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| **For Immediate Release:** | **Contact:** Neal A. Patel |
| April 14, 2016 | 202-224-6244 |

**Heller Travel Priority Approved by Senate to Be Included in Aviation Bill****(Washington, DC)** – Recently, U.S. Senator Dean Heller’s (R-NV) [U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Airport Staffing Amendment](http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=5DEC63CB-603A-4D14-9340-1249EAB812E1) to the [*Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization Act of 2016*](http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/9270731d-2db7-4c87-a2c3-b79f98bcdcef/Thune-Nelson%20Substitute%203464.pdf) (H.R.636) was approved by the United States Senate. Senator Heller worked with Majority Whip John Cornyn (R-TX) to include his amendment (#3507) in Cornyn’s broader package, referred to as the Cross-Border Trade Enhancement Act (Amendment #3779).  “I appreciate Majority Whip Cornyn for teaming up with me to get this important Nevada tourism priority approved by the Senate,” **said Senator Dean Heller.**  “Providing ports of entry the ability to form public-private partnership aimed at improving international passenger processing can increase tourism while improving national security.  I hope our language will provide airports another tool in their toolboxes to improve operations and attract new international service.”   This amendment would allow a ports of entry, like an airport, to enter into public-private partnerships with the CBP to improve operations. Last May, Thomas Cook Airlines scrapped its plans to start twice-weekly nonstop service between Reno and London scheduled to begin December 19, citing CBP’s inability to process London arrivals at Reno-Tahoe International Airport in a timely manner. **Background:** Senators Cornyn, Heller, Flake, and McCain filed amendment #3779 to the[*Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization Act of 2016*](http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/9270731d-2db7-4c87-a2c3-b79f98bcdcef/Thune-Nelson%20Substitute%203464.pdf) that would encourage public-private partnerships to boost staffing and make infrastructure improvements at U.S. ports of entry without adding to the deficit. Senator Cornyn’s standalone bill and original amendment was limited to land ports of entry, but Senator Heller worked with him to include language that mirrors the Heller-Reid U.S. Customs and Border Protection Airport Staffing Amendment (#3507) filed early last week.

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| [**Heller-Reid U.S. Customs and Border Protection Airport Staffing Amendment**](http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/3b6fb8fe-82ab-4fef-80c5-b48f644985fc/Heller-Reid%203507.pdf)* Given the need for improved airport security and traveler processing efficiency at participating airports, this amendment would allow ports of entry to enter into public-private partnerships with the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to improve operations. Specifically, it would allow airports participating in the Port of Entry Partnership Pilot Program, known as the Donor 559 program, to privately finance:
	+ Salaries and expenses of up to five additional CBP officers;
	+ Salaries and expenses of CBP employees that support officers in performing law enforcement functions;
	+ costs related to the temporary placement or permanent relocation of officers; and
	+ Costs incurred by CBP to pay existing officers overtime.
* This amendment passed as part of a broader CBP proposal, the Cross-Border Trade Enhancement Act ([Amendment #3565](http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/5838307c-8880-46ea-98a8-27c41de34eb6/Cornyn-Heller-McCain-Flake%203779.pdf)) offered by Senators Cornyn, Heller, Flake, and McCain.
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