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Michael Flynn says he is not ready to be sentenced, U.S. says he is ready

# Southern DAILY

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Monday, September 9, 2019 | [www.today-america.com](http://www.today-america.com) | Southern News Group

## U.S. hiring cools; wages, hours offer silver lining

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - U.S. job growth slowed more than expected in August, with retail hiring declining for a seventh straight month, but strong wage gains should support consumer spending and keep the economy expanding moderately amid rising threats from trade tensions.

The Labor Department's closely watched monthly employment report on Friday also showed a rebound in the workweek after it shrunk to its shortest in nearly two years in July, suggesting that companies were not yet laying off workers.

Economists said the report was consistent with an economy that was slowing, but probably not flirting with a recession as has been signaled by financial markets, especially an inversion of the U.S. Treasury yield curve. The economy's waning fortunes have been blamed on the Trump administration's year-long trade war with China, which has eroded business sentiment and plunged U.S. and global manufacturing into recession.

"The softening in job growth should surprise no one but it doesn't mean the economy is headed toward a recession right away," said Joel Naroff, chief economist at Naroff Economic Advisors in Holland, Pennsylvania. "Households still have the income to keep spending."

August jobs report points to slowing economy, Fed rate cut

U.S. August payrolls rose less than expected

Nonfarm payrolls increased by 130,000 jobs last month, flattered by temporary hiring of 25,000 workers for the 2020 census. The economy created 20,000 fewer jobs in June and July than previously reported.

Economists polled by Reuters had forecast payrolls rising by 158,000 jobs in August.

President Donald Trump shrugged off the slowdown in job growth, tweeting "Good Jobs Numbers," and claiming that "China is eating the Tariffs."

U.S. House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi, a Democrat, said the employment report offered "little comfort in an economy faltering under the Trump administration's reckless agenda to undermine the health, financial security and well-being of the American people."

Washington and Beijing slapped fresh tariffs on each other on Sunday. The duties are paid by U.S. companies importing the goods. While the two economic giants on Thursday agreed to hold high-level talks in early October in Washington, uncertainty over trade lingers.

Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell said in Zurich, Switzerland, on Friday he was not forecasting or expecting a recession, but reiterated the U.S. central bank would continue to act "as appropriate" to keep the longest expansion in history on track. The Fed is expected to cut interest rates again this month after lowering borrowing costs in July for the first time since 2008.

A seasonal quirk could account for last month's less-than-expected increase in employment. Over the past several years, the initial August job count has tended to exhibit a weak bias, with revisions subsequently showing strength.

But slower job growth is also in line with sharp declines in both the Institute for Supply Management's manufacturing and services industries employment measures in August.



FILE PHOTO: Job seekers speak to recruiters at a job fair sponsored by the New York Department of Labor in New York, June 7, 2012. REUTERS/Keith Bedford/File Photo

Job gains have averaged 156,000 over the last three months, still above the roughly 100,000 per month needed to keep up with growth in the working age population. The unemployment rate was unchanged at 3.7% for a third straight month in August as 571,000

people, the most in 10 months, entered the labor force.

The dollar slipped against a basket of currencies. U.S. Treasury yields fell. Stocks on Wall Street were trading higher.



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Inside C2

## Bernie Sanders hires Beto O'Rourke critic as top aide in 2020 race

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders on Tuesday said he is hiring a well-known liberal journalist with a history of sharply criticizing other Democratic presidential candidates, including Beto O'Rourke. Sanders' campaign said it is bringing in David Sirota, whose work has appeared in The Guardian and Newsweek, among other outlets, as a senior adviser and speechwriter.

The move could stoke tensions within the Democratic field since Sirota has previously targeted O'Rourke, a former U.S. congressman from Texas who entered the presidential race last week, and other rivals.

Sirota on Twitter and in published articles has accused O'Rourke of siding with President Donald Trump and Republicans while a member of the House of Representatives, as well as being overly friendly with the oil and gas industry.

Sirota's criticism of O'Rourke in December drew a warning from Neera Tanden, a top ally of former presidential candidate Hillary Clinton and president of the Center for American Progress, a Democratic think tank.

"A supporter of Bernie Sanders attacking a Democrat," Tanden tweeted. "This is seriously dangerous. We know Trump is in the White House and attacking Dems is doing Trump's bidding."

The conflict was a reminder of the bad blood between the Clinton and Sanders camps when they battled for the Democratic nomination ahead of the 2016 presidential race and the mistrust between the party's moderate and progressive wings.

Sirota also has slammed presidential candidates Cory Booker, Kirsten Gillibrand and Kamala Harris, as well as former U.S. Vice President Joe Biden, for being overly cozy with corporate

interests.

Sanders' campaign did not respond to a request for comment on Sirota's hiring.

Sirota worked for Sanders as a press secretary when Sanders was a member of the House of Representatives in the early 2000s.

Sen. Warren tests 2020 message in deep South An article Sirota wrote in 2013 for the liberal news website Salon praising the economic record of Hugo Chavez, Venezuela's late socialist president, also attracted criticism on social media from Sanders' Democratic Party critics and conservatives alike.

Sanders recently refused to label Venezuela's current president, Nicolas Maduro, a dictator or recognize the opposition leader, Juan Guaido, as the country's rightful leader - the current U.S. position.

Guaido invoked the constitution to assume the interim presidency in January, saying Maduro's re-election was not legitimate.



FILE PHOTO: Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT) speaks during an event to introduce the "Medicare for All Act of 2017".



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## 截稿日期9/30

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Monday, September 9, 2019

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## Editor's Choice



Soccer Football - Euro 2020 Qualifier - Group A - England v Bulgaria - Wembley Stadium, London, Britain - September 7, 2019 England's Harry Kane celebrates scoring their second goal REUTERS/Toby Melville TPX IMAGES OF THE DAY



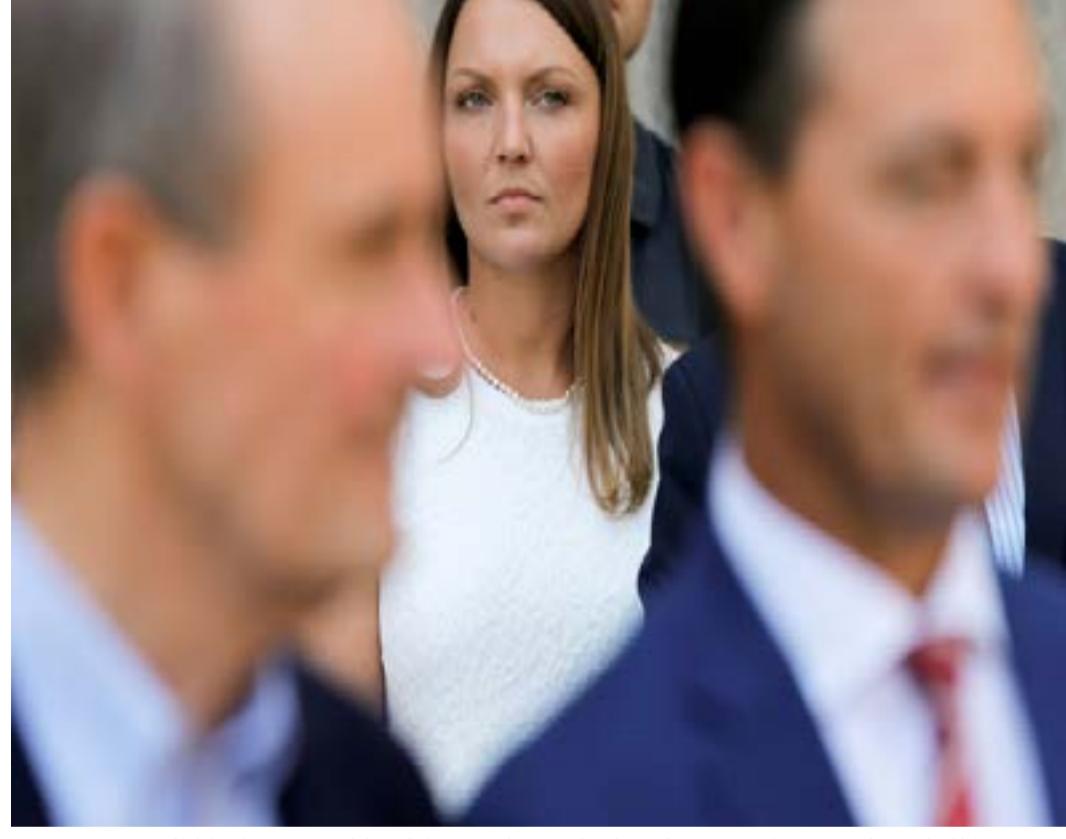
Ukrainian film director Oleg Sentsov, who was jailed on terrorism charges in Russia, gets off a plane upon arrival in Kiev after Russia-Ukraine prisoner swap, at Borispil International Airport



A U.S. flag on an embassy car is seen outside a hotel in Shanghai, China, July 31, 2019.  
REUTERS/Aly Song



Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson visits Darnford Farm in Darnford, Banchory near Aberdeen



Courtney Wild looks on outside of the Southern District of New York court after a bail hearing in U.S. financier Jeffrey Epstein's sex trafficking case, in New York



Lawyer Sigrid McCawley leaves the Southern District of New York federal courthouse after bail hearing in Jeffrey Epstein's sex trafficking case in New York City



Police officers stand next to a medical examiner car outside New York Presbyterian-Lower Manhattan Hospital, where Jeffrey Epstein's body was transported in Manhattan borough of New York City

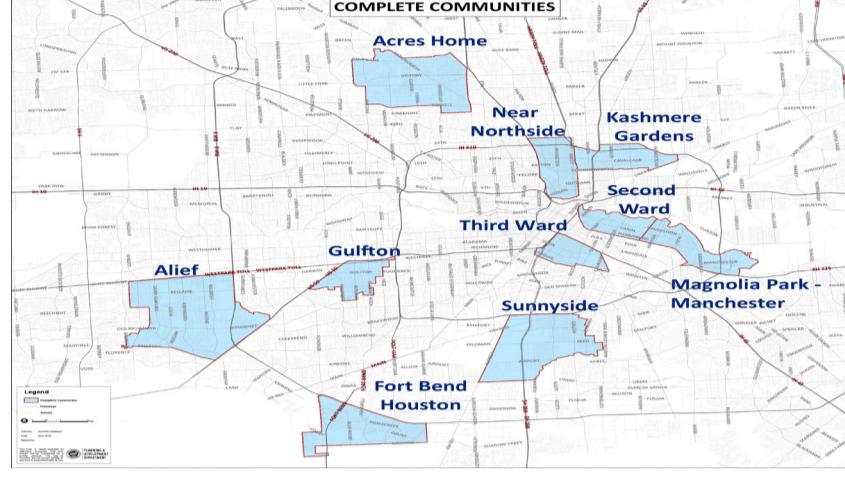


XVIII Pan American Games - Lima 2019 - Archery - Women's Compound Individual Gold Medal - Rugby Field, Lima, Peru - August 10, 2019. Mexico's Andrea Becerra in action. REUTERS/Guadalupe Pardo

**City Of Houston  
Mayor's Office  
Media Release  
For Immediate Release 6/20/19**



## Mayor Expands Complete Communities Initiative To Five More Neighborhoods

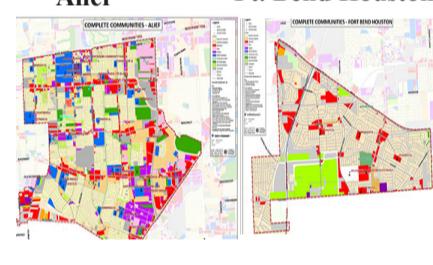


Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

Houston - On Thursday, June 20, 2019, Mayor Turner announced that five new neighborhoods have been added to the Complete Communities initiative! These are Alief, Kashmere Gardens, Fort Bend Houston, Magnolia Park - Manchester, and Sunnyside.

They join a collaborative neighborhood improvement program that started with Acres Home, Gulfton, Near Northside, Second Ward and Third Ward. The City will work in a concentrated manner with stakeholders in each area and partners across Houston to create more complete neighborhoods with enhanced access to quality affordable homes, jobs, well-maintained parks and greenspace, improved streets and sidewalks, grocery stores and other retail, good schools and transit options. The work in these neighborhoods will help develop solutions that are transferable to other communities in

Houston creating One Complete City. Mayor Turner made today's announcement at a community celebration at Eastwood Park, 5000 Harrisburg Blvd. in Second Ward, to showcase examples of the initiative's progress.



Worn out tennis courts at the park were converted to soccer practice spaces thanks to a \$200,000 public-private partnership among the city, the U.S. Soccer Foundation and Target stores. New skate park ramps debuted at the park, thanks to the Friends of Eastwood Park non-profit

organization.

"Although they have been underserved for decades, these 10 neighborhoods represent some of the best of Houston—they're diverse, hard-working, and proud," Mayor Turner said. "Complete Communities will ensure that all ships rise with the tide, so that all of our communities are part of the fabric that makes Houston one complete city."



partnership with existing neighborhood residents.



implementing these local community plans is to enable Houstonians in various places across Houston to have the opportunity to thrive where they are.

"With the Complete Communities Initiative, we are not simply imposing programs on 'under-resourced neighborhoods; rather, we are seeking to collaborate with these communities to create and implement a shared community vision that empowers that community for the long-term." Council Member Edwards stated. Edwards adds, "I commend Mayor Turner for including the Complete Communities Initiative among his top priorities, and look forward to working with Mayor Turner and my colleagues on City Council to help move all of Houston forward."

For more information on the Complete Communities Initiative, visit [houstontx.gov/completecommunities](http://houstontx.gov/completecommunities).

### Strategy



Complete Communities is about improving neighborhoods so that all of Houston's residents and business owners can have access to quality services and amenities. It's about working closely with the residents of communities that haven't reached their full potential, understanding their strengths and opportunities, and collaborating with partners across the city to strengthen them. While working to improve these communities, we must also work to ensure existing residents can stay in homes that remain affordable.



The City will also collaborate with the Complete Community Advisory Committee, comprised of community building stakeholders across Houston, during this process. In order to both develop and implement these local community plans, the City will explore public-private partnerships and private investment in these projects, where appropriate, to help build local capacity and to promote sustainability. The goal of creating and

June 2019	July - August 2019	Fall 2019 - Spring 2020	March - May 2020	Late Spring 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mayor Turner announces new communities added to the program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extensive outreach to civic leaders, including small group meetings and local events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Big public engagement meetings</li> <li>• Continued small group outreach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of Implementation Strategies</li> <li>• Creation of Complete Communities Action Plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of Long-term Projects begins</li> </ul>

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Dr. Lai is a board-certified pediatrician who earned her medical degree from The University of Texas School of Medicine in San Antonio and completed her pediatric internship and residency at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston. She is a member of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Her special clinical interests include General Pediatrics, caring for newborns, managing autism, and treating childhood obesity. She cares for young patients at Kelsey-Seybold's Tanglewood Clinic, near the Galleria.

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## Amazon Drivers Part Of \$10 Million Theft Ring, FBI Says



Amazon vans line up at a distribution center to pick up packages for delivery on Amazon Prime Day, in Orlando, Florida on July 16, 2019.

### Overview

A theft ring in Washington state sold millions of dollars' worth of stolen goods on Amazon.com in the past six years, recently unsealed federal court documents show.

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

SEATTLE — A theft ring in Washington state sold millions of dollars' worth of stolen goods on Amazon.com in the past six years, and a pair of Amazon delivery drivers was involved, recently unsealed federal court documents show.

According to a search warrant affidavit unsealed in U.S. District Court in Seattle and reviewed by The Associated Press, two storefront businesses posing as pawnshops bought the goods from shoplifters, then had the items shipped to Amazon warehouses, where they were stored until sold online.

Entities associated with the alleged ring-leader did at least \$10 million in sales on Amazon since 2013, FBI agent Ariana Kroshinsky wrote in her affidavit.

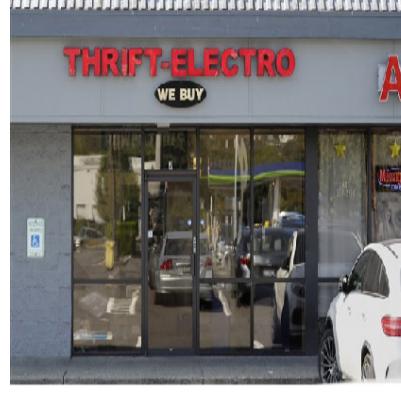
No charges have yet been filed, though investigators have raided the pawnshops

and the home of the man identified as the ringleader, Aleksandr Pavlovskiy, 44, of Auburn. A man who answered the door at one of the shops Wednesday identified himself as Alex and told The Associated Press his business was legitimate, that he kept good records and he should not be in any trouble.

Among those who provided stolen items to the pawn shops were two contract Amazon drivers, Kroshinsky said. Their job was to travel to Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, pick up items being returned to the company and then bring them to an Amazon warehouse south of Seattle, and to deliver items to post offices for shipping. Instead, they routinely stole the goods and sold them to the pawnshops, she wrote.

Amazon did not immediately return an

email seeking comment about the case Thursday.



A pawn shop alleged to have been a front for a theft ring closed in Renton, Wash. on July 31, 2019. The FBI says the ring sold millions of dollars' worth of stolen goods on Amazon.com in the past six years, and that a pair of Amazon delivery drivers was involved. No charges have yet been filed. Elaine

Thompson / AP

The investigation began last summer when a police detective in Auburn, a south Seattle suburb, was perusing a record of pawnshop sales and noticed that one man had made 57 transactions. It turned out to be one of the drivers. He had received nearly \$30,000 selling items to the pawn shops between February and July last year, the affidavit said. Police initially arrested the driver, but released him from jail to avoid disrupting their larger investigation.

The other driver, identified as Abbas Zghair, was believed to be a roommate of the first. Amazon told investigators that Zghair stole about \$100,000 worth of property, including gaming systems, sporting goods and computer products — items he sold to one of the pawnshops for less than \$20,000, the agent wrote. In an unrelated case, Zghair has been charged with murder after police said he shot and killed a man in an Auburn field in March, then fled to the Canadian border, where he was arrested trying to cross with a fake ID. He's being held on \$2.5 million bail.

Detectives staked out the pawnshops, Innovation Best in Kent and Thrift-Electro

in Renton, and observed that they appeared to be paying shoplifters and drug users cash for new items from Home Depot, Lowes and Fred Meyer department stores.



Unlike typical pawn shops, they didn't make sales; instead, the products were moved to a warehouse and to Amazon "fulfillment centers," from where they were shipped when they were sold on Amazon's website by sellers using the handles "Bestforyouall" or "Freeshipforyou," the affidavit said.

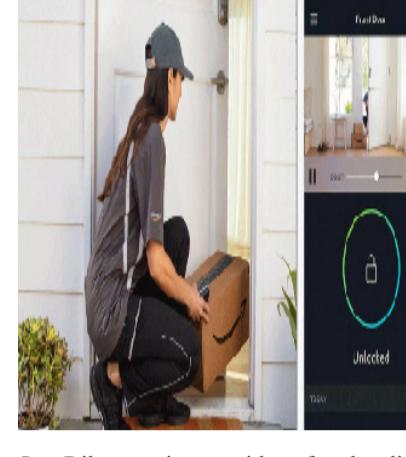
According to a database of pawnshop transactions reviewed by Auburn police, the suspect pawn shops paid more than \$4.1 million to sellers who brought them nearly 48,000 items in the past six years. The items included allergy medication, razors, electric toothbrushes and tools in their original packaging. Detectives also conducted undercover operations in which they sold new items in their original packaging to the shops, which accepted them no questions asked, Kroshinsky wrote.

The FBI said it is awaiting more Amazon records to determine the full extent of Pavlovskiy's enterprise, but that "estimated revenue from Amazon sales, for entities associated with Aleksandr Pavlovskiy, was at least \$10 million since 2013."

Pavlovskiy's lawyer, Cristine Beckwith, did not return a message seeking comment.

The sale of stolen or counterfeit goods on Amazon or other digital marketplaces is not uncommon, but it was not immediately clear how many other schemes

had reached such a volume of sales. Last year, police raided a pawn shop in Monroe, north of Seattle, that they said had taken in \$428,000 fencing stolen items, much of it on Amazon.



Jon Riley, a vice president for the digital strategy firm Publicis Sapient and previously the head of e-commerce user experience for Amazon Devices, said preventing the sale of stolen goods is a major challenge for the company, but retailers can be held liable if they don't do enough to ensure they're not selling stolen goods. Because it's impossible for Amazon to review "every Tide pod" that's sold on its site, the company will likely need to do more to vet sellers, Riley said.

"It's a little bit of an arms race for Amazon to be able to take in product, put it on the web and get it to their customers in a speedy fashion and not unwittingly sell stolen stuff at the same time," Riley said. "Ultimately what Amazon has to do is show good faith if the government comes knocking on the door and says, 'Look, you're selling stolen goods.'"

(Courtesy nbcnews.com)

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