

## Shirley Sherrod declines new job offer from USDA

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(NNPA) - After being forced to resign and then maligned publicly, Shirley Sherrod has refused to return to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). It was about one month ago the former USDA official resigned after a blogger posted an edited portion of a speech she had made that caused a rush to judgment by the Secretary of Agriculture and many others.

The edited tape of Sherrod speaking at an NAACP event seemed to suggest that she had declined to aid a White farmer in 1986. But when played, the full version of the event showed what really happened and put the entire speech in context: that she actually helped the farmer. Sherrod was fired once the edited tape surfaced and before the entire version was viewed.

Even though all the parties that maligned her character--except the blogger--have since apologized, the damage had already been done and Sherrod is standing firm. The Secretary publicly apologized to Sherrod last month for her dismissal, saying the decision was "made in haste," while President Barack Obama weighed in on the controversy, calling Sherrod an "exemplary woman."

It has been reported that she intends to take legal action against the blogger in the future. The latest announcement came after Sherrod met with the Secretary in his office in Washington, D.C. It was their first face-to-face meeting since the incident.

"I just don't think at this point with all that has happened," Sherrod told reporters, "though I am tempted to take the job." But she may remain affiliated with the agency as a consultant. "I think I can be helpful to him (Secretary Vilsack) and the department if I just take a little break and look at how I can be more helpful in the future," she said.

The next step is the lawsuit.