

FLAG



**FARMERS' LEGAL
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INCORPORATED**

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VIA FACSIMILE and E-Mail

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Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary of Agriculture
U. S. Department of Agriculture
Room 200-A Whitten Building
1400 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

I write this letter on behalf of the Board and staff of Farmers' Legal Action Group (FLAG) to urge you to immediately reinstate Shirley Sherrod to her position as Georgia Director of USDA Rural Development. Ms. Sherrod was a member of FLAG's Board from 1994 until last September, when she resigned due to her new position with Rural Development. She served as FLAG's Board President from 1995 to 2001.

FLAG's mission for the past 24 years has been to provide legal services to family farmers and their rural communities in order to help keep family farmers on the land. During Ms. Sherrod's tenure on FLAG's Board, FLAG provided legal and technical assistance to thousands of family farmers of all races across the country. In addition, FLAG provided legal and technical assistance to Ms. Sherrod and the many farmers she served while at the Federation of Southern Cooperatives. For decades, she worked tirelessly on behalf of family farmers, regardless of their race. No one was more zealous or competent than Ms. Sherrod in her mission to help keep family farmers on the land. Indeed, at its annual meeting in October 2009, FLAG presented Ms. Sherrod with FLAG's Family Farm Champion Award.

No one is more qualified to serve as USDA's Rural Development Georgia State Director. Rural Georgia has one of the highest rates of poverty in the country. Having lived and worked in rural Georgia her entire life, Ms. Sherrod has a proven track

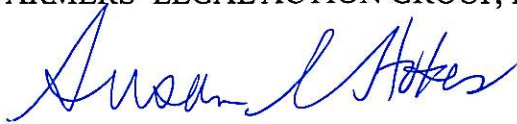
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record of knowing what works to lift people out of poverty. She has earned accolades and honors for her work.

We urge you to immediately reinstate Ms. Sherrod so that she can get back to the good work she was doing, and so the people that USDA serves know that USDA will not be beholden to the extremists who have so maligned Ms. Sherrod.

Sincerely,

FARMERS' LEGAL ACTION GROUP, INC.



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