Contact Us

Congressional Black Caucus
2444 Rayburn Building
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 226-9776 (T)
(202) 225-9817 (F)

[click here to email us](#)

CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

Wednesday, July 21, 2010

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact : J. Jioni Palmer

(Washington, D.C.)- Congressional Black Caucus Chairwoman Barbara Lee and members of the CBC released the following statement today on the firing of USDA employee Shirley Sherrod:

“It is troubling that Shirley Sherrod was asked for her resignation as Georgia State Director for Rural Development at the U.S. Department of Agriculture because of an edited video clip. A full review of the clip demonstrates Ms. Sherrod’s personal transformation. She was clearly educating the public about the power of redemption. It is now apparent that Secretary Vilsack did not have all of the facts available to him and overreacted.

“The Congressional Black Caucus continues to believe that Ms. Sherrod was unfairly asked to resign, without due process and should be reinstated immediately. There are many individuals still serving in the Department of Agriculture who were responsible for years of discrimination against African American farmers.

“We also believe that a national dialogue on race must be held. Last November, we held a forum on race in Washington DC to begin the discussion. The basis for Ms. Sherrod’s resignation is another example of why we must not sweep race under the rug. Rather, we must come together as a nation and recognize that we do not live in a post-racial era and that, while difficult, we must confront these issues head on with clarity and without fear.

“Ms. Sherrod has been an effective public servant and it would be tragic to lose a person of such caliber, competence and commitment to fairness and equality and one who has dedicated her life to working for a more perfect union.”

- 30 -

www.thecongressionalblackcaucus.com

To unsubscribe, [click here](#).

J. Jioni Palmer
Communications Director
Congressional Black Caucus
(202) 226-1912 - office
[REDACTED] - cell

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:05 PM
To: Poindexter, Martha Scott (Agriculture); 'Krysta.Harden@usda.gov'
Subject: RE: GA

Thank you.

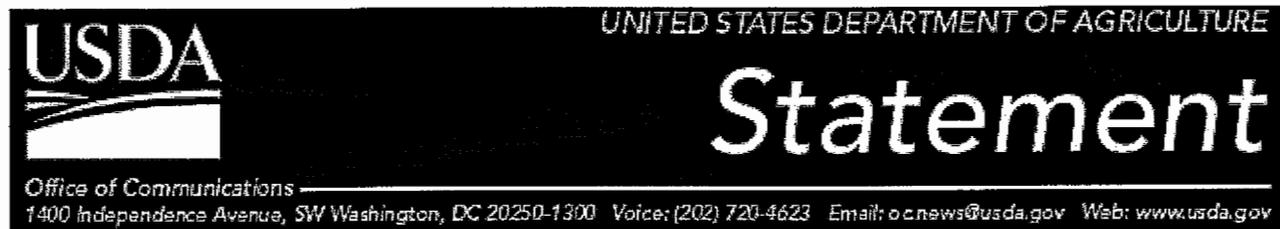
From: Poindexter, Martha Scott (Agriculture) [mailto:MarthaScott_Poindexter@agriculture.senate.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:03 AM
To: Berge, John; 'Krysta.Harden@usda.gov'
Subject: Re: GA

Thanks - the Chairman and Saxby spoke with Tonsanger privately and asked him to get them an explanation of everything asap. They will not comment publically until the Secretary's investigation is concluded and a decision is made by him.

From: Berge, John <John.Berge@osec.usda.gov>
To: Berge, John <John.Berge@osec.usda.gov>; Harden, Krysta <Krysta.Harden@osec.usda.gov>
Sent: Wed Jul 21 07:48:26 2010
Subject: GA

Good Morning -

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Release No. PENDING

Contact:
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(202) 720-4623

Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

WASHINGTON, July 21, 2010 - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack tonight released the following statement in response to the release of remarks in video from Shirley Sherrod:

"I am of course willing and will conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts to ensure to the American people we are providing services in a fair and equitable manner."

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John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 3:32 PM
To: Washo, Kevin
Subject: likely the same numbers, but..

 cell
home

Hobby Stripling at GA FSA gave these to me.

John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Fridam

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 4:09 PM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: Fw: Sharrod Charade

No idea who sent this to me, but an fyi.

----- Original Message -----

From: dickschrock@gmail.com <[REDACTED]>
To: Berge, John
Sent: Thu Jul 22 12:57:24 2010
Subject: Sharrod Charade

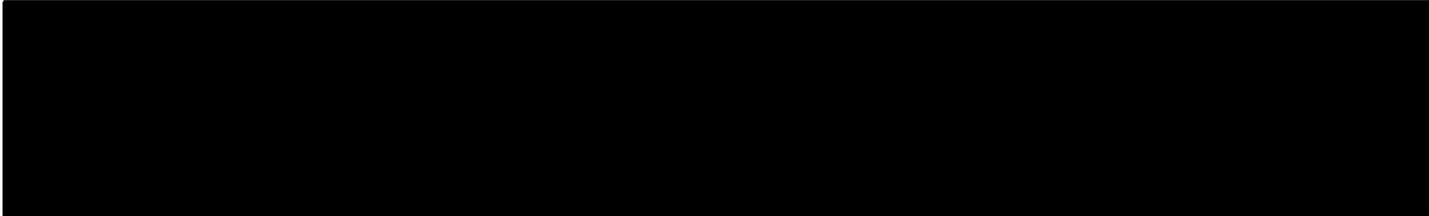
John: some free advice from afar:

Tell Plouffe and the folks in the White House to come clean as to who in the WH West Wing ordered Shirley Sharrod's termination. This is now a coverup story sans scandal. You and Cook are in the eye of the hurricane. Unless corrected, politically whomever in the WH ordered that Sharrod be immediately axed may become as infamous as "Brownie". That could be you!

"Admin leave" is routine procedure in the fed bureaucracy in cases like this. Pulling off the freeway to resign on your blackberry is bizarre behavior. The press will not rest now till they nail someone in the WH West Wing. good luck. don't try to be the fall guy for your bosses. The truth will come out. good luck.

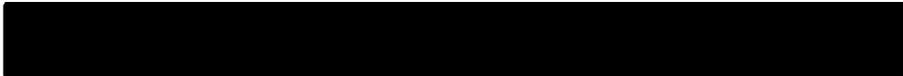
Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 28, 2010 7:07 AM
To: Jett, Carole
Subject: RE: attorney client privilege docs



From: Jett, Carole
Sent: Tuesday, July 27, 2010 8:05 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: attorney client privilege docs

<< File: Monday July 19.docx >>



Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 2:44 PM
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Subject: RE: URGENT

-----Original Message-----

From: Berge, John
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 2:42 PM
To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Subject: RE: URGENT

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 2:39 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John
Subject: Re: URGENT

Terrible. What can I do to help?

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 14:34:25 2010
Subject: URGENT

This is horrible. Video just posted on Hotair.com.

The NAACP is about to learn one of the most basic of all lessons in life – those who live in glass houses should avoid provoking a stone-throwing war. After the civil-rights organization threatened to issue a condemnation of Tea Party activism by equating it with racism (a position from which they ultimately retreated), Andrew Breitbart announced that he would publish at least one video of the NAACP itself cheering racism. Breitbart delivers on that promise today at Big Government, showing USDA official Shirley Sherrod explain to an appreciative NAACP audience in July 2009 how she deliberately withheld information from a white farmer in Georgia trying to save his land and his business:

-----Original Message-----

From: Maloney, Wayne
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 1:56 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Zaina, Lisa
Subject: FW: Georgia
Importance: High

Chris,

I was just informed of a video of the Georgia State Director that was posted on the Internet earlier this afternoon. It speaks for itself and you need to watch it right away.

I have discussed this with Tim McNeilly. He has instructed the PIC and the State Director not to respond to media without checking with us first. We have not been contacted by any media outlet but expect that we will.

Tim has been asked by me to draft a statement for our review to be issued if necessary.

Wayne
###

Georgia PIC just called to alert us to a campaign underway involving Shirley Sherrod vs. the Tea Party people. I understand that this may have been brought to your attention already, but in case it hasn't..... The PIC is looking for guidance if (and I think there will be) media contact regarding the below video.

<http://hotair.com/archives/2010/07/19/breitbart-hits-naacp-with-promised-video-of-racism/>

Looking for guidance on how you would like to prepare and handle any inquiries that result.

Thanks.

Timothy J. McNeilly | Director, Legislative and Public Affairs Rural Development U.S.
Department of Agriculture 1400 Independence Ave., S.W. | Washington, D.C. 20250
Phone: 202.720.1019 | Fax: 202.690.4083

www.rurdev.usda.gov

"Committed to the future of rural communities"

"Estamos dedicados al futuro de las comunidades rurales"

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:58 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: RE: Hey

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:58 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Re: Hey

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 17:53:39 2010
Subject: RE: Hey

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:53 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Hey

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:38 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: Re: GA delegation

I don't think its necessary. We're working through CoS'

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:36:58 2010
Subject: Re: GA delegation

I have Bishop's cell if needed

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:28:50 2010
Subject: RE: GA delegation

Erin, Todd and I are calling. Oscar is doing the State Government folks. We are calling, leaving messages if necessary, and following up with email.

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:28 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: GA delegation

Are you calling everyone.

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:43 PM
To: Harden, Krysta; Washo, Kevin
Subject: RE: Statements

Sorry - she was an employee.

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:42 PM
To: Washo, Kevin; Berge, John
Subject: Statements

Was Shirley at USDA when she made the statement?

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:47 PM
To: Hannigan, Erin; Williamson, Todd; Gonzales, Oscar
Subject: For your calls tonight..

Importance: High

Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.

You are cleared for takeoff – make these calls now. Report back to me outcomes. Call CoS. Thanks.

John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 7:34 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: Re: Rural Development State Director

Cool.

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John
Sent: Mon Jul 19 19:33:27 2010
Subject: Re: Rural Development State Director

Good
Erin's email to MSP is enough since I called earlier

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 19:32:19 2010
Subject: Fw: Rural Development State Director

Fyi.

From: Gonzales, Oscar
To: Berge, John
Cc: Yezak, Jennifer
Sent: Mon Jul 19 19:28:43 2010
Subject: FW: Rural Development State Director
John, I was able to connect and speak directly with the Governor's Washington D.C. office. Lee Anne who serves as the Federal Affairs Director will notify the appropriate individuals in her office.

As for Ag Commissioner Irvin, I left him a voice message asking him to call the IGA office.

-Oscar

From: Gonzales, Oscar
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 7:21 PM
To: 'GA-GOVERNOR (lfoster@gov.state.ga.us)'
Cc: Yezak, Jennifer
Subject: Rural Development State Director

Lee Anne, thank you very much for returning my phone call. Below is the statement issued by Secretary Vilsack regarding Shirley Sherrod, Rural Development's State Director in Georgia.

"Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously."

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 8:47 PM
To: Hannigan, Erin; Harden, Krysta
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Will call in am.

From: Hannigan, Erin
To: Berge, John
Sent: Mon Jul 19 20:42:08 2010
Subject: Fw: Georgia Rural Development State Director

From Fitz.

From: Elder, Fitzhugh (Appropriations)
To: Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 20:36:04 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director
What led to this?

Fitz Elder
[REDACTED] direct

From: Hannigan, Erin <Erin.Hannigan@osec.usda.gov>
To: Elder, Fitzhugh (Appropriations)
Sent: Mon Jul 19 19:41:21 2010
Subject: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Fitz,

Secretary Vilsack has issued the following statement with regards to Shirley Sherrod, the State Director of Rural Development in Georgia:

"Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously."

Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:45 AM
To: Harden, Krysta; Hannigan, Erin
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

On MSNBC Morning Joe right now.

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John; Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 06:38:16 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Ok. I saw the story on FOX not good

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 21:41:28 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Yes. Am planning on it. Need to determine proper answers for his questions too.

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Hannigan, Erin; Berge, John
Sent: Mon Jul 19 21:39:48 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Berge can you call Fitz tomorrow? And if so Erin let him know tonight?

From: Hannigan, Erin
To: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Sent: Mon Jul 19 21:23:09 2010
Subject: Fw: Georgia Rural Development State Director

More from Fitz.

From: Elder, Fitzhugh (Appropriations)
To: Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 21:21:10 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director
Erin,

Can you tell me if USDA, under Secretary Vilsack, has accepted any other resignations or has it terminated any other RD State Director or FSA SED for similar reasons? What are the terms of Ms. Sherrod's resignation? Has USDA identified the producer she discriminated against? Are they offering any assistance to that individual? What is USDA's policy when discrimination has occurred? Has this been referred to the DoJ? Will it be? Will USDA provide any training to the federal employees in Georgia to make sure they understand the law and their responsibilities?

Fitz Elder

direct

From: Hannigan, Erin <Erin.Hannigan@osec.usda.gov>
To: Elder, Fitzhugh (Appropriations)
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Fitz,

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Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:47 AM
To: Hannigan, Erin
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Yes. Where is mock hearing?

From: Hannigan, Erin
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:45:02 2010
Subject: RE: Georgia Rural Development State Director
John, would you be able to try and reach out? Their office is not open yet and I've got a mock hearing with Dallas at 8am before we head to his hearing.

Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:38 AM
To: Berge, John; Hannigan, Erin
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Please reach out to Phylis and or Michael Reed this am. If the Congressman needs to talk with me or the Secy just let me know. Thanks.

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:20:31 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

I have not.

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Hannigan, Erin; Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:17:42 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Have we heard from Bishop?

From: Hannigan, Erin
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta

Sent: Tue Jul 20 07:03:07 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

There's a clip in the Atlanta newspaper that includes an interview done yesterday with her.

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 06:44:33 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

On MSNBC Morning Joe right now.

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John; Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 06:38:16 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Ok. I saw the story on FOX not good

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 21:41:28 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Yes. Am planning on it. Need to determine proper answers for his questions too.

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Hannigan, Erin; Berge, John
Sent: Mon Jul 19 21:39:48 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Berge can you call Fitz tomorrow? And if so Erin let him know tonight?

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To: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Sent: Mon Jul 19 21:23:09 2010
Subject: Fw: Georgia Rural Development State Director

More from Fitz.

From: Elder, Fitzhugh (Appropriations)
To: Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 21:21:10 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director
Erin,

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employees in Georgia to make sure they understand the law and their responsibilities?

Fitz Elder

direct

From: Hannigan, Erin <Erin.Hannigan@osec.usda.gov>

To: Elder, Fitzhugh (Appropriations)

Sent: Mon Jul 19 19:41:21 2010

Subject: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Fitz,

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"Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously."

Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:38 AM
To: phyllis.hallmon@mail.house.gov
Cc: Williams, Janice; Harden, Krysta
Subject: GA

Phyllis – I'd like to try to touch base with you as soon as possible this morning to discuss the GA RD situation. Krysta reached out to Congressman Bishop, but I wanted to be sure you had any questions that you might have answered. If you cannot reach me at the number direct below, I can be reached through my assistant Janice at 202-720-7095.

John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:59 AM
To: McFarland, Lilia
Subject: Re: Quick TPS for Ed on Issue

See me by 11.

From: McFarland, Lilia
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:50:57 2010
Subject: RE: Quick TPS for Ed on Issue
12:15, so we have time.

Lilia McFarland
Office of Congressional Relations
U.S. Department of Agriculture
(202) 720-9259
lilia.mcfarland@osec.usda.gov

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:43 AM
To: McFarland, Lilia
Subject: Re: Quick TPS for Ed on Issue

When do you leave?

From: McFarland, Lilia
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:40:34 2010
Subject: Quick TPS for Ed on Issue
Hey –

Do we have quick TPS that would be appropriate for Ed on this issue we're dealing with in Georgia? He testifies before House Ag right after Dallas and I'm worried he'll get a leftover question on this.

Lilia McFarland
Office of Congressional Relations
U.S. Department of Agriculture
(202) 720-9259
lilia.mcfarland@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:22 AM
To: Blue, Rebecca
Cc: May, Tina; Hannigan, Erin
Subject: Re: Sherrod - CNN

Got the transcript.

From: Blue, Rebecca
To: Berge, John
Cc: May, Tina; Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 09:04:22 2010
Subject: Sherrod - CNN
Just an FYI Sherrod called into CNN to "set the record straight."

Rebecca Blue
Office of Congressional Relations
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Rebecca.Blue@osec.usda.gov
202-720-7095

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:33 AM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: FW: FOX: Gingrich Responds to Discrimination at USDA

GINGRICH: Well, let me say, first of all, Secretary Vilsack did exactly the right thing. I mean I often disagree with this administration. But firing her after that kind of viciously racist attitude was exactly the right thing to do. And the fact that we have to be genuinely colorblind.

You know you can't be a black racist any more than you can be a white racist. And I just think it'd be good for those of us who are often critical of the administration to recognize that here's a case where Secretary Vilsack did exactly the right thing, moved very promptly, and fired somebody who frankly shouldn't be serving the American people because they clearly had a set of attitudes inappropriate for a federal official.

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:30 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: FOX: Gingrich Responds to Discrimination at USDA

Gingrich Responds to Discrimination at USDA

Tuesday, July 20, 2010

FOX NEWS

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This is a rush transcript from "Hannity," July 19, 2010. This copy may not be in its final form and may be updated.

SEAN HANNITY, HOST: And this is a Fox News alert. An Obama administration official resigned just a short time ago after she was caught on tape appearing to tell an audience that she had used her position to racially discriminate against white farmers.

Now the woman, Shirley Sherrod, was the Georgia state director at the Department of Agricultural. Now the president's Agricultural Secretary Tom Vilsack just released a statement saying the USDA has a zero tolerance policy against discrimination.

Here's part of the shocking video that ignited this controversy.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

SHIRLEY SHERROD, FORMER USDA GA STATE DIRECTOR: The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking but he was trying to show me he was superior to me.

I know what he was doing. But he had come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him.

(END OF VIDEO CLIP)

HANNITY: Now details on the official sudden resignation are still coming in. We'll have more on this story including more video coming up in this hour. That's all straight ahead.

But also, meanwhile the debate in Washington raged today over whether or not unemployment insurance should be extended yet again for American struggling to find work. Now earlier President Obama addressed the issue from the Rose Garden.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA: It's time to stop holding workers laid off in this recession hostage to Washington politics. It's time to do what is right. Not for the next election, but for the middle class.

We've got to stop blocking emergency relief for Americans who are out of work. We've got to extend unemployment insurance.

(END OF VIDEO CLIP)

HANNITY: All right, now the president did not bother to mention that the only reason the extension may be necessary is because his stimulus was a complete and utter failure.

Now since the recovery plan was passed more than three million Americans have lost their jobs.

Now this morning the GOP leader in the House came out swinging saying, quote, "The president knows Republicans support extending unemployment insurance and doing it in a fiscally responsible way by cutting spending elsewhere in the \$3 trillion federal budget."

But the White House isn't interested in finding a way to actually pay for the extension. It's a whole lot easier to simply drive America deeper into debt.

And joining me now with analysis is the former speaker of the House, Fox News contributor, co-host of the documentary along with his wife Calista, "Nine Days That Changed the World," which you can find at Newt.org, is former speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich.

Mr. Speaker, welcome back.

NEWT GINGRICH, FORMER SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE: It's good to be with you.

HANNITY: All right. A lot — a lot obviously going on here. The — this woman on tape saying these racially charged things that she didn't want to help farmers, in particular white farmer. That she said she wanted him to go out and deal with one of his own and she put him in touch with a white lawyer.

Just the latest in a series of racial incidents. What do you think of this?

GINGRICH: Well, let me say, first of all, Secretary Vilsack did exactly the right thing. I mean I often disagree with this administration. But firing her after that kind of viciously racist attitude was exactly the right thing to do. And the fact that we have to be genuinely colorblind.

You know you can't be a black racist any more than you can be a white racist. And I just think it'd be good for those of us who are often critical of the administration to recognize that here's a case where Secretary Vilsack did exactly the right thing, moved very promptly, and fired somebody who frankly shouldn't be serving the American people because they clearly had a set of attitudes inappropriate for a federal official.

HANNITY: All right, my only thing is they weren't the ones that caught it. It was on Breitbart.com and it happened some time ago. So it's interesting that it took the new media to expose this.

Here's my next question, though. There's another twist to the story, and that is that, this was — these comments were made at an NAACP banquet. Now in light of the NAACP accusing the Tea Party of being a racist movement last week, do you think the NAACP should be held to account for the very standard they were demanding from the Tea Party?

GINGRICH: Of course. Clearly the national — and I suspect, Sean, if you contact them — the national leadership of the NAACP — I'm sure will feel honor-bound to apologize for having had that kind of a racist comment said at a meeting I suspect they didn't know about it, just as I suspect Secretary Vilsack didn't.

But now that it's there and it's clearly obvious, because it's on tape, I would hope that national NAACP would apologize for having that kind of racist comment at one of their meetings.

HANNITY: Well, I've tried to reach out to Ben Jealous. He has yet to return my phone call and he's invited on this program if he would like to discuss it. I'd like to have him on.

But it's interesting. A lot of people contacted me last week. Apparently you had sent out a tweet. By the way I'm glad that you are up on tweeting, which by the way, I have a Twitter account as well at @SeanHannity.

But you have your own Twitter account. And you offered to basically broker a meeting —

GINGRICH: No, no.

HANNITY: Well, hang on.

GINGRICH: No, I — no, I didn't say that. That was a misinterpretation by the Huffington Post.

HANNITY: OK.

GINGRICH: What I said was —

HANNITY: I didn't read the tweet. Go ahead.

GINGRICH: Right. But what I said was local Tea Party groups — because Tea Parties don't have a hierarchy. They don't have a national organization. Local Tea Party groups ought to reach out to local NAACP chapters and offer to have joint town hall meetings.

For example, about job creation. I mean there's a clear difference between job creators and job killers. It would be great to get Americans of all backgrounds in the same room talking about whether they ought to follow policies that you and I believe in which create jobs.

And I suspect most African-Americans at the local level in the local NAACP chapter would be surprised at how much they have in common with Tea Party members, a number of whom, by the way, are African-American, Latino and Asians. They're not — the Tea Parties are not white organizations. They're open to all Americans.

So my point was, if somebody wants to start a conversation, instead of yelling at them, what if we invite them in the room and let's have a conversation about America's future together.

And I'm told by Adam Waldeck at American Solutions who coordinates this that a number of local Tea Party groups are reaching out to local NAACP chapters on their own to have this kind of a dialogue.

HANNITY: I don't know what the right answer is. But I would find it very hard to sit down with the NAACP back in 2000. They ran this James Byrd ad when George Bush supported the death penalty for the person — the people responsible for that James Byrd dragging death.

You can't have a worse penalty. And that ad was particularly hard hitting. It was as if my father was killed all over again, if you remember that ad. And then in this particular case, this happened with this woman at this NAACP banquet.

I'm not saying not to have a dialogue. I am saying you can also talk about their associations. They've been — Ben Jealous was at a meeting with Louis Farrakhan. Should we not have certain standards prior to any meeting?

GINGRICH: Yes. We can also say let's agree that we should condemn racism wherever it occurs. Now we hope that the NAACP will apply that standard to somebody who is at one of its banquets.

But I think it's good for the country to see that we are not afraid to reach out and talk to people and to try to focus the conversation in a positive way. African-American unemployment is higher under the Obama administration than under any administration in a very long time.

African-Americans want their schools to work so their children go to college and not to prison. We have lots of things you and I could talk about in local meetings. And I said local meetings where local people get together.

And I think you'd find that at the local level, not the professional, you know, left-wing activist level. At the local level there are an awful lot of very decent people in the NAACP who would suddenly find out they have an awful lot in common with their local Tea Party neighbors.

HANNITY: But I found the chart — the things that were said about the Tea Party so inaccurate, so over-the-top, so lacking in evidence, it is almost hard to begin a dialogue when everything is predicated on false charges and a false statement.

I didn't even bring up the issue of the New Black Panther Party and the Department of Justice and Eric Holder. What did you —

GINGRICH: Well, look —

HANNITY: Go ahead.

GINGRICH: First of all, Eric Holder should resign for national security reasons. He should certainly resign over the racism inherent in the Black Panther case. I mean I'm happy to say that Eric Holder shouldn't be attorney general and is not doing the job correctly.

But I'd certainly go back to your point for a second, Sean. Maybe this makes me different, OK? The New York Times often runs editorials that are totally dishonest. Their attack on the Arizona state law, for example — on immigration — was a totally dishonest attack.

I still talk to New York Times reporters all the time. I think it's important to reach out. It's important to try to be positive.

HANNITY: By the way, just for the record I do not return the calls of anybody from The New York Times. They don't call anymore because I won't return their calls.

GINGRICH: Now our audience — now our audience can see the difference in our two styles.

HANNITY: Yes, well — look, what do I know? I made — perhaps you're right.

Look, I'm not saying we ought not have a dialogue. I think a dialogue is important. But I think a dialogue has got to be — the foundation of which has got to start in a fair way.

GINGRICH: Right.

HANNITY: And it's almost like if you begin a dialogue with OK, the Tea Party is racist, the Tea Party, you know — the Tea Party members uttered these racial epithets when there's no evidence, seems to me that you're starting out at a decided disadvantage.

GINGRICH: Sure.

HANNITY: If you don't demand honesty up front and an apology before the dialogue begins.

GINGRICH: Well, I like to — I think we have a nice test that came on your show tonight. Do they have the courage — the NAACP — to apologize for the racism in this person's comments at an NAACP banquet? Pretty good test.

HANNITY: All right. We'll come back. We have a lot more with former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, coming up after the break.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

HANNITY: And we continue now with former Speaker of the House, Fox News contributor, Newt Gingrich is with us.

All right, Mr. Speaker, we had the NAACP. We had what they said about the Tea Party. I think obviously an attempt — they support the Democratic Party — 106 days out of an election to energize the base.

The president. He went out and he'd started referring to the GOP as being the party of the rich because he says Republicans don't want to extend unemployment benefits. The reality is Republicans do support extending unemployment benefits. They want it paid for. They've already supported an extension for 99 weeks.

And by the way, the president doesn't need any Republican votes to pass the bill anyway. So is this — is this what we can expect for the next 106 days?

GINGRICH: Sure. Look, if you watch what Harry Reid is trying to do to Sharron Angle in Nevada. What you're going to see everywhere in the country is desperately dishonest, and I think consistently demagogue attacks, because they know that if there's any kind of a fair fight they're going to get badly defeated.

The president sadly is the opposite of Ronald Reagan. Ronald Reagan led by telling the American people the truth, by rallying them to the facts and by encouraging their better instincts.

The president seems to have a really unusual desire to divide the country and a really deep need to blame somebody else for his own failures. And as a result, you get this kind of Rose Garden comment.

HANNITY: Yes.

GINGRICH: The fact is, if this president cared about getting money to the unemployed, all he has to agree to is a one percent reduction in his budget across the board and that would pay for —

HANNITY: Yes.

GINGRICH: — everything he wants to send. But he does — what he wants to do is borrow from your children and your grandchildren so that we will pay interest on the debt forever, so that he can send out money that is unpaid for, that increases the federal deficit even beyond the already gigantic amounts.

HANNITY: All right, so —

GINGRICH: And I think that's just fundamentally, morally wrong.

HANNITY: So what you're saying for the next 106 days we can expect a ton of class warfare rhetoric, demagoguery as you just pointed out, and demonization, et cetera, character assassination, maybe some supportive groups playing the race card because they can't run on their record? That's what's the next 106 days are going to be like? This is going to be all we see?

GINGRICH: Look — I think the Democratic Party counterattack — to use the language you just kind of packaged nicely. If you assume dishonesty, distortion and demagoguery, you have a reasonably good idea what Harry Reid's campaign is going to be like.

Because of the election choice in Nevada at 14.5 percent unemployment is between a job killing Harry Reid record and a job creating Sharron Angle proposal. He's going to get beat so badly that you won't even be able to see him.

Therefore he is — he's raising — he just went to Canada to raise money from trial lawyers in an international meeting.

HANNITY: All right, so —

GINGRICH: This guy is going to pour on negative ads. Every Democrat in the country will imitate Harry Reid.

HANNITY: Yes. I agree and I have a friend of mine running for Congress and he's already experiencing it. Guy votes with Nancy Pelosi 99 percent of the time, the only thing he wants to do is attack you and me and Mark Levin and anybody else, which is interesting.

The question is, will this tactic be successful?

GINGRICH: No. No.

HANNITY: And — and how do you recommend — you're great at politics. How do you recommend Republicans counter that?

GINGRICH: First of all, Sean.

HANNITY: Yes?

GINGRICH: If you voted 99 percent with Nancy Pelosi —

HANNITY: Yes?

GINGRICH: Wouldn't you want to be attacking all day every day?

HANNITY: Yes.

GINGRICH: I mean do you want to defend that record?

HANNITY: No.

GINGRICH: I — I was out last week in — for Brad Zaun in Des Moines. His opponent voted 98 percent with Nancy Pelosi and all he has to say is, you know, San Francisco doesn't deserve an Iowa representative. Iowa needs an Iowa representative. And that's the whole campaign.

HANNITY: I think that's the whole campaign. I agree.

GINGRICH: I believe the key to the fall election is very simple. There are job creators and there are job killers. We absolute proof that from the time Pelosi and Reid took over in January of 2007 the Democratic Congress has been killing jobs. It continues to kill jobs. This economy is not going to recover. We just saw a — we just saw a huge oil rig leave the Gulf to go to Egypt with high paying jobs. We had a company announce over the weekend — think about this quote — "because of political instability in the United States, we are moving our rig to the Congo —

HANNITY: Yes.

GINGRICH: ...to drill for oil." So the president is exporting jobs. He's doing a great job of creating jobs for China. The president has done a great job creating jobs for Egypt and the Congo. He just isn't doing a great job creating jobs for Americans.

HANNITY: No, we're losing those jobs. All right, but then —

GINGRICH: So that's the choice. You want to be job creator or a job killer. If you want to be a job killer, vote Democrat. If you want a job creator, vote Republican. I think that's the fall campaign.

HANNITY: All right. I agree with you. Don't think that I didn't notice you dropped in Des Moines, Iowa, and your latest trip to the great state of Iowa. And in between I know you snuck in a trip to New Hampshire. And I think I saw your schedule, you're going back to South Carolina.

GINGRICH: I was in South Carolina Friday a week ago —

HANNITY: Now hang on a second. Now wait a minute, we've been friends a long time. You have given more direct answers to people in the liberal media than to me. I want to know what's Newt Gingrich's plan.

GINGRICH: Our plan is for Calista and me to sit down with our family in February or March.

HANNITY: That's not the answer I want.

GINGRICH: And make a decision. But I promise you, Sean —

HANNITY: Well, how come —

(CROSSTALK)

GINGRICH: Because they printed the same thing I've said to you for nine months. What can I tell you? But I think it had — because it had AP Des Moines.

HANNITY: Yes.

GINGRICH: It suddenly got bigger coverage. I mean if it had said AP Long Island it wouldn't had been the same effect.

HANNITY: It would said, Newt and Hannity, it probably wouldn't had been the same. But then again maybe they're mad at me at The New York Times because I don't respond to their phone calls. You do.

GINGRICH: Yes, I guessed that could be the whole problem.

HANNITY: That's could be the whole thing right there. All right.

GINGRICH: But I promise you in February or March, I'll be on the show. We'll talk about it.

HANNITY: And you'll announce here, either way?

GINGRICH: Well I'll certainly talk about it.

(LAUGHTER)

HANNITY: I love being able to pin you down. All right. Former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich.

— Watch "Hannity" weeknights at 9 p.m. ET!

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell:

Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:57 AM
To: Mather, Chris

John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@ocec.usda.gov

Berge, John

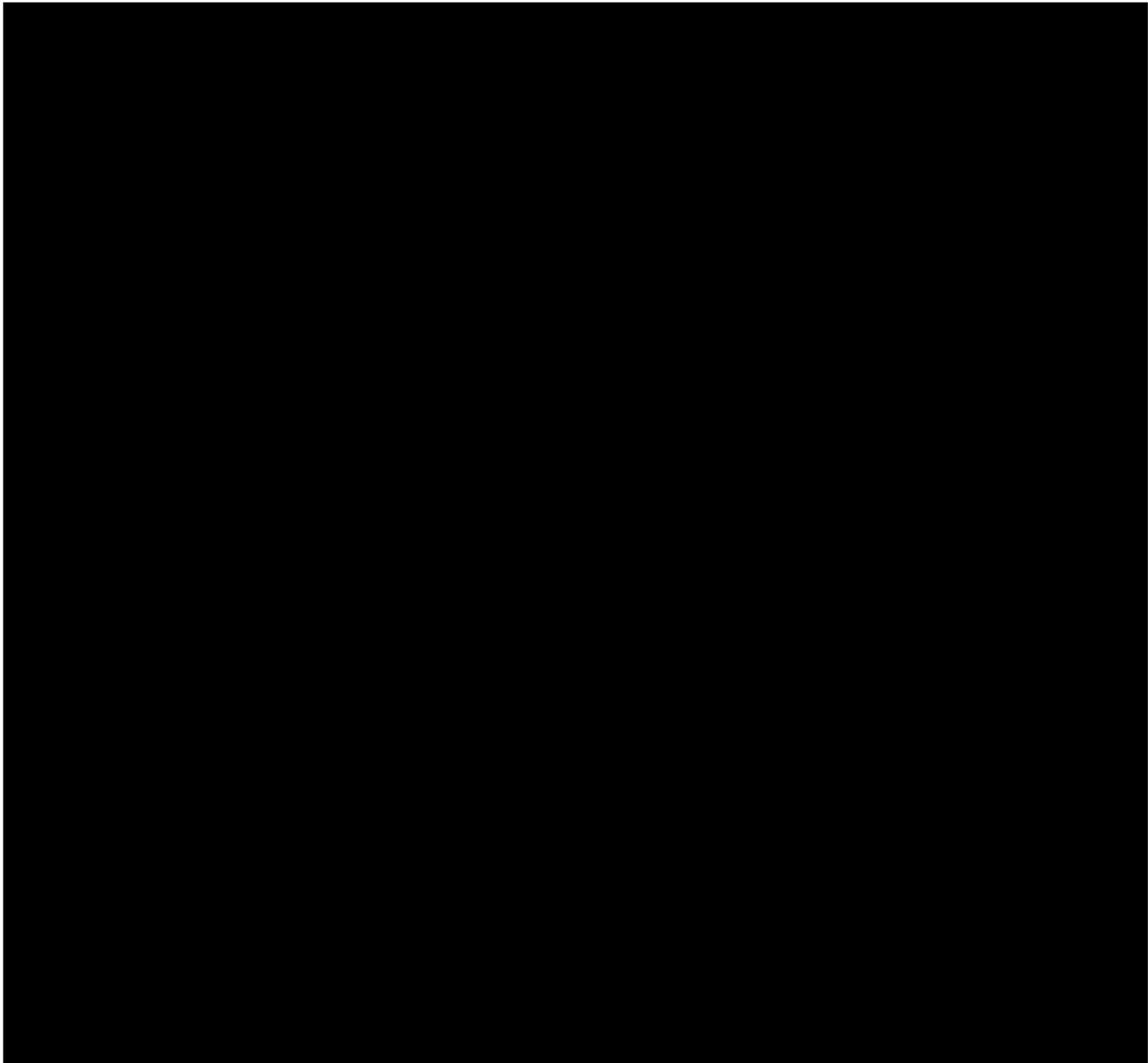
From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:57 AM
To: Mather, Chris



John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:23 PM
To: Stoneman, Shelly O.; Heimbach, James T.
Cc: Harden, Krysta; Cluthe, Sally
Subject: FW: Employee Email



John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA

202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:33 PM
To: Harden, Krysta; Hannigan, Erin; Williamson, Todd
Subject: RE: Georgia Rural Development State Director

[REDACTED]

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:18 AM
To: Berge, John; Hannigan, Erin
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

[REDACTED]

From: Berge, John
To: Hannigan, Erin; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 11:16:42 2010
Subject: RE: Georgia Rural Development State Director
Fitz now asking about the amount of money that the Southern Cooperatives receives and for what – just out of curiosity – how do we communicate to grant recipients as to what is acceptable and what is not. How shall I proceed?

From: Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 9:23 PM
To: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Subject: Fw: Georgia Rural Development State Director

More from Fitz.

From: Elder, Fitzhugh (Appropriations)
To: Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 21:21:10 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director
Erin,

Can you tell me if USDA, under Secretary Vilsack, has accepted any other resignations or has it terminated any other RD State Director or FSA SED for similar reasons? What are the terms of Ms. Sherrod's resignation? Has USDA identified the producer she discriminated against? Are they offering any assistance to that individual? What is USDA's policy when discrimination has occurred? Has this been referred to the DoJ? Will it be? Will USDA provide any training to the federal employees in Georgia to make sure they understand the law and their responsibilities?

Fitz Elder
[REDACTED] direct

From: Hannigan, Erin <Erin.Hannigan@osec.usda.gov>
To: Elder, Fitzhugh (Appropriations)

Sent: Mon Jul 19 19:41:21 2010

Subject: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Fitz,

Secretary Vilsack has issued the following statement with regards to Shirley Sherrod, the State Director of Rural Development in Georgia:

“Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod’s resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.”

Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:38 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: in case he's interested...

Ben Jealous – Wendy Hamilton whamilton@NAACPNET.org

Hillary Shelton - Adam Lee alee@NAACPNET.org

Marc Morial (Urban League) – Maria Fernandez  mariafernandez@nul.org

John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:48 PM
To: Hannigan, Erin; janeanna_harris@agriculture.senate.gov
Cc: Williamson, Todd
Subject: RE: georgia

Jane Anna – just got this far through my emails. Yes, we became aware yesterday when it started circulating. Let me know if you have additional questions.

From: Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:27 AM
To: Berge, John
Cc: Williamson, Todd
Subject: Fw: georgia

From: Harris, Jane Anna (Agriculture)
To: Williamson, Todd; Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 10:15:47 2010
Subject: georgia

Todd and Erin-

I've gotten the statement from the Secretary accepting Shirley Sherrod's resignation in Georgia. Did the Department just become aware of this video yesterday, when it started circulating the web? That seems to be when it first surfaced to everyone, but just checking. thank you so much.

Jane Anna Harris
Professional Staff | Senate Agriculture Committee
328-A Russell Building | Washington, DC 20510
T: 202-224-2035 | F: 202-224-1725
janeanna_harris@agriculture.senate.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:53 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: can you resend me a clean copy of the S statement on Sherrod?

John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:54 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: RE: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod

Thanks.

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:54 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod

Please see below for statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack regarding Shirley Sherrod's resignation yesterday:

Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:17 PM
To: Mather, Chris

Shirley Sherrod: Racist or scapegoat?



Were the administration and the NAACP too hasty in their reactions to Shirley Sherrod, the Department of Agriculture employee who resigned (i.e., was fired) for allegedly racist comments?

A [video clip](#) posted online Monday shows Sherrod delivering a speech at a March NAACP banquet, where she talks about her failure to help a white farmer who was in danger of losing his farm. Her suggestion: If he'd been black, she would have moved heaven and earth to help him. "There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, in accepting Sherrod's resignation. The NAACP, which last week accused the Tea Party of racism, rushed out a searing condemnation of Sherrod: "We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers," said NAACP president Benjamin Jealous.

But I'm not so sure that this apparently quick and sharp rush to judgment was fair. The incident Sherrod recounts occurred more than 20 years ago, before she was employed by the federal government and while she worked for a Georgia organization that assisted farmers. One of the online snippets shows her all but saying she was wrong and explaining that the episode helped her to understand that race should not have played a role in the matter. Sherrod has since told [CNN](#) and the [Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#) that she worked for some two years to help the white man save his farm and that she and the man's family ultimately became friends. The wife of the white farmer, who is deceased, has apparently confirmed Sherrod's version of events.

Did the Ag Department fully vet this matter before ordering Sherrod's removal? Did the White House or its political operatives have a hand in this personnel decision? Was Sherrod allowed to fully tell her side of the story before being axed? I'd like some answers.

By Eva Rodriguez | July 20, 2010; 12:38 PM ET

Categories: [Rodriguez](#) | Tags: [Eva Rodriguez](#)

John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:30 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris
Subject: RE: Atlanta NPR Stn (Charles Edwards): Interview on Shirley Sherrod

Extended video?

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:26 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Subject: RE: Atlanta NPR Stn (Charles Edwards): Interview on Shirley Sherrod

Looping Krysta-

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:26 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Harless, Angela -USDA; Berge, John
Subject: Atlanta NPR Stn (Charles Edwards): Interview on Shirley Sherrod

FYI on another request

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Charles Edwards [mailto:cedwards@pba.org]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:22 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Shirley Sherrod

WORKING ON A 3 PM DEADLINE

Name: Charles Edwards
Organization : 90.1 FM WABE in Atlanta (NPR)
Contact: [REDACTED]

I would like to do a phone interview about why Mrs. Sherrod no longer works for the department.

Thanks!

-Charles Edwards

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:43 PM
To: Pearson, Dexter (Agriculture)
Cc: Mather, Chris
Subject: RE: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod

Correct.

From: Pearson, Dexter (Agriculture) [mailto:Dexter_Pearson@agriculture.senate.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:42 PM
To: Berge, John
Cc: Mather, Chris
Subject: RE: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod

Thanks for the information.

So you guys don't have much more than this at this point?

dp

Dexter L. Pearson
Professional Staff
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry
Chairman Blanche L. Lincoln
328A Senate Russell Building
Washington, DC 20510
P: 202-224-2035
F: 202-228-2125

From: Berge, John [mailto:John.Berge@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:56 PM
To: Pearson, Dexter (Agriculture)
Cc: Mather, Chris
Subject: FW: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod

Dexter – attached are our talking points and below is the Secretary's statement that he issued.

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:54 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod

Please see below for statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack regarding Shirley Sherrod's resignation yesterday:

Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered

civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]

Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:11 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: FOX America Live w/ Megan Kelley (Megan Brown): Interview with USDA rep before 3 p.m. today

Did they ever run the extended tape?

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:05 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Subject: FOX America Live w/ Megan Kelley (Megan Brown): Interview with USDA rep before 3 p.m. today

FYI- Fox America Live with Megan Kelley is hoping for an interview with someone in the next 50 minutes or so. I mentioned that it was very short notice and that we're inundated with requests.

FOX America Live w/ Megan Kelley- Megan Brown


megan.brown@foxnews.com

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: 
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:18 PM
To: Harden, Krysta; Cluthe, Sally
Subject: Fw: Quick Update

Resending.

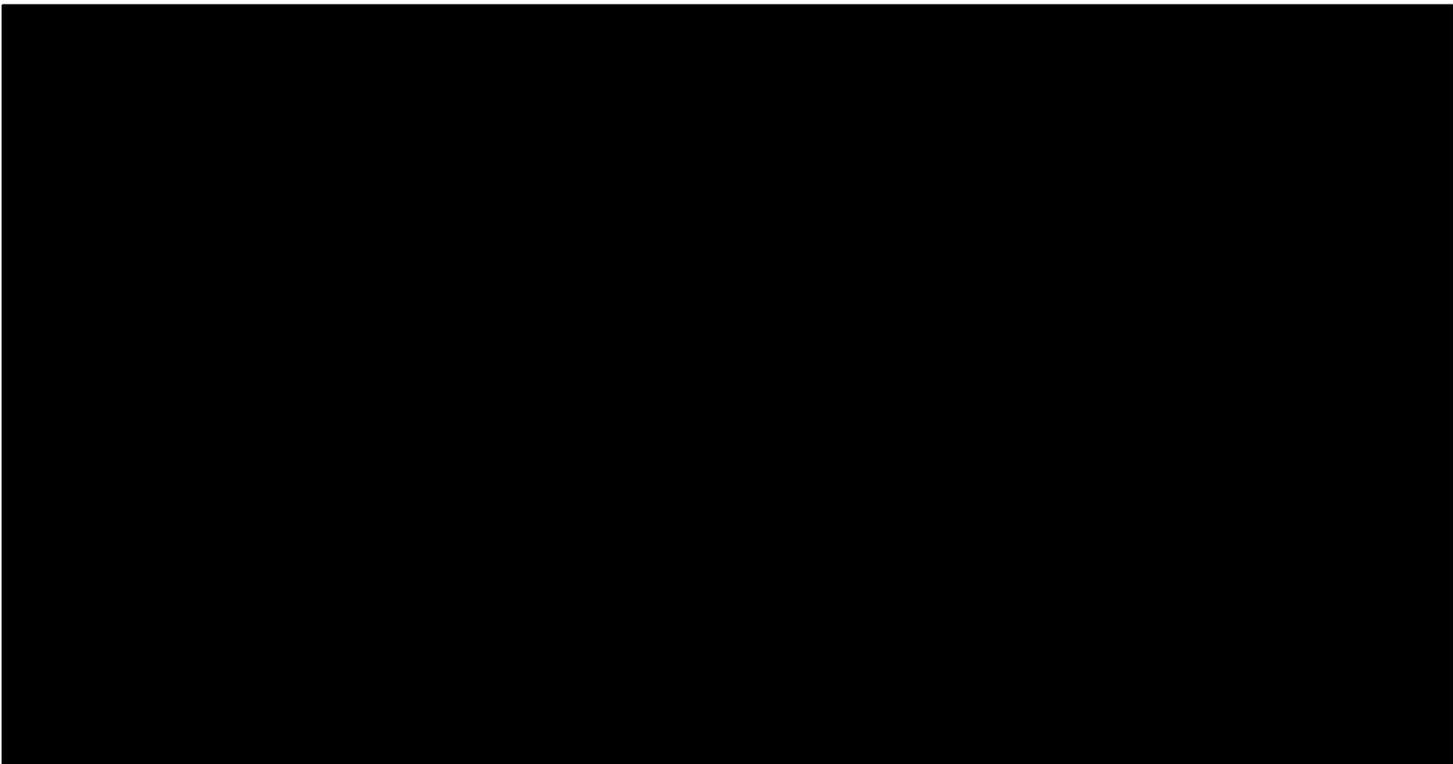
From: Cluthe, Sally
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 12:28:02 2010
Subject: RE: Quick Update
Krysta – will you make sure S does the 2:30pm call?

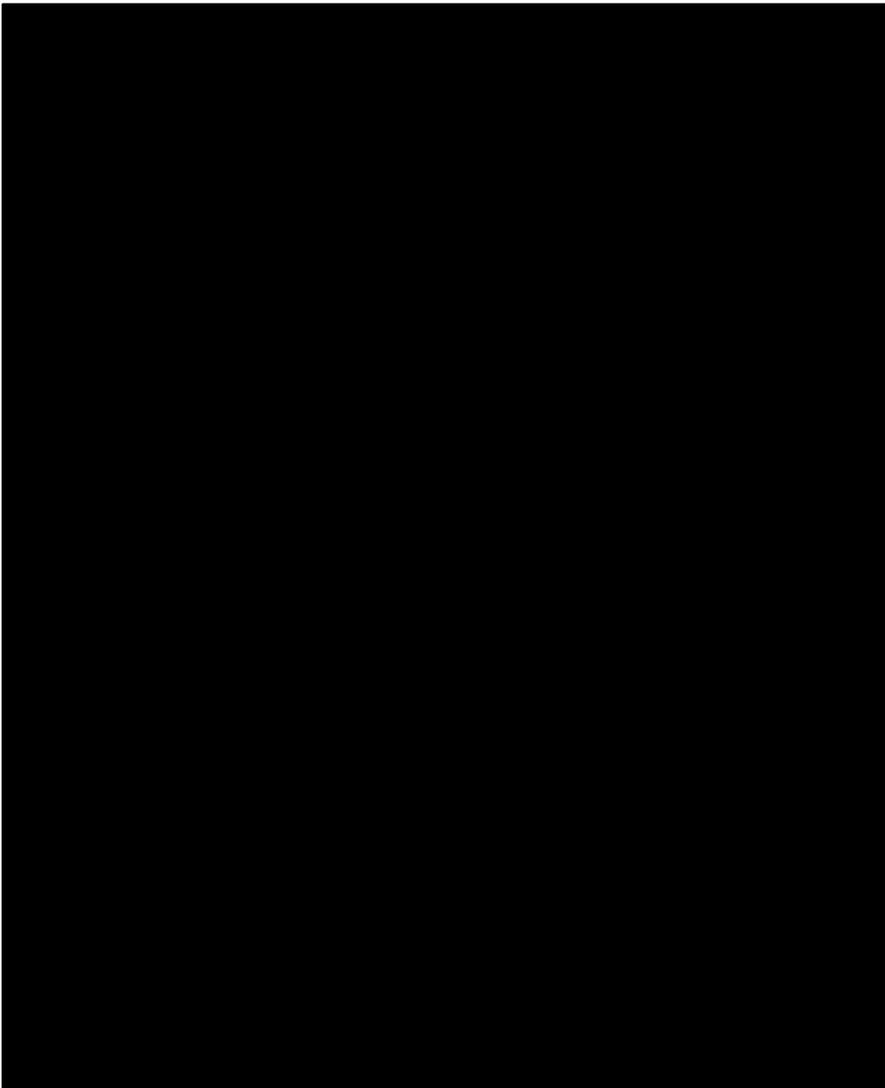
Thanks

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:25 PM
To: Cluthe, Sally; Harden, Krysta
Subject: RE: Quick Update

Thanks Sally.

From: Cluthe, Sally
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:24 PM
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Subject: Quick Update





John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:28 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Mather, Chris
Subject: Re: Shirley Sherrod comments

[REDACTED]

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 14:27:34 2010
Subject: Fw: Shirley Sherrod comments

[REDACTED]

From: Clarke, Carlisle (Agriculture)
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 14:25:13 2010
Subject: Shirley Sherrod comments

Hey Krysta – do y'all have an official release or any briefing materials on the Shirley Sherrod situation? We haven't gotten any press requests or anything yet, but I wanted to make sure we were up to speed.

Thanks!

Carlisle S. Clarke

U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
Ranking Member Saxby Chambliss
328-A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
(202) 224-2035

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:45 PM
To: Harden, Krysta; Cluthe, Sally
Subject: Re: Need numbers and times for others

Let us know how we can follow up if necessary.

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Cluthe, Sally; Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 14:43:07 2010
Subject: Re: Need numbers and times for others

From: Cluthe, Sally
To: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 14:40:10 2010
Subject: RE: Need numbers and times for others

James Clyburn – Scheduler – Alexandra Russell – 225-3315

Cong. Clyburn is available at 2:30pm.

Please call 202-226-3210 (Whip Office). Kelly Sheraton will connect the call from there.

Sanford Bishop – Scheduler – Martina Morgan – 225-3631

Cong. Bishop is available at anytime. His cell # is [REDACTED] Martina (202-225-3631) is happy to help make this happen anytime if needed.

John Lewis – Scheduler – Jacob Gillison – 225-3801

Spoke with Jacob. Waiting to hear back.

David Scott – Scheduler – Angie Borja – 225-2939

Spoke with Angie. Waiting to hear back.

I gave Krysta's cell # - Cong. is going to step out of his mark-up.

Hank Johnson – Scheduler – Ebony Simpson – 225-1605

Cong. Johnson is in the District. His primary is TODAY.

His cell # is [REDACTED]

Barbara Lee (Chairwoman) – Scheduler – ~~Allyson Feeman – 225-2665;~~

Tatiana Kalinga – 202-225-2661

On hold as I type this...

John Conyers – Scheduler – 225-5126

Bennie Thompson – Scheduler – Andrea Lee – 225-5876

GK Butterfield – Scheduler – Darnise Nelson – 225-3101

Maxine Waters – Scheduler – Angela Master – 225-2201

Sheila Jackson-Lee – Scheduler – 225-3816

Association of Black Legislators:

Rep. Calvin Smyre (D-Georgia House of Reps)

President

706-649-5533 office

calvinsmyre@synovus.com

Lakimba DeSadier

Executive Director

202-624-5457 office

 cell

lakimba@nbcsl.org

Rep. Helen Miller (D-Iowa House of Reps)

Chair of NBCSL Agriculture Committee

 cell

helen.miller@legis.state.ia.us

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta

Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 2:35 PM

To: Berge, John
Cc: Cluthe, Sally
Subject: Need numbers and times for others

Besides Clyburn and Bishop

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:19 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: Re: Shirley Sherrod comments

[REDACTED]

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 14:27:34 2010
Subject: Fw: Shirley Sherrod comments

[REDACTED]

From: Clarke, Carlisle (Agriculture)
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 14:25:13 2010
Subject: Shirley Sherrod comments

Hey Krysta – do y'all have an official release or any briefing materials on the Shirley Sherrod situation? We haven't gotten any press requests or anything yet, but I wanted to make sure we were up to speed.

Thanks!

Carlisle S. Clarke

U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
Ranking Member Saxby Chambliss
328-A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
(202) 224-2035

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:47 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Washo, Kevin
Subject: Re: Hey

CNN just read new statement.

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 15:45:50 2010
Subject: Re: Hey

Rural Directors are Schedule C Presidential Appointees. Their appointments go through Presidential Personnel.

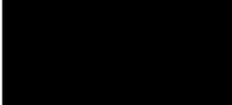
----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 15:43:55 2010
Subject: Hey

Just to confirm that Rural Directors are appointed by the Pres not just the Secy.

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:35 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie; Harden, Krysta; O'Brien, Doug
Subject: RE: Cnn interview

I need to talk to Krysta - have her call my cell. 

-----Original Message-----

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:34 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; O'Brien, Doug
Subject: Cnn interview

Cnn crew was on farm when we arrived. Secretary did interview hitting key points that this was about making sure usda wasn't distracted from correcting injustices of the past, and that it is important that we are singularly focused on job creation and that this could cause people to question and undermine decisions in georgia. He said he doesn't believe she is racist, this was about poor word choice. He was asked about wh involvement and he said he didn't talk to anyone at wh, that he took action after learning about the situation.

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:36 PM
To: DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie; Harden, Krysta; O'Brien, Doug
Subject: RE: Cnn interview

Running it with Shirley on the phone. Shirley reacting real time. Creepy.

-----Original Message-----

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:34 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; O'Brien, Doug
Subject: Cnn interview

Cnn crew was on farm when we arrived. Secretary did interview hitting key points that this was about making sure usda wasn't distracted from correcting injustices of the past, and that it is important that we are singularly focused on job creation and that this could cause people to question and undermine decisions in georgia. He said he doesn't believe she is racist, this was about poor word choice. He was asked about wh involvement and he said he didn't talk to anyone at wh, that he took action after learning about the situation.

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:37 PM
To: 'brian_baenig@agriculture.senate.gov'; 'robert_holifield@agriculture.senate.gov'
Subject: Fw: GA
Attachments: Talking Points Sherrod.docx

Gentleman-sorry for the delay on this. I thought they had been sent to you earlier. Also sending the Statement from the Secretary.

From: Berge, John
To: marthascott_poindexter@agriculture.senate.gov
Cc: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:05:54 2010
Subject: GA

The Secretary just issued this statement in re: the situation in GA, and the talking points that we are using are attached.

Yesterday, I asked for and accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation for two reasons. First, for the past 18 months, we have been working to turn the page on the sordid civil rights record at USDA and this controversy could make it more difficult to move forward on correcting injustices. Second, state rural development directors make many decisions and are often called to use their discretion. The controversy surrounding her comments would create situations where her decisions, rightly or wrongly, would be called into question making it difficult for her to bring jobs to Georgia.

Our policy is clear. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA and we strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have a duty to ensure that when we provide services to the American people we do so in an equitable manner. But equally important is our duty to instill confidence in the American people that we are fair service providers.

John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:40 PM
To: 'robert_holifield@agriculture.senate.gov'; 'brian_baenig@agriculture.senate.gov'
Subject: Fw: Statement by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack

From: Mather, Chris
To: Berge, John; Mather, Chris
Sent: Tue Jul 20 18:38:13 2010
Subject: Statement by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack

Statement by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack

Yesterday, I asked for and accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation for two reasons. First, for the past 18 months, we have been working to turn the page on the sordid civil rights record at USDA and this controversy could make it more difficult to move forward on correcting injustices. Second, state rural development directors make many decisions and are often called to use their discretion. The controversy surrounding her comments would create situations where her decisions, rightly or wrongly, would be called into question making it difficult for her to bring jobs to Georgia.

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Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:00 PM
To: Hannigan, Erin
Subject: Re: hey

I'm in mathers office. I'm here.

From: Berge, John
To: Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 18:59:18 2010
Subject: Re: hey

What did she say?

From: Hannigan, Erin
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 18:58:02 2010
Subject: RE: hey
Msnbc- Sheila Jackson Lee. Are you still in the office?

Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:58 PM
To: Hannigan, Erin
Subject: Re: hey

No. Who was the member - what channel?

From: Hannigan, Erin
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 18:54:21 2010
Subject: hey
Did you see the most recent interview that included a member of congress weighing in on this?

Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:02 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: Fw: hey

Fyi

From: Hannigan, Erin
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 19:01:37 2010
Subject: RE: hey

She started by saying how much she liked Secretary Vilsack and respected him, etc. MSNBC then talked about how she was unfairly treated and everyone jumped to conclusions. Then when pressed about the truth behind the story and whether or not the Secretary should reconsider the resignation, she said that she thought it did warrant reconsideration.

This was moments after NAACP's updated statement was released.

Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:59 PM
To: Hannigan, Erin
Subject: Re: hey

What did she say?

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To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 18:58:02 2010
Subject: RE: hey
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Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:58 PM
To: Hannigan, Erin
Subject: Re: hey

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From: Hannigan, Erin

To: Berge, John

Sent: Tue Jul 20 18:54:21 2010

Subject: hey

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Erin Hannigan

Office of Congressional Relations

United States Department of Agriculture

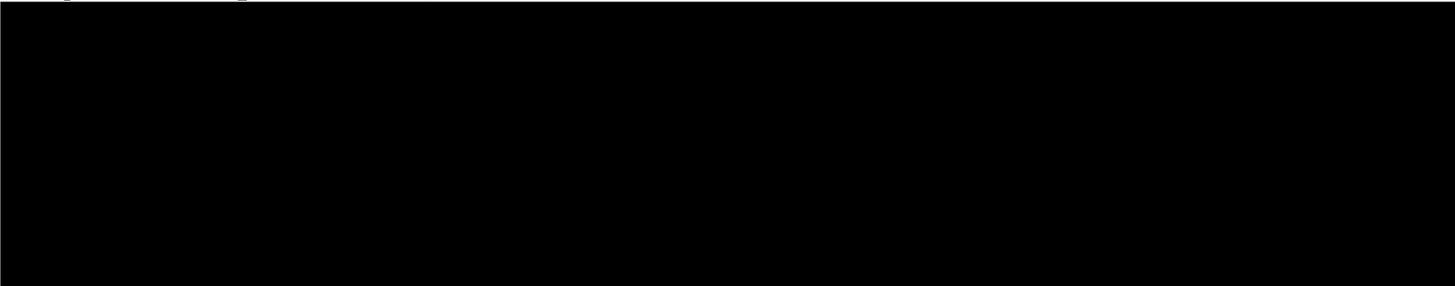
202.720.7095

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:11 PM
To: Jeanquart, Bobbi; Williamson, Todd
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Thanks

From: Jeanquart, Bobbi
To: Williamson, Todd
Cc: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 19:09:56 2010
Subject: RE: Georgia Rural Development State Director



Roberta Jeanquart
Office of Assistant Secretary for Administration
bobbi.jeanquart@osec.usda.gov
Phone 202-720-3805
Cell 

From: Williamson, Todd
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 5:24 PM
To: Jeanquart, Bobbi
Cc: Berge, John
Subject: FW: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Bobbi,



Thanks,

C. Todd Williamson, III

Office of Congressional Relations
U.S. Department of Agriculture
(202) 720-7095

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:33 PM
To: Harden, Krysta; Hannigan, Erin; Williamson, Todd
Subject: RE: Georgia Rural Development State Director

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:18 AM
To: Berge, John; Hannigan, Erlin
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director

[REDACTED]

From: Berge, John
To: Hannigan, Erin; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 11:16:42 2010
Subject: RE: Georgia Rural Development State Director

From: Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 9:23 PM
To: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Subject: Fw: Georgia Rural Development State Director

More from Fitz.

From: Elder, Fitzhugh (Appropriations)
To: Hannigan, Erin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 21:21:10 2010
Subject: Re: Georgia Rural Development State Director
Erin,

Can you tell me if USDA, under Secretary Vilsack, has accepted any other resignations or has it terminated any other RD State Director or FSA SED for similar reasons? What are the terms of Ms. Sherrod's resignation? Has USDA identified the producer she discriminated against? Are they offering any assistance to that individual? What is USDA's policy when discrimination has occurred? Has this been referred to the DoJ? Will it be? Will USDA provide any training to the federal employees in Georgia to make sure they understand the law and their responsibilities?

Fitz Elder
[REDACTED] direct

From: Hannigan, Erin <Erin.Hannigan@osec.usda.gov>
To: Elder, Fitzhugh (Appropriations)
Sent: Mon Jul 19 19:41:21 2010
Subject: Georgia Rural Development State Director

Fitz,

Secretary Vilsack has issued the following statement with regards to Shirley Sherrod, the State Director of Rural Development in Georgia:

"Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously."

Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:18 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: Re: Jesse Jackson

Need to talk to you

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: O'Brien, Doug
Cc: Berge, John; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:15:32 2010
Subject: Re: Jesse Jackson

Secy talking with The Rev now

----- Original Message -----

From: O'Brien, Doug
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 19:49:19 2010
Subject: Jesse Jackson

John Mitchell with rev jackson just called my number.

He can connect the secr to rev jackson anytime. I think he expects it tonight.

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:55 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: Re: Hey

Just missed you. Try again?

----- Original Message -----
From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:48:50 2010
Subject: Re: Hey

Is okay - just hhave a bit of new information.

----- Original Message -----
From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John; Jett, Carole; Mather, Chris
Cc: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:38:16 2010
Subject: Hey

I will. Sorry I cannot call just feel like I need to be in the room

----- Original Message -----
From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Jett, Carole; Mather, Chris
Cc: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:35:52 2010
Subject: Re: Jesse Jackson

Keep us posted.

----- Original Message -----
From: Harden, Krysta
To: Jett, Carole; Mather, Chris
Cc: Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:35:15 2010
Subject: Re: Jesse Jackson

Rahm calling Secy now

----- Original Message -----
From: Jett, Carole
To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Cc: Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:27:36 2010
Subject: Re: Jesse Jackson

Looping in Mather.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta

To: O'Brien, Doug

Cc: Berge, John; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff

Sent: Tue Jul 20 20:15:32 2010

Subject: Re: Jesse Jackson

Secy talking with The Rev now

----- Original Message -----

From: O'Brien, Doug

To: Harden, Krysta

Sent: Tue Jul 20 19:49:19 2010

Subject: Jesse Jackson

John Mitchell with rev jackson just called my number.

He can connect the secr to rev jackson anytime. I think he expects it tonight.

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:14 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: Re: Hey

Should have it out well before then.

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 23:13:24 2010
Subject: Re: Hey

Ok. If plane is on time will be there about 9:30

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 23:12:08 2010
Subject: Re: Hey

Thanks. Will look forward to it, and will prepare to send in morning.

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 23:11:02 2010
Subject: Re: Hey

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Tue Jul 20 23:01:22 2010
Subject: Re: Hey

----- Original Message -----

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Sent: Tue Jul 20 22:42:16 2010
Subject: Hey

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:43 AM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: Re: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

Will go out this am.

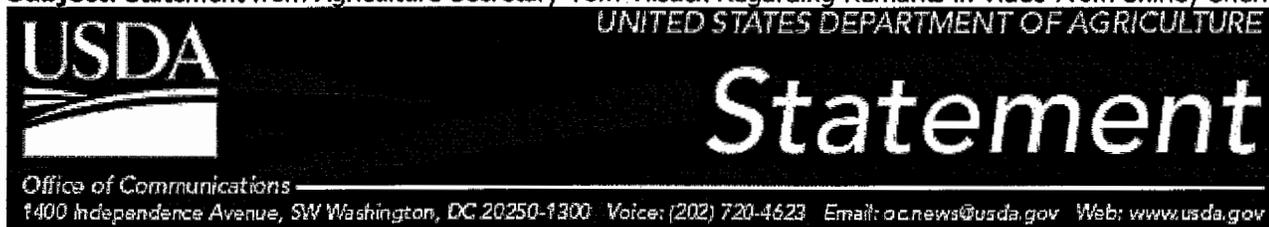
From: Harden, Krysta
To: Berge, John
Sent: Wed Jul 21 05:33:20 2010
Subject: Fw: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

Please share as we discussed

From: Mather, Chris
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wed Jul 21 05:17:54 2010
Subject: Fw: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

This went at 2
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wed Jul 21 02:07:06 2010
Subject: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod



Release No. PENDING

Contact:
USDA Office of Communications
(202) 720-4623

Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

WASHINGTON, July 21, 2010 - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack tonight released the following statement in response to the release of remarks in video from Shirley Sherrod:

"I am of course willing and will conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts to ensure to the American people we are providing services in a fair and equitable manner."

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice), or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]

Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:45 AM
To: May, Tina
Subject: Fw: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

Official (sort of) copy.

From: Mather, Chris
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wed Jul 21 05:17:54 2010
Subject: Fw: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

This went at 2
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wed Jul 21 02:07:06 2010
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Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]

Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:58 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fw: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

Fyi

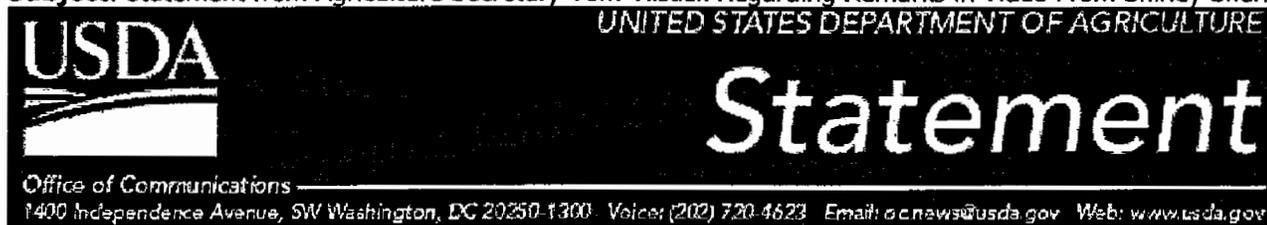
From: Berge, John
To: Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wed Jul 21 06:49:15 2010
Subject: Re: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

Just got this. BB is messed up. Sending to hill in about an hour.

From: Mather, Chris
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wed Jul 21 05:17:54 2010
Subject: Fw: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

This went at 2
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wed Jul 21 02:07:06 2010
Subject: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod



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Stephanie Chan

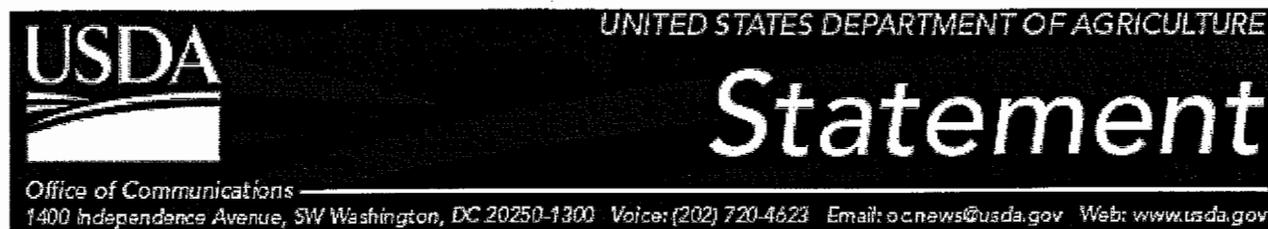
*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:48 AM
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Subject: GA

Good Morning -

Secretary Vilsack issued the following statement late last evening in reference to the situation in Georgia.



Release No. PENDING

Contact:
USDA Office of Communications
(202) 720-4623

Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

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John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 8:28 AM
To: Yezak, Jennifer; Gonzales, Oscar
Subject: RE: GA

Thanks.

From: Yezak, Jennifer
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 8:28 AM
To: Berge, John; Gonzales, Oscar
Subject: Re: GA

John, we'll email it to Gov and Ag Commissioner.

Jennifer

From: Berge, John
To: Yezak, Jennifer; Gonzales, Oscar
Sent: Wed Jul 21 08:17:25 2010
Subject: Fw: GA

Please send to GA Gov and GA State Ag Commision.

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wed Jul 21 08:08:26 2010
Subject: GA

Good Morning -

Secretary Vilsack issued the following statement late last evening in reference to the situation in Georgia.



Release No. PENDING

Contact:
USDA Office of Communications
(202) 720-4623

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From Shirley Sherrod**

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John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:12 AM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: RE: we got clips today?

AP

The White House called the Agriculture Department Tuesday night after more information about Sherrod's remarks emerged, a White House official said. The official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the call, said the White House and the department agreed that the case should be reviewed based on the new evidence.

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:11 AM
To: Berge, John
Subject: RE: we got clips today?

Working on it

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 8:49 AM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: we got clips today?

Didn't get them.

John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:56 AM
To: Hannigan, Erin
Subject: Re: Jackson

Not til now.

From: Hannigan, Erin
To: Berge, John
Sent: Wed Jul 21 09:54:36 2010
Subject: Jackson
Have you seen this?

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/07/21/AR2010072102398.html>

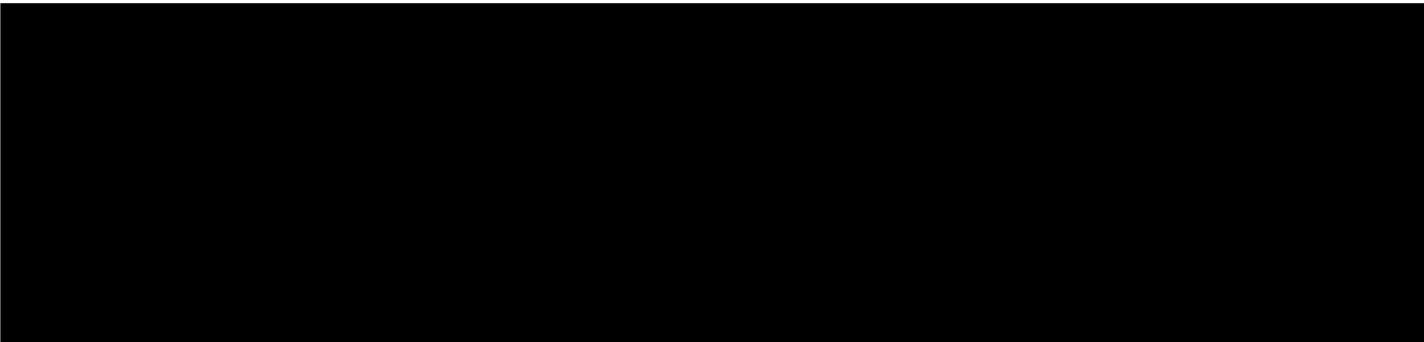
Erin Hannigan
Office of Congressional Relations
United States Department of Agriculture
202.720.7095

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:58 AM
To: McFarland, Lilia; Harden, Krysta
Cc: Church, Chris; Williamson, Todd
Subject: Re: Bishop

You and Chris should go.

From: McFarland, Lilia
To: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Cc: Church, Chris; Williamson, Todd
Sent: Wed Jul 21 10:29:14 2010
Subject: Bishop
Dear Krysta and John,



Lilia McFarland
Office of Congressional Relations
U.S. Department of Agriculture
(202) 720-9259
lilia.mcfarland@osec.usda.gov

[click here to email us](#)

CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

Wednesday, July 21, 2010

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact : J. Jioni Palmer

(Washington, D.C.)- Congressional Black Caucus Chairwoman Barbara Lee and members of the CBC released the following statement today on the firing of USDA employee Shirley Sherrod:

“It is troubling that Shirley Sherrod was asked for her resignation as Georgia State Director for Rural Development at the U.S. Department of Agriculture because of an edited video clip. A full review of the clip demonstrates Ms. Sherrod’s personal transformation. She was clearly educating the public about the power of redemption. It is now apparent that Secretary Vilsack did not have all of the facts available to him and overreacted.

“The Congressional Black Caucus continues to believe that Ms. Sherrod was unfairly asked to resign, without due process and should be reinstated immediately. There are many individuals still serving in the Department of Agriculture who were responsible for years of discrimination against African American farmers.

“We also believe that a national dialogue on race must be held. Last November, we held a forum on race in Washington DC to begin the discussion. The basis for Ms. Sherrod’s resignation is another example of why we must not sweep race under the rug. Rather, we must come together as a nation and recognize that we do not live in a post-racial era and that, while difficult, we must confront these issues head on with clarity and without fear.

“Ms. Sherrod has been an effective public servant and it would be tragic to lose a person of such caliber, competence and commitment to fairness and equality and one who has dedicated her life to working for a more perfect union.”

- 30 -

www.thecongressionalblackcaucus.com

To unsubscribe, [click here](#).

J. Jioni Palmer
Communications Director
Congressional Black Caucus
(202) 226-1912 - office
[REDACTED] - cell

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:05 PM
To: Poindexter, Martha Scott (Agriculture); 'Krysta.Harden@usda.gov'
Subject: RE: GA

Thank you.

From: Poindexter, Martha Scott (Agriculture) [mailto:MarthaScott_Poindexter@agriculture.senate.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:03 AM
To: Berge, John; 'Krysta.Harden@usda.gov'
Subject: Re: GA

Thanks - the Chairman and Saxby spoke with Tonsanger privately and asked him to get them an explanation of everything asap. They will not comment publically until the Secretary's investigation is concluded and a decision is made by him.

From: Berge, John <John.Berge@osec.usda.gov>
To: Berge, John <John.Berge@osec.usda.gov>; Harden, Krysta <Krysta.Harden@osec.usda.gov>
Sent: Wed Jul 21 07:48:26 2010
Subject: GA

Good Morning -

Secretary Vilsack issued the following statement late last evening in reference to the situation in Georgia.



Release No. PENDING

Contact:
USDA Office of Communications
(202) 720-4623

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John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 9:25 AM
To: Harden, Krysta; Hochstrasser, Franz
Subject: Re: Checking

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Hochstrasser, Franz; Berge, John
Sent: Thu Jul 22 09:07:34 2010
Subject: RE: Checking
Got it, I thought it was sent.

From: Hochstrasser, Franz
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 9:03 AM
To: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Subject: RE: Checking

Thanks!

Franz Hochstrasser
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of Congressional Relations
o: (202) 205-1191 / c: [REDACTED]

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:16 PM
To: Hochstrasser, Franz; Berge, John
Subject: Re: Checking

From: Hochstrasser, Franz
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wed Jul 21 19:29:20 2010
Subject: Re: Checking

Heading out for dinner but can come back in if we need to send later. Thanks.

From: Berge, John
To: Hochstrasser, Franz; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wed Jul 21 18:52:10 2010
Subject: Re: Checking

Don't know - adding Krysta. Nothing on email now - just teed up.

From: Hochstrasser, Franz
To: Berge, John
Sent: Wed Jul 21 18:46:05 2010
Subject: Checking
Did you still need me to send the drafted email out, that we discussed today?

Thanks!

Franz Hochstrasser
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of Congressional Relations
o: (202) 205-1191 / c: 

Berge, John

From: Wilson, Denise R. [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 10:52 AM
To: Berge, John; Stoneman, Shelly O.
Subject: Shirley Sherrod

Just had a conversation with Ron Stroman of the Oversight committee. Towns is very worried that USDA took action against Ms Sherrod w/o learning the facts which resulted in her being directed to resign. He has directed his staff to prepare a letter to Vilsak along this line.

Ron said that Ranking Member Issa is expected to play into the media accounts that the WH was behind the move to take action against a black woman-and that Issa will play the race card against USDA and the WH -highlighting the fact that we took action before the facts were in. According to Ron, (who is in touch with her) Ms Sherrod does not appear to plan on coming back to USDA because she feels so unfairly treated.

Denise Wilson

Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

Berge, John

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:44 PM
To: 'Wilson, Denise R.'
Cc: Berge, John
Subject: hey

Just wanted you to know that the S has been trying to reach Mrs. Sherrod all afternoon and will continue to try to do so. And, the CBC has asked him to come up as soon as he can. He talked with the Chair woman again (also yesterday) and agreed to come. However, he hopes to talk with Mrs. Sherrod first if possible.

Just wanted to keep you in the loop. KH

Krysta Harden
Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations
USDA
202.720.7095

Berge, John

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:55 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Berge, John
Subject: Re: hey

The S is with the CBC now.

From: Harden, Krysta
To: 'Wilson, Denise R.'
Cc: Berge, John
Sent: Wed Jul 21 14:43:31 2010
Subject: hey

Just wanted you to know that the S has been trying to reach Mrs. Sherrod all afternoon and will continue to try to do so. And, the CBC has asked him to come up as soon as he can. He talked with the Chair woman again (also yesterday) and agreed to come. However, he hopes to talk with Mrs. Sherrod first if possible.

Just wanted to keep you in the loop. KH

Krysta Harden
Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations
USDA
202.720.7095

Berge, John

From: Wilson, Denise R. [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 8:10 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Berge, John
Subject: RE: hey

Well since he missed the CBC meeting, should the Secretary call Towns directly?

From: Harden, Krysta [mailto:Krysta.Harden@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 7:41 PM
To: Wilson, Denise R.
Cc: Berge, John
Subject: Re: hey

[REDACTED]

From: Wilson, Denise R.
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Berge, John
Sent: Thu Jul 22 19:37:01 2010
Subject: RE: hey

Are you circling with Ron Stroman in the Oversight committee?

[REDACTED]

From: Harden, Krysta [mailto:Krysta.Harden@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:55 PM
To: Wilson, Denise R.
Cc: Berge, John
Subject: Re: hey

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From: Harden, Krysta
To: 'Wilson, Denise R.'
Cc: Berge, John
Sent: Wed Jul 21 14:43:31 2010
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Just wanted to keep you in the loop. KH

Krysta Harden
Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations
USDA

202.720.7095

Berge, John

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 8:11 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Berge, John
Subject: Re: hey

Yes that is a good idea. I also emailed Ron to ask if he and I would talk about the briefing request. Thanks Denise

From: Wilson, Denise R.
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Berge, John
Sent: Thu Jul 22 20:10:12 2010
Subject: RE: hey
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From: Harden, Krysta [mailto:Krysta.Harden@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 7:41 PM
To: Wilson, Denise R.
Cc: Berge, John
Subject: Re: hey

[REDACTED]

From: Wilson, Denise R.
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Berge, John
Sent: Thu Jul 22 19:37:01 2010
Subject: RE: hey
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[REDACTED]

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Just wanted to keep you in the loop. KH

Krysta Harden
Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations
USDA
202.720.7095

Berge, John

From: Wilson, Denise R. [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 8:14 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Berge, John
Subject: RE: hey

[REDACTED]

From: Harden, Krysta [mailto:Krysta.Harden@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 8:11 PM
To: Wilson, Denise R.
Cc: Berge, John
Subject: Re: hey

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From: Wilson, Denise R.
To: Harden, Krysta
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To: Wilson, Denise R.
Cc: Berge, John
Subject: Re: hey

[REDACTED]

From: Wilson, Denise R.
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Berge, John
Sent: Thu Jul 22 19:37:01 2010
Subject: RE: hey
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[REDACTED]

From: Harden, Krysta [mailto:Krysta.Harden@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:55 PM
To: Wilson, Denise R.
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From: Harden, Krysta
To: 'Wilson, Denise R.'
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Sent: Wed Jul 21 14:43:31 2010
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Krysta Harden
Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations
USDA
202.720.7095

Berge, John

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 8:16 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: Re: hey

[REDACTED] We will try that in the am. Thank you

From: Wilson, Denise R.
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Berge, John
Sent: Thu Jul 22 20:14:01 2010
Subject: RE: hey

[REDACTED]

From: Harden, Krysta [mailto:Krysta.Harden@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 8:11 PM
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Cc: Berge, John
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Subject: Re: hey

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From: Wilson, Denise R.
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Berge, John
Sent: Thu Jul 22 19:37:01 2010
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[REDACTED]

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Just wanted to keep you in the loop. KH

Krysta Harden
Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations
USDA
202.720.7095

Berge, John

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 8:18 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: Re: hey

Just heard from Ron. He and I are talking in the am. I will let you know how it goes.

From: Wilson, Denise R.
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Berge, John
Sent: Thu Jul 22 20:14:01 2010
Subject: RE: hey
[REDACTED]

From: Harden, Krysta [mailto:Krysta.Harden@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 8:11 PM
To: Wilson, Denise R.
Cc: Berge, John
Subject: Re: hey

Yes that is a good idea. I also emailed Ron to ask if he and I would talk about the briefing request. Thanks Denise

From: Wilson, Denise R.
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Berge, John
Sent: Thu Jul 22 20:10:12 2010
Subject: RE: hey

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Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 7:41 PM
To: Wilson, Denise R.
Cc: Berge, John
Subject: Re: hey

[REDACTED]

From: Wilson, Denise R.
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Berge, John
Sent: Thu Jul 22 19:37:01 2010
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To: Wilson, Denise R.
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Subject: Re: hey

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Cc: Berge, John
Sent: Wed Jul 21 14:43:31 2010
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Just wanted to keep you in the loop. KH

Krysta Harden
Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations
USDA
202.720.7095

Berge, John

From: Wilson, Denise R. [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 8:26 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: RE: hey

Thanks all.

From: Harden, Krysta [mailto:Krysta.Harden@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 8:18 PM
To: Wilson, Denise R.
Cc: Berge, John; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: Re: hey

Just heard from Ron. He and I are talking in the am. I will let you know how it goes.

From: Wilson, Denise R.
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Berge, John
Sent: Thu Jul 22 20:14:01 2010
Subject: RE: hey
[REDACTED]

From: Harden, Krysta [mailto:Krysta.Harden@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 8:11 PM
To: Wilson, Denise R.
Cc: Berge, John
Subject: Re: hey

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From: Wilson, Denise R.
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Berge, John
Sent: Thu Jul 22 20:10:12 2010
Subject: RE: hey
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From: Harden, Krysta [mailto:Krysta.Harden@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 7:41 PM
To: Wilson, Denise R.
Cc: Berge, John
Subject: Re: hey
[REDACTED]

From: Wilson, Denise R.
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Berge, John
Sent: Thu Jul 22 19:37:01 2010
Subject: RE: hey
Are you circling with Ron Stroman in the Oversight committee?



From: Harden, Krysta [mailto:Krysta.Harden@osec.usda.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 5:55 PM
To: Wilson, Denise R.
Cc: Berge, John
Subject: Re: hey

The S is with the CBC now.

From: Harden, Krysta
To: 'Wilson, Denise R.'
Cc: Berge, John
Sent: Wed Jul 21 14:43:31 2010
Subject: hey
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Just wanted to keep you in the loop. KH

Krysta Harden
Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations
USDA
202.720.7095

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:55 PM
To: [REDACTED]; Stoneman, Shelly O.
Subject: URGENT

FYI – we are developing statement on the issue below now, and will be reaching out to the GA delegation, GA Governor, GA Ag Commissioner, etc. FYI - person is on administrative leave and we are exploring other options. We will also reach out to Appropriators and Authorizers.

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:50 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Fw: URGENT

Chris Mather

From: Cherlin, Reid H.
To: Mather, Chris; Gavin, Tom
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:24:42 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT
ok – what are you going to say, and has she been fired? I'm going to alert folks here.

From: Mather, Chris [mailto:Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:19 PM
To: Cherlin, Reid H.; Gavin, Tom
Subject: Re: URGENT

Video of GA Rural Development State Director saying at a NAACP meeting that when a white farmer came to her for services, she knowingly didn't give him all the help he needed. She goes on to make it a larger case about understanding race... but looks bad. O'Reilly just called us for statement.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Cherlin, Reid H. <[REDACTED]>
To: Mather, Chris; Gavin, Tom <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:49:56 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT

Can you explain a little about what this is and what we should do?

-----Original Message-----

From: Mather, Chris [mailto:Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:48 PM
To: Cherlin, Reid H.; Gavin, Tom
Subject: URGENT
Importance: High

See below. Just posted online. There is video. CBS NY just ran something. FOX News ran something yesterday but our TV Eyes did not pick up.

<http://hotair.com/archives/2010/07/19/breitbart-hits-naacp-with-promised-video-of-racism/>

here is beginning on whats online

The NAACP is about to learn one of the most basic of all lessons in life - those who live in glass houses should avoid provoking a stone-throwing war. After the civil-rights organization threatened to issue a condemnation of Tea Party activism by equating it with racism (a position from which they ultimately retreated), Andrew Breitbart announced that he would publish at least one video of the NAACP itself cheering racism. Breitbart delivers on that promise today at Big Government, showing USDA official Shirley Sherrod explain to an appreciative NAACP audience in July 2009 how she deliberately withheld information from a white farmer in Georgia trying to save his land and his business:

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:33 PM
To: Greenawalt, Andrei M.; [REDACTED]
Subject: HELP

Importance: High

Need a phone number for Tom Gavin ASAP.

John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@oscc.usda.gov

Berge, John

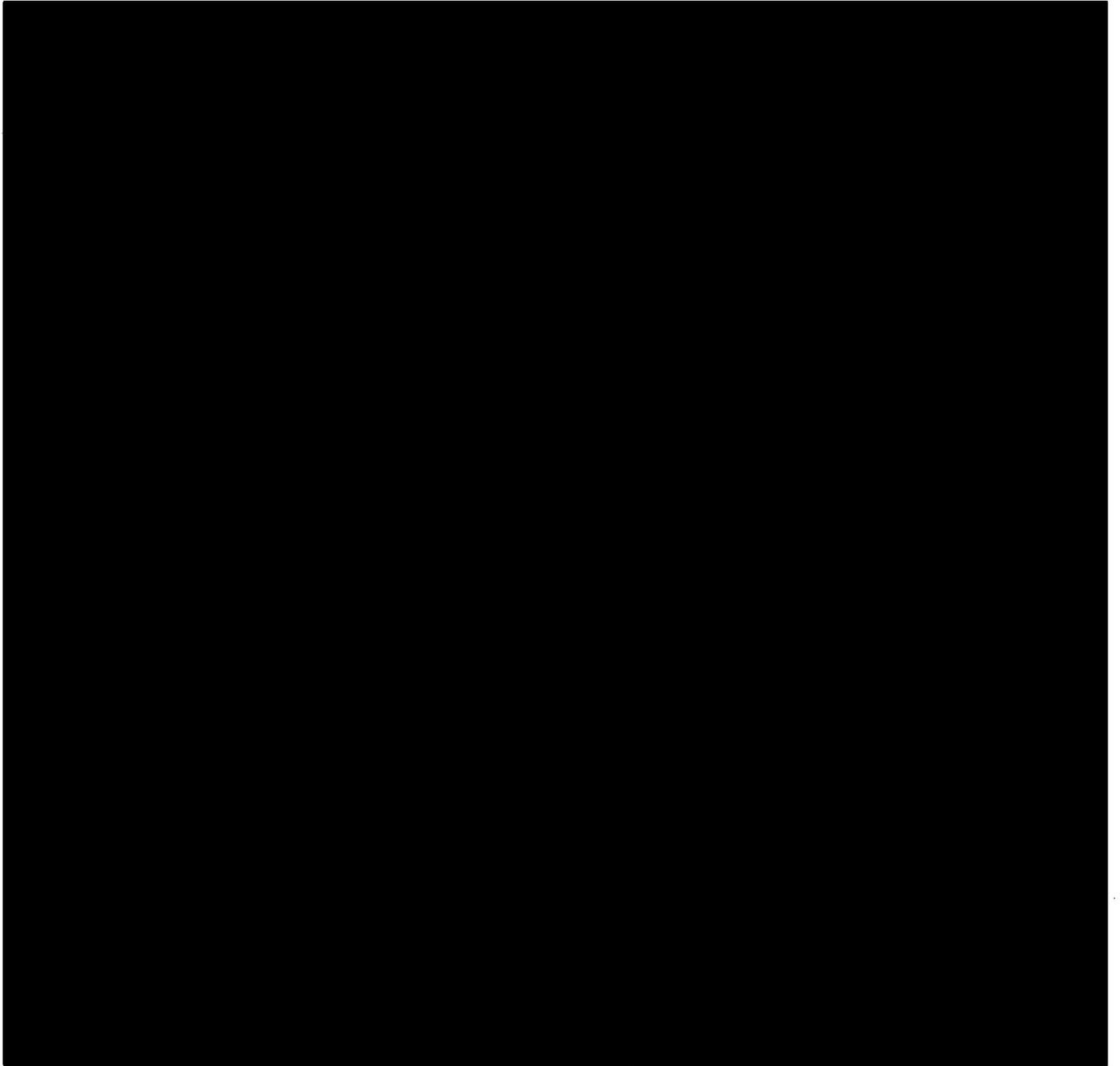
From: Berge, John
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:22 PM
To: Greenawalt, Andrei M.
Subject: do you have a cell or direct number for Gibbs?

Secretary will likely want to call him this evening.

John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA
202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:23 PM
To: Stoneman, Shelly O.; Heimbach, James T.
Cc: Harden, Krysta; Cluthe, Sally
Subject: FW: Employee Email



John Berge
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Congressional Relations - USDA

202-720-5759 (office)
john.berge@osec.usda.gov

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:26 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns

Got it and will follow up.

----- Original Message -----

From: Wilson, Denise R. <[REDACTED]>
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:21:22 2010
Subject: Chairman Towns

His staff director, Ron Stroman just called. Towns wants to be briefed on Shirley Sherrod.
Ron's number is [REDACTED].

Denise Wilson
Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:27 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: Fw: Chairman Towns

I can handle this, unless you/secretary wants to call.

----- Original Message -----

From: Wilson, Denise R. <[REDACTED]>
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:21:22 2010
Subject: Chairman Towns

His staff director, Ron Stroman just called. Towns wants to be briefed on Shirley Sherrod.
Ron's number is [REDACTED]
Denise Wilson

Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:28 PM
To: Wilson, Denise R.
Subject: RE: Chairman Towns

Got it.

-----Original Message-----

From: Wilson, Denise R. [mailto:████████████████████]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:27 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns

Also, you might want to connect with Patrice Willoughby, exec dir of the CBC.

Denise Wilson

Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

----- Original Message -----

From: Wilson, Denise R.
To: 'john.berge@osec.usda.gov' <john.berge@osec.usda.gov>
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:21:22 2010
Subject: Chairman Towns

His staff director, Ron Stroman just called. Towns wants to be briefed on Shirley Sherrod.
Ron's number is ██████.

Denise Wilson

Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:29 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns

The opposite. The Secretary spoke with several members of the CBC today who were all supportive.

From: Wilson, Denise R.
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:28:00 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns
Ron is way too wound up on this. He's saying the CBC will be all over this. What have you heard?
Denise Wilson
Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

From: Berge, John <John.Berge@osec.usda.gov>
To: Wilson, Denise R.
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:26:03 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns

Got it and will follow up.

----- Original Message -----

From: Wilson, Denise R. <[REDACTED]>
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:21:22 2010
Subject: Chairman Towns

His staff director, Ron Stroman just called. Towns wants to be briefed on Shirley Sherrod.
Ron's number is [REDACTED]
Denise Wilson
Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:38 PM
To: Wilson, Denise R.
Subject: RE: Chairman Towns

They are speaking at 515.

From: Wilson, Denise R. [mailto: [REDACTED]]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:31 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns

Did he speak with Barbara Lee
Denise Wilson
Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

From: Berge, John <John.Berge@osec.usda.gov>
To: Wilson, Denise R.
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:29:27 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns

The opposite. The Secretary spoke with several members of the CBC today who were all supportive.

From: Wilson, Denise R.
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:28:00 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns
Ron is way too wound up on this. He's saying the CBC will be all over this. What have you heard?
Denise Wilson
Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

From: Berge, John <John.Berge@osec.usda.gov>
To: Wilson, Denise R.
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:26:03 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns

Got it and will follow up.

----- Original Message -----

From: Wilson, Denise R. < [REDACTED] >
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:21:22 2010
Subject: Chairman Towns

His staff director, Ron Stroman just called. Towns wants to be briefed on Shirley Sherrod.

Ron's number is [REDACTED].

Denise Wilson

Special Assistant to the President

Office of Legislative Affairs

The White House

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 5:03 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns

Concur, and that is what I offered on voicemail, but need best number for later tonight. S is in OH travelling and won't be available to call until after 6 or 630 EDT. Do you have a good number?

From: Wilson, Denise R.
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:58:25 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns
Maybe the secretary should just put in a call to Towns. Maybe Towns/ Ron feel left out on the calls.
Denise Wilson
Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

From: Wilson, Denise R.
To: 'John.Berge@osec.usda.gov' <John.Berge@osec.usda.gov>
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:48:12 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns

Good. Not sure why Ron wants to make an issue of this without the facts
Denise Wilson
Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

From: Berge, John <John.Berge@osec.usda.gov>
To: Wilson, Denise R.
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:37:37 2010
Subject: RE: Chairman Towns

They are speaking at 515.

From: Wilson, Denise R. [mailto:[REDACTED]]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:31 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns

Did he speak with Barbara Lee
Denise Wilson
Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

From: Berge, John <John.Berge@osec.usda.gov>
To: Wilson, Denise R.
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:29:27 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns

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To: Berge, John
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Denise Wilson
Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

From: Berge, John <John.Berge@osec.usda.gov>
To: Wilson, Denise R.
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:26:03 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns

Got it and will follow up.

----- Original Message -----

From: Wilson, Denise R. <[REDACTED]>
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:21:22 2010
Subject: Chairman Towns

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Ron's number is [REDACTED]

Denise Wilson
Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 5:09 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns

Very helpful.

From: Wilson, Denise R.
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 17:07:00 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns
[REDACTED] Towns mobile

[REDACTED] Ron mobile
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From: Wilson, Denise R.
To: 'John.Berge@osec.usda.gov' <John.Berge@osec.usda.gov>
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:48:12 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns

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From: Berge, John <John.Berge@osec.usda.gov>
To: Wilson, Denise R.
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:37:37 2010
Subject: RE: Chairman Towns

They are speaking at 515.

From: Wilson, Denise R. [mailto: [REDACTED]]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:31 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns

Did he speak with Barbara Lee
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From: Berge, John <John.Berge@osec.usda.gov>
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Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:29:27 2010
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To: Wilson, Denise R.
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:26:03 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns

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The White House

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 5:11 PM
To: Harden, Krysta; Cluthe, Sally
Subject: Fw: Chairman Towns

WH would like Secretary to reach out to towns directly. Numbers below.

From: Wilson, Denise R.
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 17:07:00 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns
[REDACTED] Towns mobile

[REDACTED] Ron mobile
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Special Assistant to the President

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From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 5:11 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns

Yes.

From: Wilson, Denise R.
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 17:07:20 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns
So you left Ron a message?
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Special Assistant to the President
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Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:28 PM
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From: Wilson, Denise R.
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Any new news?
Denise Wilson
Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

From: Berge, John <John.Berge@osec.usda.gov>
To: Wilson, Denise R.
Sent: Tue Jul 20 17:09:14 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns

Very helpful.

From: Wilson, Denise R.
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 17:07:00 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns
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Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:35 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns

I spoke with Ron. We're hooking the Secretary up with the Chairman.

From: Wilson, Denise R.
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 18:29:43 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns
You have to connect with Ron. I better check his website. No telling what they have released
Denise Wilson
Special Assistant to the President
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From: Berge, John <John.Berge@osec.usda.gov>
To: Wilson, Denise R.
Sent: Tue Jul 20 18:27:51 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns

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Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:50 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns

They spoke and Towns is okay.

From: Wilson, Denise R.
To: Berge, John
Sent: Tue Jul 20 18:40:44 2010
Subject: Re: Chairman Towns
Whew. Great
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From: Berge, John <John.Berge@osec.usda.gov>
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Ron's number is [REDACTED]
Denise Wilson
Special Assistant to the President

Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

Berge, John

From: Berge, John
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:40 AM
To: Wilson, Denise R.; Harden, Krysta
Subject: RE: CBC NEWS: CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

Got it.

From: Wilson, Denise R. [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 11:39 AM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Fw: CBC NEWS: CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

FYI
Denise Wilson
Special Assistant to the President
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

From: Schwoeffermann, Irene (CBC) <ibs@mail.house.gov>
Sent: Wed Jul 21 10:46:38 2010
Subject: CBC NEWS: CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

Trouble viewing this press release? [Click here.](#)



CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS

CHANGE COURSE, CONFRONT CRISES, CONTINUE THE LEGACY

Contact Us

Congressional Black Caucus
2444 Rayburn Building
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 226-9776 (I)
(202) 225-9817 (F)

[click here to email us](#)

CBC Statement on the Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

Wednesday, July 21, 2010

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact : J. Jioni Palmer

(Washington, D.C.)- Congressional Black Caucus Chairwoman Barbara Lee and members of the CBC released the following statement today on the firing of USDA employee Shirley Sherrod:

“It is troubling that Shirley Sherrod was asked for her resignation as Georgia State Director for Rural Development at the U.S. Department of Agriculture because of an edited video clip. A full review of the clip demonstrates Ms. Sherrod’s personal transformation. She was clearly educating the public about the power of redemption. It is now apparent that Secretary Vilsack did not have all of the facts available to him and overreacted.

“The Congressional Black Caucus continues to believe that Ms. Sherrod was unfairly asked to resign, without due process and should be reinstated immediately. There are many individuals still serving in the Department of Agriculture who were responsible for years of discrimination against African American farmers.

“We also believe that a national dialogue on race must be held. Last November, we held a forum on race in Washington DC to begin the discussion. The basis for Ms. Sherrod’s resignation is another example of why we must not sweep race under the rug. Rather, we must come together as a nation and recognize that we do not live in a post-racial era and that, while difficult, we must confront these issues head on with clarity and without fear.

“Ms. Sherrod has been an effective public servant and it would be tragic to lose a person of such caliber, competence and commitment to fairness and equality and one who has dedicated her life to working for a more perfect union.”

- 30 -

www.thecongressionalblackcaucus.com

To unsubscribe, [click here](#).

J. Jioni Palmer
Communications Director
Congressional Black Caucus
(202) 226-1912 - office
[REDACTED] - cell

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:50 PM
To: Berge, John
Subject: Fw: URGENT

Chris Mather

From: Cherlin, Reid H.
To: Mather, Chris; Gavin, Tom
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:24:42 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT

ok - what are you going to say, and has she been fired? I'm going to alert folks here.

From: Mather, Chris [mailto:Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:19 PM
To: Cherlin, Reid H.; Gavin, Tom
Subject: Re: URGENT

Video of GA Rural Development State Director saying at a NAACP meeting that when a white farmer came to her for services, she knowingly didn't give him all the help he needed. She goes on to make it a larger case about understanding race... but looks bad. O'Reilly just called us for statement.

Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Cherlin, Reid H. <[REDACTED]>
To: Mather, Chris; Gavin, Tom <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:49:56 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT

Can you explain a little about what this is and what we should do?

-----Original Message-----

From: Mather, Chris [mailto:Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:48 PM
To: Cherlin, Reid H.; Gavin, Tom
Subject: URGENT
Importance: High

See below. Just posted online. There is video. CBS NY just ran something. FOX News ran something yesterday but our TV Eyes did not pick up.

<http://hotair.com/archives/2010/07/19/breitbart-hits-naacp-with-promised-video-of-racism/>

here is beginning on whats online

The NAACP is about to learn one of the most basic of all lessons in life - those who live in glass houses should avoid provoking a stone-throwing war. After the civil-rights organization threatened to issue a condemnation of Tea Party activism by equating it with racism (a

position from which they ultimately retreated), Andrew Breitbart announced that he would publish at least one video of the NAACP itself cheering racism. Breitbart delivers on that promise today at Big Government, showing USDA official Shirley Sherrod explain to an appreciative NAACP audience in July 2009 how she deliberately withheld information from a white farmer in Georgia trying to save his land and his business:

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:40 AM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: RE: Now seeking clarification

[REDACTED]

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:38 AM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: Fw: Now seeking clarification

[REDACTED]

From: Ed O'Keefe
To: Cherlin, Reid H. ; Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 11:31:04 2010
Subject: Now seeking clarification
Reid:

I'm assuming y'all have seen Ms. Sherrod on CNN saying that undersecretary of Agriculture Cheryl Cook called her several times to ask for resignation and that the administration forced her out without letting her tell her side of the story.

Looking to see once again if the White House or USDA has further comment? Thanks in advance.

Ed O'Keefe
The Federal Eye
The Washington Post
ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com
202.334.5546. (o) | [REDACTED] (c)
AIM: edatpost | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [GovLoop](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

Mather, Chris

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Subject: RE: Now seeking clarification

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

From: Mather, Chris
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 11:39:33 2010
Subject: RE: Now seeking clarification

[REDACTED]

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:38 AM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: Fw: Now seeking clarification

[REDACTED]

From: Ed O'Keefe
To: Cherlin, Reid H. ; Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 11:31:04 2010
Subject: Now seeking clarification
Reid:

I'm assuming y'all have seen Ms. Sherrod on CNN saying that undersecretary of Agriculture Cheryl Cook called her several times to ask for resignation and that the administration forced her out without letting her tell her side of the story.

Looking to see once again if the White House or USDA has further comment? Thanks in advance.

Ed O'Keefe
The Federal Eye
The Washington Post
ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com
202.334.5546. (o) | [REDACTED] (c)
AIM: edatpost | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [GovLoop](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:46 PM
To: 'Cherlin, Reid H.'
Subject: FW: Statement by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:39 PM
Subject: Statement by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack

Statement by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack

Yesterday, I asked for and accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation for two reasons. First, for the past 18 months, we have been working to turn the page on the sordid civil rights record at USDA and this controversy could make it more difficult to move forward on correcting injustices. Second, state rural development directors make many decisions and are often called to use their discretion. The controversy surrounding her comments would create situations where her decisions, rightly or wrongly, would be called into question making it difficult for her to bring jobs to Georgia.

Our policy is clear. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA and we strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have a duty to ensure that when we provide services to the American people we do so in an equitable manner. But equally important is our duty to instill confidence in the American people that we are fair service providers.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:16 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: RE: URGENT

Yes

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:02 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: Re: URGENT

Have you seen the video?

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 15:00:42 2010
Subject: Re: URGENT

I sent to Ross and Jett
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 14:51:24 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT

Is WH or Kevin aware of this?

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 2:44 PM
To: Berge, John; Mather, Chris
Subject: Re: URGENT

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Harden, Krysta; Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 14:42:27 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT

-----Original Message-----

From: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 2:39 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John
Subject: Re: URGENT

Terrible. What can I do to help?

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Berge, John; Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 14:34:25 2010
Subject: URGENT

This is horrible. Video just posted on Hotair.com.

The NAACP is about to learn one of the most basic of all lessons in life – those who live in glass houses should avoid provoking a stone-throwing war. After the civil-rights organization threatened to issue a condemnation of Tea Party activism by equating it with racism (a position from which they ultimately retreated), Andrew Breitbart announced that he would publish at least one video of the NAACP itself cheering racism. Breitbart delivers on that promise today at Big Government, showing USDA official Shirley Sherrod explain to an appreciative NAACP audience in July 2009 how she deliberately withheld information from a white farmer in Georgia trying to save his land and his business:

-----Original Message-----

From: Maloney, Wayne
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 1:56 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Zaina, Lisa
Subject: FW: Georgia
Importance: High

Chris,

I was just informed of a video of the Georgia State Director that was posted on the Internet earlier this afternoon. It speaks for itself and you need to watch it right away.

I have discussed this with Tim McNeilly. He has instructed the PIC and the State Director not to respond to media without checking with us first. We have not been contacted by any media outlet but expect that we will.

Tim has been asked by me to draft a statement for our review to be issued if necessary.

Wayne
###

Georgia PIC just called to alert us to a campaign underway involving Shirley Sherrod vs. the Tea Party people. I understand that this may have been brought to your attention already, but in case it hasn't..... The PIC is looking for guidance if (and I think there will be) media contact regarding the below video.

<http://hotair.com/archives/2010/07/19/breitbart-hits-naacp-with-promised-video-of-racism/>

Looking for guidance on how you would like to prepare and handle any inquiries that result.

Thanks.

Timothy J. McNeilly | Director, Legislative and Public Affairs Rural Development U.S.
Department of Agriculture 1400 Independence Ave., S.W. | Washington, D.C. 20250

Phone: 202.720.1019 | Fax: 202.690.4083

www.rurdev.usda.gov

"Committed to the future of rural communities"

"Estamos dedicados al futuro de las comunidades rurales"

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 3:56 PM
To: Misailidis, Sarah; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: FW: Georgia

Importance: High

-----Original Message-----

From: Maloney, Wayne
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 1:56 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb; Zaina, Lisa
Subject: FW: Georgia
Importance: High

Chris,

I was just informed of a video of the Georgia State Director that was posted on the Internet earlier this afternoon. It speaks for itself and you need to watch it right away.

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Thanks.

Timothy J. McNeilly | Director, Legislative and Public Affairs Rural Development U.S.
Department of Agriculture 1400 Independence Ave., S.W. | Washington, D.C. 20250
Phone: 202.720.1019 | Fax: 202.690.4083

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"Committed to the future of rural communities"

"Estamos dedicados al futuro de las comunidades rurales"

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:07 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Re: Transcript

Great, thanks.
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:57:55 2010
Subject: RE: Transcript

No worries, the interns transcribed as quickly as their keyboards would allow. We thanked them with lots of exclamation points

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 4:56 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Fw: Transcript

Did you type this? Sorry, thought it was Sarah.
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:42:36 2010
Subject: Transcript

Chris, please see below for transcript

Video: [Link](#)

On July 25, 2009 Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack appointed Shirley Sherrod as Georgia Director of Rural Development. USDA Rural Development spends over \$1.2 Billion in the state of Georgia each year. On March 27, 2010, while speaking at the NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet, Ms. Sherrod admits that in her federally appointed position, overseeing over a billion dollars, she discriminates against people due to their race.

Shirley Sherrod: The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking but he was trying to show me he was superior to me, I know what he was doing. But he had to come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me, was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him. I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their

farm land. And here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So, I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough. So that when he, I assumed the Department of Agriculture had sent him to me, either that or the Georgia Department of Agriculture. And he needed to go back and report that I did try and help him. So I took him to a white lawyer that that had attended some of the training that we had provided because of Chapter 12 bankruptcy had just been enacted for the family farm. So I figured if I take him to one of them that his own kind would take care of him. That's when it was revealed to me that its about poor versus those who have. It's not so much about white...it is about white and black. It is about white and black but its not you know...it opened my eyes because I took him to one of his own.

Fox News Clip:

Geraldo Rivera: Do you denounce in the way that you ask the Tea Parties denounce racists within your ranks?

Hilary Shelton: Yes we do, we repudiate racists within our ranks.

Back to Shirley Sherrod Clip:

I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farm land and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]

Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 5:18 PM
To: Washo, Kevin



Chris Mather

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:09 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: Fw: Transcript

See below to answer S's question.
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:07:54 2010
Subject: RE: Transcript
He is the NAACP Sr. Vice President.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:06 PM
To: Misailidis, Sarah; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Fw: Transcript

Who is Hilary?
Chris Mather

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 17:33:14 2010
Subject: Re: Transcript

Secy is asking who is Hillary Shelton in this transcript

From: Mather, Chris
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Washo, Kevin; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah; Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:53:35 2010
Subject: Fw: Transcript

Thanks Sarah.
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin

Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:42:36 2010

Subject: Transcript

Chris, please see below for transcript

Video: [Link](#)

On July 25, 2009 Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack appointed Shirley Sherrod as Georgia Director of Rural Development. USDA Rural Development spends over \$1.2 Billion in the state of Georgia each year. On March 27, 2010, while speaking at the NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet, Ms. Sherrod admits that in her federally appointed position, overseeing over a billion dollars, she discriminates against people due to their race.

Shirley Sherrod: The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking but he was trying to show me he was superior to me, I know what he was doing. But he had to come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me, was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him. I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land. And here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So, I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough. So that when he, I assumed the Department of Agriculture had sent him to me, either that or the Georgia Department of Agriculture. And he needed to go back and report that I did try and help him. So I took him to a white lawyer that that had attended some of the training that we had provided because of Chapter 12 bankruptcy had just been enacted for the family farm. So I figured if I take him to one of them that his own kind would take care of him. That's when it was revealed to me that its about poor versus those who have. It's not so much about white...it is about white and black. It is about white and black but its not you know...it opened my eyes because I took him to one of his own.

Fox News Clip:

Geraldo Rivera: Do you denounce in the way that you ask the Tea Parties denounce racists within your ranks?

Hilary Shelton: Yes we do, we repudiate racists within our ranks.

Back to Shirley Sherrod Clip:

I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farm land and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]

Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:30 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Washo, Kevin
Subject: Re: IMP

[REDACTED]
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----
From: Harden, Krysta
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:28:57 2010
Subject: Re: IMP

[REDACTED]
----- Original Message -----
From: Mather, Chris
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:28:22 2010
Subject: IMP

[REDACTED]
Chris Mather

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:33 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: Re: IMP

[REDACTED]
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----
From: Harden, Krysta
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:28:57 2010
Subject: Re: IMP

[REDACTED]
----- Original Message -----
From: Mather, Chris
To: Harden, Krysta
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:28:22 2010
Subject: IMP

[REDACTED]
Chris Mather

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:49 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Re: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod

To whom did you send this?
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:48:05 2010
Subject: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod
Good evening,

Please see below for statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack regarding Shirley Sherrod's resignation:

Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 9:12 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fw: Google Alert - Tom Vilsack

Chris Mather

From: Google Alerts
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 20:11:45 2010
Subject: Google Alert - Tom Vilsack
News

2 new results for Tom Vilsack

[Agriculture chief fosters better relationship between EPA and farmers](#)

GovExec.com

By Jerry Hagstrom CongressDaily July 19, 2010 Agriculture Secretary **Tom Vilsack** defended EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson's handling of agricultural issues on ...

[See all stories on this topic »](#)

[USDA Official Who Withheld Help from White Farmer Resigns](#)

Big Government (blog)

... and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person," Agriculture Secretary **Tom Vilsack** said in a written statement. ...

[See all stories on this topic »](#)

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[Manage your alerts.](#)

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:55 AM
To: Weaver, Caleb
Subject: Re: Dallas

Yes en route
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Weaver, Caleb
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:34:57 2010
Subject: Re: Dallas

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Weaver, Caleb
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:24:52 2010
Subject: Dallas

Chris Mather

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 8:59 AM
To: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Subject: Fw: NAACP Statement on Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

Chris Mather

From: Stephanie Chan
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 08:50:30 2010
Subject: NAACP Statement on Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

fyi-

NAACP Statement on Resignation of Shirley Sherrod

by Publius

July 19, 2010

(BALTIMORE, MD) NAACP President and CEO Benjamin Todd Jealous issued the following statement today after learning of the resignation of Shirley Sherrod of the United States Department of Agriculture:

“Since our founding in 1909, the NAACP has been a multi-racial, multi-faith organization that— while generally rooted in African American communities— fights to end racial discrimination against all Americans.

We concur with US Agriculture Secretary Vilsack in accepting the resignation of Shirley Sherrod for her remarks at a local NAACP Freedom Fund banquet.

Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race.

We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers.

Her actions were shameful. While she went on to explain in the story that she ultimately realized her mistake, as well as the common predicament of working people of all races, she gave no indication she had attempted to right the wrong she had done to this man.

The reaction from many in the audience is disturbing. We will be looking into the behavior of NAACP representatives at this local event and take any appropriate action.

We thank those who brought this to our national office’s attention, as there are hundreds of local fundraising dinners each year.

Sherrod’s behavior is even more intolerable in light of the US Department of Agriculture’s well documented history of denying opportunities to African American, Latino, Asian American, and Native American farmers,

as well as female farmers of all races. Currently, justice for many of these farmers is being held up by Congress. We would hope all who share our outrage at Sherrod's statements would join us in pushing for these cases to be remedied.

The NAACP will continue to advance the ideals of America and fight for freedom, justice and fairness for all Americans."

Founded in 1909, the NAACP is the nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization. Its members throughout the United States and the world are the premier advocates for civil rights in their communities, conducting voter mobilization and monitoring equal opportunity in the public and private sectors.

--
Stephanie Chan


Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:20 AM
To: Misailidis, Sarah

Bring clips to Pearlies office instead.
Chris Mather

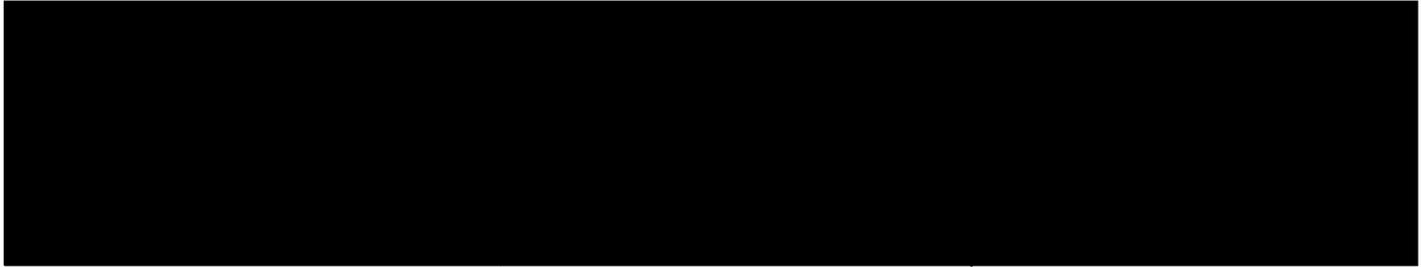
Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:22 AM
To: Misailidis, Sarah
Cc: Powell, Tamika -USDA

Sarah, have Tamika bring clips instead and TP can you bring my charger. In Pearlies office.
Chris Mather

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:46 AM
To: Mather, Chris



Chris Mather

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 9:51 AM
To: Misailidis, Sarah
Subject: Re: Dropping off clips

Berge's office - OCR
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Misailidis, Sarah
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tue Jul 20 09:45:55 2010
Subject: Dropping off clips

To you at the cage right now

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:20 AM
To: Weaver, Caleb

[REDACTED]

Chris Mather
Director of Communications
USDA
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 402A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0060
chris.mather@usda.gov

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:49 AM
To: Washo, Kevin
Subject: RE: Guidance for inquiries

Will do.

From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:48 AM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: Re: Guidance for Inquiries

Berge office

From: Mather, Chris
To: Jett, Carole; Berge, John; Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 11:45:52 2010
Subject: Re: Guidance for inquiries

Where
Chris Mather

From: Jett, Carole
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 11:28:23 2010
Subject: Re: Guidance for inquiries

Let's get back together.
Carole Jett
Deputy Chief of Staff
USDA
[REDACTED]

From: Mather, Chris
To: Jett, Carole; Berge, John; Washo, Kevin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 11:25:34 2010
Subject: Guidance for inquiries

Do we need to tell people where to send inquiries?

Chris Mather

Director of Communications

USDA

1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 402A

Washington, DC 20250

202-690-0060

chris.mather@usda.gov

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:25 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Fw: Shirley Sherrod -- WORKING ON DEADLINE

Chris Mather

From: [REDACTED]
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tue Jul 20 12:20:20 2010
Subject: Shirley Sherrod -- WORKING ON DEADLINE
Dear Chris,

I am a producer with The Takeaway, a nationally broadcast morning news show based out of WNYC (New York Public Radio), and produced in partnership with the New York Times, the BBC, Public Radio International and WGBH Boston. We are very interested in getting in touch with Shirley Sherrod to see if we can get her on the show tomorrow morning.

It would be for a segment tomorrow at 6:30 a.m. EST, and we'd be happy to have Shirley join us by phone. The segment would be about 5-7 minutes long, and would focus primarily on her story, her resignation, and the response to it so far. I appreciate any help you can give me -- I know you're probably being slammed with similar requests.

I can be reached by email here, and by phone at [REDACTED]. Very much looking forward to speaking with you.

Many thanks,

Samantha Fields
The Takeaway, WNYC
thetakeaway.org || wnyc.org

[REDACTED]

--
.
.
.
Samantha Fields
[REDACTED]

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:50 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Re: NPR All Things Considered (Chelsea Jone): Interview with Secretary on Shirly Sherrod Video

Yes
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tue Jul 20 12:41:44 2010
Subject: RE: NPR All Things Considered (Chelsea Jone): Interview with Secretary on Shirly Sherrod Video Done. Also, am I ok to send the statement to Reuters?

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:38 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: NPR All Things Considered (Chelsea Jone): Interview with Secretary on Shirly Sherrod Video

Yes. Take off Jett and Ross as well.
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Cc: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 12:34:46 2010
Subject: NPR All Things Considered (Chelsea Jone): Interview with Secretary on Shirly Sherrod Video Just making sure the rest of the group saw this request for an interview with the Secretary

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:25 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Cc: Mather, Chris
Subject: Fw: All Things Considered interview with Secretary Vilsack?

From: CJones@npr.org
To: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 12:19:58 2010
Subject: All Things Considered interview with Secretary Vilsack?
Hi Justin,

Chelsea Jones here from NPR's *All Things Considered*...we're interested in an interview with the Secretary today about the Shirley Sherrod/NAACP video. Is he commenting at all on this? If so, let me know.

Thanks so much,

Chelsea

NPR | Chelsea Jones | *All Things Considered* | cjones@npr.org | [REDACTED]

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:07 PM
To: Harless, Angela -USDA
Subject: Re: Is it from TJV or you? RE:

Thanks. Really appreciate you stepping up to help out. I know its not in your job description.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----
From: Harless, Angela -USDA
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tue Jul 20 13:05:57 2010
Subject: RE: Is it from TJV or you? RE:

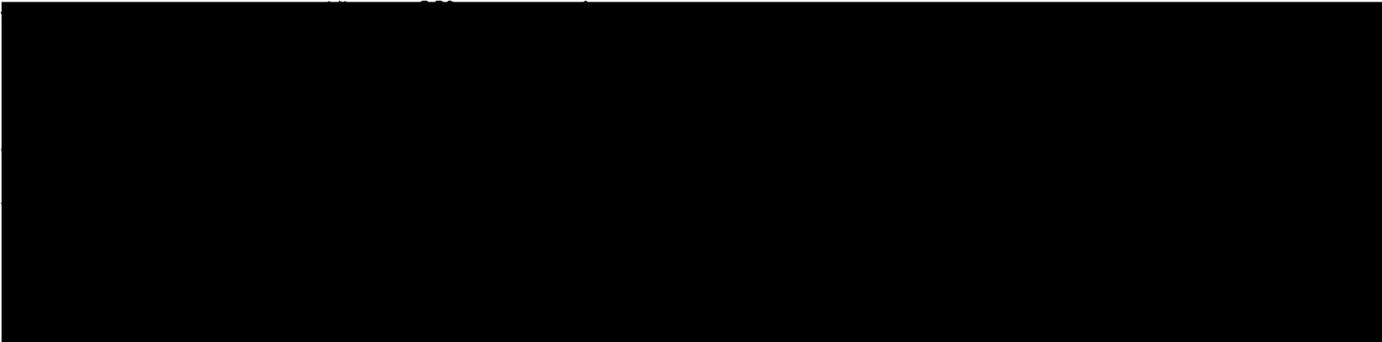
Done.

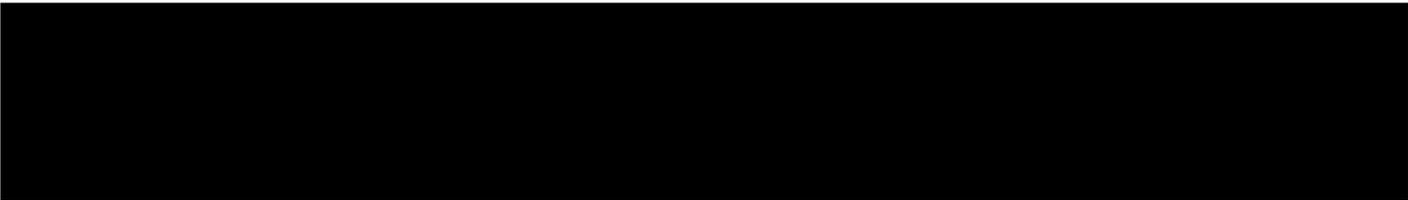
-----Original Message-----
From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:48 PM
To: Harless, Angela -USDA
Subject: Re: Is it from TJV or you? RE:

TV
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----
From: Harless, Angela -USDA
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tue Jul 20 12:43:23 2010
Subject: Is it from TJV or you? RE:

-----Original Message-----
From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:37 PM
To: Harless, Angela -USDA
Subject:





Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:26 PM
To: Harless, Angela -USDA
Subject: Re:

Yowza. I didn't get it.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----
From: Harless, Angela -USDA
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tue Jul 20 13:24:24 2010
Subject: RE:

It was already sent -

Angela Harless
Communications Coordinator
Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
202/720-4623 - office
202/720-5402 - fax

-----Original Message-----
From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:24 PM
To: Harless, Angela -USDA
Subject:

How quickly will email go out? Needs to be asap.
Chris Mather

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:44 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: FW: CNN NewsroomAM w/Tony Harris...

From: Cook, Cheryl
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:41 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: DeJong, Justin; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole
Subject: FW: CNN NewsroomAM w/Tony Harris...

Chris, is this program on the list to receive a call from OC?

From: Durham, Diane [mailto:Diane.Durham@turner.com]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:33 PM
To: Cook, Cheryl
Subject: CNN NewsroomAM w/Tony Harris...

Ms. Cook, CNN NewsroomAM w/Tony Harris is requesting a live interview as soon as possible with you regarding Shirley Sherrod's dismissal. Please call me so we might discuss the possibility of this interview. Thank you.

Diane Durham
Editorial Producer/NewsroomAM
404-827-4102
[REDACTED] cell

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:59 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Fw: Requests for interviews

Chris Mather

From: Ej.Stapler@one.usda.gov
To: bobby@loudobbsradio.com
Sent: Tue Jul 20 13:49:20 2010
Subject: Requests for interviews
Bobby,

All media inquiries are being handled by Chris Mather or Justin DeJong in Washington. You can reach them at 202-720-4623.

EJ

E. J. Stapler | Public Information Coordinator
Rural Development
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Georgia State Office
355 East Hancock Ave. (Stop 310) | Athens, GA 30601
Phone; 706-546-2165, ext. 5904 | Fax: 706-546-2126
<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ga>

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:12 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: FW: ABC News / Good Morning America

From: Bosland, Katie [mailto:Katie.Bosland@abc.com]
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:11 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: ABC News / Good Morning America

Hi Chris and Stephanie-

My name is Katie Bosland and I am a producer with ABC News / Good Morning America with George Stephanopoulos and Robin Roberts. I wanted to reach out to see if Secretary Vilsack would be available in the morning to come on the show to talk with George? We will be covering and talking about the Agriculture Director's resignation and would welcome the opportunity to have the Secretary on the show and hear his thoughts on the matter. Is there a number where I can best reach you. I am reachable via cell at [REDACTED]

Hope to speak soon and take care—

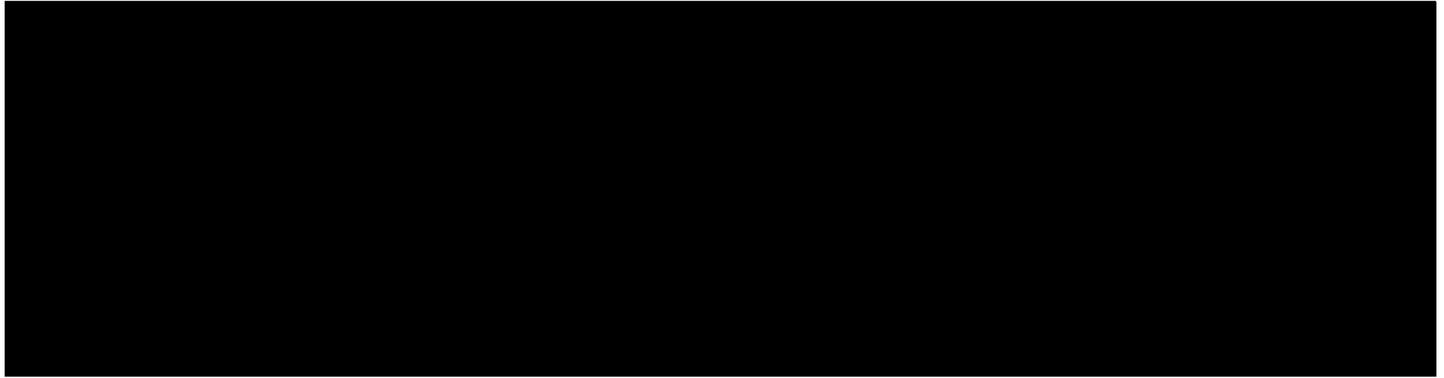
Katie Bosland

Katie Bosland | Segment Producer | ABC News, *Good Morning America* | Katie.Bosland@abc.com | [REDACTED]

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:27 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie

For statement, don't press send



Chris Mather
Director of Communications
USDA
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 402A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0060
chris.mather@usda.gov

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:31 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie

Statement good to go. Just say, Statement by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack

Chris Mather
Director of Communications
USDA
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 402A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0060
chris.mather@usda.gov

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:47 PM
To: Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Fw: NYT Reporter

Can we send her pigford background asap
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tue Jul 20 16:10:08 2010
Subject: RE: NYT Reporter

Just wanted general background info. She is looking for someone to walk her through the events and developments today.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:08 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Re: NYT Reporter

What questions.
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tue Jul 20 15:55:15 2010
Subject: NYT Reporter
Can you call her? She just called for details

Louise
Wall Street Journal
[REDACTED] louise.radnofsky@wsj.com
Re: would like a copy of release

Sent: Tue Jul 20 12:14:01 2010

Subject: FW: Jalonick (USDA worker quits over racism charge from video, 3...)

Hey Justin, here is latest writethru. We are going to add background in next writethru

From: AP Exchange notification [mailto:noreply.apexchange@notification.ap.org]

Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 12:04 PM

To: Jalonick, Mary Clare

Subject: Jalonick (USDA worker quits over racism charge from video, 3...)

Date: 07/20/2010 12:02 PM

US--USDA-Racism-Resignation/490

Eds: Replaces last graf to correct reference to 'he said'.

USDA worker quits over racism charge from video

Associated Press Writers

WASHINGTON (AP) - A black employee who resigned from the Agriculture Department over comments at a Georgia NAACP meeting said Tuesday the White House forced her out of her job over a manufactured racial controversy.

Shirley Sherrod said she was on the road Monday after an event in rural Georgia when USDA deputy undersecretary Cheryl Cook called her and told her the White House wanted her to resign. "They called me twice," Sherrod told The Associated Press in an interview. "The last time they asked me to pull over the side of the road and submit my resignation on my Blackberry, and that's what I did."

The controversy began Monday when the conservative website biggovernment.com posted a two-minute, 38-second video clip of Sherrod's remarks to a local NAACP chapter.

In the video, she says the first time a white farmer came in for help, he was acting "superior" to her and that she struggled to decide how much help to provide him when so many black farmers were struggling. She said she didn't give him the full force of help she could have, but gave him enough.

The website called it proof that the NAACP - which recently accused the Tea Party of including racist elements - condones racism.

Sherrod said her comments to the local NAACP group that she withheld support some 24 years ago from a farmer because he was white are really part of a story of racial reconciliation. She said she ultimately became friends with the farmer and worked closely with him for two years to keep him from losing his farm. At the time, she worked for a nonprofit farm aid group.

"My point in telling that story is that working with him helped me to see that it wasn't just a black and white issue," she told The AP. "It was about those who have and those who do not. That's why I take the time to tell that story is to tell people we need to get beyond it and work together."

Hours after her resignation, Sherrod accused administration officials of lacking backbone. A USDA spokesman would not comment on whether the White House was involved.

Secretary Tom Vilsack issued a statement saying the agency has no tolerance for discrimination.

"We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously," the statement said.

National NAACP President Benjamin Todd Jealous issued a statement Monday night - before Sherrod's explanation - supporting the resignation. Jealous said the group opposes racism of all kinds.

"According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race," he said. "We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers."

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Summary

Date: 07/20/2010 12:02 PM
Slug: US--USDA-Racism-Resignation
Headline: USDA worker quits over racism charge from video
Byline: BEN EVANS
Byline Title: Associated Press Writers
Copyright Holder: AP
Priority: r (4)
With Photo:
Dateline: WASHINGTON
Lead
Editors' Note: Eds: Replaces last graf to correct reference to 'he said'.
Word Count: 490
File Name (Transref):
Editorial Type: Lead
AP Category: w
Format:

mjalonick@ap.org - ec2092fe2fbb4232bcd31de0f3a3e569

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[IP_US_DISC]msk dccc60c6d2c3a6438f0cf467d9a4938

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:32 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie

Can you send me statement again?

Chris Mather
Director of Communications
USDA
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 402A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0060
chris.mather@usda.gov

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:37 PM
To: 'dstrauss@politico.com'
Subject: FW: Statement by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 3:39 PM
Subject: Statement by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack

Statement by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack

Yesterday, I asked for and accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation for two reasons. First, for the past 18 months, we have been working to turn the page on the sordid civil rights record at USDA and this controversy could make it more difficult to move forward on correcting injustices. Second, state rural development directors make many decisions and are often called to use their discretion. The controversy surrounding her comments would create situations where her decisions, rightly or wrongly, would be called into question making it difficult for her to bring jobs to Georgia.

Our policy is clear. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA and we strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have a duty to ensure that when we provide services to the American people we do so in an equitable manner. But equally important is our duty to instill confidence in the American people that we are fair service providers.

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:39 PM
To: 'dstrauss@politico.com'
Subject: FW: Message from Secretary Vilsack

This is the email to employees

From: The Office of the Secretary
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 1:14 PM
To: ALL-USDA-2K
Subject: Message from Secretary Vilsack

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

Dear employee:

Some of you may have seen the news stories about USDA today. I want to reiterate my commitment and that of the leadership at USDA to civil rights. We all must work to ensure that we are treating our customers and employees equally and fairly and we all should have zero tolerance for discrimination.

I also want to remind all of you that you have a unique and important individual responsibility to represent this sentiment in your official actions, statements, and public presentations. We are lucky to have the opportunity to work for the American people and we owe it to them to instill confidence in our leadership. Our words and actions matter.

We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and I thank you for your service and efforts to achieve this goal,

Secretary Vilsack

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:52 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Fw: Los Angeles ABC Radio (Les Seigal): Interview with Shirley Sherrod

Are you printing these out?
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Tue Jul 20 18:13:13 2010
Subject: Los Angeles ABC Radio (Les Seigal): Interview with Shirley Sherrod
FYI- Interview request for morning drive time in Los Angeles 8-12 am ET.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Ross, Lori -USDA
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:42 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: media inquiry

Les Siegal
ABC Radio Producer in LA
[REDACTED]

Re: Interview with Shirley Sharod

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:28 PM
To: 'Peter.Nicholas@latimes.com'
Subject: Re: shirley sherrod

Chris Mather

From: Nicholas, Peter
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tue Jul 20 19:03:08 2010
Subject: shirley sherrod
Hi:

Reid suggested I reach out to you. can you give a call? am at [REDACTED]
Thanks,

Peter Nicholas
LA Times/Chicago Tribune Washington Bureau

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 7:29 PM
To: Weaver, Caleb
Subject: Re: Fox News (Judson Berger): Pigford

Chris Mather

From: Weaver, Caleb
To: Chan, Stephanie; DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris
Sent: Tue Jul 20 18:58:56 2010
Subject: RE: Fox News (Judson Berger): Pigford
I'll send it right now.

Caleb Weaver
Press Secretary
USDA
O: 202-720-0622
C: [REDACTED]
caleb.weaver@oc.usda.gov

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 6:58 PM
To: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Mather, Chris
Subject: RE: Fox News (Judson Berger): Pigford

What was nature of [REDACTED] last summer. Apparently there was a group formed? He is trying to track this info down.

He knows Chris is looking into this but he is *writing now*.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:56 PM
To: Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Fox News (Judson Berger): Pigford

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Berger, Judson [mailto:Judson.Berger@foxnews.com]

Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 4:49 PM

To: Chan, Stephanie

Subject: foxnews.com question

Putting this in an e-mail as requested. First, I wanted to find out what the latest on the Pigford settlement was – meaning, has Congress authorized or appropriated the \$1.25 billion the administration was seeking for Pigford II settlements? (And this is on top of the \$1 billion already paid?)

Could you provide any information about the settlement amount that went to the [REDACTED]

Did that settlement have anything to do with either Shirley Sherrod's hiring or her resignation? Thank you.

Judson Berger
Political News Editor
[REDACTED]

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:31 AM
To: Misailidis, Sarah; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Fw: Federal Eye: Tom Vilsack, USDA and civil rights

Either of you in?
Chris Mather

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie; Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Wed Jul 21 07:23:31 2010
Subject: Fw: Federal Eye: Tom Vilsack, USDA and civil rights

Sarah, for top clips. Tx.

From: ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com
Sent: Wed Jul 21 07:12:16 2010
Subject: Federal Eye: Tom Vilsack, USDA and civil rights

http://voices.washingtonpost.com/federal-eye/2010/07/tom_vilsack_usda_and_civil_rig.html

Tom Vilsack, USDA and civil rights

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said early Wednesday morning that he's willing to reconsider his decision to force Shirley Sherrod's resignation.

"I am of course willing and will conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts to ensure to the American people we are providing services in a fair and equitable manner," Vilsack said in a statement that arrived in inboxes after 2 a.m.

But to understand why he sought Sherrod's resignation so quickly, let's go back to February 2009. That's when Vilsack publicly vowed to tackle USDA's troubled civil rights history by ensuring that employees fairly treated minority and women farmers.

"Some folks refer to USDA as the last plantation, and it has a pretty poor history of taking care of people of color," Vilsack said at time. "You've got outright bias and discrimination."

"Also you've got good people who don't even know that they're discriminating," said Vilsack. "It's necessary to begin the process reeducating people."

Vilsack made those comments in Albany, Ga., Sherrod's home town. And he said them at a conference hosted by the Federation Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund, the same group Sherrod worked for in 1986 when she first met white farmer Rog Spooner.

Reeducating employees required an \$8 million consulting contract with Jackson Lewis Corporate Diversity Counseling Group, required reviewing tens of thousands of complaints leveled against USDA during George W. Bush's presidency. The review was led by a 34-year USDA veteran whom Vilsack coaxed out of retirement.

"When this department was established in 1862 by Abraham Lincoln, he referred to it as the people's department," Vilsack told colleague Krissah Thompson in February. "In order to be consistent with that legacy, it's necessary that our programs and our approach reflect an appreciation for everyone's rights. We took a look at [these] prior issues and are in the process of trying to address each of them."

The efforts received little national news coverage until this week when a three-minute clip of Sherrod's now-infamous speech surfaced. Her message -- that Americans need to see beyond a person's skin color -- was tainted by an impolitic delivery White House officials consider too damaging.

"This controversy could make it more difficult to move forward on correcting injustices," Vilsack said Tuesday, adding later that, "The controversy surrounding [Sherrod's] comments would create situations where her decisions, rightly or wrongly, would be called into question making it difficult for her to bring jobs to Georgia."

"Our policy is clear," he continued. "There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA and we strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have a duty to ensure that when we provide services to the American people we do so in an equitable manner. But equally important is our duty to instill confidence in the American people that we are fair service providers."

Did Vilsack make the right decision, or did he overreact at the mercy of the web and cable news cycle? Or did he have to accept Sherrod's resignation in order to reinforce his work on civil rights? It's a question many in Washington will continue asking today.

Continue reading the Wednesday Eye Opener: http://voices.washingtonpost.com/federal-eye/2010/07/tom_vilsack_usda_and_civil_rig.html

Ed O'Keefe
The Federal Eye
The Washington Post
ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com

██████████ (c)

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 8:24 AM
To: May, Tina
Subject: Re:


Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: May, Tina
To: Mather, Chris; Berge, John; Jett, Carole
Sent: Wed Jul 21 08:23:00 2010
Subject: Re:

What is your #

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Berge, John; Jett, Carole
Cc: May, Tina
Sent: Wed Jul 21 08:22:14 2010
Subject: Re:

Tina, can you please call me?
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole
Cc: May, Tina
Sent: Wed Jul 21 08:20:59 2010
Subject: Re:

Go it. Sorry.

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Berge, John; Jett, Carole
Cc: May, Tina
Sent: Wed Jul 21 08:19:04 2010
Subject: Re:


----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John
To: Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole
Cc: May, Tina
Sent: Wed Jul 21 08:12:53 2010
Subject: Re:



----- Original Message -----

From: Berge, John

To: Mather, Chris; Jett, Carole

Cc: May, Tina

Sent: Wed Jul 21 08:12:37 2010

Who is going to hill? They're about to leave.

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:11 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: RE: DRAFT: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod

To whom did we send on Monday morning?

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 8:54 AM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: RE: DRAFT: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod

It went to FOX news, they were the only ones who called Monday

- Fox News (Ron Mitchell): Shirley Sherrod Video > SC sent statement – **DONE**
- Fox News (Judd Berger): Shirley Sherrod > SC sent statement – **DONE**
- Fox News (Joy Lin): Shirley Sherrod> SC sent statement – **DONE**

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 8:49 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: FW: DRAFT: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod

Can you tell me to whom we sent this Monday night?

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:47 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: DRAFT: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod

Great. Will tell you when to send.
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:44:40 2010
Subject: DRAFT: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod
Good evening,

Please see below for statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack regarding Shirley Sherrod's resignation:



Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:17 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie

At what time did we issue statement yesterday afternoon?

Chris Mather
Director of Communications
USDA
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 402A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0060
chris.mather@usda.gov

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 10:16 AM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: Fox - Reporter in Athens

?
Chris Mather

From: Ej.Stapler@one.usda.gov
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thu Jul 22 10:10:01 2010
Subject: Fox - Reporter in Athens

Message this AM from Jeff Ebner 404-713-0953 of Fox News Channel. Said he was here at the federal building. We did have a Fox crew show up the other day, but security kept them out of the building. We've had trouble with voice mail, but this has just shown up this morning. If someone could get back to him, I'd appreciate it.

EJ

E. J. Stapler | Public Information Coordinator
Rural Development
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Georgia State Office
355 East Hancock Ave. (Stop 310) | Athens, GA 30601
Phone; 706-546-2165, ext. 5904 | Fax: 706-546-2126
<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ga>

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 1:15 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fw: READOUT OF PRESIDENT OBAMA'S CALL WITH SHIRLEY SHERROD

Chris Mather

From: White House Press Office
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thu Jul 22 13:08:06 2010
Subject: READOUT OF PRESIDENT OBAMA'S CALL WITH SHIRLEY SHERROD
THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

July 22, 2010

READOUT OF PRESIDENT OBAMA'S CALL WITH SHIRLEY SHERROD

The President reached Ms. Sherrod by telephone at about 12:35. They spoke for seven minutes.

The President expressed to Ms. Sherrod his regret about the events of the last several days. He emphasized that Secretary Vilsack was sincere in his apology yesterday, and in his work to rid USDA of discrimination.

The President told Ms. Sherrod that this misfortune can present an opportunity for her to continue her hard work on behalf of those in need, and he hopes that she will do so.

###

[Unsubscribe](#)

The White House · 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW · Washington DC 20500 · 202-456-1111

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:04 AM
To: Washo, Kevin
Subject: Re:

Me in 10. Buzz me
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Washo, Kevin
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wed Jul 21 07:01:14 2010
Subject: Re:

15

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Jett, Carole; Washo, Kevin; Berge, John
Sent: Wed Jul 21 06:58:03 2010
Subject:

When are you guys in?
Chris Mather

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:31 AM
To: Misailidis, Sarah; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Fw: Federal Eye: Tom Vilsack, USDA and civil rights

Either of you in?
Chris Mather

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Jett, Carole; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie; Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Wed Jul 21 07:23:31 2010
Subject: Fw: Federal Eye: Tom Vilsack, USDA and civil rights

Sarah, for top clips. Tx.

From: ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com
Sent: Wed Jul 21 07:12:16 2010
Subject: Federal Eye: Tom Vilsack, USDA and civil rights

http://voices.washingtonpost.com/federal-eye/2010/07/tom_vilsack_usda_and_civil_rig.html

Tom Vilsack, USDA and civil rights

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"When this department was established in 1862 by Abraham Lincoln, he referred to it as the people's department," Vilsack told colleague Krissah Thompson in February. "In order to be consistent with that legacy, it's necessary that our programs and our approach reflect an appreciation for everyone's rights. We took a look at [these] prior issues and are in the process of trying to address each of them."

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"Our policy is clear," he continued. "There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA and we strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have a duty to ensure that when we provide services to the American people we do so in an equitable manner. But equally important is our duty to instill confidence in the American people that we are fair service providers."

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Ed O'Keefe
The Federal Eye
The Washington Post
ed.okeefe@washingtonpost.com



Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:17 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie

At what time did we issue statement yesterday afternoon?

Chris Mather
Director of Communications
USDA
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 402A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0060
chris.mather@usda.gov

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:42 AM
To: Lavallee, Aaron
Subject: Re: Updated media list

Who from AP?
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Lavallee, Aaron
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wed Jul 21 09:30:04 2010
Subject: Updated media list

AP and
The Hill are here

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:47 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Re: DRAFT: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod

No, tuesday am, who called and to whom did you send our first statement
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wed Jul 21 09:23:45 2010
Subject: RE: DRAFT: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod
Tuesday statement went to - Our in house list, anyone who called the our office and reporters who had written on the story (interns were researching and pulling info on throughout the day).

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:11 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: RE: DRAFT: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod

To whom did we send on Monday morning?

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 8:54 AM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: RE: DRAFT: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod

It went to FOX news, they were the only ones who called Monday

- Fox News (Ron Mitchell): Shirley Sherrod Video > SC sent statement – **DONE**
- Fox News (Judd Berger): Shirley Sherrod > SC sent statement – **DONE**
- Fox News (Joy Lin): Shirley Sherrod > SC sent statement – **DONE**

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 8:49 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: FW: DRAFT: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod

Can you tell me to whom we sent this Monday night?

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:47 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Subject: Re: DRAFT: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod

Great. Will tell you when to send.
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 18:44:40 2010
Subject: DRAFT: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on Shirley Sherrod
Good evening,

Please see below for statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack regarding Shirley Sherrod's resignation:

Today, I accepted Ms. Sherrod's resignation. There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:47 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Fw: statement

Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Jon Ward <jon@dailycaller.com>
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wed Jul 21 06:08:16 2010
Subject: statement

hi Chris, could you send me vilsack's statement on sherrod?

Jon Ward
Senior Reporter
The Daily Caller


dailycaller.com/author/jward

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:47 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Fw: GOOD MORNING -- would be grateful for a copy of the Secretary's statement--thank you

Chris Mather

From: mallen@politico.com
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wed Jul 21 12:44:33 2010
Subject: GOOD MORNING -- would be grateful for a copy of the Secretary's statement--thank you
sorry for your crazy day!

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:57 PM
To: 'mjalonick@ap.org'
Subject: Re: statement

We sent last night
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Jalonick, Mary Clare <mjalonick@ap.org>
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wed Jul 21 01:15:11 2010
Subject: statement

Het Chris, thanks for giving your upcoming statement to AP first. Just want to make sure it is still coming? Thanks

Mary Clare Jalonick
The Associated Press
202 641 9461 (office)

Twitter: MCJalonick

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[IP_US_DISC]

msk dccc60c6d2c3a6438f0cf467d9a4938

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:10 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: FW: URGENT MSNBC Interview REQ
Attachments: image001.png

From: Conte-Widman, Carmen (NBC Universal, MSNBC) [mailto:Carmen.Widman@nbcuni.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:31 AM
To: Weaver, Caleb; Mather, Chris
Subject: URGENT MSNBC Interview REQ

Good Morning Caleb - We're very interested in having the Secretary Vilsack join us ANYTIME he is available between 9am-4pm today regarding Shirley Sherrod. We have various anchors throughout the day including Chuck Todd, Savannah Guthrie, Norah O'Donnell, Tamon Hall, Contessa Brewer. Please keep me posted on his availability thanks!
Carmen



Carmen Widman
MSNBC Booking Producer
[REDACTED] (direct)
212-664-1450 (main)
carmen.widman@msnbc.com

MSNBC studios are now at 30 Rockefeller Plaza

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:13 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: FW: FOX The O'Reilly Factor (Ron Mitchell): Questions regarding Shirley's employment, settelement figures

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:59 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Purchia, Liz
Subject: FOX The O'Reilly Factor (Ron Mitchell): Questions regarding Shirley's employment, settelement figures

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Mitchell, Ron [mailto:Ron.Mitchell@foxnews.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:12 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Fox News Request

Thank you for keeping us updated on the Sherrod story. As more information has come out, we had a few more questions regarding Ms. Sherrod, her employment at the USDA, and her recent legal action against it.

Why would the USDA hire someone who just sued them? Was it somehow a condition of the settlement?

Why do the Sherrods deserve \$300,000 in payments? According to the Washington Examiner (we're currently putting our own figures together) that amount exceeds "the average payout thus far to everyone else? (\$1.15 billion divided by 16,000 is about \$72,000)?"

Can we get a full accounting of the \$13 million in settlement money?

Ron Mitchell
Senior Producer, The O'Reilly Factor
Fox News Channel

[REDACTED]
ron.mitchell@foxnews.com

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:14 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: FW: shirley sherrod

From: rachel@talkingpointsmemo.com [mailto:rachel@talkingpointsmemo.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 12:59 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: shirley sherrod

Hi Chris --

I expect you're totally swamped but wanted to shoot you a few questions about the Secretary's statement. Here goes: What will the review look like? Expectation of how long it will take? Is it possible that Ms. Sherrod will get her job back? A different Ag job? Has the secretary seen the full video? Does he have any regrets about asking her to resign before seeing the full video?

Thanks again for all your help on this --
Rachel

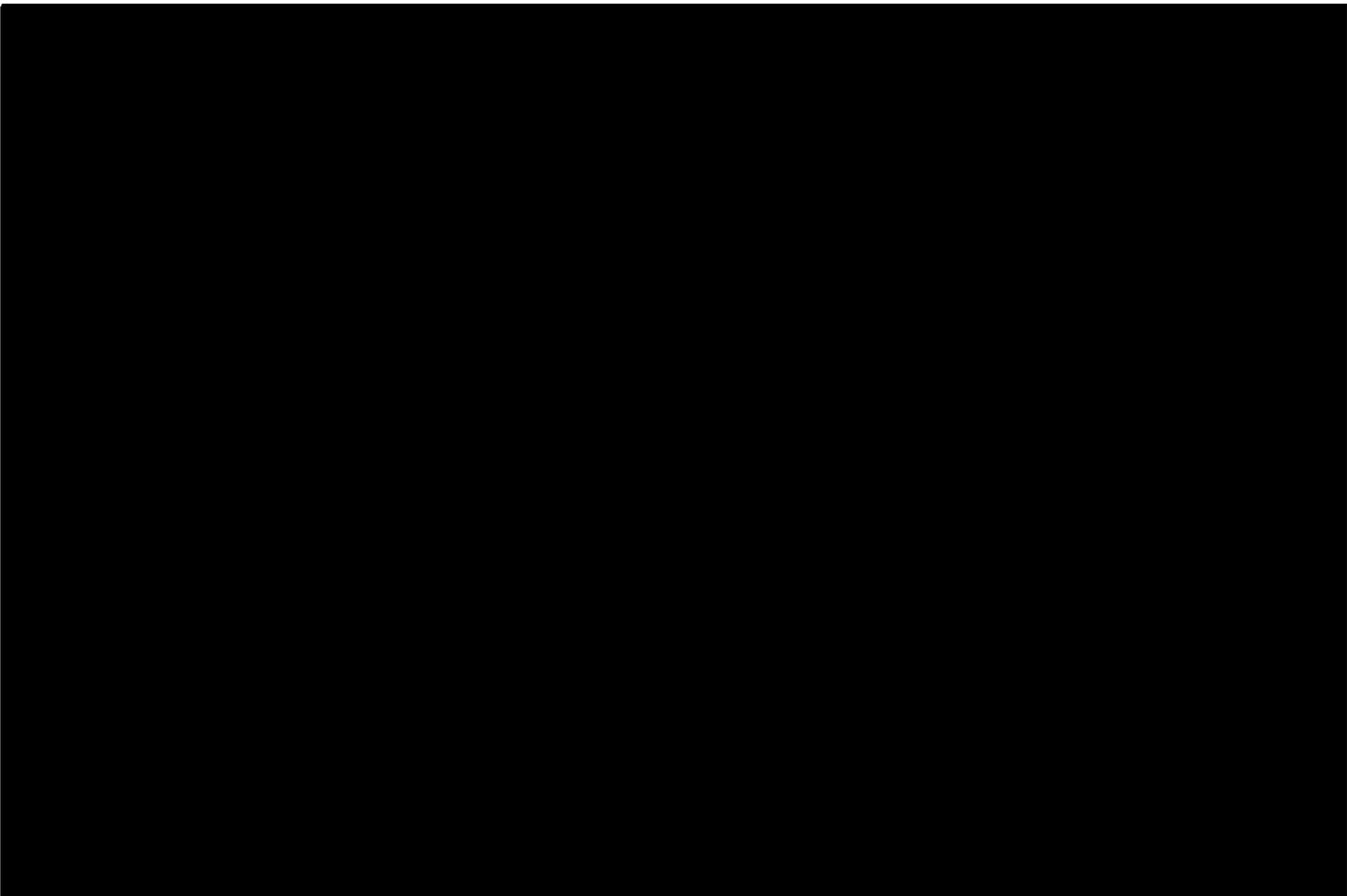
--

Rachel Slajda
Reporter-Blogger, Talking Points Memo
[REDACTED]
rachel@talkingpointsmemo.com

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:18 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie

Just a draft



Chris Mather
Director of Communications
USDA
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 402A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0060
chris.mather@usda.gov

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 2:07 PM
To: Black, David -OC; Powell, Tamika -USDA
Subject: Re: DMR (Phil Brasher): Questions on Shirley Sherrod story

I am not there.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Black, David -OC
To: Mather, Chris; Powell, Tamika -USDA
Sent: Wed Jul 21 13:59:30 2010
Subject: Re: DMR (Phil Brasher): Questions on Shirley Sherrod story

Wayne has info - coming to share now
David O. Black
Acting Deputy Director
Office of Communications, USDA
202-720-6072
david.black@oc.usda.gov

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Powell, Tamika -USDA; Black, David -OC
Sent: Wed Jul 21 13:53:15 2010
Subject: Re: DMR (Phil Brasher): Questions on Shirley Sherrod story

David can you help? I am getting emails chan sent me 13 hours ago.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Powell, Tamika -USDA
To: Mather, Chris; Black, David -OC
Sent: Wed Jul 21 13:46:13 2010
Subject: RE: DMR (Phil Brasher): Questions on Shirley Sherrod story

Just tried to contact Wayne I will reach out to his BB

Tamika J. Powell-Bellamy
Information Support Specialist
Office of Communications, USDA
(202)690-1059 (o)
(202)720-5402 (f)

" All great things are simple, and many can be expressed in single words: freedom, justice, honor, duty, mercy, hope. "

-----Original Message-----

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:41 PM
To: Powell, Tamika -USDA; Black, David -OC
Subject: Fw: DMR (Phil Brasher): Questions on Shirley Sharrod story

Can we get Wayne to drop everything and figure out how to fix email problems?
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Purchia, Liz
Sent: Wed Jul 21 13:30:49 2010
Subject: DMR (Phil Brasher): Questions on Shirley Sharrod story

FYI-

He sent at 9:30 but I just received it???

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED] Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: Brasher, Philip [mailto:pbrasher@desmoine.gannett.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:38 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Re: Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

What's the time frame for having this review done? What prompted him to issue this statement? Had he seen the full video before issuing this? If not, has he seen it since?

Thanks.

On 7/21/10 2:07 AM, "Chan, Stephanie" <Stephanie.Chan@oc.usda.gov> wrote:

[cid:3362549905_25706]

Release No. PENDING Contact:
USDA Office of Communications

(202) 720-4623

Statement from Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack Regarding Remarks in Video From Shirley Sherrod

WASHINGTON, July 21, 2010 - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack tonight released the following statement in response to the release of remarks in video from Shirley Sherrod:

"I am of course willing and will conduct a thorough review and consider additional facts to ensure to the American people we are providing services in a fair and equitable manner."

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice), or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED] Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov
<<mailto:Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov>><<mailto:Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov>>

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:59 PM
To: Washo, Kevin
Subject: RE: Are you around?

Back from cbc

From: Washo, Kevin
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:13 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: Are you around?

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:06 PM
To: 'Tapper, Jake'; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: RE: Any word from sherrod on the job offer?

No.

From: Tapper, Jake [mailto:Jake.Tapper@abc.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 6:31 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Any word from sherrod on the job offer?

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 9:00 AM
To: Powell, Tamika -USDA
Subject: Fw: GMA Transcript 7 AM

Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Purchia, Liz; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Thu Jul 22 07:32:52 2010
Subject: GMA Transcript 7 AM
Station: (ABC)
Date: 07/22/2010 07:01:39 - 7:11:39 AM

Video:

<http://mms.tveyes.com/Transcript.asp?stationid=1715&DateTime=07/22/2010+07:01:39&mediapreload=14&playclip=true>

anytime you bring up race, it's such a charged topic. shirley sherrod, the government official forced to resign was reinstated on wednesday, and offered a new job. agriculture secretary, her bsz, tom vilsack, personally apologized to her. so did white house press secretary, robert gibbs. both said the comments were taken out of context. there was a rush to judgment. but serious questions remain about how this all began. and there's no question about it. the administration could have handled it better.

and ms. sherrod wants questions answered before she accepts the job offer.

we're also watching the gulf this morning. they're preparing to evacuate all ships ahead of what could become tropical storm bonnie. the relief wells were stopped. one was supposed to be finished in a couple of days. if this hits, it could set efforts back two weeks. sam champion is tracking it.

we'll talk to sam in a few minutes.

we begin with the fallout over the controversy of shirley sherrod. we have her reaction this morning. she'll join us here in our studio. first, jake tapper has the latest at the white house. good morning, jake.

reporter: good morning, robin. you know, you seldom see something like this, where somebody claims they've been wronged. the white house admits it. apologizes. she's offered a job. but the white house does seem very eager to get this story behind them. overnight, secretary of agriculture, tom vilsack, met with members of the congressional black caucus, to discuss the circumstances that led to the ouster of agriculture department official shirley sherrod. it was vilsack's most recent act of contrition for the episode.

it was a very good meeting. and we really believe that mrs. sherrod deserves our respect.

reporter: this followed vilsack's apology to sherrod. after it became clear that her words had been taken out of context, in the short clip making the rounds on the internet and cable.

this is a good woman. she's been put through hell.

apparently, she's watching this briefing, shirley sherrod, on cnn, right now. is there anything you want to say to her?

on behalf of the administration, i offer our apologies.

reporter: and it was more than an apology. vilsack suggested he offered her a new job in the agriculture department's task of settling minority lawsuits for farmers who claim they were discriminated against in farm mroons.

she has a unique set of skills, that i believe will help in assisting usda as we deal with turning the page on our civil rights chapter, which has been difficult.

reporter: but for some conservatives, the matter is not over.

if a white public servant's referenced his own kind or one of his own, when speaking about an african-american, that white person would be fired on the spot.

reporter: and, george, so far this morning, white house officials say they have not heard yet back from shirley sherrod about that job offer. george?

she hasn't decided yet, jake.

when i spoke with shirley sherrod early this morning, she said she accepted the apology. but she's not ready to accept the job offer.

that, i just don't know at this point. i really have not had a chance, yet, to look at just what that offer is. as i said earlier, i really -- i know he talked about discrimination and the agency. and after all of these years, that's still happening. i would not want to be the one person in the agency that everyone is looking at to clear up discrimination in the department of agriculture.

seems to me that you're saying, at this point, it's not your personal situation that bothers you so much. you want to know that there's an institutional commitment to fight this discrimination.

right. if there is, there's some other things that would need to happen within the agency that have not happened to this date.

but don't you think that president obama's committed to that?

i would hope that he is.

you were quite harsh on the white house in the early days, as this story unfolded. are you satisfied now that they've done everything they can, that the president's done everything he can? and that he's fully behind you?

you know, i can't say that the president is fully behind me. i would hope that he is. i have not talked to him. he is my president, though. so, i --

would you like to talk to him?

i would love to talk to him. but i respect him as a president of this great nation. and he is my president.

and let's assume he picks up the phone and calls you into the oval office. what specifically would you say to him? what do you want him to do?

i'd like for him -- he's not someone who has experienced some of the things i've experienced through life, being a person of color. he might need to hear some of what i could say to him. i don't know whether that would guide him in the way that he deals with others like me. but i'd at least like to have the opportunity to talk to him about it.

so, it sounds like you want some reassurance from the president, as well, not just the secretary.

that would help a little.

finally, you have been through so much, in the last week or so, at this point. going from, at one moment, being a villainous symbol of racism. now, to someone being a heroine, of racial redemption. what has that been like?

for me, especially in the beginning, it was so tough because my life has been about fairness. and to have people think that i was a racist, someone who's worked against racism all of my life, really, really hurt, to feel that people thought of me in a way that i know i wasn't. and a way that so many people who know me knew that that wasn't me. but the thought of thinking that this country -- other people in this country would never know the real me was really, really taxing on me. and

then, to move to a point where the truth is out there. and people can see the life that i've lived. i would hope that it could inspire someone else.

well, we can all hope your story's more widely shared. thank you for your return this morning.

thank you.

and more for the fallout on this, we're joined by our political contributor, donna brazile. and also, nicolle wallace, who was communications director for president george w. bush. donna, i was struck by something you said in "aud today" this morning. the white house, the naacp, the conservative noise machine. the liberal noise machine. who gets the most blame?

there's enough on everybody's plate to keep the high and mighty in washington, d.c. to eat bird until, you know, turkey season. truth is, george, there's a lot of blame here. there's a lot of blame. george, when i first heard about this story, i didn't simply react. i kept thinking, sherrod, sherrod. and then, i googled because i recalled that charles sherrod, one of the founders of the student nonviolent planning committee. i had to google charles sherrod. i said, is this charles' wife? she said, yes. she screamed at me. the point is, george, all you had to do was simply google sherrod, to know that shirley sherrod has an extraordinary life story of commitment to justice, civil rights, fairness for all people. it is one of the saddest chapters i've seen in this small but very unique period of history, under president obama. when no one simply picked up the phone to call this wonderful woman or her husband and say, what's up?

you know, you make a good point there. nicole, i bring you in here. that is what is most striking here. the white house may have had nothing to do with this. but no one at the agriculture department picks up the phone and makes the phone call. inexcusable. on the other hand, in some ways, understandable, given the hair trigger that everyone's on now, because of the way the stories fly across the internet.

i know we're going to get to the polls. and i don't think they're unrelated. i think this is a white house, to me, appears very brittle. it's a white house that's created a climate at their agencies where everyone is so eager to protect and promote the white house's political interests, that they're overreacting.

they thought they were doing the white house's bidding, even though the white house didn't ask them to do it.

it goes to work with ill motive. certainly, the remorse makes clear that no one intended the consequences. i think, perhaps, we've done more in the last 24 hours around the issue of race and racial reconciliation this woman's story. the original speech, which i think more people have now listened to, than the original audience. and, you know, with this morning, it was incredibly moving. the fact that she has the sense to be measured and restrained, and not make her decision with the same rapidity that decisions are made in washington, is quite striking.

what i'm thinking, is maybe everyone should be off the hair trigger. donna, i want to bring you in. this is not the president's - he didn't cause this problem. but now, it's his responsibility to fix it. what does he need to do?

look, everyone is overreacting to these edited videos. i really hope that the president -- not just the president. there's so many people that can learn a little bit from shirley sherrod. her grace, her willingness to go out there and be courageous and telling her story. perhaps, though, the con conservative blogger should talk to her. he could use an honest conversation about race. and naacp could be reminded of its history and understand that its mission is to promote equal justice under the law. i think this white house, the president, the administration, the congress, everyone else, can learn a wonderful lesson from shirley sherrod. before we leap to judgment, we should learn to listen. to believe that the best motives that we all have is truly available, if we just listen. that's all we're asking. listen to people. don't rush to judgment.

this comes against the backdrop, as you mentioned, nicolle, showing the president has new tough numbers. 48% disapprove now of the job he's doing. more disapprove than approve. and 48% say they will not vote for him again. does not deserve re-election. clearly, the turnaround the white house has been hoping for has not begun yet.

this is a tough political climate. i think the toughest moment that robert gibbs was in the briefing, when he was asked by areporter, whether they were too quick to throw people under the bus. that, again, is the symptom of a white house really feeling the heat, when their poll numbers are plunging. they have to take a deep breath and keep it together. one of the democrats brought out the story of ronald reagan. i think someone will make that correlation to reagan's journey to re-election. we'll see if this white house crafts an appeal to the sector.

donna, you get the last word.

he won 53% of the vote. If he's down by five points, i hope he can make it up this fall. the independents are the same as democrats or republicans. we're sick about the economy. if he continues to put forward good legislation, get the jobs, get the country moving again, his numbers will return to normal. whatever normal is these days.

donna brazile, and nicolie wallace, thanks very much.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]

Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 9:00 AM
To: Powell, Tamika -USDA
Subject: Fw: CBS The Early Show 7:30 AM

Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Purchia, Liz
Cc: Misallidis, Sarah
Sent: Thu Jul 22 07:54:40 2010
Subject: CBS The Early Show 7:30 AM

This interview with Shirley focuses mainly on NAACP and Andrey Breitbart whom she is considering taking legal action against.

Station: WRAL-RAL (CBS)
Date: 07/22/2010 07:37:53 - 7:47:53 AM

Video:

<http://mms.tveyes.com/Transcript.asp?stationid=2060&DateTime=07/22/2010+07:37:53&mediapreload=14&playclip=true>

we want to recap the explosive story we reported earlier in the telecast. a video was shown on conservative blogger, showing shirley sherrod with her reluctance to help a white farmer 24 years ago. that video went viral. sherrod was forced to resign and then the entire video surfaced when it became clear her statement taken out of context. secretary vilsack has apologized and offered her another job.

we had an opportunity to discuss a unique opportunity here at usda that might be of interest to her.

shirley sherrod joins us live in the studio this morning. good to have you with us.

thank you. good to be here.

i'm sure it's been an exhausting few days for you.

yes, it has.

there's so much to talk about, how quick everyone was to react to this. the administration, the naacp. you said you weren't given a chance to explain. you were told to pull over on the side of the road, resign on your blackberry. what does that say about the state of thing in this country for them to say so quickly, you're wrong, you're out.

yes. it tells me we've gotten to the point where we're not interested -- well, i guess i shouldn't say interested in the truth. but we're not willing to take the time to look at all of the facts before jumping out there to make decisions. decisions that were so wrong in this -- especially in this case.

and when you look at your case specifically, you were taken -- things you said were taken, put on a website, edited because someone had a bone to pick. not with you.

right.

but with someone else, with something greater. how does that make you feel as a person?

you know, it does not feel good that someone was just willing to -- you know, as much as -- I can't even think of his name --

andrew breitbart.

yes. as much as he's is saying it was about the naacp, he had to know that it was about me. he was willing to destroy me to get to what he thought -- to try to destroy the naacp. i don't see how he could connect the two because the naacp didn't make those statements. i made the statements. i told the story. i was using my life to really help people see how i changed. and in doing that -- and i have every -- you know, if you hear my story, you know i have every reason to think differently. but in telling my story, how i moved to a place where i could work with anyone, it helps others to see that they can do the same.

it seems to be the ultimate irony that your story, which was about understanding, it's not about black and white or different races, but it's a struggle for the haves and are notes. the ultimate irony that that story was used, in fact, to hopefully portray the exact opposite.

right. that's why he had to know what he was doing. i think he -- i'm certain he didn't think the other side of the story would come out, but he knew he was misrepresenting the facts.

has he apologized to you.

no, he hasn't.

do you expect an apology?

no, i don't. you know, i don't know him, never heard of him before this happened. but from what i think he is, i don't think i would ever receive an apology.

~~would you consider legal action against him?~~

~~yes.~~

and is that something you're actively talking about or --

i haven't talked about it actively, but i would definitely consider it.

you've also been ofd a job, a new job, not your old position, back with the agriculture department. i know you still need time to look at the offer but essentially dealing with civil rights issues.

right.

is that something you'd like to be involved in?

that's something i've been involved in since 1965. it's not something new to me. maybe it's something new to the department, but definitely not something new to me. i would not like to be the one person that this country is looking at to solve all of the problems of discrimination within the department of agriculture. they have been going on for years in terms of black farmers and now hispanic farmers, native american farmers, women farmers. there are many, many, many layers of issues there. and i don't know that the department is ready to deal with them.

which is sort of a sad statement to say they may not be ready to deal with them. do you think the government, perhaps the american people, are ready to deal with issues like this, the quick reaction, the knee-jerk reaction because someone is so afraid of any perceived bias or any perceived racism?

you know, i would hope that by -- you know, having gone through this, these last few days, it would help this country -- people in this country to really look at what we're doing. you know, let's step back and see if we can have a new start. you know, if my sufficing ov the last few days can help move that forward, hey, i'm willing to be the fall guy for that.

that's quite a fall, but you're rising up from it. we do appreciate you taking the time to join us this morning. shirleysherrrod, thanks.

thank you.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell:

Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 9:01 AM
To: Powell, Tamika -USDA
Subject: Fw: MSNBC (Carmen Widman): Interview with Secretary ANYTIME
Attachments: image001.png

Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Weaver, Caleb; Purchia, Liz; DeJong, Justin
Cc: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thu Jul 22 08:19:50 2010
Subject: MSNBC (Carmen Widman): Interview with Secretary ANYTIME
Thanks, Caleb. Looping in Liz and JD

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Weaver, Caleb
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 8:18 AM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Cc: Mather, Chris
Subject: Fw: URGENT MSNBC Interview REQ

For the list.

From: Conte-Widman, Carmen (NBC Universal, MSNBC)
To: Weaver, Caleb; Mather, Chris
Sent: Thu Jul 22 07:09:13 2010
Subject: RE: URGENT MSNBC Interview REQ

We are still very interested in having an ANYTIME interview with Secretary Vilsack today between 9am-4pm. Please keep me posted on his availability.



Carmen Widman
MSNBC Booking Producer
[REDACTED] (direct)
212-664-1450 (main)
carmen.widman@msnbc.com

MSNBC studios are now at 30 Rockefeller Plaza

From: Conte-Widman, Carmen (NBC Universal, MSNBC)
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 7:31 AM
To: 'caleb.weaver@oc.usda.gov'; 'chris.mather@oc.usda.gov'
Subject: URGENT MSNBC Interview REQ

Good Morning Caleb - We're very interested in having the Secretary Vilsack join us ANYTIME he is available between 9am-4pm today regarding Shirley Sherrod. We have various anchors throughout the day including Chuck Todd, Savannah Guthrie, Norah O'Donnell, Tamon Hall, Contessa Brewer. Please keep me posted on his availability thanks!
Carmen

<< OLE Object: Picture (Metafile) >>
Carmen Widman
MSNBC Booking Producer
[REDACTED] (direct)
212-664-1450 (main)
carmen.widman@msnbc.com

MSNBC studios are now at 30 Rockefeller Plaza

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 9:02 AM
To: Powell, Tamika -USDA
Subject: Fw: Fox News (Elena Isella): Questions about Shirley Sherrard Job Offer

Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Purchia, Liz
Sent: Thu Jul 22 08:47:13 2010
Subject: Fox News (Elena Isella): Questions about Shirley Sherrard Job Offer
I don't believe Secretary has public events scheduled today. I assume Cheryl Cook doesn't either...

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Isella, Elena [<mailto:Elena.Isella@foxnews.com>]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 8:32 AM
To: stephanie.chan@usda.gov; Chan, Stephanie
Cc: Dumpe, Megan; Ridolfi, Sarah; 087-DC desk email
Subject: Questions about Secretary Vilsack's Schedule

Good Morning Stephanie,

I just spoke with you on the phone, I work on the assignment desk at Fox News. Per our conversation I'm emailing you questions.

Does Secretary Vilsack have any public events scheduled for today or tomorrow? If so, how will the press office announce this information? Do we need to call you or will there be a press release emailed? If so, can our assignment desk be added to your distribution list dc.desk@foxnews.com? Will Secretary Vilsack meet with members of Congress or the White House?

Does Deputy Secretary Cheryl Cook have any public events scheduled for today or tomorrow too? Are there any changes with her job status?

What kind of job offer has the USDA offered to Shirley Sherrod? Is it within the Office of Outreach? How will USDA announce her decision? Should our assignment desk call back the Office of Communication? Will Secretary Vilsack, members of Congress, or the White House personally be meeting with Ms. Sherrod? When and where will that be happening? If so will that be opened to the press? Is the USDA aware of Ms. Sherrod's schedule this week? Will she be coming to DC? Or in New York or Atlanta?

One more thing, this is the link that we signed up for to receive USDA updates.
<http://usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?contentidonly=true&contentid=signupform.html> Can you please make sure we are on the list?

Thank you for your time. And if you can please reply to all so our assignment desk can receive your reply, that would be wonderful.

Elena Isella
Fox News Channel



Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 9:04 AM
To: Powell, Tamika -USDA
Subject: Fw: MSNBC - Shirley Sherrod on Morning Joe

Chris Mather

From: Purchia, Liz
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John
Cc: Chan, Stephanie; Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Thu Jul 22 08:59:54 2010
Subject: MSNBC - Shirley Sherrod on Morning Joe

07/22/2010 08:21:18

Video:

<http://mms.tveyes.com/Transcript.asp?stationid=205&DateTime=07/22/2010+08:21:18&mediapreload=14&playclip=true>

shirley, great to see you this morning. thank you for coming in.

thank you.

i went to go back to the beginning of this. people asking you questions here. take us back to monday. you are on your way to athens, georgia.

yes.

tell us about the three phone calls you got and what exactly was said, who they were from.

tell me tell you about the first phone call placed on administrative leave which would have been a good thing to do and continue while you look into it. so the first call said, shirley, we will have to put you on administrative leave. i said --

what time is this?

this is around 3:00, 2:30, 3:00 on monday.

okay.

and it was, like, such a letdown. i walked outside of the room to take the call because i was meeting with the staff. we call it the leadership staff at rural development in georgia and we were three and a half hours from the office because we had gone over to west point, georgia, to tour the kia plant and had a meeting there because we assisted the city of west point with getting ready to bring the plant and jobs into the area.

who was that on the phone?

cheryl cook. she said go home. all i can say is get some rest.

you know her?

yes. she knew me before i came to the department.

did she say this is a message from the white house specifically?

she didn't say it with that call. when i was placed on administrative leave, she did not say that with that call. so i explained to the staff what was happening and i said, all i can do now is take this government car back to athens. get my car and go home. and they pulled me into a circle to pray before leaving. so i got in the car. still so unbelievable. and then, the first call came in saying shirley, they want you to resign. she didn't say the white house on that call. and i said, oh my goodness.

but i want to know, shirley, how you were told what you had done. how did you know you were in trouble?

oh --

they didn't say you're on administrative leave.

they didn't say i had done anything.

they said what? i was the one when i first learned that that video was out there, it was last thursday. i was in a meeting in atlanta with land grant institutions and having to check my e-mail while sitting in the meeting and saw that meeting from this person saying shame on you. you have no business working at the agency and said some other stuff and i replied, you are so wrong. that's the first thing, you are so wrong. i said, that's not what i was saying. i went on to explain to that individual in my message what i was doing and i said, you should see the whole video. so, he then e-mailed back. you know? they have these e-mails. you don't know who it's coming from. but i e-mailed him and said, i suggested where i thought he could get it. and then, i sat there and forwarded all of that to the department of agriculture to say, hey, look at what's happening. i wanted them to see my response to him and, you know, so i was told we'll get back with you. when i left the meeting that day, i drove to south georgia. i stopped in the city of forsyth, georgia, to get a call at 4:00 and the thing was, well, we don't know what to do with this. we'll get this to the media people. and get back to you. no one got back to me. you know? and by monday i'm getting a lot of hate mail. hate e-mail messages, calling me all kinds of things and saying i have no business working at the agency and just -- it was just awful. so i made the first call up there to see what was going on. and then, the next call was the call putting me on administrative leave.

shirley, we have joe and miika down in pensacola who have a question for you. guys?

okay.

let me say the woman who's received the most apologies over the past 24 hours in america, shirley, i would like to apologize to you, too.

yeah. you should.

i apologize all the time. i screw up all the time and not sure if i owe you an apology but found it's much safer to apologize.

it's what he does.

i want to step back because this is a -- you know, we are having media wars over this episode. we're having political wars. this sort of garbage goes on all the time. i want to step back, though, and i want to talk about the underlying message. the message of reconciliation. a remarkable message that you took when you gave this speech and again, you're getting hate mail from people based on a speech where you're preaching what we need preached today more than ever, reconciliation. get -- tell us about that message again. the underlying message of this entire video. reconciliation. looking at somebody not based on race but based on need.

and perhaps why we need it now more than ever.

yes. you know, and let me say i tell that story using my life, you know, so that people are not just hearing words but they -- if you get to know me and the things that have happened to me and the things that i have done, and i say to them, if i can get over it, you certainly should be able to do it. we need to get to a point where we can move forward working together. i say to people, especially in the south, it's a great region of this country. and if we could just figure out how to work together, get beyond the civil war, i say to folks all the time, you know, i go into some of these communities and it looks like the civil war ended just last month. you know? we have to get beyond that. and i use my life. when you look at the fact of my father was murdered. i could tell you many, many, many, many more stories of things that happened to me over the last 45 years to me and my husband and my family. and if i can move beyond that to try to work together, hey, people in this country ought to be able to do this. we can get beyond this, you all. we can work together and make a good place for all of us to be able to live.

your father was killed by the ku klux klan?

yeah. you know, it's so interesting. you know, i didn't know him to be a klansman and my father was murdered in 1965 and a group of white men came to burn a cross in front of our house. i had gone on to college 100 miles away but in that house was my mother, my young brother that my father didn't get to see, he was born june 6th and this was the month of june and, actually, september

when the cross burning happened and my four sisters: they knew there was no male other than -- how old was he? about 3 or 4 months old at that point. and these white men could come to burn a cross in front of a house they knew contained mostly females and a baby male.

mika?

yeah.

mika?

miss **sherrod**, given the message you had in response to joe's question about how we can get beyond this, does that mean maybe then that you will consider taking your job back, that getting beyond this will be you moving beyond this, as well? do you think you can do that?

i have not seen the full offer yet. haven't been able to get to my e-mail if they've sent it. the secretary told me they would put it in writing and i gave him my e-mail address yesterday so that he could send that to me. i just don't want -- i'm not sure -- i need to talk to them more and i told him i need to think about it. we certainly need to have other conversations. i would not like to be looked at as that one person who can be responsible for all of the discrimination in the department of agriculture. and you have not only blacks receiving that discrimination but there are lawsuits now by native americans and us panic, women farmers.

this is a department that settled the litigation in the billions of dollars of discrimination against black farmers.

yes.

before we ever get to this chapter this week.

they haven't completely dealt with the black farmers yet. because there's a whole issue of 1.25 billion that congress and it is not costing taxpayers money because i think that comes from a special fund that's been set up. but that whole issue of completing that lawsuit, yet you have all of these others now.

joe?

hey shirley, yeah, i want to thank you, shirley for --

thank you very much.

07/22/2010 08:29:33 - 8:39:33 AM

Video:

<http://mms.tveyes.com/Transcript.asp?stationid=205&DateTime=07/22/2010+08:29:33&mediapreload=14&playclip=true>

you know, it's so interesting. you know, i didn't know him to be a klansman and my father was murdered in 1965 and a group of white men came to burn a cross in front of our house. i had gone on to college 100 miles away but in that house was my mother, my young brother that my father didn't get to see, he was born june 6th and this was the month of june and, actually, september when the cross burning happened and my four sisters. they knew there was no male other than -- how old was he? about 3 or 4 months old at that point. and these white men could come to burn a cross in front of a house they knew contained mostly females and a baby male.

mika?

yeah.

mika?

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at as that one person who can be responsible for all of the discrimination in the department of agriculture. and you have not only blacks receiving that discrimination but there are lawsuits now by native americans and us panic, women farmers.

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joe?

hey shirley, yeah, i want to thank you, shirley for --

thank you very much.

i want to thank you for you this exclusive, coming to n= f ""morning joe"" first.

good to finally hear from you.

thursday 8:30 eastern. really quickly, though, i want you -- i don't think you should go back to work for the department of agriculture. i think you can go out and deliver a more important message on reconciliation. robert gibbs of the white house yesterday talked about a teachable moment. what have you lned from -- what's the big lesson from this story of the past 24, 48 hours and what can we learn from it moving forward?

well, one of the lessons is that we can be so quick to judge. and that's what gets us in trouble most of the time. if we were not that way, i don't think we would be -- i would be sitting here today talking to you. the other lesson, i think, from all of this is that we haven't gotten to the point where we need to be in this country. and you know, if my being in this position having gone through everything i have gone through the last few days help move the discussion forward, that need to happen in this country, now that i'm willing to be the fall guy for. you know?

shirley, as you're considering your job offer options, i want you to know i have a show coming on this network at 10:00 p.m. sometime in the fall when i feel the energy to do it.

say no now.

i don't have a mika. i don't have a mika.

just say no.

i need a 10:00 p.m. mika. take your time. think about it. you have a lot to think about. if you're available for 10:00 p.m., monday through -- i don't know, most days of the week.

he is --

shirley, if you think this last week has been tough, sit next to this crazy man and your life will be a living, breathing hell.

never fired anyone. i have never fired anyone.

shirley, look into his eyes, look into his heart and then just say no.

yes.

amen.

it's what i should have done.

reconciliation has its limits.

thank you so much for being here.

Liz Purchia

Press Assistant, Office of Communications

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Desk: (202) 720-2168 | BB: [REDACTED]

Liz.Purchia@oc.usda.gov

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 11:35 AM
To: 'Terence Samuel'

FACTS THAT MEDIA HAS FAILED TO RECOGNIZE DESPITE US TELLING THEM REPEATEDLY - ONLY COVERING HER SIDE OF STORY

Cheryl Cook did not say anything about Glenn Beck to Shirley Sherrod.

WH did not ask for or pressure for resignation. Cheryl Cook did not say WH was asking.

She was not harassed. We called her four times over the course of several hours. First to put on administrative leave. Second to ask if she was willing to resign and she said yes. Third to ask for it in writing and fourth because we did not get any paper yet.

She said she was willing to resign

We emailed her the offer this morning but have not heard back

This am she said she got offer but it wasn't her old job. I think it goes without saying, if she wants it back, she can have it.

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 11:56 AM
To: 

Sure, now Meet the Press wants us.

Chris Mather
Director of Communications
USDA
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 402A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0060
chris.mather@usda.gov

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 12:03 PM
To: 'Brasher, Philip'; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: RE: Sherrod

You need anything from us right now? No word on Shirley's response

-----Original Message-----

From: Brasher, Philip [mailto:pbrasher@desmoine.gannett.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 3:16 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Sherrod

Has Vilsack reached Ms. Sherrod? What is the disposition?

Will Vilsack and/or Cheryl Cook be made available to talk about this? If not, why not?

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 12:33 PM
To: 'Tapper, Jake'; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: RE: Good morning - GMA calling

Shirley has not told us yet. We emailed her the offer this morning.

From: Tapper, Jake [mailto:Jake.Tapper@abc.com]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 6:41 AM
To: Mather, Chris; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Good morning - GMA calling

Anyone there I can talk to?

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 12:37 PM
To: Jones, Christine
Subject: RE: Shirley Sherrod

Greg Diephouse

From: Jones, Christine
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 10:16 AM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: Shirley Sherrod

Chris,

Karen Messmore asked me to ask you who the POC is for inquiries that are coming in on this matter? OHRM is apparently receiving calls about this situation and we need to know who we should be referring questions to.

Thank you,

Christine R. Jones

Departmental Management
Office of Human Resources Management
Room 312-W, J. L. Whitten Building
1400 Independence Ave., SW.
Washington, D.C. 20250
Phone: 202-720-5873
Fax: 202-720-9148
Email: christine.jones@dm.usda.gov

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 12:41 PM
To: 'Brasher, Philip'
Subject: RE: Sherrod

We are not talking about the position until we talk again with Shirley.

-----Original Message-----

From: Brasher, Philip [mailto:pbrasher@desmoine.gannett.com]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 12:35 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: Re: Sherrod

Actually I have two requests:

We would like to talk with the secretary as possible to allow him to step back and talk about the lessons learned from this, his struggle to put the department's race problem behind it and how this affects - or doesn't affect - his agenda going forward. And how this has affected him personally. The anguish was pretty apparent yesterday.

Separately, what is the position Sherrod was offered? Who held it previously? How long has it been vacant?

Thanks!

On 7/22/10 12:03 PM, "Mather, Chris" <Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov> wrote:

You need anything from us right now? No word on Shirley's response

-----Original Message-----

From: Brasher, Philip [mailto:pbrasher@desmoine.gannett.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 3:16 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Sherrod

Has Vilsack reached Ms. Sherrod? What is the disposition?

Will Vilsack and/or Cheryl Cook be made available to talk about this? If not, why not?

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 12:41 PM
To: Powell, Tamika -USDA
Subject: FW: New Media Update 7/22/10 Part 1
Attachments: NewMedia_Sherrod_072210-12am.doc

From: Rhee, Peter
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 12:30 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Black, David -OC; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Eamich, Amanda
Cc: Fobla, Hakim
Subject: Re: New Media Update 7/22/10 Part 1

And here's a version of Word for those who can't open a docx file.

On 7/22/10 12:25 PM, "Peter Rhee" <peter.rhee@oc.usda.gov> wrote:

Attached.

Peter Rhee, PMP
Creative Media Director
Office of Communications
U.S. Department Of Agriculture
RM 405-A
BB. [REDACTED]
M. [REDACTED]
O. 202.720.8138

www.usda.gov/newmedia

Peter Rhee, PMP
Creative Media Director
Office of Communications
U.S. Department Of Agriculture
RM 405-A
BB. [REDACTED]
M. [REDACTED]
O. 202.720.8138

www.usda.gov/newmedia

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 12:42 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: FW: Sherrod

I just told him we aren't talking about position until we talk to Shirley.

-----Original Message-----

From: Brasher, Philip [mailto:pbrasher@desmoine.gannett.com]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 12:35 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: Re: Sherrod

Actually I have two requests:

We would like to talk with the secretary as possible to allow him to step back and talk about the lessons learned from this, his struggle to put the department's race problem behind it and how this affects - or doesn't affect - his agenda going forward. And how this has affected him personally. The anguish was pretty apparent yesterday.

Separately, what is the position Sherrod was offered? Who held it previously? How long has it been vacant?

Thanks!

On 7/22/10 12:03 PM, "Mather, Chris" <Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov> wrote:

You need anything from us right now? No word on Shirley's response

-----Original Message-----

From: Brasher, Philip [mailto:pbrasher@desmoine.gannett.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 3:16 PM
To: Mather, Chris; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Sherrod

Has Vilsack reached Ms. Sherrod? What is the disposition?

Will Vilsack and/or Cheryl Cook be made available to talk about this? If not, why not?

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 2:56 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Fw: Question

I told him yes
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Nicholas, Peter <Peter.Nicholas@latimes.com>
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thu Jul 22 14:47:00 2010
Subject: Question

Did the department email Ms Sherrod a job offer this morning?
Robert Gibbs referred questions to your office at today's briefing.

Peter Nicholas
Tribune Washington Bureau
LA Times/Chicago Tribune newspapers
Cell: [REDACTED]
Work: 202-824-8321

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 3:03 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: RE: CNN Contact

Talked to her.

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 2:58 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: CNN Contact

The person on TV was Ali Velshi. If you want to get info over please send to Sarah, she will blast to control room.

CNN Network booking (Sarah Baker [REDACTED] Sarah.Baker@cnn.com)

PS- She is the one who has been asking for an interview and has been quite nice

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 3:54 PM
To: 'Cherlin, Reid H.'
Subject: FW: WaPo Ed O'Keef article

From: DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 3:51 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: FW: WaPo Ed O'Keef article

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: Purchia, Liz
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 3:37 PM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: WaPo Ed O'Keef article

Links to this <http://www.rma.usda.gov/aboutrma/civilrights/>

President Obama calls Shirley Sherrod

Updated 1:39 p.m. ET

<http://voices.washingtonpost.com/federal-eye/2010/07/shirley-sherrod-wants-to-talk.html>

President Obama has expressed his "regret" to former U.S. Agriculture Department official **Shirley Sherrod** over her ouster, the White House said Thursday.

The president reached Sherrod around 12:35 p.m. ET and "emphasized that Secretary Vilsack was sincere in his apology yesterday, and in his work to rid USDA of discrimination," the White House said Thursday.

"The President told Ms. Sherrod that this misfortune can present an opportunity for her to continue her hard work on behalf of those in need, and he hopes that she will do so," the statement said.

Obama made the call from his private office on Thursday after twice trying unsuccessfully to reach her on Wednesday evening, according to a White House aide. Staffers tried to reach her again this morning and Obama spoke with her when she returned the call, the aide said.

Sherrod did not indicate to Obama whether she plans to rejoin the government, according to the aide. She expressed reluctance to rejoin the Obama administration earlier Thursday during a series of television interviews.

"I'd like to talk to him about the experiences of people like me, people at the grassroots level, people who live out here in rural America people, who live in the South. I know he does not have that kind of experience," Sherrod told NBC's Today Show.

"We love him, we want him to be successful, because we feel he thinks in some ways like we do, and we think that's good for the country," she said later. "Yes, there are issues out there that we are faced with, issues of poverty. The other thing, I want everything to reflect, I want a good reflection for him as the first black president."

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack offered Sherrod a position with USDA's Office of Civil Rights and Community Outreach, Sherrod said, but raised doubts she would take the job.

"I would not be that individual that the department, everyone is looking to to solve the issue of racism in USDA. It takes a lot more to get that job done," she said, noting that other USDA officials have not lost their jobs for discriminating against minority or women farmers.

Sherrod also told CNN's "American Morning" that said she would like to "get back at" **Andrew Breitbart**, the right-wing blogger whose posting of the video snippet triggered the political storm that led to her ouster. Asked whether she would like to see Breitbart's Web site shut down, Sherrod replied: "That would be a great thing...he's doing more to divide us."

Liz Purchia
Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-2168 | BB: 
Liz.Purchia@oc.usda.gov

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 3:55 PM
To: 'Ed O'Keefe'
Subject: FW: WaPo Ed O'Keef article

Ed, this was not the job she was offered. The position you see here is an agency position, she was offered a much larger role as we have said.

Links to this <http://www.rma.usda.gov/aboutrma/civilrights/>

President Obama calls Shirley Sherrod

Updated 1:39 p.m. ET

http://voices.washingtonpost.com/federal-eye/2010/07/shirley_sherrod_wants_to_talk.html

President Obama has expressed his "regret" to former U.S. Agriculture Department official **Shirley Sherrod** over her ouster, the White House said Thursday.

The president reached Sherrod around 12:35 p.m. ET and "emphasized that Secretary Vilsack was sincere in his apology yesterday, and in his work to rid USDA of discrimination," the White House said Thursday.

"The President told Ms. Sherrod that this misfortune can present an opportunity for her to continue her hard work on behalf of those in need, and he hopes that she will do so," the statement said.

Obama made the call from his private office on Thursday after twice trying unsuccessfully to reach her on Wednesday evening, according to a White House aide. Staffers tried to reach her again this morning and Obama spoke with her when she returned the call, the aide said.

Sherrod did not indicate to Obama whether she plans to rejoin the government, according to the aide. She expressed reluctance to rejoin the Obama administration earlier Thursday during a series of television interviews.

"I'd like to talk to him about the experiences of people like me, people at the grassroots level, people who live out here in rural America people, who live in the South. I know he does not have that kind of experience," Sherrod told NBC's Today Show.

"We love him, we want him to be successful, because we feel he thinks in some ways like we do, and we think that's good for the country," she said later. "Yes, there are issues out there that we are faced with, issues of poverty. The other thing, I want everything to reflect, I want a good reflection for him as the first black president."

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack offered Sherrod a position with USDA's Office of Civil Rights and Community Outreach, Sherrod said, but raised doubts she would take the job.

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Sherrod also told CNN's "American Morning" that said she would like to "get back at" **Andrew Breitbart**, the right-wing blogger whose posting of the video snippet triggered the political storm that led to her ouster. Asked whether she would like to see Breitbart's Web site shut down, Sherrod replied: "That would be a great thing...he's doing more to divide us."

Liz Purchia
Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-2168 | BB: [REDACTED]
Liz.Purchia@oc.usda.gov

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 5:25 PM
To: Jeanquart, Bobbi
Subject: Re: IMP

Can you have him call me when he gets back?  Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----
From: Jeanquart, Bobbi
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thu Jul 22 17:13:15 2010
Subject: Re: IMP

He is on hill with mr clyburn will be back at 530

----- Original Message -----
From: Mather, Chris
To: Jeanquart, Bobbi
Sent: Thu Jul 22 17:10:36 2010
Subject: IMP

Can you help me find Pearlie?
Chris Mather

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 5:46 PM
To: Ross, Lori -USDA
Subject: Fw: 10:30 tomorrow

See below. I have to do this. Can you move
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
To: Mather, Chris

Cc: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thu Jul 22 17:44:50 2010
Subject: 10:30 tomorrow

Media prep.
Karen Ross
Chief of Staff
Office of the Secretary

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 6:04 PM
To: 'Michelle.Cumbo@turner.com'
Cc: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Re: Hello from CNN American Morning

No he is not.
Chris Mather

From: Michelle.Cumbo@turner.com
To: Mather, Chris
Cc: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Thu Jul 22 18:01:40 2010
Subject: Hello from CNN American Morning
Hello Chris and Stephanie:

Hope this e-mail finds you well. I wanted to check back in regarding our request for Secretary Vilsack or someone from the agriculture department? Any way the Secretary could be available for an interview tomorrow morning?

Looking forward to hearing back from you.

Best,

Michelle A. Cumbo
Producer, *CNN American Morning*
212-275-7843 direct
[REDACTED] mobile
Michelle.cumbo@turner.com

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 6:05 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Re:

No. Maybe he just emailed me.
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thu Jul 22 18:03:07 2010
Subject: RE:

I didn't get any question from Ed Henry. Are you referring to the person in the WH brief that asked "maybe I missed this, but why couldn't she just have her old job back?" ?

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: 

Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 5:24 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject:

Can you send me Ed Henry's questions - didn't we have them somewhere?

Chris Mather

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 7:00 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Re: CNN Transcript- POTUS on Shirley

I need to send to S
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Misailidis, Sarah; Purchia, Liz; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thu Jul 22 18:56:03 2010
Subject: CNN Transcript- POTUS on Shirley

CNN 07/22/2010 18:38:51

President Obama has granted an interview to ABC News and he spoke about the Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack's decision to go ahead to fire **Shirley Sherrod**, and listen to this.

he jumped the gun partly because we now live in this media culture where something goes up on YouTube or a blog, and everybody scrambles, and I have told my team and I told my agencies that we have to make sure that we are focusing on doing the right thing instead of what looks to be politically necessary at that very moment. We have to take our time and think these issues through.

the president of the United States. All right. Let's bring in Candy Crowley, our chief political correspondent and host of "State of the Union" which airs Sunday mornings at 9:00, and John King who hosts "John King USA" which comes up at the top of the hour. You spoke with **Shirley Sherrod**, John, and how did that conversation with you go with her after she spoke with the president?

Well, good. She said she had a brief conversation with the president, and she is grateful that he did not use the words "I'm sorry, but right in the vein that he regretted what had happened. Interestingly, she has questions and still believes that someone, and not the president, and she believes him, but someone in the White House was involved in her firing. Other things, Wolf, she is not sure if she will take the job and she is exhausted and tough words for the NAACP and how they treated her in this, and I asked her about Andrew Breitbart, the conservative who put the edited words on the air, and what she thought about him.

Reporter: If you had a few seconds for Andrew Breitbart, what would you say?

I would say he is a liar. He knew exactly what effect that would have on the conservative racist people he is dealing with. That is why I started to get the hate mail. And that is why I started to get the hate calls. He got the effect he was looking for.

She said it would take a very long time, and she would have to have deep personal conversation with Andrew Breitbart, and she will forgive the White House, and Secretary Vilsack, but not Andrew Breitbart.

Well, what is your take, Candy. I have been anxious to speak to you over the last couple of days.

I think that the post-presidency race isn't. I was having a conversation saying that is the White House tried to take President Obama out of this, and sort of keep him above it, and yet he makes this phone call, and I said, that there is no way to keep this president away from racial issues. He is the first African-American president, and naturally, I mean, I was trying to think that if this, if the Gates, the Harvard thing that happened with the policeman, and the professor, if that had happened under George W. Bush, nobody would have looked at him to say something, but they do look to Barack Obama to say something, because he is president and made history and something they know they have to live with.

So, it is not just that the buck stops here as Harry Truman said, but also because he is African-American?

Sure, sure. Ask any other -- and look at any other president trying to put him in position of the particular Harvard incident and no one would have expected that they would have to put something out there, but they do expect it of President Obama,

and they do also expect, and they did politically 101, get rid of the problem. that is what everybody's first reaction is when a political problem comes up, everybody has learned to get rid of the problem, and that is a problem for them, except he is exactly right in this day and age --

it turned out to be a big problem.

except that she was not a problem and gave a remarkable and redemptive speech. remember when the gates thing happened the president regretted that the cambridge police acted stupidly and now his administration has acted stupidly, and they didn't check out to the right, and the speech did not get investigated, and they accepted that she was a racist and problem and it looked especially bad when it is the administration of the first african-american president, and the naacp act on the premise to treat everybody fairly and jumped the gun, and didn't treat this woman fairly, and they have egg on their face and they know it.

we look forward to your show at the top of the hour, ""john king usa,"" and candy crowley sunday.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell:

Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 7:16 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: CNN Transcript- POTUS on Shirley

Agreed.
Chris Mather

From: TJV
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thu Jul 22 19:16:01 2010
Subject: Re: CNN Transcript- POTUS on Shirley

[REDACTED]

From: Mather, Chris
To: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thu Jul 22 19:07:35 2010
Subject: Fw: CNN Transcript- POTUS on Shirley

FYI. POTUS did interview.
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Misailidis, Sarah; Purchia, Liz; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Thu Jul 22 18:56:03 2010
Subject: CNN Transcript- POTUS on Shirley

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he jumped the gun partly because we now live in this media culture where something goes up on YouTube or a blog, and everybody scrambles, and I have told my team and I told my agencies that we have to make sure that we are focusing on doing the right thing instead of what looks to be politically necessary at that very moment. We have the take our time and think these issues through.

the president of the United States. all right. let's bring in Candy Crowley our chief political correspondent and host of "State of the Union" which airs Sunday mornings at 9:00, and John King who hosts "John King USA" which comes up at the top of the hour. you spoke with Shirley Sherrod, John, and how did that conversation with you go with her after she spoke with the president?

well, good. she said she had a brief conversation with the president, and she is grateful that he did not use the words I'm sorry, but right in the vein that he regretted what had happened. interestingly, she has questions and still believes that someone, and not the president, and she believes him, but someone in the White House was involved in her firing. other things, well, she is not sure if she will take the job and she is exhausted and tough words for the NAACP and how they treated her in this, and I asked her about Andrew Breitbart, the conservative who put the edited words on the air, and what she thought about him.

reporter: if you had a few seconds for Andrew Breitbart, what would you say?

i would say he is a liar. he knew exactly what effect that would have on the conservative racist people he is dealing with. that is why i started to get the hate mail. and that is why i started to get the hate calls. he got the effect he was looking for.

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i think that the post presidency race isn't. i was having a conversation saying that is the white house tried to take president obama out of this, and sort of keep him above it, and yet he makes this phone call, and i said, that there is no way to keep this president away from racial issues. he is the first african-american president, and naturally, i mean, i was trying to think that if this, if the gates, the harvard thing that happened with the policeman, and the professor, if that had happened under george w. bush, nobody would have looked at him to say something, but they do look to barack obama to say something, because he is president and made history and something they know they have to live with.

so, it is not just that the buck stops here as harry truman said, but also because he is african-american?

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we look forward to your show at the top of the hour, ""john king usa,"" and candy crowley sunday.

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 12:30 AM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: Fw: Cedar Rapids Gazette: Vilsack role in USDA firing seen as uncharacteristic of 'thoughtful' decision-maker

Chris Mather

From: liz purchia
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Misailidis, Sarah; Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Thu Jul 22 22:36:58 2010
Subject: Cedar Rapids Gazette: Vilsack role in USDA firing seen as uncharacteristic of 'thoughtful' decision-maker
Also, wanted to make sure you saw this Cedar Rapids Gazette article. It's the best I've seen out of all the articles about the situations.
<http://gazetteonline.com/breaking-news/2010/07/22/vilsack-role-in-usda-firing-seen-as-uncharacteristic-of-%e2%80%98thoughtful%e2%80%99-decision-maker>

Vilsack role in USDA firing seen as uncharacteristic of 'thoughtful' decision-maker

Posted on Jul 22, 2010 by [James Q. Lynch](#).

Those who know Tom Vilsack well are surprised the former Iowa governor is caught up in a series of hasty decisions embarrassing him and the Obama administration.

On the other hand, his apology for the firing of a USDA employee based on an edited video and his offer to rehire her are more typical of what a former legal counsel described as Vilsack's "incredibly diligent" approach to decision-making.

"He was incredibly well-prepared and very thoughtful, especially to the extent that it had tangible impacts on people," said Brian Gentry, who served as the two-term governor's legal counsel.

He also found it ironic that Vilsack would be caught up in a controversy with racial overtones. Vilsack, Gentry said "really worked hard to increase access to services, to opportunities and to engagement in the governmental apparatus to people who historically had not had significant representation."

Vilsack's efforts to expand rights for homosexuals, restore felons' voting right and oppose legislation making English the official state language were more consistent with his "commitment to promoting equal rights, equal opportunities."

Democratic Sen. Tom Harkin has observed that same thoughtfulness over the years, so he was surprised at Vilsack's firing of Shirley Sherrod, a black USDA official, based on reports she discriminated against a white farmer.

"Well, look, I don't know all the ins and outs of this," Harkin said July 22. "I don't know who called who, who said what. ... but it does not seem to me to be the Tom Vilsack that I know and have known for 20 years."

Harkin, who said he hasn't talked to Vilsack about the incident, wouldn't say whether he thought the decision to fire Sherrod had been made above Vilsack's level. However, the rapid-fire series of events caused Iowa Republican Sen. Chuck Grassley to wonder about the White House's role.

"I know Secretary Vilsack to be a fair person and he has done the right thing by owning up to the mistake," Grassley said, "but the White House hasn't cleared the air with a full accounting of what transpired and reconciled reports that USDA staff felt pressured by the White House to ask Ms. Sherrod to resign."

Sherrod was asked to resign based on an edited videotape posted by conservative blogger Andrew Breitbart at www.BigGovernment.com in which she recalls her reluctance 24 years ago to help a white farmer seeking government assistance.

At a news conference Wednesday, Vilsack insisted he made the decision without knowing all the facts and regretted it.

"I am accepting the responsibility with deep regret," he said.

White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs also insisted the decision was one made at the Agriculture Department and he denied White House pressure. He apologized to Sherrod "for the entire administration."

Harkin doubted Vilsack would have fired someone based on the blog post.

On the other hand, "We all make mistakes," Harkin said, adding, "Maybe he just made a big mistake."

If he did, Vilsack wasn't alone, according to Stephen Berry, a Pulitzer-prize winning newspaper reporter now teaching at the University of Iowa.

He was appalled that "such a big deal was made politically about pure crappy journalism."

The original story, posted at BigGovernment.com by conservative blogger Andrew Breitbart, was "not worth crap, but it gets played all over the place," Berry said.

He also faulted the media for running the story without verifying it.

"When they see bullshit coming across the air, they need to ignore it," Berry said. "Let Fox and MSNBC waste their time on it."

And if the Obama administration had "checked the damn facts it could have saved itself a lot of embarrassment," Berry said.

Berry gave Gibbs some credit for acknowledging the mistake and apologizing for it, but said he shouldn't have spent so much time discussing it.

"He should have just said, 'That's bullshit, let's go to the next question,'" Berry said.

Berry hopes readers and viewers recognize the coverage was "silly as hell. I hope they realize that bad journalism got a lot of play."

More worrying is that the story completely overshadowed a truly important news story — Obama signing the financial reform law, Berry said.

"That will affect everyone's lives for a long time," he said. "This Shirley Sherrod thing will disappear in no time flat."

Harkin, who called the coverage of the Sherrod affair an example of a "personality-driven ... People magazine society," predicted that "in a few weeks people will say, 'Who's Shirley Sherrod?'"

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 2:27 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Fw:

Please send to our super duper interns. I don't have their JIC email addresses.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Mather, Chris
To: Chan, Stephanie; Misailidis, Sarah; Purchia, Liz; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Powell, Tamika -USDA; Ross, Lori -USDA; Allen, Renee -USDA; Black, David -OC; Eamich, Amanda; Maloney, Wayne
Sent: Fri Jul 23 14:18:11 2010

I wanted to send a note to all of you to thank you for dealing with the many issues that arose this week and forced us to work longer and harder and in a more frenetic atmosphere. Many people have commented to me the good work you all did this week including the Secretary. It was not fun and we learned a hard lesson, but hopefully it will help us be better workers, stewards and people in the future. Thank you! And please feel free to leave early today you have more than made up for it this week. Have a good weekend. And rest up. Lots of work to do!

Chris Mather

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 2:30 PM
To: Powell, Tamika -USDA
Subject: Re:

Yes!
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----
From: Powell, Tamika -USDA
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Fri Jul 23 14:25:42 2010
Subject: RE:

When you return let's go over schedule.

Tamika J. Powell-Bellamy
Information Support Specialist
Office of Communications, USDA
(202)690-1059 (o)
(202)720-5402 (f)

" All great things are simple, and many can be expressed in single words: freedom, justice, honor, duty, mercy, hope. "

-----Original Message-----
From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 2:18 PM
To: Chan, Stephanie; Misailidis, Sarah; Purchia, Liz; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin; Powell, Tamika -USDA; Ross, Lori -USDA; Allen, Renee -USDA; Black, David -OC; Eamich, Amanda; Maloney, Wayne
Subject:

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Chris Mather

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 5:55 PM
To: 'Peter.Nicholas@latimes.com'
Subject: Re: Question

Yes I heard that.
Chris Mather

From: Nicholas, Peter
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Fri Jul 23 17:28:33 2010
Subject: RE: Question

There's some back and forth about a white house liaison ...

SECRETARY VILSACK: You know, I think that first of all, I indicated to Shirley my personal regret and my responsibility for the fact that she received multiple phone calls. That's again a problem that I could have corrected if I had done this job properly.

Having said that, there was no pressure from the White House here. This was my decision. I obviously was not party to those conversations. It may very well be that during the course of the conversation, Ms. Cook indicated that a White House liaison had been contacted, but I don't know that she necessarily indicated that there was any pressure because that was not the case.

This was something I decided, and I have to accept full responsibility for this.

QUESTION (CNN): So does that mean a White House liaison?

SECRETARY VILSACK: We have a number of people in the White House that we communicate with from time to time when there are issues, just to keep them informed, and I this was my decision. You know, I appreciate the concerns that folks are expressing, but this was my decision, and I made it in haste. And I learned from that.

QUESTION: Secretary, you decided to fire Ms. Sherrod, and then you notified a liaison at the White House or someone did, and can you describe what their reaction then was to that?

SECRETARY VILSACK: I requested her resignation about the same time the sort of things crossed, crossed in time.

From: Mather, Chris [mailto:Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 5:26 PM
To: Nicholas, Peter
Subject: Re: Question

I just checked. He did not.
Chris Mather

From: Nicholas, Peter
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Fri Jul 23 17:24:59 2010
Subject: RE: Question
Didn't he mention talking to the liaison in his news conference?
Will double check the transcript.

From: Mather, Chris [mailto:Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 5:24 PM
To: Nicholas, Peter
Subject: Re: Question

No he did not. Where did you get that?
Chris Mather

From: Nicholas, Peter
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Fri Jul 23 17:18:29 2010
Subject: RE: Question
Ok. sec vilsack mentioned talking to the liaison, who's a usda employee, I'm told.
So who's that person?

From: Mather, Chris [mailto:Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 5:17 PM
To: Nicholas, Peter
Subject: Re: Question

No.
Chris Mather

From: Nicholas, Peter
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Fri Jul 23 17:15:50 2010
Subject: RE: Question
Yes. was he the one whom Sec Vilsack spoke with about the Sherrod firing?

From: Mather, Chris [mailto:Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 5:15 PM
To: Nicholas, Peter
Subject: Re: Question

Heard you called our Liaison. Need something?
Chris Mather

From: Nicholas, Peter
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thu Jul 22 15:17:25 2010
Subject: RE: Question

When did you say that? I've been disheartened by the lack of response from your press office.

From: Mather, Chris [mailto:Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 3:05 PM
To: Nicholas, Peter
Subject: RE: Question

We have said repeatedly that this is a discussion that we are having with her, not over the airwaves. We are waiting to hear from her.

From: Nicholas, Peter [mailto:Peter.Nicholas@latimes.com]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 3:01 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: Re: Question

Thanks. What is the position?

Peter Nicholas
Tribune Washington Bureau
LA Times/Chicago Tribune newspapers
Cell: [REDACTED]
Work: 202-824-8321

On Jul 22, 2010, at 2:55 PM, "Mather, Chris" <Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov> wrote:

Yes we did.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Nicholas, Peter <Peter.Nicholas@latimes.com>
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thu Jul 22 14:47:00 2010
Subject: Question

Did the department email Ms Sherrod a job offer this morning?
Robert Gibbs referred questions to your office at today's briefing.

Peter Nicholas
Tribune Washington Bureau
LA Times/Chicago Tribune newspapers
Cell: [REDACTED]
Work: 202-824-8321

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 6:27 PM
To: 'Peter.Nicholas@latimes.com'
Subject: Re: Question

No problem. I don't have the information in my blackberry but you can find online. If you have trouble let me know.
Chris Mather

From: Nicholas, Peter
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Fri Jul 23 17:59:05 2010
Subject: RE: Question
Also, I'm going to file a FOIA request. What is contact info for USDA's FOIA officer?

From: Mather, Chris [mailto:Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 5:56 PM
To: Nicholas, Peter
Subject: Re: Question

I am looking at same one. What is your question?
Chris Mather

From: Nicholas, Peter
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Fri Jul 23 17:53:45 2010
Subject: RE: Question
Here's another reference to the liaison's office.
What transcript were you checking?

I'm not certain in what period of time the White House was contacted, but, as these calls were being made, the White House, through the Liaison's Office, was aware, but the decision to do what was done was done by me

From: Mather, Chris [mailto:Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov]
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Didn't he mention talking to the liaison in his news conference?
Will double check the transcript.

From: Mather, Chris [mailto:Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov]

Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 5:24 PM

To: Nicholas, Peter

Subject: Re: Question

No he did not. Where did you get that?
Chris Mather

From: Nicholas, Peter

To: Mather, Chris

Sent: Fri Jul 23 17:18:29 2010

Subject: RE: Question

Ok. sec vilsack mentioned talking to the liaison, who's a usda employee, I'm told.
So who's that person?

From: Mather, Chris [mailto:Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov]

Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 5:17 PM

To: Nicholas, Peter

Subject: Re: Question

No.
Chris Mather

From: Nicholas, Peter

To: Mather, Chris

Sent: Fri Jul 23 17:15:50 2010

Subject: RE: Question

Yes. was he the one whom Sec Vilsack spoke with about the Sherrod firing?

From: Mather, Chris [mailto:Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov]

Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 5:15 PM

To: Nicholas, Peter

Subject: Re: Question

Heard you called our Liaison. Need something?
Chris Mather

From: Nicholas, Peter

To: Mather, Chris

Sent: Thu Jul 22 15:17:25 2010

Subject: RE: Question

When did you say that? I've been disheartened by the lack of response from your press office.

From: Mather, Chris [mailto:Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 3:05 PM
To: Nicholas, Peter
Subject: RE: Question

We have said repeatedly that this is a discussion that we are having with her, not over the airwaves. We are waiting to hear from her.

From: Nicholas, Peter [mailto:Peter.Nicholas@latimes.com]
Sent: Thursday, July 22, 2010 3:01 PM
To: Mather, Chris
Subject: Re: Question

Thanks. What is the position?

Peter Nicholas
Tribune Washington Bureau
LA Times/Chicago Tribune newspapers
Cell: [REDACTED]
Work: 202-824-8321

On Jul 22, 2010, at 2:55 PM, "Mather, Chris" <Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov> wrote:

Yes we did.
Chris Mather

----- Original Message -----

From: Nicholas, Peter <Peter.Nicholas@latimes.com>
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Thu Jul 22 14:47:00 2010
Subject: Question

Did the department email Ms Sherrod a job offer this morning?
Robert Gibbs referred questions to your office at today's briefing.

Peter Nicholas
Tribune Washington Bureau
LA Times/Chicago Tribune newspapers
Cell: [REDACTED]
Work: 202-824-8321

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 7:08 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: CNN Hunt news package

Chris Mather

From: DeJong, Justin
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Fri Jul 23 10:39:25 2010
Subject: FW: CNN Hunt news package
You need to see this.

Justin DeJong
Press Secretary
USDA Office of Communications
1400 Independence Ave, SW, Room 403A
Washington, DC 20250
202-690-0548
[REDACTED] (cell)
justin.dejong@usda.gov

From: O'Brien, Doug
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 10:35 AM
To: DeJong, Justin
Subject: FW: CNN Hunt news package

I assume you have seen this. Long piece on trying to find Cheryl Cook.

From: Williamson, Todd
Sent: Friday, July 23, 2010 10:10 AM
To: Harden, Krysta
Cc: Berge, John; O'Brien, Doug
Subject: CNN Hunt news package

<http://www.cnn.com/video/#/video/us/2010/07/23/henry.sherrrod.mystery.woman.cnn?hpt=C2>

Not sure if you all have seen this...I don't think CNN has run this on air yet

C. Todd Williamson, III
Office of Congressional Relations
U.S. Department of Agriculture
(202) 720-7095

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:06 PM
To: Misailidis, Sarah; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: Fw: Transcript

Who is Hilary?
Chris Mather

From: Harden, Krysta
To: Mather, Chris
Sent: Mon Jul 19 17:33:14 2010
Subject: Re: Transcript

Secy is asking who is Hillary Shelton in this transcript

From: Mather, Chris
To: Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff; Berge, John; Harden, Krysta; Washo, Kevin; DeJong, Justin; Weaver, Caleb
Cc: Misailidis, Sarah; Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:53:35 2010
Subject: Fw: Transcript

Thanks Sarah.
Chris Mather

From: Chan, Stephanie
To: Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; DeJong, Justin
Sent: Mon Jul 19 16:42:36 2010
Subject: Transcript
Chris, please see below for transcript

Video: [Link](#)

On July 25, 2009 Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack appointed Shirley Sherrod as Georgia Director of Rural Development. USDA Rural Development spends over \$1.2 Billion in the state of Georgia each year. On March 27, 2010, while speaking at the NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet, Ms. Sherrod admits that in her federally appointed position, overseeing over a billion dollars, she discriminates against people due to their race.

Shirley Sherrod: The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking but he was trying to show me he was superior to me, I know what he was doing. But he had to come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me, was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him. I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land. And here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So, I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough. So that when he, I assumed the Department of Agriculture had sent him to me, either that or the Georgia Department of Agriculture. And he needed to go back and report that I did try and help him. So I took him to a white lawyer that had attended some of the training that we had provided because of Chapter 12 bankruptcy had just been enacted for the family farm. So I figured if I take him to one of them that his own kind would take care of

him. That's when it was revealed to me that its about poor versus those who have. It's not so much about white...it is about white and black. It is about white and black but its not you know...it opened my eyes because I took him to one of his own.

Fox News Clip:

Geraldo Rivera: Do you denounce in the way that you ask the Tea Parties denounce racists within your ranks?

Hilary Shelton: Yes we do, we repudiate racists within our ranks.

Back to Shirley Sherrod Clip:

I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farm land and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So I didn't give him the full force of what I could do.

Stephanie Chan

Press Assistant, Office of Communications

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]

Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov

Mather, Chris

From: Mather, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2010 6:28 PM
To: Harden, Krysta
Subject: IMP


Chris Mather

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:13 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Purchia, Liz
Subject: FW: CNN point of contact for ALL live show requests !!

FYI-

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Baker, Sarah [mailto:Sarah.Baker@turner.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:57 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: CNN point of contact for ALL live show requests !!

Dag/Stephanie

Sarah here from Cnn - I am the point of contact today for all AG Secretary Vilsack and Cheryl Cook requests. I have EVERY platform here asking for live or live to taped interviews.

Please know we are trying to consolidate these live requests with a point person as myself who works for the network verses a show.

Is there a point where we can speak about avail or platform preference?

Dag/Stephanie- please let me know,

Sarah

DeJong, Justin

From: Chan, Stephanie
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:26 PM
To: Mather, Chris; DeJong, Justin; Purchia, Liz
Subject: Message from Dag to CNN POC: "At this point, we don't plan to offer an admin official"

FYI-

Stephanie Chan

*Press Assistant, Office of Communications
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Desk: (202) 720-5555 | Cell: [REDACTED]
Stephanie.chan@oc.usda.gov*

From: Vega, Dag [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:55 AM
To: Baker, Sarah; Chan, Stephanie
Subject: RE: CNN point of contact for ALL live show requests !!

Sarah,
At this point, we don't plan to offer an admin official. We'll let you know if that changes.
Thanks.

Dag Vega

From: Baker, Sarah [mailto:Sarah.Baker@turner.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 21, 2010 9:57 AM
To: Vega, Dag; Stephanie.Chan@oc.usda.gov
Subject: CNN point of contact for ALL live show requests !!

Dag/Stephanie

Sarah here from Cnn - I am the point of contact today for all AG Secretary Vilsack and Cheryl Cook requests.
I have EVERY platform here asking for live or live to taped interviews.

Please know we are trying to consolidate these live requests with a point person as myself who works for the network verses a show.

Is there a point where we can speak about avail or platform preference?

Dag/Stephanie- please let me know,

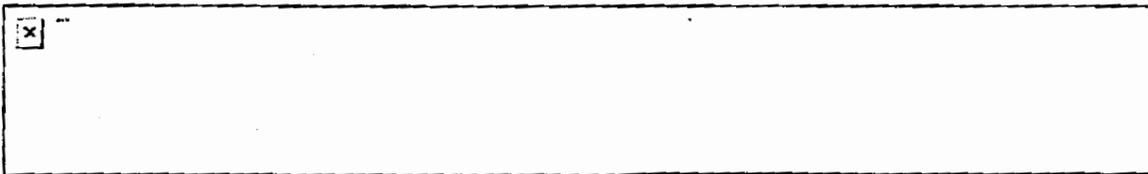
Sarah

DeJong, Justin

From: Chris.Mather@oc.usda.gov
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:09 AM
To: Misailidis, Sarah; [REDACTED];
Weaver, Caleb; Chan, Stephanie; DeJong, Justin
Cc: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: RE: Rural Development summary clips
Attachments: image001.jpg

Can someone print the actual clips so we have on paper?

From: Misailidis, Sarah
Sent: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 11:01 AM
To: [REDACTED]; Mather, Chris; Weaver, Caleb; 'Justin, DeJong';
Chan, Stephanie
Cc: Harden, Krysta; Berge, John; Washo, Kevin; Jett, Carole; Ross, Karen -ChiefOfStaff
Subject: Rural Development summary clips



Office of Communications (202) 720-4623

USDA Clips

Tuesday, July 20, 2010

USDA Clips are intended for use by authorized government personnel only. Redistribution by any means to any unauthorized person violates copyright on the source material.

Rural Development clips

USDA worker quits over racism charge from video (AP 7/20)

A black federal worker has resigned from a Georgia agricultural job after a video clip showed her saying she had not helped a farmer as much as she could have because he was white. U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a statement Tuesday he had accepted the resignation of Shirley Sherrod. Vilsack says the USDA has no tolerance for discrimination. Sherrod told the Atlanta-Journal Constitution she was forced out of her job as the USDA's rural development director for Georgia. She said the two-minute, 38-second video posted online Monday misconstrued her message. Sherrod's taped remarks were from a local meeting of the civil rights group NAACP. National NAACP President Benjamin Todd Jealous welcomed the resignation because the group opposes racism of all kinds. [Link](#)

Dismissed employee blames media (UPI 7/20)

An employee of the U.S. Department of Agriculture says she lost her job because the media misconstrued a speech she gave at an NAACP banquet. Shirley Sherrod, who was forced out as the USDA's rural development director for Georgia, is seen on a video admitting she didn't do everything she could to help a white farmer who needed aid, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported Tuesday. What the media didn't report, Sherrod says, was that the incident she was relating on the video happened 24 years ago when she was working for another organization, not the federal government. Also left out, Sherrod says, is the part where she says she was trying to figure out how to help someone who was condescending. [Link](#)

USDA employee says statements on white farmer misconstrued (CNN 7/20)

A black Agriculture Department employee who resigned after a video clip showed her talking about a white farmer said Tuesday her remarks were taken out of context. Shirley Sherrod, the department's former state director of rural development for Georgia, told CNN on Tuesday the incident she discusses in the clip took place more than two decades ago -- and she recounted it to an audience to make the point that people should move beyond race. "I was speaking to that group, like I've done many groups, and I tell them about a time when I thought the issue was race and race only," Sherrod told CNN's "American Morning" from her home in Albany, Georgia. The incident took place in 1986, while she worked for a nonprofit and before she worked for the USDA, she said. "I was telling the story of how working with him helped me to see the issue is not about race. It's about those who have versus those who do not have." [Link](#)

Race remarks cost USDA official her job (CNN Blog 7/20)

An African-American Agriculture Department worker resigns over her handling of a white Georgia farmer's case when she worked for a nonprofit group in 1986. It came to light when Shirley Sherrod talked about the case at an NAACP banquet earlier this year. Were her remarks a teaching moment that backfired, or evidence of racism? Sherrod says her comments were taken out of context -- that the point of her story was to unite people. Tony Harris will be talking to Sherrod at 11:00am ET on CNN, and we'll post that interview here. Watch some of her speech and phone interview with CNN's American Morning below, then tell us what you think. We'll share some of your comments on air in the CNN Newsroom, 11:00am -- 1:00pm ET. [Link](#)

Video Shows USDA Official Saying She Didn't Give 'Full Force' of Help to White Farmer (FOX News 7/20)

Days after the NAACP clashed with Tea Party members over allegations of racism, a video has surfaced showing an Agriculture Department official regaling an NAACP audience with a story about how she withheld help to a white farmer facing bankruptcy -- video that now has forced the official to resign. Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, is shown in the clip describing "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." Sherrod, who is black, claimed the farmer took a long time trying to show he was "superior" to her. The audience laughed as she described how she determined his fate... "There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person," Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a written statement. "We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously." [Link](#)

Gingrich Responds to Discrimination at USDA (Fox News 7/20)

SEAN HANNITY, HOST: And this is a Fox News alert. An Obama administration official resigned just a short time ago after she was caught on tape appearing to tell an audience that she had used her position to racially discriminate against white farmers. Now the woman, Shirley Sherrod, was the Georgia state director at the Department of Agricultural. Now the president's Agricultural Secretary Tom Vilsack just released a statement saying the USDA has a zero tolerance policy against discrimination. Here's part of the shocking video that ignited this controversy. (BEGIN VIDEO CLIP) SHIRLEY SHERROD, FORMER USDA GA STATE DIRECTOR: The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking but he was trying to show me he was superior to me. I know what he was doing. But he had come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time trying to show me he was superior to me was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him. [Request Story](#)

Black USDA official resigns after admitting she only 'did enough' for white farmer (MSNBC 7/20)

A black USDA official in Georgia has resigned after publicly admitting she didn't help a white man trying to save his farm to the "full force" of her power and instead referred him to "one of his own." Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said he had accepted Shirley Sherrod's resignation, saying there was "zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA." The NAACP, which recently condemned racism in tea party groups, also issued a statement Monday night saying: "Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race." [Link](#)

Morning Joe (MSNBC 7/20)

Well, another story of reverse discrimination comes out today. This one is really interesting. I'm thinking that this woman regrets this comment. a USDA official in Georgia has resigned after I YouTube clip show: her admitting that race helped determine how much aid would be given to a white farmer. You're not supposed to do that, are you? I mean, I'm not --it's probably not a good idea. for being so stupid. It's no even -- well, how about you just don't do it. Anyway, the state's director of rural development apparently made the comments during an NAACP banquet in March. Take a listen. The first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm, he took a long time talking, but he was trying to show me he was superior to me. What he didn't know while he was taking all that time to show me he was superior to me was i was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him. I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land. So, I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. [Request Story](#)

Shirley Sherrod Resigns Over USDA Race Remark Furor (CBS News 7/20)

A high-ranking black employee of the U.S. Department of Agriculture has resigned after remarks she made about race were distributed by conservative web sites and aired on Fox News. A video clip of Shirley Sherrod, the USDA's Georgia State Director of Rural Development, was circulated by conservative blogger Andrew Breitbart and his site, biggovernment.com, in which Sherrod talked of withholding help to a white man facing the loss of his family farm. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack released a statement Tuesday saying he had accepted Sherrod's resignation, and added that the department has no tolerance for discrimination. [Link](#)

USDA worker quits over 1986 racial incident (The Washington Post 7/20)

A U.S. Agriculture Department official from Georgia resigned late Monday after she was caught on tape admitting that she had not helped a farmer as much as she could have because he was white. Shirley Sherrod, USDA state director of rural development, made the remarks on March 27 at an NAACP Freedom Fund banquet. Her videotaped remarks surfaced on YouTube on Monday. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack accepted Sherrod's resignation, saying, "There is zero tolerance for discrimination at USDA, and I strongly condemn any act of discrimination against any person. We have been working hard through the past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department and take the issue of fairness and equality very seriously." NAACP President and Benjamin Jealous called Sherrod's actions shameful and agreed with the decision to fire her. [Link](#)

In the curious case of Shirley Sherrod, let's see the whole tape (Atlanta Journal Constitution 7/20)

A couple of folks in comments yesterday brought up the case of USDA official Shirley Sherrod, a black woman caught on tape at an NAACP meeting here in Georgia apparently bragging about being less than diligent in helping a white farmer. The folks at Big Government posted a portion of her speech as part of the running feud between the NAACP and the Tea Party over which organization is more racist. By the end of the day Monday, Sherrod had been forced to resign her post, and NAACP President Ben Jealous had released a statement agreeing with the forced resignation: "Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race. [Link](#)

Resigned USDA official says racial story misconstrued (Atlanta Journal Constitution 7/20)

The USDA's rural development director for Georgia says she was forced out of her federally appointed job after a "snippet" of a speech she gave in March appeared to show her admission to only half-heartedly aiding a struggling white farmer because of his race. But in a phone interview from her home in Albany early Tuesday morning, Shirley Sherrod told the Atlanta-Journal Constitution that the two-minute, 38-second video posted online Monday by biggovernment.com and reported on by FoxNews.com and the AJC completely misconstrued the message she was trying to convey. Sherrod, 62, insisted her statements in the video were not racist. "For Fox to take a spin on this like they have done, and know it's not the truth ... it's very upsetting," she said. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Resigns USDA Job After Admitting Use Of Racial Preference During NAACP Banquet (VIDEO) (The Huffington Post 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod, who resigned Monday from the USDA. 756 Shirley Sherrod, a USDA official in Georgia, has resigned after publicly admitting that race played a factor in her decision to limit how much aid would be given to a white farmer. Sherrod, who is African American, made the comments during a local NAACP

banquet on March 27, according to information displayed on the video. A clip of her speech first appeared Monday morning on BigGovernment.com and aired that evening on Fox News. Her resignation as the agency's state director of rural development was quickly accepted by U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. He cited a zero-tolerance policy and told CNN that he was working to "reverse the checkered civil rights history at the department." In her controversial speech, Sherrod discussed the first time she was "faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." She claimed that during the conversation, the man "was trying to show me he was superior to me." [Link](#)

NAACP Slams Shirley Sherrod's Actions As 'Shameful' (My Fox New York 7/20)

The actions of a black U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) official who admitted withholding help to a white farmer facing bankruptcy were late Monday described as "shameful" by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, was exposed in a video recorded at an NAACP banquet describing "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." Sherrod claimed the farmer took a long time trying to show he was "superior" to her. "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land -- so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough," she said in the video. The Agriculture Department announced Monday, shortly after FOXNews.com published its initial report on the video, that Sherrod had resigned. [Link](#)

Ga. USDA Official Resigns Over Comments (My Fox Atlanta 7/19)

Racially charged comments have led to the abrupt resignation of an agriculture department official. Shirley Sherrod was the top official who oversaw rural development in the state of Georgia. According to FOX News, Sherrod, the director of the USDA's rural development agency, resigned over comments she made at an NAACP meeting. FOX News obtained taped comments from an NAACP meeting that took place in Douglas, Georgia in March. According to FOX News, Sherrod is seen talking about how she withheld help to a white farmer who was facing bankruptcy. "I didn't give him the full force of what I could do, I did enough," Sherrod said during the meeting. In the video, Sherrod said she was struggling with the fact so many black people have lost their farmland and she was faced with having to help a white person save their land. Sherrod said she took him to see a white lawyer. "I figured if I took him to one of them his own kind, [they] would take care of him," said Sherrod. According to FOX News, the agriculture department announced Monday that Sherrod had resigned. [Link](#)

USDA big quits in bias-boast shock (The New York Post 7/20)

A black official in the US Agriculture Department resigned yesterday after a video surfaced of her bragging to the NAACP that she didn't do everything she could to help a white farmer facing bankruptcy. Shirley Sherrod, the department's Georgia director of Rural Development, told the audience at a March banquet in Atlanta that she claimed the man felt "superior" to her, according to FoxNews.com. "He had come to me for help. What he didn't know while he was talking all that time, trying to show me he was superior to me, was I was trying to decide just how much help I was going to give him," Sherrod said. "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land -- so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do." "I did enough," she said. [Link](#)

NAACP 'appalled' by black USDA official's racial discrimination (Daily Caller 7/20)

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People President Benjamin Todd Jealous said late Monday he was "appalled" by the actions of U.S. Department of Agriculture official Shirley Sherrod, who resigned earlier in the day after video surfaced of her speaking at an NAACP event about discriminating against a white farmer seeking government help. Jealous also promised to look into why members of the audience at an NAACP fundraiser in Georgia this past March reacted, as shown in the video, by nodding and in some cases laughing at Sherrod's remarks. But Jealous distanced the national NAACP from the incident. Coming just days after the NAACP condemned racist elements inside the Tea Party movement, Sherrod's remarks place the storied civil rights organization in an uncomfortable position. "Racism is about the abuse of power. Sherrod had it in her position at USDA. According to her remarks, she mistreated a white farmer in need of assistance because of his race," Jealous said. "We are appalled by her actions, just as we are with abuses of power against farmers of color and female farmers." "Her actions were shameful. While she went on to explain in the story that she ultimately realized her mistake, as well as the common

predicament of working people of all races, she gave no indication she had attempted to right the wrong she had done to this man," Jealous said (read his full statement below). [Link](#)

BREAKING: Racist Obama administration member resigns (Manhattan Conservative Examiner 7/19)

Shirley Sherrod of the USDA's Georgia Rural Development office has resigned following the airing of overtly racist remarks she made in a speech before—of all organizations—the NAACP. At a local NAACP meeting in March of 2010, Sherrod boasted of withholding assistance to a farmer based on the color of his skin, which happened to be white. Sherrod (surprise!) is black. In her comments, which are captured in the video below, Sherrod freely admits to "struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land, and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land." She further confesses to abusing her position by refusing to "give him the full force of what I could do." The remarks conclude with a racist gem: "I took him to a white lawyer... I figured that if I take him to one of them, that his own kind would take care of him." [Link](#)

USDA Official Implicated in NAACP Racism Flap (Buckeye Ag Network 7/20)

Days after the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) denounced the Conservative Tea Party movement on allegations of racism, the organization was itself implicated in charges of racism involving a USDA official. In a video released at BigGovernment.com, USDA's Director of Rural Development in Georgia Shirley Sherrod was depicted acknowledging discriminating against white farmers. The video, of a speech Sherrod gave to the NAACP's Freedom Fund banquet in March of this year, stirred quite a controversy on the internet this week, forcing Sherrod's resignation from the department Monday. Sherrod's remarks in the NAACP speech indicated that she "didn't give [a white farmer] the full force of what I could do," because "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farm land." [Link](#)

USDA worker quits over racism charge from video (Salon 7/20)

A black federal worker has resigned from a Georgia agricultural job after a video clip showed her saying she had not helped a farmer as much as she could have because he was white. U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a statement Tuesday he had accepted the resignation of Shirley Sherrod. Vilsack says the USDA has no tolerance for discrimination. Sherrod told the Atlanta-Journal Constitution she was forced out of her job as the USDA's rural development director for Georgia. She said the two-minute, 38-second video posted online Monday misconstrued her message. [Link](#)

Justice Not Only Obama Department Not Equally Enforcing Law (Heritage Foundation Blog 7/20)

This morning we reviewed the still unfolding New Black Panther Party scandal at the Department of Justice where a whistle blower, testifying under oath, quoted Deputy Assistant Attorney General Julie Fernandes as saying that "the Voting Section will never or will not, at least while she is there, bring any more cases against blacks or other national minorities." In other words, Fernandes has reportedly admitted that the Obama Justice Department is not enforcing the nation's civil rights law equally and in a race-neutral manner. The Obama Justice Department has refused to confirm or deny that Fernandes made this statement. Now Andrew Breitbart has unearthed a very similar statement from another Obama political appointee, this time from the Department of Agriculture. In the video, U.S. Department of Agriculture Director of Rural Development for Georgia Shirley Sherrod tells an NAACP audience . . . First Justice. Now Agriculture. How many other Obama Department's are refusing to enforce our nation's laws equally? [Link](#)

NAACP meeting calmly listened to racist remarks from black fed official (American Thinker 7/20)

Andrew Breitbart has scored another bullseye, revealing hypocrisy of the highest order on the part of another leftist establishment organization, the NAACP. On March 27 of this year, speaking before an NAACP 20th Annual Freedom Fund Banquet, Shirley Sherrod, the Department of Agriculture director for the State of Georgia -- responsible for over a billion dollars a year in spending -- boasts of denying a white farmer her full efforts because of his race. The audience does not react with shock or disapproval, but rather just sits there. So much for NAACP President Ben Jealous denouncing the tea parties for tolerating racists. Only after Breitbart gave the incriminating video national exposure did the NAACP issue the obligatory denunciation, to prevent further embarrassment. But when nobody was looking, the NAACP audience was totally cool with the racism expressed by their speaker. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Comments Results in Resignation (Lalate Blog 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod has resigned following her comments about a white farmer. Shirley Sherrod's remarks appeared in a video from BigGovernment.com, dated by the website as March 27. Shirley Sherrod has been the USDA's Georgia director of Rural Development. In the video, Sherrod addresses an NAACP banquet stating "the first time I was faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people have lost their farmland and here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land — so I didn't give him the full force of what I could do. I did enough". Late Monday the USDA announced Sherrod had resigned. NAACP President and CEO Benjamin Todd Jealous issued a statement against Sherrod's comments. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod of USDA resigns (Buzz Tab 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod, USDA's black employee has resigned from her post on Monday in the wake of outburst of a video at conservative media outlets in which Shirley Sherrod is shown telling one of the audience that she had not given a white farmer the full force of what I could do to help him save his family farm. Tom Vilsack, the Agriculture Secretary said that he had accepted Shirley Sherrod's resignation. Shirley Sherrod was working as USDA's State Director of Rural Development for Georgia. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said he had accepted the resignation of Shirley Sherrod, the department's state director of rural development for Georgia. Tom Vilsack further added that in USDA, they are following a zero tolerance for discrimination. He said that being Secretary Agriculture he condemns any discriminatory act against any person. He further added that at USDA, they are working hard for past 18 months to reverse the checkered civil rights history and they are taking fairness and equality as a serious matter at USDA. [Link](#)

Shirley Sherrod Has Officially Resigned From Her Job Due To Racial Preference! (Moms Word Blog 7/20)

Shirley Sherrod, who is known as a USDA official in Georgia, has finally resigned after publicly admitting that race played a factor in her decision to limit how much aid would be given to a white farmer. Sherrod, who is African American, made the comments during an NAACP banquet on March 27, according to the information in the video above. In fact a clip of her speech was being aired on BigGovernment.com and also Fox News Monday morning. Sherrod said during the now famous speech about the first time she was "faced with having to help a white farmer save his farm." She claims that during the conversation, the man "was trying to show me he was superior to me." "I was struggling with the fact that so many black people had lost their farmland," Sherrod told the crowd. "And here I was faced with having to help a white person save their land." [Link](#)

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