

AP

3 candidates for Nevada governor pledge to protect Medicaid

By MICHELLE L. PRICE

May 9, 2018



LAS VEGAS (AP) — Three of the four leading candidates for Nevada governor pledged Tuesday night to protect the state's expanded Medicaid program if elected in November.

Republican state Treasurer Dan Schwartz as well as Democrats Clark County Commissioner Chris Giunchigliani and Clark County Commission Chairman Steve Sisolak spoke to about 400 people representing churches, nonprofits and schools who make up a group called Nevadans for the Common Good. Organizers said Republican candidate and Attorney General Adam Laxalt declined the group's invitation to appear because he had a scheduling conflict.

Schwartz and Giunchigliani sat next to each other and chatted occasionally, while Sisolak, who is in a heated primary battle with Giunchigliani, sat six seats away from his commission colleague.

Members of **Nevadans for the Common Good** urged the candidates to ensure residents have reliable transportation, affordable housing and access to affordable health care, particularly by guarding Nevada's Medicaid expansion.

Nevada's expansion of Medicaid under President Barack Obama's Affordable Care Act has allowed 200,000 of the state's poor to get insurance.

Giunchigliani and Sisolak said they'd work to ensure the expanded coverage isn't rolled back. Schwartz said he too would continue the program but questioned how Nevada could continue to pay for it, saying the health law didn't provide a way to fund it.

Giunchigliani said she also wants to raise the rates that doctors are reimbursed for seeing Medicaid patient so doctors have an incentive to continue accepting that insurance.

To boost funding for Nevada's public schools, all three candidates said they wanted to ensure revenues from an increase on hotel room taxes and taxes on legal marijuana sales are sent to education.

Giunchigliani and Schwartz also questioned why Nevada has approved a \$750 million tax hike to help pay for a new NFL stadium in Las Vegas for the Oakland Raiders instead of spending that on something like schools.

Sisolak, who was closely involved in the stadium and Raiders plan, defended the project and said it would generate \$35 million in tax revenue a year.

On public transportation, Giunchigliani suggested that there may be a creative way to use ride-hailing services like Lyft and Uber to help senior citizens and people with disabilities who need to travel long distances.

Laxalt campaign spokesman Andy Matthews did not respond to questions about Laxalt's whereabouts Tuesday but released a statement Laxalt is attending forums and events in every county to talk to voters and hear their concerns.

"He looks forward to continuing to work hard to earn every vote between now and the June 12 primary," Matthews said.

The candidates hoping to replace term-limited Republican Gov. Brian Sandoval in November must first make it through a June 12 primary election.