

## NATION/WORLD DIGEST

### Storm Shuts Down BP Effort To Kill Oil Well

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — A storm brewing in the Caribbean brought the deep-sea effort to plug the ruptured oil well to a near standstill Wednesday just as BP was getting tantalizingly close to going in for the kill.

Work on the relief well — now just days from completion — was suspended, and the cap that has been keeping the oil bottled up since last week may have to be reopened, allowing crude to gush into the sea again for days, said retired Coast Guard Adm. Thad Allen, the government's point man on the crisis.

"This is necessarily going to be a judgment call," said Allen, who was waiting to see how the storm developed before deciding whether to order any of the ships and crews stationed some 50 miles out in the Gulf of Mexico to head for safety.

The cluster of thunderstorms passed over Haiti and the Dominican Republic on Wednesday, and forecasters said the system would probably move into the Gulf over the weekend. They gave it a 50 percent chance of becoming a tropical depression or a tropical storm by Friday.

Crews had planned to spend Wednesday and Thursday reinforcing with cement the last few feet of the relief tunnel that will be used to pump mud into the gusher and kill it once and for all. But BP put the task on hold and instead placed a temporary plug called a storm packer deep inside the tunnel, in case it has to be abandoned until the storm passes.

### DNA Hunt Prompts Dictator's Exhumation

BUCHAREST, Romania (AP) — The mystery of where former Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceausescu and his wife Elena were buried moved closer to resolution Wednesday after forensic scientists dug up their official graves in a hunt for DNA.

Ceausescu ruled Romania for 25 years with an iron fist before being ousted and executed during the 1989 anti-communist revolt in which more than 1,000 people were killed.

Many Romanians have doubted for years that the Ceausescus were really buried in the Ghencea military cemetery in west Bucharest. Still, they were shocked by the unannounced early-morning exhumation, part of a five-year lawsuit.

"I never thought this would happen," said Ioan Miricchi, 81, a former engineer visiting a family grave early Wednesday. "I didn't believe the rumors he wasn't buried here ... but I suppose the family must decide."

Conspiracy theories have ranged from the graves being empty to the Ceausescus' bodies being spirited off by supporters and replaced in their coffins by anonymous victims of Europe's bloodiest anti-communist revolt.

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## Senate Approves Jobless Payments To Millions

BY ANDREW TAYLOR  
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — State unemployment agencies are gearing up to resume sending unemployment payments to millions of people as Congress moves to ship President Barack Obama a measure to restore lapsed benefits.

After months of increasingly bitter stalemate, the Senate passed the measure Wednesday by a 59-39 vote. Obama is poised to sign the measure into law after a final House vote on Thursday.

It's a welcome relief to 2 1/2 million people who have been out of work for six months or more have seen their benefits lapse.

Under best-case scenarios, unemployed people who have been denied jobless benefits because of a partisan Senate standoff over renewing them can expect retroactive payments as early as next week in some states. In other states, it will take longer.

State unemployment and labor agencies have been preparing for weeks for Congress to restore jobless payments averaging \$309 a week for almost 5 million people whose 26 weeks of state benefits have run out. Those people are enrolled in a federally financed program providing up to 73 additional weeks of unemployment benefits.

About half of those eligible have had their benefits cut off since funding expired June 2. They are eligible for lump sum retroactive payments that are typically delivered directly to their bank accounts or credited to state-issued debit cards.

In states like Pennsylvania and New York, the back payments should go out next week, officials said. In others, like Nevada, it may take a few weeks for all of those eligible to receive benefits, said Mae Worthey, a spokesman for the Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation.

In North Carolina, Employment and Income Department spokesman Andrew James says to expect a wait of two to six weeks.

The Senate continued debating the measure a full day after a GOP filibuster was defeated by a 60-40 vote. Senate rules required 30 hours of debate, but missing no opportunity to seize a political edge, Democrats attacked Republicans for not waiving them and requiring an additional day of debate.

"Republicans are declaring an all-out war on unemployed Americans," said Jim Manly, spokesman for Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev. "Even though Democrats have the votes to give unemployed workers the safety net they deserve, Republicans are callously delaying the vote for an entire day."

In fact, the measure could have been passed months ago had Democrats not insisted on coupling it with a host of other, more controversial legislation, such as tax increases on hedge fund managers and on some small businesses that were used to pay to renew a popular package of tax breaks for individuals and businesses.

The resulting delays required two temporary unemployment insurance extensions — one came only after a lapse in coverage because Reid adjourned the Senate for its two-week Easter recess rather than engage in a time-consuming battle with Republicans. Benefits were restored retroactively.

# W.H. Apologizes To Fired Ag Worker

BY MARY CLARE JALONICK  
AND BEN EVANS  
Associated Press Writers

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 ouster.

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.

# Red Tag Clearance



Accent	Was	NOW	Dining (cont'd)	Was	NOW
Mission Bench with Storage	\$405	<del>\$243</del>	Cherry Dining Chair w/cream fabric seat	\$198	<del>\$99</del>
Black Bench	\$464	<del>\$232</del>	Wood & Metal Table & 4 Chairs	\$975	<del>\$293</del>
Black Accent Chair	\$280	<del>\$140</del>	Cherry Queen Anne Sideboard	\$928	<del>\$324</del>
Barritz Side Table	\$372	<del>\$186</del>	Vintage Arm Chair	\$199	<del>\$99</del>
Tray Table	\$206	<del>\$99</del>	Leg Table	\$856	<del>\$428</del>
Display Shelf	\$555	<del>\$277</del>	Pedestal Table	\$1,040	<del>\$520</del>
Metal Cart	\$838	<del>\$251</del>	Vintage Side Chair	\$162	<del>\$81</del>
Black Oriental Painted 2 Door Cabinet	\$490	<del>\$245</del>	Harp Side Chair	\$190	<del>\$95</del>
Cherry Quilt Rack	\$49	<del>\$14</del>	Colonial Carved Fan Back Side Chair	\$560	<del>\$280</del>
Painted Floor Clock	\$1,080	<del>\$324</del>	Round Cherry Dining Table		
Espresso Console Curio	\$1,065	<del>\$532</del>	& 6 Chairs with Leather Seats	\$6,304	<del>\$2,836</del>
White Wicker Ottoman	\$400	<del>\$100</del>	Cherry Curio/China	\$3,184	<del>\$1,273</del>
Black Bombe Chest	\$899	<del>\$539</del>	Cherry Server	\$2,175	<del>\$435</del>
Black 3 Drawer Chest w/ Marble Top	\$869	<del>\$521</del>	Round Glass & Metal Dinette Set	\$897	<del>\$358</del>
Wine Rack	\$449	<del>\$179</del>	Rectangular Cherry Table & 6 Microfiber Seat Chairs	\$2,353	<del>\$1,177</del>
Accent Table	\$269	<del>\$161</del>	Square Black & Glass Table with 4 Chairs	\$1,095	<del>\$548</del>
Black Painted 5 Drawer Cabinet	\$512	<del>\$199</del>	Rectangular Table & 6 Microfiber Seat Chairs	\$1,965	<del>\$1,277</del>
Small Console with drawer	\$299	<del>\$179</del>	China with 2 drawers	\$1,117	<del>\$726</del>
Accent Chair w/black & cream checked fabric	\$374	<del>\$224</del>	Round Dining Set with 6 Upholstered Chairs	\$5,477	<del>\$2,190</del>
Oriental Chest	\$539	<del>\$270</del>	Dining Side Chair	\$586	<del>\$58</del>
1/2 Moon Console	\$749	<del>\$299</del>	Dining Chair w/Tan Microfiber Seat	\$172	<del>\$66</del>
Black Accent Table	\$269	<del>\$161</del>	Round Glass & Metal Dinette Set	\$1,330	<del>\$665</del>
<b>Bedroom</b>			Rect Cherry Table, 2 Arm Chairs & 4 Side Microfiber Chairs	\$1,980	<del>\$990</del>
Queen Cherry Sleigh Bed	\$1,290	<del>\$645</del>	Round Cherry & Black Table & 4 Chairs	\$4,536	<del>\$2,268</del>
Cappuccino Distressed Pine Dresser & Mirror	\$930	<del>\$465</del>	<b>Area Rugs up to 80% off!</b>		
Cappuccino Distressed Pine Chest	\$750	<del>\$375</del>	<b>Accessories up to 80% off!</b>		
Dark Oak Dresser & Mirror	\$1,510	<del>\$755</del>	<b>Entertainment</b>		
Queen Platform Bed, Dresser, Mirror & Nightstand	\$2,934	<del>\$1,467</del>	Eggshell Entertainment Stand	\$1,190	<del>\$476</del>
6 Drawer Chest	\$1,196	<del>\$598</del>	Oak TV Chest	\$1,400	<del>\$699</del>
Black & Brown King Curved Bed	\$2,544	<del>\$1,272</del>	Black TV Stand	\$717	<del>\$358</del>
Black & Brown Nightstand	\$800	<del>\$240</del>	Entertainment Armoire	\$4,080	<del>\$1,224</del>
Twin Maple Headboard	\$143	<del>\$57</del>	Black & Red Painted Armoire	\$2,466	<del>\$739</del>
<b>Mirrors Starting at \$49</b>			<b>Leather</b>		
Mission Nightstand	\$480	<del>\$192</del>	Red Leather Recliner	\$837	<del>\$418</del>
Mission Armoire	\$1,395	<del>\$558</del>	Brown 100% Leather Sofa	\$1,278	<del>\$511</del>
Dresser/Mirror Medium Brown Finish	\$1,260	<del>\$630</del>	Brown 100% Leather Sofa	\$2,205	<del>\$1,099</del>
Chest	\$851	<del>\$425</del>	Brown 100% Leather Chair	\$1,575	<del>\$787</del>
Nightstand	\$340	<del>\$170</del>	Navy Leather Recliner	\$897	<del>\$448</del>
2 Tone Brown 3 Drawer Nightstand	\$447	<del>\$223</del>	Leather Chair	\$1,200	<del>\$480</del>
2 Tone Brown Queen Sleigh Bed	\$897	<del>\$583</del>	Leather Button Tufted Back Chair	\$1,170	<del>\$468</del>
2 Tone Brown King Sleigh Bed	\$976	<del>\$634</del>	Chestnut Faux Leather Chair	\$509	<del>\$199</del>
2 Tone Brown Dresser	\$1,038	<del>\$674</del>	<b>Home Office</b>		
2 Tone Brown Dresser & Mirror	\$1,326	<del>\$861</del>	Oak Bookcase	\$633	<del>\$316</del>
Twin Mission Oak Headboard	\$162	<del>\$40</del>	Cherry Bookcase	\$349	<del>\$209</del>
Cherry 8 Drawer Chest	\$2,880	<del>\$1,440</del>	Brown Leather Office Chair	\$796	<del>\$398</del>
Cherry King Sleigh Bed	\$2,331	<del>\$1,165</del>	Cherry Desk with Hutch	\$1,784	<del>\$535</del>
Cherry Dresser & Mirror	\$2,584	<del>\$1,292</del>	Cherry Executive Desk	\$765	<del>\$382</del>
Cherry 5 Drawer Chest	\$2,880	<del>\$1,440</del>	<b>Reclining</b>		
Cherry King Sleigh Bed	\$3,004	<del>\$1,499</del>	Tan Recliner with Heat & Massage	\$670	<del>\$335</del>
Cherry Armoire	\$3,408	<del>\$1,363</del>	Tan Microfiber Skirted Recliner	\$1,740	<del>\$348</del>
Underbed Storage	\$476	<del>\$95</del>	Tan Leather Recliner	\$584	<del>\$350</del>
Pine Dresser & Mirror	\$808	<del>\$399</del>	Faux Leather Recliner	\$1,240	<del>\$620</del>
Oak Dresser & Mirror	\$1,545	<del>\$618</del>	<b>More Clearance Items Throughout The Store. Limited Quantities.</b>		
2 Drawer Oak Nightstand	\$419	<del>\$167</del>	<b>Living Room</b>		
<b>Dining</b>			Blue & Yellow Plaid Ottoman	\$624	<del>\$124</del>
Black Granite Table & 6 Chairs	\$1,405	<del>\$699</del>	Cream Chair without skirt	\$928	<del>\$464</del>
Oak & Granite Table & 4 Microfiber Chairs	\$1,495	<del>\$748</del>	Cream Chair with skirt	\$928	<del>\$464</del>
Cherry Server	\$975	<del>\$488</del>	Floral Chair	\$828	<del>\$331</del>
42" Light Oak Formica Table with 18" Leaf	\$799	<del>\$199</del>	Floral Chair	\$624	<del>\$249</del>
Light Maple Chair w/Leather Seat	\$222	<del>\$44</del>	Leaf Pattern Chair with Skirt	\$896	<del>\$358</del>
Dining Chair with fabric seat	\$132	<del>\$66</del>	Red Plaid Chair	\$892	<del>\$356</del>
42" x 64" Cherry Table	\$2,111	<del>\$211</del>	Tan & Blue Floral Chair	\$1,200	<del>\$299</del>
Cherry Dining Chair w/fabric seat	\$216	<del>\$86</del>	Red Paisley Sofa	\$1,276	<del>\$638</del>
<b>24" Counter stools Starting at \$33</b>			Red & Gold Chair	\$768	<del>\$384</del>
<b>30" Barstools Starting at \$44</b>			Floral Sofa	\$1,116	<del>\$446</del>
			Chocolate Microfiber Chair	\$864	<del>\$432</del>
			Green Chair	\$1,405	<del>\$393</del>
			Brown Bicast Sofa	\$761	<del>\$380</del>
			Sage Microfiber Loveseat	\$599	<del>\$239</del>
			Tan Microfiber Sectional w/Chaise	\$1,451	<del>\$870</del>
			Red Striped Chair w/Espresso Arms	\$698	<del>\$279</del>
			Animal Print Chaise	\$598	<del>\$358</del>
			Blue Chair with Espresso Arms	\$688	<del>\$207</del>
			<b>Occasional Tables</b>		
			Cherry Sofa Table	\$801	<del>\$360</del>
			Black & Oak Coffee Table	\$556	<del>\$278</del>
			Square Cherry Coffee Table	\$916	<del>\$366</del>
			Faux Trunk Coffee Table & 2 End Tables	\$1,701	<del>\$340</del>
			Oval Coffee Table	\$640	<del>\$160</del>
			Cherry Oval Storage Coffee Table	\$537	<del>\$268</del>
			Square Black End Table	\$285	<del>\$142</del>
			Sofa Table with 4 drawers	\$450	<del>\$225</del>
			Rect. Coffee Table with 2 drawers	\$405	<del>\$199</del>
			Coffee Table	\$285	<del>\$142</del>
			Inlaid Cherry End Table	\$375	<del>\$150</del>
			Round Cherry Coffee Table	\$404	<del>\$199</del>
			Chairside Cherry End Table	\$330	<del>\$165</del>
			Black Small Round End Table with Leather Top	\$285	<del>\$142</del>
			Brown Cherry & Glass Coffee Table	\$770	<del>\$155</del>
			Cherry Square Coffee Table	\$1,145	<del>\$343</del>
			Black Coffee Table	\$685	<del>\$206</del>
			Black Rectangular End Table	\$547	<del>\$164</del>
			Black Round End Table	\$547	<del>\$164</del>
			Cherry Distressed End Table	\$639	<del>\$320</del>
			Oval Coffee Table	\$373	<del>\$93</del>
			Mission Sofa Table	\$419	<del>\$209</del>
			Stone Microfiber Loveseat	\$599	<del>\$239</del>
			Oak Coffee Table	\$241	<del>\$120</del>
			Oak Lift Top Coffee Table	\$389	<del>\$194</del>
			3 pack Oak & Glass Coffee & 2 End tables	\$381	<del>\$190</del>
			Cherry End Table	\$389	<del>\$156</del>
			Wood, Metal & Tile Coffee Table & 2 End Tables	\$599	<del>\$359</del>
			Bamboo & Glass End Table	\$420	<del>\$210</del>
			Bamboo & Glass Coffee Table	\$505	<del>\$252</del>
			Cherry Bamboo Leg Coffee Table with 2 Trays	\$539	<del>\$215</del>
			Round Cherry & Black Large Pedestal End Table	\$404	<del>\$199</del>
			Square Golf Coffee Table	\$560	<del>\$168</del>
			Metal & Glass Coffee Table	\$332	<del>\$166</del>
			Metal Sofa Table	\$399	<del>\$199</del>



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