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| **For Immediate Release:** | **Contact:** Megan Taylor |
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**Heller, Bipartisan Group of Senators Defend Critical Veterans Programs**

**Washington, D.C.** – U.S. Senators Dean Heller (R-NV), joined with a number of colleagues in the U.S. Senate making the case for programs that combat veteran homelessness. In a letter to the Senate Appropriations subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Affairs chairman and ranking member, Heller and a bipartisan group of senators highlighted their support for the Supporting Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Program, the Grant and Per Diem (GPD) Program, and for services provided by the Housing and Urban Development-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) Program.

[Earlier this year, Heller underlined many issues facing Nevada’s veterans and homeowners during the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs’ confirmation hearing for Dr. Ben Carson, the Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) nominee.](https://youtu.be/9lwhzavYJkQ) Specifically, Heller stressed the need for HUD to work closer with the VA to reduce veteran homelessness in Nevada.

Last week, [Heller spoke at a Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs](https://youtu.be/5l0YTSIvfeU) hearing about [bipartisan legislation](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2015/10/heller-legislation-to-assist-homeless-veterans-and-their-dependents-passes-u-s-senate) to ensure children of homeless veterans are eligible for services provided to that veteran by VA-funded facilities, and that no veteran is turned away from a facility because they have dependents.

**The letter reads in full below:**

The Honorable Jerry Moran

Chairman

Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies

Committee on Appropriations

Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Brian Schatz

Ranking Member

Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies

Committee on Appropriations

Washington, DC 20510

*Dear Chairman Moran and Ranking Member Schatz:*

*As the Senate Appropriations Committee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies considers the Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 Appropriations bill, we respectfully request the Subcommittee provide robust funding for the Supporting Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Program, the Grant and Per Diem (GPD) Program, and case management and supportive services as administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) under the Housing and Urban Development-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) Program.*

*In November 2016, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and the Interagency Council on Homelessness released the 2016 Point-in-Time Count showing there were 39,471 homeless veterans across the country on a given night. Although this is a decline of about fifty percent since 2009, having even a single veteran experiencing homelessness is one too many. We must continue our diligence and commitment if we are to end veteran homelessness in our country once and for all.*

*The SSVF, GPD, and HUD-VASH programs are central to federal efforts to ending veteran homelessness. These unique programs support communities across the nation providing critical services and housing for veterans and their families.*

*Through the SSVF program, VA awards grants in all fifty states to non-profit organizations assisting low-income veterans and their families living in or transitioning to permanent housing. Grantees offer eligible veteran families with case management and assistance in obtaining VA and other benefits, including: health care services, daily living services, personal financial planning services, legal services, housing counseling services, among others. In FY 2016, SSVF served nearly 150,000 veterans and their families in all fifty states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. According to VA’s National Center on Homelessness, of those discharged from the SSVF program, eighty-four percent obtained permanent housing.*

*The VA’s GPD Program provides grants to public entities or nonprofit organizations offering services and transitional housing to homeless veterans. The program includes two primary sources of funding: capital and per diem grants. Capital grants are awarded to entities that remodel, acquire, construct, or expand facilities that serve as veteran service centers or transitional housing. The per diem portion pays organizations for the housing and services provided to veterans at a fixed dollar rate. According to VA, nearly 14,000 beds nationwide served more than 25,000 veterans in 2016 allowing more than 16,500 veterans to exit transitional housing and enter into permanent housing. As such, the GPD Program remains a key component in the fight to end veteran homelessness.*

*HUD-VASH is the largest supportive permanent housing program in our country combining HUD’s Housing Choice rental assistance vouchers with VA case management and supportive services. Some of these services include a full range of medical, mental health, and employment services to veterans within their. Since 2008, more than 79,000 vouchers have been awarded, and according to HUD on November 17, 2016, approximately 111,000 formerly homeless veterans were in homes due to HUD-VASH.*

*We understand the difficult decisions the Subcommittee faces in the current budget environment. However, the need for programs that support homeless veterans remains great. As we work towards the goal of ending veteran homelessness, providing sufficient funding to the SSVF, GPD, and HUD-VASH programs will allow for continued momentum and progress toward ending veteran homelessness. Thank you for your consideration of this request and your support of our nation’s veterans and their families.*

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DEAN HELLER

U.S. Senator

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