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## NewsClips

September 14, 2017

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**Recode**  
[The inside story of how Netflix transitioned to digital video after seeing the power of YouTube](#)

**nscreenmedia.com**  
[Apple TV 4K – a me-too product with a premium price](#)

**Harrisburg Patriot-News**  
[House Republicans muscle through a revenue plan based largely on one-time fixes; could be reset for broader state](#)

Working late into the night Wednesday to deal with a looming cash crunch, the state House of Representatives approved a budget-funding bill that if enacted would end a months-long impasse.

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Gov. Wolf, however, called the revenue plan "irresponsible," and signaled that it won't offset the need for him to make difficult cuts to the state budget as early as Friday. "There is some real hardship for people and institutions that people in this building really care about, and the people of Pennsylvania really care about," the Democratic governor told the Inquirer and Daily News during an unrelated interview before the vote was taken. The bill passed shortly before 10 p.m. by a vote of 103-91 and now moves to the Senate, where it

faces an uncertain future.

The plan, pushed forward by the Republican majority, seeks to close a \$2.2 billion deficit in part by selling a portion of the state's landmark tobacco settlement fund, expanding gaming, and pulling money from special funds that pay for things like mass transit, environmental projects, and parks. House Republican leaders have said the plan provides an alternative to tax increases and avoids a new tax on gas drillers that they fear would harm the industry.

**budget negotiations**

**Philadelphia Daily News**  
**Gerrymandering and Pennsylvania's democratic deficit**

**Philadelphia Inquirer**  
**Op-ed: Let court decide if Pa. officials broke the law with an unbalanced budget**

Democrats, both in the House and in the governor's office, however, have said the plan lacks recurring sources of revenue needed to solve a larger, more systemic budget imbalance. The proposal will encounter opposition in the Senate, one Democratic leader said. "I think it would be tough [to pass]," said Senate Minority Leader Jay Costa (D, Allegheny). To some extent, House Republicans expect that.

One leader characterized the bill as a gambit, an opening bid to get a conversation going. Before the House vote, Majority Leader Dave Reed (R, Indiana) said: "We're going to move forward with this with the expectation we get to 102 votes and then we'll enter into the next round of negotiations and hopefully finish that in a very timely fashion."

Wolf said he is optimistic that the House and the Senate will come to some sort of compromise by Monday, but he would not elaborate on why he thinks that. "Again," he said, "there is no guarantee." The Senate in July passed a **revenue package** that would balance the budget the legislature passed on June 30 through a mix of borrowing and new and increased taxes, including a levy on natural gas drilling. Wolf has said he supports the Senate's proposal, but tax-averse House Republicans have rejected it.

What happens in the legislature over the next few days will greatly impact what cuts, if any, Wolf has to make. Treasurer Joe Torsella, also a Democrat, has warned that the state's primary bank account is expected to careen toward zero, forcing Wolf to decide which bills to delay and which expenses to forgo entirely.

Wolf said he has "taken some steps" to cover the state through the weekend. Absent a revenue package, the governor said he expects that Standard & Poor's would likely call Monday to announce that it would downgrade the state's credit rating, making it more expensive for the state to borrow money. Wolf said he expects to know more Friday about what specific spending he might cut. "If they're going to force this issue," he said, "I will manage the financial situation as best I can." – *Philadelphia Inquirer*

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As Facebook ramps up its new "in-stream" video advertising, the social media company is attempting to avoid the brand safety headaches that have plagued rivals such as YouTube in recent months. Facebook on Wednesday introduced new "monetization eligibility standards" it said are designed to provide more clear guidance on the types of content that will be allowed to have advertising run alongside it on the platform. It will also specify the types of publishers and video creators who can earn money from ads on Facebook.

The company said it would not place ads alongside content that focuses on tragedy, conflict or debated social issues, or that depicts acts or threats of violence, for example. It will remove ads from content that fails to comply with its guidelines. To date, Facebook hasn't had to deal with advertising adjacency challenges to the extent many online media companies and ad platforms have, owing to the nature of its in-feed ad formats that appear as stand-alone entries as users scroll through their news feeds.

But as the company **rolls out its new in-stream video ad product** and hosts more publisher content via its Instant Articles platform, advertisers are beginning to ask more questions about what types of content their ads might appear within across the social network. The new in-stream ads will appear as ad breaks in the middle of publishers' videos, but won't be inserted in user-uploaded videos. "We take very seriously our responsibility to earn and maintain the trust of our advertiser partners—and give them the confidence they need to invest in us," Facebook's vice president of global marketing solutions, Carolyn Everson, wrote in a blog post published Wednesday.

Facebook said it's now testing in-stream video ad breaks with hundreds of publishers, many of which are already creating content for its new video platform Watch. Plus, more than 10,000 publishers are now posting articles directly to Facebook using Instant Articles, which have gradually been allowed to carry more ads.

In an attempt to alleviate brand safety concerns, Facebook said that in the coming months it will begin providing advertisers with post-campaign reports specifying which publishers' content their ads appeared in, across in-stream videos, Instant Articles and its Audience Network ad network product. Advertisers won't be given the ability to specify which content they want their ads appear alongside using "whitelists" of preapproved publishers. Rather, they will be required to "blacklist" specific publishers from their ad buys, or to remove categories of publishers Facebook deems to publish "sensitive" material.

Facebook said it would also provide marketers with a new tool that will offer a preview of which publishers' content their ads may appear alongside before their ad campaign begins. While the new monetization eligibility standards will apply to videos and Instant Articles hosted on Facebook itself, they will not apply to the Audience Network, which allows marketers to target consumers across websites and properties outside of the Facebook platform.

Brand safety has been a growing concern for marketers in recent years as they try to reach more tailored audiences. Thanks to the rise of automated ad targeting systems and vast ad networks, it's become increasingly difficult to keep track of where their ads might show up. Earlier this year, a number of big brands **pulled their ads** from YouTube after revelations that their ads ran alongside videos promoting anti-Semitism and terrorism, for example.

YouTube parent Google, a unit of Alphabet Inc., vowed to do a better job policing its content and to give marketers more information about where their ads appear across the service, as well as setting a 10,000-view threshold for a video channel to reach before it can make money from ads. Some big advertisers **have since returned**. Facebook appears eager to settle advertisers' brand safety nerves before it begins ramping up its in-stream video ads more aggressively, even though those ads won't run during user-generated videos as on YouTube. But the balance between brand safety and maximizing ad revenues can be a tricky one to strike.

Meanwhile, ad-buying agencies have been calling for online ad platforms to police their content more carefully, and to give advertisers greater transparency into their systems. Speaking at the Goldman Sachs Communacopia conference in New York on Tuesday, WPP Chief Executive Martin Sorrell said both Google and Facebook have been "responsive" to brand safety issues, but suggested they should do more. "They are not tech companies or engineering companies. Google and Facebook are media companies. They have responsibility for the editorial that flows through their pipes. And I think they are slowly coming to the understanding that is the case," Mr. Sorrell said.

Marketers have also been calling for online ad platforms such as Facebook and YouTube to allow third parties to audit their brand safety claims. Google **promised to do so** in April and now says it's working to implement verification technology for YouTube from DoubleVerify, Integral Ad Science and comScore. Facebook's Ms. Everson promised similar functionality in her blog post. "Our teams are partnering closely with third parties, such as DoubleVerify and Integral Ad Science, to ensure the brand safety controls we create serve our advertisers' needs," she wrote. – **Wall Street Journal**

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Pennsylvania will lose two good public servants next year. They deserve words of praise.

State Rep. John Taylor of Philadelphia and U.S. Rep. Charlie Dent of Allentown have both announced they will not stand for re-election in 2018. Taylor will retire after 34 years in the state House. Dent is leaving Congress after 14 years. Both men are Republican loyalists. Both are what could be called moderates who tilt toward conservative. Because of that, they are out of step with many in their party. In the Republican establishment, both in Harrisburg and Washington, moderation is a vice and conservatism is considered phony unless it includes a slash-and-burn approach not only on social issues, but to government itself.

Taylor and Dent have refused to be pressured into adopting this brand of politics. They are reminiscent of legislators in earlier days, deeply partisan, but also aware of their duty to govern responsibly, even if it takes compromise – a horrible word in the radical conservative lexicon. In the House Republican caucus, Taylor was for many years the only Republican legislator from Philadelphia. That status could have made him ineffective, but it did not. He talked to and dealt with Democrats. He advanced the city's agenda when he agreed with it. He was crucial in keeping Philadelphia on the minds of his Republican colleagues, winning state money for the Port of Philadelphia and SEPTA.

The fact that he was pro-union – another rarity among Republicans – helped. The fact that he had a good disposition and a practical turn of mind helped, too. He realized that he was elected to serve a larger purpose than advancing his own interests. He was there to serve the interests of his constituents in Northeast Philadelphia's 177<sup>th</sup> District and the residents of his hometown.

**Taylor is little known outside of political circles**, and that is deliberate. He was a workhorse, not a show horse in the halls of the legislature, more interested in results than public praise. It wasn't easy being the odd man out. As Taylor himself put it, he was ridiculed as a right-wing nut in deep blue and very liberal Philadelphia, and ridiculed as a socialist in the GOP caucus in Harrisburg.

**Dent was a much more visible leader.** He is head of the Tuesday Group, a collection of 50 or so moderate but conservative members of Congress. He drew the wrath of President Trump and Republican leaders in the House by opposing the various Republican attempts to repeal Obamacare. Dent calls himself a member of the “governing wing” of his party – a believer in compromise (that dirty word again) to accomplish goals. He had already drawn opposition to re-election from a pro-Trump state representative who has called Dent “the number-one turncoat” in his party.

Dent angered radical Republicans not only for disagreeing with party positions, but by being vocal about it. Most other moderate Republicans didn’t have the gumption to speak out, but as Dent put it, “Silence is consent.” We regret that Taylor and Dent are retiring, but we can’t blame them. They are escaping a party so sick it hates what they stand for. – ***Philadelphia Inquirer*** editorial

