

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **For Immediate Release:** | **Contact:** Megan Taylor |
| August 16, 2017 | 202-224-6244 |

**Heller-Backed “Forever G.I. Bill” Signed Into Law***Historic Legislation Includes Three Heller Provisions*

**Washington, D.C.** – Today, President Trump signed into law the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act, sweeping, bipartisan legislation cosponsored by U.S. Sen. Dean Heller (R-NV) to improve veterans’ education benefits and enhance the post-9/11 G.I. Bill. The historic proposal includes three provisions authored by Heller to aid Nevada’s veteran and military communities.

The Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act makes much-needed updates for reservists, Purple Heart recipients, and veterans who face school closures while enrolled and surviving family members. The legislation also provides increased resources and authority for educational assistance to pursue science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) programs, computer programming and career technical training.

The bill removes the 15-year time period within which a veteran must use their G.I. Bill benefits, subsequently earning the name “Forever G.I. Bill” by some of the nation’s Veteran Service Organizations.

“The G.I. Bill is one of our country’s greatest successes, and it’s why we must continue to strengthen this benefit for veterans today, and future generations,” **said Heller**. “I was honored to work with my colleagues on the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee to garner wide, bipartisan support for this historic proposal and push it through Congress. Our legislation bolsters G.I. Bill benefits for reservists, Purple Heart recipients, and eliminates the arbitrary 15-year limit, giving our nation’s warriors and their dependents the flexibility to further their education when the time is right for them. This is yet another positive development for Nevada’s veterans, and I’ll continue to work to empower Nevada’s veterans with more tools to succeed.”

**Heller Provisions Included In The Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act:**

* **S. 1362, Heller’s Guard and Reservists Education Improvement Act:** This legislation adjusts the G.I. bill tier structure to increase the benefit payable percentage for Guardsmen and Reservists who served less than 12months. In many cases, time spent on initial training does not count toward active-duty time.
* **S.1277, VET TEC Act of 2017 (Heller is an Original Cosponsor):** This provision would require the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to conduct a pilot program allowing veterans to access non-traditional technology education programs, including in the areas of computer programming, computer software, media application, and information sciences.
* **S. 1489, Veterans Education Relief and Reinstatement Act (VERRA) of 2017 (Heller is an Original Cosponsor):** VERRA would expand the VA’s authority to restore the Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits of veterans who are affected by the permanent closure of ITT Tech or other institutions. Currently, VA cannot fully restore a veterans’ benefits if a school they attend permanently closes.

*###*