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**Heller SelectUSA Bill and Good-Government Amendment Sail through Committee** *Top Priorities Address Job Creation and Government Accountability to Taxpayers***(Washington, DC)**– United States Senator Dean Heller issued the following statement after the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation passed the SelectUSA Authorization Act of 2016, S. 3097, during a committee mark up earlier today. **“This legislation’s driving force is simple: create more jobs here at home. Specifically, it will increase employment opportunities in Nevada by allowing for collaboration between local stakeholders and foreign companies seeking to invest directly in the United States. With over 45,000 jobs in Nevada already resulting from foreign-owned businesses, this legislation will encourage additional growth and ensure our state continues to emerge as a national leader in innovation, technology, and entrepreneurship,”** stated Senator Heller.During the mark up, the Committee also adopted an amendment proposed by Heller, Commerce Committee Chairman John Thune (R-SD), and Senator Ron Johnson (R-WI) to prevent government travel improprieties,to deter the misuse of staff members for non-official business matters, and to stop wasteful office renovation expenditures of politically appointed officials at the Department of Commerce. This amendment was a response to a [recent report released by the Inspector General of the U.S. Department of Commerce entitled “Investigation into Travel & Other Improprieties in the Office of a Politically Appointed Official.”](https://www.oig.doc.gov/OIGPublications/15-0444.pdf) This official was later exposed by the Washington Post in its article [“Globetrotting Obama official traveled in luxury. Taxpayers footed the bill.”](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/powerpost/wp/2016/09/09/top-obama-administration-official-dinged-by-watchdog-for-the-cost-of-travelling-in-style/?tid=a_inl) **“Serving in the federal government as a political appointee is an honorable public service. Contrary to the behavior of some at the Commerce Department, it does not mean you have a blank check to waste taxpayer dollars on lavish renovations and luxuries. This amendment holds government officials accountable and ensures federal funds are spent responsibly. The gross levels of excess and misuse of taxpayers’ dollars documented in the Inspector General report are inexcusable and have no place here in Washington,”** said Senator Heller. **BACKGROUND:****The SelectUSA Legislation:**SelectUSA, housed within the Department of Commerce, focuses on attracting and retaining direct foreign investment in the United States. Specifically, it coordinates with more than 20 federal agencies to respond to potential investors and helps them navigate the U.S. federal system. The reforms included in the Heller legislation aim to enhance the programs ability to attract investments that jump-start economic development, spur research and development, and open up domestic export markets. This legislation is supported by Economic Development Authority of Western Nevada (EDAWN), the Las Vegas Global Economic Alliance (LVGEA), the Northern Nevada Development Authority (NNDA), and the Nevada Governor’s Office of Economic Development (GOED). **Legislation Provisions:*** The SelectUSA Authorization Act authorizes the SelectUSA program for the next 5 years.
* The Act updates SelectUSA to increase opportunities and access to services for rural and smaller states, as well as to increase coordination with other federal entities focused on promoting international trade and investment.
* It adds Congressional oversight of the program by requiring the Secretary of Commerce to submit an annual report to Congress on the activities of the SelectUSA program during the preceding fiscal year. The report would include:
	+ A description of the outreach activities of the program and the amounts used by SelectUSA for such activities;
	+ The number of foreign firms that relocated to the U.S. as a result of the SelectUSA Initiative;
	+ A description of the progress made by the U.S. in increasing its share of FDI from the Asia and Pacific regions; and
	+ Any findings, made by the SelectUSA Initiative, that are relevant to promoting the U.S. as a premier location for FDI.
* The bill also calls for a GAO study to examine the effectiveness of SelectUSA in increasing, encouraging, and supporting foreign direct investment in the United States.

**The Thune-Heller-Johnson Amendment:*** Requires political appointees at the Department of Commerce to be trained on the regulations and policies governing the use of subordinates for non-official business, official travel, self-promotion, and congressional budget restrictions;
* Mandates the Department provide Congress with a report on renovations to the office suite of the Under Secretary for International Trade within 30 days; and
* Directs the Secretary of Commerce to implement new procedures and safeguards pertaining to political appointee’s office renovations.

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