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**Heller Proposes Legislation to Provide Veterans with Advanced Technology Training**

**Washington, D.C.** – U.S. Senators Dean Heller (R-NV), John Boozman (R-AR), Jim Risch (R-ID) and Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV) introduced legislation to expand and strengthen a successful Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) pilot program covering the costs for non-traditional technology education programs. The Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses (VET TEC) Act would allow veterans to learn valuable 21st century workforce skills such as computer coding and programming as a VA educational benefit. This is a proven program that covers costs of IT training that typically aren’t covered by the Post 9/11 GI Bill.

“As Nevada continues to be a leader in the tech sector, it’s important that veterans have the training they need to succeed once they return home,” **said Heller.** “Our legislation enables the VA to connect veterans with educational programs for coding, programming, and other technologically-related courses in order to better prepare them to re-enter the workforce and empower them with the skills necessary to compete in today’s global economy.”

“Providing educational opportunities for our veterans to learn the technical skills companies need is a win-win. By modernizing the education model, we can open doors to training and jobs for veterans reentering the workforce,” **said Boozman.**

“As our veterans return home and transition to civilian life, we must ensure that they have the tools and training needed to get ahead,” **said Risch.** “We know veterans are 45% more likely to be self-employed than non-veterans, with at least 2.4 million firms currently being owned and operated by former service members. These skills will be infinitely valuable to our veterans as they start new businesses or reengage in the workforce.”

“I am proud to support legislation that will help provide our veterans greater opportunities to succeed in the workforce,” **Capito said.** “Not only will the VET TEC Act help veterans obtain the knowledge and skills they need to compete in a changing economy, but it will also help meet the economic needs of communities in West Virginia and across the country.”

The VET TEC Act would:

* Expand VA’s Accelerated Learning pilot program that currently partners with technology education programs for coding and programming boot camps, information technology (IT) certification courses and web services;
* Authorize VA to contract with technology education programs to provide non-traditional technology courses;
* Provide VA the flexibility to use contracting as an alternative oversight mechanism in order to terminate contracts with under-performing or fraudulent educational programs;
* Allow only reputable educational programs to participate, giving preference to programs offering tuition reimbursement and including payment milestones to ensure accountability; and
* Provide veterans with a housing stipend similar to the Post 9/11 GI Bill.

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