

Unemployment Rates Rose In 18 U.S. States

WASHINGTON (AP) — Unemployment rates rose in 18 U.S. states in May, the most in nine months. Increasing unemployment in more than a third of U.S. states is the latest evidence of a weaker job market.

The Labor Department said that unemployment rates fell in only 14 states. That's fewer than the previous month, when rates fell in 37 states. Rates were unchanged in 18 states.

Nationally, the rate rose to 8.2 percent in May from 8.1 percent in April, the first increase in almost a year. Employers added only 69,000 jobs, the fewest in 12 months.

Still, 27 states added jobs in May. California gained the most, adding 33,900. Ohio was next with 19,600.

North Carolina reported the biggest loss, shedding 16,500 jobs. It was followed by Pennsylvania, which lost nearly 10,000.

Nevada had the nation's highest unemployment rate, at 11.6 percent, followed by Rhode Island's 11 percent and California's 10.8 percent.

North Dakota, meanwhile, reported the nation's lowest rate of 3 percent. Nebraska had the next lowest, at 3.9 percent.

Despite the slowdown in hiring in recent months, some of the hardest-hit states have seen substantial improvement in the past year.

Michigan and Nevada have both seen their unemployment rates fall 2.1 percentage points in the past 12 months. Both states still have higher unemployment rates than the national average. But Michigan's rate was 8.5 percent last month, down from 10.6 percent in May 2011.

Florida and Mississippi have seen their rates fall 2 percentage points in the past 12 months. Florida's rate was 8.6 percent, down from 10.6 percent in the same month last year. Mississippi's is 8.7 percent, down from 10.7 percent in May 2011.

Some of those declines reflect more hiring. The nation has gained more than 1 million jobs in the past six months.

But the lower rates also are a result of more people becoming discouraged and dropping out of the work force. The government only counts people as unemployed if they are actively looking for work.

District: Teacher Had Kids Hit Alleged Bully

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Two Texas teachers have been placed on leave after school officials say one of them ordered more than 20 students to line up and hit a boy accused of being a bully, a district spokesman confirmed Friday.

Apparently, the more seasoned of the two Judson Independent School District teachers was trying to teach the 6-year-old a lesson, according to a report from police in the South Texas school district.

The teacher is accused of orchestrating the slugfest after a younger colleague at the elementary school went to her last month seeking suggestions on how to discipline Aiden Neely, a kindergarten she described as being a classroom bully.

The way she chose to teach Aiden "why bullying is bad," according to the police report, was by instructing his peers to "Hit him!" and "Hit him harder!"

Prosecutors in San Antonio are reviewing the allegations and will determine whether formal charges will be filed in 30 to 60 days, said Adriana Biggs, chief of the white-collar crime division for the Bexar County District Attorney's office.

Amy Neely, Aiden's mother, filed an official oppression complaint against the teachers with the district police department earlier this week, district spokesman Steve Linscomb told The Associated Press on Friday.

Messages that the AP left Friday at phone listings for an Amy Neely in San Antonio and Schertz were not immediately returned. But the mother told other media outlets that, "I don't want this teacher to be teaching anymore," singling out the educator accused of ordering the students to hit her son.

"She doesn't need to be around any children," she said.

Neely said her son is not a problem child and that this was the first she'd heard of teachers having any issues with him.

"He's not a bully," she said.

The mother added — and the police report confirmed — that some of Aiden's classroom friends told him they didn't want to hit the boy but did so because they were afraid not to.

"Twenty-four of those kids hit him and he said that most of them hit him twice," Neely said in interviews with local media.

She said she learned about what happened to her son after a teacher who witnessed the incident and intervened went on to report it two weeks later.

The district placed both teachers on paid administrative leave and launched an investigation on May 18.

Phones Gain Ability To Learn By Touching

NEW YORK (AP) — There's a form of extra-sensory perception called psychometry, whose practitioners claim to learn things about objects by touching them. Smartphones set to be released this month by Samsung and Sony will have some of that ability: they'll learn things when you touch them to pre-programmed "tags."

For example, you can program a tag with your phone number, and stick it on your business card. When someone taps the phone to the card, the phone would call you. Or you can put a tag on your night stand. Place the phone there, and it goes into "alarm clock" mode, holding your calls until the morning.

Samsung Electronics Co. announced this week that it will be selling these tags in the form of stickers it calls "TecTiles" — \$15 for 5 of them. They'll work with its new flagship Samsung Galaxy S III smartphone, set to launch in a few weeks, and several others already in the market, including the HTC EVO 4G LTE sold by Sprint Nextel.

Sony Corp.'s Xperia Ion, to be released June 24, will come with the ability to read different coin-like plastic tags that read "Home," "Office" and so forth. The tags cost \$20 for four, and the phone can be programmed to react differently to each tag. The "Car" tag can launch a navigation application, for instance. Tapping "Home" can send a text message to the rest of the family that you're home, and set the ringer volume to maximum.

The big push behind the technology, which is known as Near-Field Communications, comes from companies that see the phone as the wallet of the future. When touched to payment terminals, NFC-equipped phones can act as credit or debit cards.

But turning phones into credit cards is a tall order. Mobile payments already work with a few phones, but broad adoption is being held up while cellphone companies, banks, payment processors and retailers work out who pays for what and who benefits.

U.S. Declassifies Attacks In Yemen, Somalia

ROBERT BURNS

AP National Security Writer

WASHINGTON — The White House is partially lifting the lid of secrecy on its counterterrorism campaign against al-Qaida in Yemen and Somalia by formally acknowledging for the first time that it is conducting lethal attacks in those countries.

The White House's semiannual report to Congress on the state of U.S. combat operations abroad, delivered Friday, mentions what has been widely reported for years but never formally acknowledged by the administration: The U.S. military has been taking "direct action" against members of al-Qaida and affiliates in Yemen and Somalia.

The report does not elaborate, but "direct action" is a military term of art that refers to a range of lethal attacks, which in the case of Yemen and Somalia include attacks by armed drones. The report does not mention drones, which are remote-controlled, pilotless aircraft equipped with surveillance cameras and sometimes armed with missiles.

The report applies only to U.S. military operations, including those by special operations forces — not those conducted by the CIA.

"In all cases we are focused on those al-Qaida members and affiliates who pose a direct threat to the United States and to our national interests," Pentagon press secretary George Little said after the report's release. "This report contains information about these operations owing to their growing significance in our overall counterterrorism effort."

The report does not provide details of any military operations in either Yemen or Somalia. It merely acknowledges they have happened. Killings of terror suspects overseas are acknowledged by the administration, but it does not mention the involvement of drones. The CIA and military have separate drone fleets.

The decision by President Barack Obama to declassify the existence of the counterterror actions in those two countries amounts an incremental move toward greater openness about the use of U.S. force overseas. It does not reflect any change in the intensity or basic character of the U.S. campaign to defeat al-Qaida.

A previous step in the direction of greater official transparency came in April when the White House's counterterrorism chief, John Brennan, made the first formal confirmation that the U.S. uses armed drones against terrorists. But he did not mention their use in specific countries.

The new information in Friday's report comes amid outcries from some in Congress about leaks to the news media about details of classified activities such as the existence of a White House "kill list" of targeted al-Qaida militants. The accusation, mostly by Republicans, is that the White House has orchestrated the leaks to improve Obama's re-election chances, an allegation the president has rejected as "offensive" and "wrong."

Three administration officials who briefed The Associated Press on the decision to declassify the existence of the military's coun-

terterrorism campaigns in Yemen and Somalia said Obama determined that the time was ripe, in part because the U.S. has built closer relations with the Yemeni government and with governments interested in eliminating extremist elements in Somalia. Somalia has not had a fully functioning government since 1991.

The officials said the declassification of further details in future reports to Congress would remain under White House review.

Under the War Powers Resolution of 1973, the White House is required to report to Congress every six months on U.S. combat operations abroad. Friday's report includes a secret attachment with classified details, which was not released publicly.

The last report, on Dec. 15, 2011, made no mention of Yemen or Somalia. Instead it said that in relation to efforts against al-Qaida, the U.S. was working with partners "with a particular focus on countries within the U.S. Central Command's area of responsibility," which is a broad swath of territory that includes the entire Middle East and Central Asia.

Friday's report was more explicit. It said that in Somalia the U.S. military has worked to counter the terrorist threat posed by al-Qaida and al-Qaida-associated elements of a militant group called al-Shabaab.

"In a limited number of cases, the U.S. military has taken direct action in Somalia against members of al-Qaida, including those who are also members of al-Shabaab, who are engaged in efforts to carry out terrorist attacks against the United States and our interests," it said.

U.S. Reveals Accusations Against Secret Service

BY ALICIA A. CALDWELL

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The U.S. government has revealed details of serious allegations against Secret Service agents and officers since 2004, including claims of involvement with prostitutes, leaking sensitive information, publishing pornography, sexual assault, illegal wiretaps, improper use of weapons and drunken behavior. It wasn't immediately clear how many of the accusations have been confirmed.

The heavily censored list, which runs 229 pages, was quietly released under the U.S. Freedom of Information Act to The Associated Press and other news organizations following the Secret Service prostitution scandal that erupted in April in Colombia. It describes accusations filed against Secret Service employees with the Homeland Security Department's inspector general.

Some of the accusations occurred as recently as last month. In many cases, the government noted that some of the claims were resolved administratively, and others were being formally investigated.

The new disclosures of so many serious accusations lend weight to concerns expressed by Congress that the prostitution scandal exposed a culture of misconduct within the Secret Service. Secret Service Director Mark Sullivan apologized for the incident during a hearing in May but insisted that what happened in Colombia was an isolated case.

Secret Service officials did not immediately respond Friday to questions about the accusations.

Sen. Susan Collins, a Maine Republican who has been investigating the Colombia scandal said while some of the allegations were "unfounded or frivolous," others appear to be legitimate and that "adds to my concern about apparent misconduct by some of the personnel of this vital law enforcement agency."

"The key question is whether these incidents indicate a larger cultural problem," Collins said Friday.

Sen. Joseph Lieberman, I-Conn., said Friday an investigation by the Secret Service's inspector general is continuing and the public should withhold judgment until that review is complete.

The complaints included an alleged sexual assault reported in August 2011. In the heavily censored entry, an employee was accused of pushing a woman who also worked for the agency onto a bed during a work trip. The employee "got on top of (censored) attempting to have sex," even though the woman "told (censored) 'no' several times." The entry noted that supervisors described the accused as "a conscientious and dependable employee." The incident was closed with an "administrative disposition" in February.

They also included an anonymous complaint in October 2003 that a Secret Service agent "may have been involved with a prostitution ring," noting that two telephone

numbers belonging to the agent, whose name was censored and who has since retired, turned up as part of an FBI investigation into a prostitution ring. In addition, in 2005, an employee was reported to the Washington field office for being arrested on a charge of solicitation in a park. Documents do not reveal the outcome of that case.

In 2008, an on-duty uniform division officer was arrested in a Washington prostitution sting. The officer, who was driving a marked Secret Service vehicle at the time, was placed on administrative leave, the records show. Sullivan said during the May hearing that the officer was later fired.

Other allegations include:

—October 2011: An employee

was accused of sending harassing messages to a woman who interpreted them to be sexual harassment.

—March 2011: A complaint was filed involving embezzlement or theft of public money. Nearly the entire

entry was censored save for a notation that it was adjudicated by a judge.

—October 2010: An employee was implicated in a national security leak. The details were censored, and the records didn't include a disposition of the case.

—May 2012: An employee was accused of contributing to the delinquency of a minor. No details were provided, other than that the case was closed administratively.

—May 2012: An officer was videotaped, twice, wandering nude around an apartment complex.

—January 2011: Police in New York arrested an investigative support assistant on charges sexual abuse. The records do not list an outcome for the case.

—2005: An armed agent was accused of threatening to shut down a strip club because it was charging \$40 for lap dances and \$25 for table-side dances, which the agent said was against federal law. The incident was reported in May 2012.

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