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Next Friday, the governor said, the state will run out of options to pay for government services if the Republican-controlled House does not act on a plan to fund the \$32 billion spending plan that became law this summer. "There are some tough things that I'm going to have to do," Wolf, a Democrat, said during a morning interview on KDKA-AM radio in Pittsburgh. "We're talking about things that aren't going to work in terms of roads and schools. Our children are going to get hurt by this. ... volunteer fire companies around the state."



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Wolf's comments came a few hours before a group of rank-and-file conservative House Republicans unveiled their own plan to balance the budget, largely by transferring money from 41 special funds that pay for things such as 911 centers, hazardous-site cleanup, transportation, and environmental projects. The plan would also reduce some tax credits and calls for advertising on state-owned buildings, among other measures. The House conservatives say their plan would generate \$2.4 billion, enough to cover the deficits from last year's budget and the current one.

House Republican leadership supports the plan and intends to bring it up for discussion in a closed-door GOP caucus meeting when the House returns to session next week, spokesman Steve Miskin said. Whether the plan would pass the full House, let alone the Senate, remains to be seen. Wolf did not hold

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back criticism. "Today's proposal fails to address our challenges," Wolf spokesman J.J. Abbott said in a statement. "Raiding these funds will mean cuts to programs. There is no way around it."

Jennifer Kocher, spokeswoman for the GOP-controlled Senate, said the chamber would consider the proposal if it passed the House, but added: "We are fearful that the new House plan would harm agricultural, environmental, and transportation projects across the commonwealth while not addressing long-term budgetary concerns." The Senate in late July passed a plan to pay for the \$32 billion budget through a mix of borrowing and new or increased taxes, including a new levy on natural gas drilling and hikes in taxes on electric and telephone services.

Tax-averse House Republicans have balked at that plan, but also have steadfastly refused to return to the Capitol over the last six weeks to try to negotiate a different deal. At Tuesday's news conference with GOP lawmakers to unveil their plan, Rep. Joe Emrick (R., Northampton) said that the group evaluated several factors when looking for money to balance the budget. Among them: Would the transfer impact operations? Would there be any legal ramifications? Would it bring the fund below average numbers needed for various operations?

Rep. Dan Moul (R., Adams) said some of these transfers have occurred in the past, and some would involve money that appears to be dormant. "Until and unless every source of reserve revenue is exhausted, we should not and are not asking more of our taxpayers," Moul said. "We are simply doing what we should be doing: serving as good stewards of their hard-earned tax dollars." Passing the plan could be a heavy lift.

House Democrats have some "immediate concerns about the legality of the proposed transfers," according to spokesman Bill Patton, who noted that some funds have specific purposes under the law. "We will certainly take a close look at what they've come up with. At this point, we don't fully understand it, but now that we've received the details today, we will do our best to see if any part of it works," Patton said. "We're not ruling it out, but we're very doubtful of the utility of this plan."

The House will be working under a tight time crunch when it returns. State officials have said that Pennsylvania's main checking account will dip into negative territory Sept. 15 and that the administration will no longer be able to prop it up through short-term loans or transfers without an enacted revenue plan. — *Philadelphia Inquirer*

This past weekend, more than 3,000 students on the Stockton University campuses in South Jersey moved into their dorm rooms, many of them carting televisions. But the reality is that old-school cable-TV — a package of linear cable channels — is barely relevant today to college kids raised with on-demand video, DVRs, and functionality-rich smartphones.

Realizing the trend, Comcast is now two years into offering Xfinity on Campus that replicates the home cable-TV experience, unchaining college students from the televisions in their dorm rooms through content available over campus wireless WiFi. Over that same network, the service makes available on-demand video and 20 hours of DVR recording capacity.

This year, about 100 campuses have signed on to Xfinity on Campus, offering it to hundreds of thousands of students at Pennsylvania State University, University of Maryland, and Florida State University, in addition to dozens of smaller institutions. Stockton agreed to it, a university official said, in part because student leaders asked for it. "Very few students watch live TV anymore," Bob Heinrich, chief information officer at Stockton University in Galloway Township, Atlantic County, said on Tuesday. Xfinity on Campus "replicates the experience that kids in their homes get from their cable or satellite providers," Heinrich said.

Xfinity on Campus is part of the cable service offered to resident students and does not cost extra for them or the university, Heinrich said. The students need to authenticate with Xfinity on Campus using their Stockton credentials to take advantage of it. The cable services are paid by board fees. Because Comcast does not distribute set-top boxes to students on college campuses, the Xfinity on Campus on-demand content and DVR recordings is available only on mobile devices such as smartphones or laptops. If students would like to watch the content on televisions themselves, they have to buy a Roku device such as the streaming stick.

Xfinity on Campus was launched in 2015, with about 20 colleges. A year ago, the number was expanded to about 60 colleges. And, today, about 100 campuses. Among other regional schools with Xfinity on Campus are Delaware, Penn, Villanova, West Chester, Temple, Rider, Drexel, and Juniata. Comcast says the most-watched shows by college kids on Xfinity on Campus this spring were the NBA playoffs, "Sports Center," "Grey's Anatomy" and "Law & Order: Special Victims Unit." — *Philadelphia Inquirer*

A new Verizon Communications Inc. rewards program, Verizon Up, provides credits that wireless subscribers can use for concert tickets, movie premieres and phone upgrades. But it comes with a catch: Customers must give the carrier access to their web-browsing history, app usage and location data, which Verizon says it uses to personalize the rewards and deliver targeted advertising as its customers browse the web. The trade-off is part of Verizon's effort **to build a digital advertising business** to compete with web giants Facebook Inc. and Alphabet Inc.'s Google, which often already possess much of the same customer information.

Even though Congress earlier this year dismantled tough privacy regulations on telecommunications providers, Verizon still wants customers to opt-in to its most comprehensive advertising program, called Verizon Selects. Data collected under the program is shared with Oath, **the digital-media unit Verizon created** when it **bought AOL and Yahoo**. Since access to data from customers could make it easier to tailor ads to their liking, Verizon hopes the information will help it gain advertising revenue to offset sluggish growth in its cellular business.

While it added more than 600,000 wireless subscribers last quarter, the gains came during a period of intense competition that forced it to **revive unlimited-data offerings** and **sacrifice the revenue** it generated from pricier plans and overage fees. Verizon's core wireless business generated \$89 billion in revenue in 2016—a 2.7% drop from 2015. Meantime, its digital advertising unit brings in roughly \$7 billion a year. Verizon has about 4% of the U.S. digital advertising market this year, compared with 41% for Google and 20% for Facebook, according to eMarketer. Wireless competitor AT&T Inc. faces similar challenges as it also tries building an ad-targeting program around its new video services.

Verizon, the U.S.'s largest carrier with more than 114 million subscribers, has been experimenting with targeted-advertising programs for at least five years. Verizon Up, launched in August, is the latest incarnation of its rewards program. Verizon doesn't say how many people have enrolled in Up or Selects. For every \$300 customers spend on their Verizon bills, they receive one Up credit, which can be used for rewards such as Uber rides, four free months of Apple Music or chances to win tickets to see performers such as Lady Gaga.

Verizon makes it clear during the sign-up process what data consumers are giving up: Information about their demographics and interests, what websites they visit, what apps and features they use, and their location. The disclaimer quickly drew criticism in the tech world. Adam Levin, a consumer advocate and founder of data-security firm CyberScout, warned in a column on HuffPost that the "hidden cost of Verizon's 'free' rewards program is your data."

In an interview, he asked: "When you think about it, do you really want somebody to know that much about your life?" Deli Meeks, a 26-year-old forklift operator in Atlanta, said he doesn't mind Verizon accessing his data. A lot of companies track information, and it helps make advertising more useful, he said. Mr. Meeks used his first reward to secure two tickets to a preseason NFL game between the Baltimore Ravens and the Buffalo Bills. "As long as they keep it up, I think I'll stay" a Verizon customer, he said, "regardless of the price."

Google, Facebook and other internet firms possess similar data about their users and disclose it in their privacy policies. But Verizon must walk a more delicate line. Telecoms are required by federal law to take precautions when it comes to customer data. Verizon doesn't want to risk a consumer and regulatory backlash, as it has in the past, for its data-collection methods. "Some of our competitors, they have exactly the same thing, it's just buried in the terms and conditions of the service," Diego Scotti, Verizon's chief marketing officer, said of the information tech giants collect. "We are not hiding anything." Google and Facebook declined to comment.

Verizon's program allows customers to opt out of data-sharing after they have signed up for Verizon Up, but it can keep the data for three years. Mr. Scotti said **he hopes customers will appreciate** the up-front disclosures and that the rewards program will make Verizon customers more loyal. But the extra precaution might stifle Verizon's ability to grow the program, said Craig Moffett, an analyst at MoffettNathanson LLC. "This just highlights how thorny privacy issues can be for telecom operators," he said. "If they are going to be held to a higher standard than Google and Facebook, either by statute or simply by convention, then it will be very hard for them to effectively compete." — **Wall Street Journal**



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