

countless lives she has touched. The Goodhue Center, and all of Staten Island, is stronger because of her service.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Ilene Pappert for her lifetime of dedication and to wish her continued health, happiness, and fulfillment in the years ahead.

HONORING SHIRLEY SHERROD'S
60TH ANNIVERSARY IN ADVOCACY
FOR CIVIL RIGHTS AND
EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 23, 2026

Mr. BISHOP. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heart full of reverence and deep personal gratitude to honor Mrs. Shirley Miller Sherrod on the 60th anniversary of her tireless work for civil rights, economic justice, and the dignity of underserved farmers and rural communities. An event to celebrate her advocacy and remarkable life will be held on Friday, April 24, 2026, in Albany, Georgia.

A daughter of the Jim Crow South, Shirley Sherrod's life is testimony—written in endurance, courage, and relentless love. Born and raised in rural Georgia, she watched injustice with her own eyes as a young woman: at 17 she witnessed an all-white grand jury refuse to indict the man who took her father's life. From that wound came a vow—to spend her life defending the rights of her people. That vow was kept, not with fire or fanfare, but with steady, sacrificial labor that changed lives and moved a Nation.

Her commitment was strengthened by education and faith. Mrs. Sherrod studied at Fort Valley State University and Albany State University, where she earned her bachelor's degree; she holds a master's degree from Antioch University and is a 1993 Kellogg Fellow. Those classrooms sharpened her mind and equipped her to lead with both wisdom and humility.

Following the example of her parents, including her mother, Mrs. Grace Miller, Shirley set out to make a difference. Together with her late husband, the Rev. Charles Sherrod, she helped found the Southwest Georgia Project for Community Education and co-founded New Communities, Inc., the Nation's first community land trust. For decades they sought to secure land, bread, and dignity for Black families who had been denied both. They fed the hungry, taught the hopeful, defended the dispossessed, and refused to surrender a dream of justice even when drought, discrimination, and punitive government practices deprived them of the land they had nurtured.

When Shirley was appointed Georgia Director of Rural Development at USDA, she carried with her a lifetime of moral authority. When she was wrongfully forced from that office amid deceit and malicious editing, she bore the blow with quiet strength that only deepened my admiration. She returned to the trenches she had always known—the fields, the co-ops, the kitchen tables of small farmers—refusing bitterness and choosing again to build.

For sixty years Shirley has been a voice for those whose voices are too often crowded out: Black farmers fighting to hold their land; chil-

dren denied equal education; families seeking access to markets and capital. She has organized, taught, advocated, and led institutions—The Sherrod Institute, New Communities at Cypress Pond (Resora), The Southwest Georgia Project—that remain beacons of hope and practical help for a new generation.

On a personal note, Shirley and Charles were more than colleagues in the struggle—they were friends and moral companions. They both stood with me in places of decision and pressure; they supported me and, with humility, held me accountable when justice demanded it. Shirley's friendship has been a sustaining gift—her counsel frank, her faith unshakable, her love a steadying hand through seasons of trial.

There are moments in life that narrow everything to one clear truth. For Shirley, those moments have been countless acts of service: cajoling a reluctant lender to hear a farmer's story, sitting late with a grieving family, coaxing young leaders to raise their eyes to both truth and possibility. Her life makes real the Scripture that comforts and convicts us: "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves" (Proverbs 31:8). She has spoken—and acted—without ceasing.

Mary McLeod Bethune once urged us to "Invest in the human soul. Who knows, it might be a diamond in the rough." Shirley Sherrod has lived that charge—investing in people, cultivating promise, and revealing the brilliance in communities too often overlooked.

Mr. Speaker, we gather not merely to laud achievements, though they are many, but to give thanks for a life poured out in pursuit of justice and mercy. We honor Shirley Sherrod for sixty years of faith made visible, for the countless lives she has steadied and lifted, and for the example she sets for all who would work for a fairer America.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives to join my wife, Vivian and me in celebrating Mrs. Shirley Miller Sherrod—a reformer, a teacher, a friend, and a true steward of hope—and to pledge anew our support for the work she leads so faithfully. May God bless her, keep her, and multiply the harvest of her labors for generations to come.

RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE OF
ALEX PONDER

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 23, 2026

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Alex Ponder for her many contributions and 7 years of service to 9th Congressional District residents as Senior Advisor for District Operations and Outreach on my district staff. Alex has spent the formative years of her career serving the community where she grew up.

Alex was born and raised in the district in Park Ridge and interned with my office while studying at Loyola University Chicago. She made such a strong impression that we invited her to join our team full time after graduation. Over the years, she grew into a trusted and capable member of my staff, serving her community with care and consistency.

In her role, Alex was a constant presence across the district. She built lasting relation-

ships with residents and community organizations and helped ensure our office stayed connected to the people we serve. She skillfully led our Congressional Art Competition, working closely with educators and students to build a program that was well run and drew strong participation from schools across the district each year, lifting up young artists and recognizing their work.

Alex was someone my staff knew they could always count on. She stepped into scheduling, communications, and other roles whenever needed, never treating any responsibility as outside her lane. She helped keep track of casework numbers and distribution and was an essential part of our office team during many transitions. Alex began as an intern in our district office and later came to oversee that same program. She selected and managed the interns who assist our office each semester, helping bring new members onto "Team Schakowsky" and teaching them how to advocate for residents and support a congressional office.

Alex knows how to make constituents feel welcome and listened to. She is kind and compassionate, and helped create a warm environment for constituents who called or visited the office.

Alex advocated for constituents in a number of important areas, and handled a high volume of constituent casework. She became the passport expert in our office and was able to cut through red tape to get constituents their passports quickly, alleviating their anxiety during what is often a stressful process. She helped seniors with Social Security and Medicare, and helped constituents resolve problems with the IRS and immigration. Alex made a real, concrete difference in the lives of so many 9th Congressional district residents.

Alex received a well-deserved and special recognition that reads "Agudath Israel of Illinois hereby recognizes the extraordinary efforts of Alex Ponder. Her dedication to the constituents of Illinois' 9th Congressional District, under the leadership of Congresswoman JAN SCHAKOWSKY, is truly remarkable. As a global pandemic affected new challenges for countless individuals, you gave personal attention to every person in need. Regardless of the hour or day of the week, and often against the odds, you worked tirelessly to ensure needs were met, emergencies were addressed, and best outcomes achieved. On behalf of Agudath Israel and our entire community, we express profound gratitude for constantly going above and beyond the call of duty."

And a constituent wrote this heartfelt note "Your employee Alex Ponder of the Glenview office has gone way above and beyond in assisting our daughter and her family this summer . . . I reached out to Alex Ponder and she spent as much time as necessary to guide us through the various documents and notarizations and other forms necessary. She also arranged a meeting with the U.S. Passport Office in Chicago and followed through to be sure all was accomplished efficiently and properly. This is government service at its best, Jan, and I smile every day as I drive past your house, happy to have you as a neighbor as well as our representative! Young professionals such as Alex are worth their weight in gold, and it's a testament to your office that such talent is recruited and retained."

On behalf of the residents of the 9th Congressional District of Illinois, I want to express

my sincere gratitude to Alex Ponder for her years of service. Her work on our team and her commitment to her community reflect her character and values. I am proud of how much she has accomplished here and know that she will continue to succeed and serve the community in the years ahead.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 23, 2026

Ms. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, on April 22, 2026, I was present at the House Appropriations Committee Full Committee markup of the FY2027 Financial Services and General Government bill. We were debating an amendment to authorize Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients to work in the federal government when the vote on Ordering the Previous Question for H. Res. 1189 was

called. This resulted in my absence from the House during one vote on April 22, 2026.

Had I been present, I would have voted NAY on Roll Call No. 130, on Ordering the Previous Question.

RECOGNIZING THE RETIREMENT OF BILL PARTRIDGE

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 23, 2026

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor Bill Partridge. After almost 40 years of service, Oxford Police Chief and Public Safety Director, Bill Partridge, announced his retirement starting May 1, 2026. Chief Partridge joined the Oxford Police Department in 1989 and was first appointed Chief of Police in July 2007.

Chief Partridge served as the president of the Alabama Association of Chiefs of Police

(AACOP) two times, as well as chairman of the AACOP legislative committee, former chairman of the Alabama Peace Officers Standards and Training Commission, advisory board chairman for the Center of Best Practices in Law Enforcement at Jacksonville State University, and vice president of the FBI National Academy Associates—Alabama Chapter.

During his tenure as Chief of Police, Partridge became a known leader in law enforcement across the state of Alabama and helped secure funding and support for the East Metro Alabama Crime Center. This facility is a state-of-the-art building that works in conjunction with other law enforcement agencies in the region, state, and across the country to help fight crime.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing and celebrating the extraordinary career of my friend, Bill Partridge. I thank him for his service to the State of Alabama.