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**Heller Secures Three Provisions in Bipartisan Legislation to Improve Care at the VA, Bill Now Heads to the President’s Desk**

**WASHINGTON** – Today, the U.S. Senate passed the John S. McCain III, Daniel K. Akaka, and Samuel R. Johnson VA Maintaining Internal Systems and Strengthening Integrated Networks (VA MISSION) Act, bipartisan legislation that U.S. Sen. Dean Heller (R-NV) helped introduce to further fund and reform the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Veterans Choice Program, expand eligibility for caregivers, recruit and retain doctors, and streamline the VA health care system. The historic proposal includes three bills authored by Heller, a senior member of the U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, to help Nevada’s veteran and military communities. The VA MISSION Act now goes to the President’s desk for his signature.

“Just last week, a veteran from Gardnerville said that he prefers to see his doctor at the clinic one mile down the road from his home, but even under the VA Choice Program – he is forced to travel 100 miles roundtrip to see his cardiologist and his foot doctor. That doesn’t make any sense, and it is exactly what the VA MISSION Act aims to fix,” **said Heller.**Included in the package are three of Heller’s proposals: the [Veterans Transplant Coverage Act](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2017/11/u-s-house-passes-heller-bill-to-aid-veterans-in-need-of-transplants), which allows veterans to receive live-donor organ transplants from non-veterans; [the VA Bonus Transparency Act](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=F37A2278-20CE-476D-A75A-BF2B1D949A9A), which requires the VA to annually report on the bonuses awarded to critical positions within the VA; and the Maximizing Efficiency and Improving Access to Providers at the VA Act, which requires VA to hire medical scribes for patient data entry so physicians can spend more time with the veteran patient.

“Whether it’s increasing options for veterans in need of an organ transplant, making it easier for VA physicians to spend more time with their patients, or bringing more transparency to the VA, I’m proud that the VA MISSION Act contains my provisions that are based on the feedback I receive from my Veterans Advisory Councils in Nevada. I’m also pleased that this bill expands the VA Caregivers program to all eras of veterans,” **said Heller.** “As we approach Memorial Day, we are reminded of those who paid the ultimate price for our freedoms, as well as the sacrifice that our military veterans – and their families - make each day. They deserve to know that our nation will support them when they return from the frontlines, and that’s what this bill is all about: empowering veterans with more choices and making sure they have access to quality, timely care near their homes. I look forward to seeing the president sign it into law.”

In the 115th Congress alone, the President has already signed ten bills that Heller either authored or helped introduce to address needs of Nevada’s 300,000 veterans. That includes Heller’s legislation to expand veterans’ GI Bill education benefits and ensure veterans’ continued access to life-saving surgeries. Most recently, Heller’s [Veteran Urgent Access to Mental Healthcare Act](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=42D0F165-0646-4EE0-9383-13500FF34336) became law in March of 2018 as part of the omnibus spending measure.

**Heller Provisions Included in The VA MISSION Act:**

* [**The Veterans Transplant Coverage Act:**](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2017/11/u-s-house-passes-heller-bill-to-aid-veterans-in-need-of-transplants) This bill allows veterans to receive organ transplants from a non-veteran with their VA coverage. Currently, the VA can deny a transplant to a veteran if the live donor is a non-veteran.
* [**The VA Bonus Transparency Act:**](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=F37A2278-20CE-476D-A75A-BF2B1D949A9A) This bill requires the VA to submit an annual report on performance awards and bonuses given to high-level VA employees.
* **A Pilot Program for Medical Scribes:**This requires VA to hire medical scribes for patient data entry so physicians can spend more time with the veteran patient.

**Veterans Bills Heller Authored, Helped Introduce, or Co-Led Signed into Law During the 115th Congress:**

* S. 2548 (Heller authored), Veteran Urgent Access to Mental Healthcare Act
* S. 2247 (Heller authored), legislation for VA cemetery improvements
* S.114 (Heller authored), VA Choice and Quality Employment Act
* S. 1362 (Heller authored), Guard and Reservists Education Improvement Act
* S. 1277 (Heller co-led), VET TEC Act
* S. 1024, (Heller original cosponsor) Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act
* S. 1094, (Heller original cosponsor) Department of Veterans Affairs Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act
* S. 1598, (Heller original cosponsor) Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act
* S. 1489, (Heller original cosponsor) Veterans Education Relief and Reinstatement Act
* S.784 (Heller original cosponsor) the Veterans’ Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act

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