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Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Challengers Neil Makhija and Matthew Schutter questioned incumbent State Rep. Doyle Heffley on his record, while Heffley and Makhija accused each other of accepting campaign contributions from outside the 122nd Legislative District during a debate for the seat Thursday night at the Penn's Peak entertainment venue in Jim Thorpe.



About 100 people — who got rowdy at times and had to be silenced by moderator Kim Bell of Blue Ridge Cable TV — turned out to hear the three candidates' views on such topics as a severance tax on natural gas, property tax reform, transportation funding, the opioid epidemic, medical marijuana and the legalization of marijuana during

an hour-long debate that included questions from a four-member media panel that included Standard-Speaker Managing Editor Mark Katchur.

While Republican Heffley defended his six-year record in the Legislature, Makhija, the Democratic candidate, criticized state government as “dysfunctional and corrupt,” and Schutter, the Libertarian candidate, preached cutting the size of government and using the savings to spend money on needed projects in the state.

Makhija accused Heffley of taking campaign contributions from large corporations and lobbyists — and voting for legislation they support and sometimes write — while Heffley shot back that he gets 80 percent of his campaign funds from Carbon County, while Makhika held fundraisers in New York and Massachusetts.

Makhija championed the establishment of a severance tax on natural gas, saying once pipelines are built, the tax could bring in “billions.” The 30-year-old attorney wants to use the funds to help offset property taxes, which he wants to eliminate because of their negative impact on senior citizens. But Heffley said projections are that a severance tax would only generate \$500,000 a year, while property taxes bring in \$14 billion.

All three candidates support House Bill 76, which proposes substituting higher state sales and income taxes to replace property taxes as the main funding source for school districts. All three agreed action needs to be taken with the opioid epidemic, but varied in their opinions of how to approach it. Haffley said he is serving on a task force on the issue, Makhija said he would “put the people first,” and accused Heffley of supporting large pharmaceutical companies' legislation in Harrisburg, which Heffley denied.

Makhija supports medical marijuana, because of the good he says it can do to help

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terminally ill people. He said the issue has to be taken away from government and put in the hands of doctors. Schutter supported legalizing recreational marijuana, saying that alcohol and tobacco have killed people, but marijuana has not. Heffley spoke of his record on voting for drug courts, which the other candidates also said they support. The four panel members rotated asking the candidates questions. The three used their rebuttal time to answer questions that were previously asked, causing their answers to be cut off or short. – *Hazleton Standard-Speaker*

Several websites including Twitter and Tumblr were unreachable for many internet users Friday morning following an online attack. Web technology provider Dyn said its domain name system, or DNS, service was subject to a massive distributed denial of service attack. Denial of service attacks can knock websites offline by flooding them with junk data, blocking the way for legitimate users. Dyn's DNS services are a key part of the digital supply chain that allow web addresses—Twitter.com for instance—to take users to the infrastructure that hosts them.

“We began monitoring and mitigating a DDoS attack against our Dyn Managed DNS infrastructure” beginning at 7:10 a.m. Eastern time on Friday, the Web service said on its status website. “Some customers may experience increased DNS query latency and delayed zone propagation during this time.” Amazon.com Inc. also said it had found the root cause of DNS problems affecting its East Coast cloud customers, though it didn't disclose the cause. In a note on its status dashboard, Amazon said it was looking into an elevated number of errors related to accessing its cloud services in a main East Coast server hub due to DNS issues. Amazon Web Services runs a broad array of websites. Cloud services provider Heroku Inc. also said that it was seeing “widespread” DNS issues related to a denial of service attacks against one of its DNS providers.

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Verizon Communications Inc. on Thursday reported declining revenue and plunging subscriber growth, and said it is assessing whether it will need to renegotiate its acquisition of Yahoo Inc. after a major data breach. Verizon's Chief Financial Officer Fran Shammo described the recently announced breach of 500 million Yahoo accounts as “extremely large.”

He said the company is assuming that it will have a “material impact” on Yahoo, suggesting that the carrier will look to renegotiate the deal though he gave no indication Verizon intended to walk away. Mr. Shammo said Verizon lawyers had their first call with Yahoo's lawyers this week and said evaluating the impact of the breach is “going to be a long process.”

The carrier, which has sought to develop new revenue streams via acquisitions, in July said it would buy Yahoo's Web assets for \$4.83 billion in cash, the biggest of a recent string of digital acquisitions. For New York-based Verizon, the deal is a key component of a digital media and advertising empire the nation's biggest wireless carrier is trying to build in hopes of taking on Alphabet Inc.'s Google and Facebook Inc.

At the same time, Verizon's wireless business is sagging as competitors gain strength. The carrier reported its second straight quarterly revenue decline after six years of growth. It also posted a 66% drop in net retail postpaid wireless subscribers from a year ago, down to 442,000, which is also 28% lower than in the previous quarter. Shares, which were up

9% this year before the results, dropped 2.7% in early Thursday trading. “We are executing in a very challenging competitive environment,” Mr. Shammo said on a call with analysts.

Verizon, which has been facing rising competition from smaller rivals like Sprint Corp. and T-Mobile US Inc., has warned that earnings may plateau in 2016 as it works through changes it has made to keep its wireless plans in line with competitors. Sprint this week reported strong subscriber growth for the quarter. On its wireless business, the carrier had a net loss of 36,000 postpaid phone customers compared with gains of 430,000 a year ago, a sign that a healthier Sprint and an aggressive T-Mobile are inflicting pain on their larger competitor. Postpaid churn, or the rate at which customers canceled service, rose 11 basis points to 1.04% from a year ago.

Mr. Shammo blamed some of the slowdown in subscriber growth on the recall of Samsung Electronics Co.’s new Galaxy Note 7 over issues with its batteries. “We were off to a really good start with the Samsung Note 7,” Mr. Shammo said. “And then unfortunately there was a total recall of that phone which has definitely impacted our growth because historically Verizon has always been the number one leader in high-end Samsung phones.”

For the September period, revenue slipped 6.7% to \$30.94 billion, below estimates for \$31.09 billion, according to Thomson Reuters. Verizon posted a profit of \$3.6 billion, down from \$4 billion last year. On Thursday, the company backed its forecast of earnings for 2016—excluding a 7-cent per-share dent from the work stoppage during a union strike—to remain flat with 2015.

Verizon has been shifting its wireless customers to noncontract plans that have a cheaper monthly service rate but require customers to pay full price for their device, usually in installments. The percentage of phone activations on installment plans rose to 70% from 67% in the second quarter. Verizon said it expects that rate to remain consistent in the fourth quarter. — *Wall Street Journal*

Although Hillary Clinton has shown a rising lead in recent Pennsylvania polls, both presidential campaigns still are fighting to rally their supporters here with another set of appearances from the two nominees. Republican Donald Trump is scheduled to headline a rally Friday at Johnstown’s War Memorial Arena. **The event begins at 4 p.m.** and doors open at 1 p.m.

Clinton’s campaign says she and vice presidential pick Tim Kaine will be in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh on Saturday, but it has not yet released details on the exact time and locations of those appearances. Those interested in attending can RSVP online to be notified when there’s more information on the Democratic events in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. Kaine, a U.S. senator from Virginia, also will be in the Keystone State on Friday. He’s scheduled to headline an afternoon event in State College. And one of the campaign’s top surrogates, Vice President Joe Biden, also **will be campaigning Friday in Wilkes-Barre** for the former secretary of state. He’ll be back in the state Tuesday for an unspecified event for Clinton in the Pittsburgh area.

After a narrower margin earlier in the summer, recent Pennsylvania polls have shown Clinton with an average lead of 6 points, according to tracking data from RealClearPolitics. That lead is in the double-digits in the critical Philadelphia suburbs, where Trump would need to improve his numbers in order to have a shot at winning the state. Despite an advantage in the polls, the Clinton campaign hasn’t signaled a diminished interest in Pennsylvania.

On Wednesday, it announced that pop artist Katy Perry will hold a get-out-the-vote rally in Philadelphia on Nov. 5, days before polls open here. Additional details on that concert will be released soon, according to Clinton’s campaign. — *Allentown Morning Call*



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