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Woodlands mansion with famous closet now listed at \$7 million



Inside C2

# Southern DAILY

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Southern Daily News is published by Southern News Group Daily

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Wednesday, May 16, 2018 | www.today-america.com | Southern News Group

## U.S. lawmakers push back on Trump talk of helping China's ZTE

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - U.S. lawmakers on Tuesday rejected any plan by President Donald Trump to ease restrictions on China's ZTE Corp (000063.SZ), calling the telecommunications firm a security threat and vowing not to abandon legislation clamping down on the company.

A sign of ZTE Corp is pictured at its service centre in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, China May 14, 2018. REUTERS/Stringer

Trump on Monday had defended his decision to revisit penalties on ZTE for flouting U.S. sanctions on trade with Iran, in part by saying it was reflective of the larger trade deal the United States is negotiating with China.

"I hope the administration does not move forward on this supposed deal I keep reading about," Republican Senator Marco Rubio said. Bilateral talks between the world's two biggest economies resume in Washington this week.

The Wall Street Journal has reported Beijing would back away from threats to slap tariffs on U.S. farm goods in exchange for easing the ban on selling components to ZTE.

"They are basically conducting an all-out assault to steal what we've already developed and use it as the baseline for their development so they can supplant us as the leader in the most important technologies of the 21st century," Rubio said at a Foreign Relations Committee hearing on Asia policy. Trump had taken to Twitter on Sunday with a pledge to help the company, which has suspended its main operations, because the penalties had cost too many jobs in China. It was a departure for a president who often touts "America First" policies.

The Commerce Department in April found ZTE had violated a 2017 settlement created after the company violated sanctions on Iran and North Korea, and banned U.S. companies from providing exports to ZTE for seven years.

U.S. companies are estimated to provide 25 percent to 30 percent of components used in ZTE's equipment, which includes smartphones and gear to build telecommunications networks. The suggestion outraged members of Congress who have been pressing for more restrictions on ZTE. Some U.S. lawmakers have alleged equipment made by ZTE and other Chinese companies could pose a cyber security threat.

"Who makes unilateral concessions on the eve of talks after you've spent all this time trying to say, correctly in my view, that the Chinese have ripped off our technology?" Senator Ron Wyden, the senior Democrat on the Senate Finance Committee, which oversees trade policy, told Reuters.

Wyden, who is also on the Intelligence Committee, was one of 32 Senate Democrats who signed a letter on Tuesday accusing Trump of putting China's interests ahead of U.S. jobs and national security.

Republican Representative Mac Thornberry, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, said at a Bloomberg event on Tuesday he did not expect lawmakers would seek to remove a ban on ZTE technology from a must-pass annual defense policy bill making its way through Congress.

"I confess I don't fully understand the administration's take on this at this point," Thornberry said. "It is not a question to me of economics, it is a question of security."

Another Republican, Senator John Kennedy, defended Trump, saying the president's approach is part of a larger set of negotiations with China. "He didn't get up one day and go, 'I think I'll change my mind on ZTE.' I think it's part of a larger issue, and part of a larger set of negotiations," Kennedy told reporters.



A sign of ZTE Corp is pictured at its service centre in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, China May 14, 2018. REUTERS/Stringer

## North Korea casts doubt on Trump summit, suspends talks with South

SEOUL (Reuters) - North Korea on Wednesday threw into question an unprecedented summit between its leader Kim Jong Un and U.S. President Donald Trump scheduled for next month, denouncing military exercises between South Korea and the United States as a provocation and calling off high-level talks with Seoul.

A report on North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency angrily attacked the "Max Thunder" air combat drills, which it said involved U.S. stealth fighters and B-52 bombers, and appeared to mark a break in months of warming ties between North and South Korea and between Pyongyang and Washington.

Any cancellation of the June 12 summit in Singapore, the first meeting between a serving U.S. president and a North Korean leader, would deal a major blow to Trump's efforts to score the biggest diplomatic achievement of his presidency.

Trump has raised expectations for a

successful meeting even as many analysts have been skeptical of the chances of bridging the gap due to questions about North Korea's willingness to give up a nuclear arsenal that now threatens the United States.

The KCNA report called the air drills a "provocation" that goes against the trend of warming ties.

"This exercise, targeting us, which is being carried out across South Korea, is a flagrant challenge to the Panmunjom Declaration and an intentional military provocation running counter to the positive political development on the Korean Peninsula," the South Korean news agency Yonhap quoted KCNA as saying.

"The United States will also have to undertake careful deliberations about the fate of the planned North Korea-U.S. summit in light of this provocative military ruckus jointly conducted with the South Korean authorities."

A Trump-Kim summit until recently had looked impossible given the insults

and threats the two leaders exchanged last year over North Korea's development of nuclear missiles capable of hitting the United States. Heather Nauert, spokeswoman for the U.S. State Department said it had no information from North Korea about threat to cancel the summit and that it continued to plan for that meeting.

"Kim Jong Un had said previously that he understands the need and the utility of the United States and the Republic of Korea continuing in its joint exercises," Nauert told a briefing.

"We have not heard anything from that government or the government of South Korea to indicate that we would not continue conducting these exercises or that we would not continue planning for our meeting between President Trump and Kim Jong Un next month," she said. There was no immediate comment from the White House.

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## Houston Zoo's summer party series for adults kicks off with a silent disco

By Craig Hlavaty

The Houston Zoo's short series of monthly summer parties to encourage adults to come out to the zoo after dark (without the little ones) kicks off this week.

The After Dark party series begins Thursday, May 17, with upcoming dates on the third Thursday in June and July. This week's event is a silent disco party. For those unfamiliar with silent disco parties, patrons are given special headphones where they can tune into a handful of channels playing specific genres of music, like electronic dance, Top 40, and '70s and '80s jam. It's rather funny watching people nodding along and dancing to the music silently. Everyone can listen to what they want and be happy.

It's also a little less intrusive for the zoo's sleeping residents, a plus for the animal welfare staff who work events like this. A whole team is on site to make sure the animals are safe and secure while thousands roam around the park.

In April the Houston Zoo released its ambitious plans for the future which will transform the Houston treasure in many ways.

Speaking of those residents, a handful will be part of special encounters and informative meet-and-greets with guests. A prehensile tailed porcupine, a Harris's hawk, and a black-throated monitor will be on display, according to the Houston Zoo. The keepers of the elephants, sea lions, and



reptiles and amphibians will also be holding special Q&A sessions with party goers.

Maybe the zoo's pregnant elephant Tess will be up and about. We hear pregnant elephant cravings are ridiculous.

Tickets are \$35 per night or \$90 for a season package. Guests must



be 21 years or older. Alcohol will be sold at the events. These parties, along with the annual Zoo Lights, Feast with the Beasts, and the brand-new Brew at the Zoo beer festival that debuted in April are a way to reach out to Houstonians who want to experience the scenery after hours without children.

## Woodlands mansion with famous closet now listed at \$7 million

The listing price keeps dropping on the Woodlands mansion where the three-story master bedroom closet and its owner made 2014 headlines after a burglary. Theresa and Lamar Roemer's nine-bedroom Chateau Woods estate, originally listed for \$12.9 million, is now listed for \$7 million.

The key to selling this home may be downplaying the closet, said Claudia Fathivand of Nan and Company Properties/Christie's International Real Estate.

"I'm going to try to rebrand it," Fathivand said. She said potential wealthy buyers may come from outside the Houston area and might be attracted to the home's other features, such as the luxurious pool or the fact that it is a rare three-story mansion.

"Not everybody has the amount of clothes that (Ro-

emer) has," Fathivand said. "Not everybody needs a three-story closet. So the closet, to me, is a distraction."

Other features of the home include a catering kitchen, lap pool, wine room with sitting area, butler's pantry, a 24/7 security system and an elevator.

"This house was never meant to be a house that we would live in together. It was always meant to be a house to flip," Roemer told the Houston Chronicle in 2014. "I want to build another one and build a bigger closet."

Roemer had announced in 2016 that the mansion would go up for auction, but the auction was later postponed.

In December 2016, rapper Gucci Mane shot a music video inside the 3000-square-foot closet. At that time, the mansion was listed for \$7.9 million.

The home at 47 Grand Regency Circle was built in 2005 and remodeled in 2013.



## 訃聞

潘政喜牧師的至親好友們平安：

我們摯愛的潘牧師，於主後一九四一年一月十二日在台灣屏東縣內埔鄉中林村出生。初中時信主耶穌蒙召獻上自己，潘牧師一生盡心竭力愛神愛人，愛妻子、愛兒、愛女、愛婿、愛孫兒，他為人謙和、善良，喜愛傳福音，領人歸主，兩度退而不休，忠心至死。

主後二〇一八年五月十三日上午十時不幸因心臟病發，送醫搶救罔效，如飛而去，在美國德州休士頓市安息主懷，旅居在世七十八年。

家人與朋友深感震驚與不捨，如今他已完成 神交託的使命，「聖經上說：我聽見從天上有聲音說，你要寫下，從今以後在主裡面而死的人有福了，聖靈說，是的，他們息了自己的勞苦，作工的果效也隨著他們（啟示錄十四章十三節）。」相信他已進入上帝為他預備更美的天家，與神同在，好得無比。因此，我們在永恆的盼望中，誠邀您一起來參加追思、祝福與禱告。

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## 聞

你要為真道打那美好的仗，持定永生。你為此被召，也在許多見證人面前，已經作了那美好的見證。（提摩太前書六章十二節）

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# Editor's Choice



U.S. President Donald Trump speaks at the 37th Annual National Peace Officers' Memorial Service at the U.S. Capitol in Washington



71st Cannes Film Festival - Screening of the film "Solo: A Star Wars Story" out of competition - Red Carpet Arrivals - Cannes, France May 15, 2018. Nabilla Benattia arrives. REUTERS/Regis Duvignau



Russian opposition leader Navalny leaves after a court hearing in Moscow



Palestinian demonstrator fights with Israeli security forces during a protest against U.S. embassy move to Jerusalem and ahead of the 70th anniversary of Nakba, near Damascus Gate in Jerusalem's Old City



EU foreign policy chief Mogherini attends a signing ceremony of a cooperation agreement with Cuba's FM Rodriguez in Brussels



A worker cleans a Lionel Messi figure at a small factory in the outskirts of Shanghai



Boys, who are experiencing the lives of Buddhist monks by staying in a temple for two weeks as novice monks, enjoy a ride at the Everland amusement park in Yongin



Palestinians collect tires to be burnt during a protest marking the 70th anniversary of Nakba, at the Israel-Gaza border in the southern Gaza Strip



A couple wear Prince Harry and Meghan Markle face masks outside Windsor Castle, in Windsor

The winds of change are blowing through employee benefit plans across Canada, and they smell like weed.

Benefits industry insider Mike Sullivan caught a whiff at a recent meeting with some of his clients, who represent private companies with benefit plans that cover about three million Canadian workers across a range of industries.

"This group that was in attendance, the No. 1 topic of discussion was medical cannabis," said Sullivan, who is president of Cubic Health, which provides analytics to employers who sponsor health benefit plans.

"That's what everybody wanted to talk about — but not in a negative way: there's a lot of support for looking at this and examining it in a thoughtful, responsible way," Sullivan told an audience at a cannabis business conference held in Toronto by the Canadian Institute May 25.

The insurance industry itself has been hesitant to cover medical marijuana, according to Sullivan.

"Insurance company actuaries cannot get their head around how to price the risk of medical cannabis," he said, citing the range of products available, the personalized nature of dosing, and the wide range of potential indications as complicating factors.

But that doesn't matter to medium- and large-sized Canadian employers, Sullivan said. They generally use insurance companies to administer their employee health benefit plans while paying the costs of coverage themselves, an arrangement known as a self-insured, self-funded or "administrative services only" plan.

Self-insured companies get to choose what their benefit plans cover — and apparently, some of their workers want them to cover medical marijuana.

"Employers are hearing it from their employees," said Joan Weir, director of health and disability policy with the Canadian Life and Health Insurance Association. "Will it ever be a benefit?"

'Mutual Benefit' To Employers, Employees

Those employers, said benefits expert Mike Sullivan, are seeking the answer to a question: "Can they do a better job of getting people back to work sooner, and staying at work," by covering medical marijuana?

Major Canadian Employers Are Already Considering Covering The Drug, Says Industry Insider

Could Medical Marijuana Be Your Next Employee Health Benefit?

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor



Large Canadian companies with self-funded employee benefit plans are seriously considering covering medical cannabis for their workers, according to a benefits industry insider. (Photo/Bloomberg)

Of course, paying for employees' medical marijuana raises a host of complex questions, especially in safety-sensitive industries like resource extraction or construction. But workers in those industries are already using employer-covered drugs, said Sullivan, especially opiates and benzodiazepines.

"I think it's a very naive argument for employers to say, 'Well, we don't want to open up the door here,'" he said. "The door is already open."

As self-insured health benefit plans start covering medical marijuana, employees shouldn't expect blanket approvals for the drug. Coverage will have to be approved on a case-by-case basis, said Sullivan.



Jonathan Zaid, executive director of Canadian For Fair Access to Medical Marijuana, convinced the University of Waterloo student union to cover his medical cannabis under its health benefit plan in December 2014.

tor of Canadian For Fair Access to Medical Marijuana, convinced the University of Waterloo student union to cover his medical cannabis under its health benefit plan in December 2014. Covering medical marijuana brings "mutual benefit" for patients and their employers, according to Jonathan Zaid, executive director of Canadians for Fair Access to Medical Marijuana. (Photo/CBC)

"We hear wide-ranging anecdotal reports that are extremely positive from patients, saying that they're going back to work, they're having better family and social lives, they're happier, their symptoms are more manageable, and they're often going off of other pharmaceutical drugs which are all insured," Zaid said.

Some Plans Already Cover Marijuana

Zaid himself has been covered for medical cannabis by the University of Waterloo student union's health benefit plan since December 2014. He said it took eight

months of discussions to reach an agreement with his plan sponsor.

A small number of other self-insured Canadian health benefit plans already cover medical marijuana in certain circumstances.

Windsor, Ont., union LIUNA Local 625 recently started covering medical marijuana as a way to reduce opioid use among members. Earlier this year, a Nova Scotia human rights board said the Canadian Elevator Industry Welfare Trust Plan had to cover medical marijuana expenses for employee Gordon "Wayne" Skinner, although that plan's board of trustees is appealing the decision.

Veterans Affairs Canada also reimburses a growing number of military veterans for medical cannabis.

From the perspective of benefit plan sponsors, there's strong medical evidence that medical marijuana is effective for three specific conditions, according to Cubic Health's Mike Sullivan: spasticity in multiple sclerosis patients, nausea reduction for chemotherapy patients, and relief of chronic pain.



Loblaw Companies is covering medical marijuana for employees through their health benefit plans, but only in a limited number of cases. (Photo/Reuters/Canadian

Press)

Grocery and pharmacy giant Loblaw Companies started covering medical marijuana for employees in late March — but Sullivan noted that Loblaw is only covering MS and chemotherapy patients, leaving out the potentially large population of chronic pain patients who could benefit from coverage.

"It's curious to me that they cherry-picked the two groups that are going to be very, very, very small in number, and that they just said [the annual coverage limit] is going to be \$1,500," Sullivan told CBC News. "Where did that number come from?"

Licensed Marijuana Producers Lay Groundwork

Marijuana has not been assigned a Drug Identification Number from Health Canada, which makes it difficult for insurers to process claims. But some licensed marijuana producers are laying the groundwork for employers to cover their products by assigning them Product Identification Numbers instead.

"We want to make it as easy as possible" for insurance administrators to cover costs, said Philippe Lucas, vice president of patient research and access at licensed producer Tilray.

Lucas said some Tilray customers are already getting their costs covered by major insurance plan administrators like Great West Life, Sun Life and Wawanesa by way of employees' individual healthcare spending accounts, which allow discretionary spending of an annual amount of money on approved medical expenses.

Tilray is also actively lobbying employee benefit plan sponsors to include cannabis in their coverage, he said. Meanwhile, Lucas sees changing attitudes towards medical marijuana among insurance industry players.

"I think that there's a hesitance by some industry members of being the first out of the gate to offer medical cannabis, but there's a greater fear of being the last out of the gate to offer this coverage," he said. (Courtesy http://www.cbc.ca/news)



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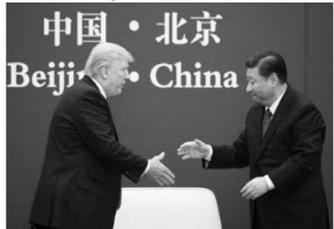
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In a surprising departure from his "America First" agenda, President Trump says he will help a China-based cellphone manufacturer save jobs after the Commerce Department said it sold U.S. technology to Iran and North Korea and then failed to live up to the terms of a settlement.

ZTE, the world's fourth-largest maker of cellphones, was found in violation of U.S. rules against selling U.S.-originated technology to certain blacklisted countries. After reaching a more than \$1 billion settlement with Commerce as reparation for its Iran and North Korea dealings, ZTE then violated the terms of the agreement by failing to fire some employees and reprimand others who were involved in the illicit technology transfers.

Among other things, Commerce imposed a seven-year ban on the company that prevented it from buying parts from U.S. manufacturers.

Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross last month called ZTE's behavior "egregious" and said it "cannot be ignored."



Presidents Trump and Xi are working together "to give massive Chinese phone company, ZTE, a way to get back into business, fast," Trump tweeted on Sunday.

The president's tweet on Sunday appears to have undone all that. "President Xi of China, and I, are working together to give massive Chinese phone company, ZTE, a way to get back into business, fast," Trump tweeted on Sunday. "Too many jobs in China lost. Commerce Department has been instructed to get it done!"

A few hours later, he followed up with another tweet: "China and the United States are working well together on trade, but past negotiations have been so one sided in favor of China, for so many years, that it is hard for them to make a deal that benefits both countries. But be cool, it will all work out!"

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump President Xi of China, and I, are working together to give massive Chinese phone company, ZTE, a way to get back into business, fast. Too many jobs in China lost. Commerce Department has been instructed

President Trump Puts 'America First' 'On Hold' To Save Chinese Jobs

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor



Picture from May 3, 2018 shows the ZTE logo on an office building in Shanghai. (Photo/AFP)

to get it done! 10:01 AM - May 13, 2018

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

China and the United States are working well together on trade, but past negotiations have been so one sided in favor of China, for so many years, that it is hard for them to make a deal that benefits both countries. But be cool, it will all work out!

2:22 PM - May 13, 2018 Although the origins of the case against ZTE dates back years, as CNET reports, "ZTE disclosed earlier this year that while it had gotten rid of several employees, the company hadn't properly reduced the bonuses of some workers, or issued letters of reprimand. The inaction wasn't consistent with a progress report ZTE issued in July. It's because of those false statements that the Commerce Department decided to act."

Amid Trump's tough talk on trade — with China a particular target of his anger and frustration — Commerce last month imposed a seven-year ban on ZTE from purchasing anything from U.S. companies — a move that cut it off from its suppliers that has been described as a "death sentence" for the company, which employs some 70,000 workers in China.

Following his about-face announced on

Twitter, White House press secretary Lindsay Walters issued the following statement: "The President's tweet underscores the importance of a free, fair, balanced, and mutually beneficial economic, trade and investment relationship between the United States and China. The administration is in contact with China on this issue, among others in the bilateral relationship. President Trump expects Secretary Ross to exercise his independent judgment, consistent with applicable laws and regulations, to resolve the regulatory action involving ZTE based on its facts." California Democratic Rep. Adam Schiff tweeted a response directed at the president: "Our intelligence agencies have warned that ZTE technology and phones pose a major cyber security threat. You should care more about our national security than Chinese jobs."

Adam Schiff @RepAdamSchiff

Our intelligence agencies have warned that ZTE technology and phones pose a major cyber security threat. You should care more about our national security than Chinese jobs.

"A reversal of the ZTE decision could temporarily tamp down trade tensions by allowing the Chinese to make concessions to the U.S. without losing face," Eswar Prasad, a

professor of trade policy at Cornell University, tells The Associated Press. "Trump may have recognized that backing off on ZTE clears the path for him to claim at least a partial victory in the US-China trade dispute based on the concessions the Chinese seem prepared to offer."

Speaking to NPR's All Things Considered Sunday, CNET Executive Editor Roger Cheng called the president's move "absolutely a shocker."

"ZTE makes smartphones that really utilize a lot of American technology, companies like Qualcomm, which makes processors or Intel, which makes chips - Corning, which makes display glasses. A lot of these U.S. companies supply major components and software technology to ZTE products," Cheng tells NPR.

"So the argument that ZTE has been making quietly is that they actually invest a lot in the U.S. economy," Cheng says. Last year, they spent more than \$2 billion purchasing technology from U.S. businesses. So, that's probably an argument that helped sway President Trump." (Courtesy https://www.npr.org)

Related

China has welcomed a pledge from Donald Trump to help save ZTE, one of China's biggest telecoms companies

Trump Seeks To Save Chinese Jobs At ZTE Ahead Of Trade Talks



(Photo/Getty Images)

ZTE has suspended operations after the US last month banned American companies from selling it components. The firm had admitted to making illegal shipments to Iran and North Korea.

But Mr. Trump has now tweeted he will work with President Xi to help ZTE get "back into business fast", saying too many jobs in China were at risk.

China has called the comments "positive".

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

President Xi of China, and I, are working together to give massive Chinese phone company, ZTE, a way to get back into business, fast. Too many jobs in China lost. Commerce Department has been instructed to get it done!

"We greatly appreciate the positive position of the US on the ZTE issue and are in close communication with the US on the details of the issue," foreign ministry spokesman Lu Kang said.

US commentators say the tone of the tweet is a dramatic shift for Mr Trump, who has consistently accused China of stealing US jobs. The concession to Beijing comes ahead of high-level trade talks later this week in Washington aimed at resolving an escalating trade dispute between the world's two largest economies.

Beijing has made resolving the situation with ZTE, which employs about 80,000 people, one of its demands for striking a broader trade agreement with with US.

What Did ZTE Do Wrong?

In March 2017, ZTE admitted to violating US sanctions by illegally shipping American technology to Iran and North Korea and was fined \$1.1bn (£800m).

The current export ban - which lasts seven years - was imposed last month after the company allegedly failed to comply with its agreement.

It was accused of lying about the punishment of employees involved in skirting the sanctions.



US companies provide at least a quarter of the components used in ZTE's equipment, which includes smartphones and telecommunications network equipment.

ZTE spent more than \$2.3bn on imports from about 200 US companies last year. Douglas Jacobson, a lawyer in Washington DC who represents some of ZTE's suppliers, said: "This is a fascinating development in a highly unusual case that has gone from a sanctions and export control case to a geopolitical one."

"There's no legal mechanism for this. How this will play out remains to be seen. They are not simply going to be able to resume business as usual." (Courtesy bbc.com)

Advertisement for 雲天燒腊麵食家 (Yun Tian BBQ Noodle House) featuring menu items like 京都肉排, 葱油鯧魚, and 特價午餐 \$5.75.

Advertisement for 中美酒樓 (Chinese American Restaurant) featuring menu items like 新推出超值特價菜 \$5.50 and 超值套餐.

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