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New York Times

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Fierce Video

[PBS' most-of-the-above digital-video strategy](#)

Philadelphia Inquirer

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The West Virginia House of Delegates has passed legislation aimed at expanding high-speed wireless and broadband internet development in the state. The bill approved 97-2 Monday now moves to the state Senate. One delegate did not vote. The bill would allow broadband providers to install updated technologies on existing rights-of-way and utility poles, resulting in a saving of capital costs. It also would require power companies to study the feasibility of providing broadband technologies on their existing infrastructure.

The state Public Service Commission would oversee the bill's provision. To further reduce costs and encourage investment, the bill would establish a method of calculating the valuation of wireless technology for tax purposes. The Federal Communications Commission says 82 percent of West Virginians have access to fixed broadband internet speeds. — *Associated Press*

Verizon Communications Inc.'s core wireless business continues to add customers in the crowded U.S. market, but the company's quarterly profit was hit by charges related to a restructuring in its struggling media business.

The carrier previously [said it added a net 653,000](#) new postpaid phone connections during the final quarter of 2018. That pool of new phone connections was an increase from the net 295,000 it added in the third quarter and a 50% increase from the 431,000 additions in the final quarter of 2017. In all, net income attributable to Verizon was \$1.94 billion, down from \$18.67 billion a year earlier, when it received [a one-time \\$16.8 billion reduction](#) of its deferred tax liabilities. Quarterly revenue rose 1% to \$34.3 billion, with gains in wireless offset by declines in Verizon's landline and media units.

Verizon's fourth-quarter results included \$4.9 billion pretax in charges, mostly from an accounting charge to write down the value of its Oath media business, which was created by the acquisitions of AOL and Yahoo. The carrier previously announced it would [book a more than \\$4 billion accounting charge](#) related to Oath. That unit, which has been rebranded as Verizon Media Group, failed to meet revenue targets and earlier this month [said it would lay off 7%](#) of its staff and revamp its strategy.

Verizon said revenue in the media business was \$2.1 billion in the fourth quarter, down nearly 6% from the prior year. In addition to the Oath layoffs, Verizon is in the process of [shedding about 10,400 workers](#) as part of an effort to cut \$10 billion in costs by 2021 as it focuses on [building its next-generation 5G wireless network](#). The company said it had cut \$2.3 billion by the end of 2018.

Executives have said they would avoid a large-scale content acquisition and instead focus on building out Verizon's network and using the media assets the company already has, which include websites such as Yahoo Finance, HuffPost and TechCrunch. Verizon had [118 million wireless connections](#) at the end of 2018, compared with 116.8 million at the end of September. It is the first major U.S. carrier to report quarterly earnings; rivals including AT&T Inc. will share their performance later this week.

Although major handset makers Apple Inc. and Samsung Electronics Co. have [cautioned about slowing demand](#) for their latest devices, U.S. wireless carriers have benefited from less-generous promotions to lure customers. Citigroup analysts said in a research note Monday that "should last at least another six months." Verizon said it added 556,000 connections for smartwatches, connected vehicles and other gadgets as well as 11,000 tablet connections. Those connected devices provide additional revenue in addition to phone connections.

Its landline business added 54,000 net new home broadband connections during the final quarter of 2018 and lost a net 46,000 Fios video customers. Unlike other pay-TV providers, the business has struggled to retain customers amid a wave of “cord cutting” and consumers’ embrace of streaming video services. Those shifting customer preferences and the advent of 5G helped prompt a reorganization of Verizon’s core business lines under Hans Vestberg, the company’s new chief executive. The changes, effective this month, have restructured the businesses by the type of customer served, rather than by the type of service provided. Shares of Verizon were down 2% in premarket trading. Verizon shares are little changed over the past 12 months, while rival AT&T has fallen 18%. – **Wall Street Journal**

A Navy veteran and former Veterans Affairs official will compete with an information technology consulting firm owner for an open state Senate seat in suburban Pittsburgh. Republican delegates chose D. Raja and Democrats chose Pam Iovino in Sunday’s votes. April 2’s special election will fill the remaining two years in Republican Guy Reschenthaler’s Senate term in the politically divided district.

Raja is CEO of Computer Enterprises Inc. He ran unsuccessfully for state Senate in 2012 before becoming Allegheny County’s Republican Party chairman. Iovino retired as a captain after serving 23 years in the Navy and became an assistant secretary in the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs under then-President George W. Bush, a Republican. Reschenthaler resigned earlier this month to serve in Congress. Republicans control Pennsylvania’s Senate, 28-21. – **Associated Press**

