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 **Heller’s Bill to Expand Veterans’ Mental Health Services in Government-Funding Measure***Funding for State Veterans Homes and to Combat Veteran Homelessness Also Included*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.**– U.S. Senator Dean Heller (R-NV), a senior member of the U.S. Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee, today announced his legislation to provide mental health treatment to veterans who may not have access to benefits from the U.S. Department of Veterans (VA) has been included in a must-pass government-funding bill that Congress is expected to consider this week. Heller recently introduced the [Veteran Urgent Access to Mental Healthcare Act](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=4AE4659E-A7E9-472B-8FCF-31E7EC53DEBF) with Senators John Cornyn (R-TX) and Marco Rubio (R-FL).

Specifically, the legislation provides veterans who were released from the military with an “other-than-honorable” discharge a mental health assessment and treatment from the VA. Under current law, veterans with an “other-than-honorable” discharge do not have access to VA health benefits unless the VA deems otherwise.

“Our country owes a great debt to the men and women who have served this nation, and that’s why I believe it is our solemn responsibility to make sure that our troops have access to mental health resources once they transition out of the military,” **said Heller.** “This bill sends a strong message to veterans in Nevada and across the country who were released with an “other-than-honorable” discharge that we recognize their service and their sacrifice and that there is treatment readily available for them if they need it. I’m proud to work with Senator Cornyn on this legislation, and thank congressional leaders for including my proposal in the funding package.”

The omnibus also includes two other priorities Heller fought for to help support Nevada’s 300,000 military veterans.

The bill directs $685 million to the VA’s State Home Construction Grant Program, which helps fund critical veterans’ homes including the [Northern Nevada Veterans Home](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2017/7/heller-attends-northern-nevada-veterans-home-groundbreaking). Inclusion of the funding [comes after Heller urged the Appropriations Committee last year to continue federal support for the state facilities](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/7f9f37b7-d38f-4e47-a963-a06b9e7a3ee0/05032017%20Cosign%20Letter%20to%20Appropriations%20re%20State%20Veterans%20Home%20Grant%20Program.pdf), arguing that they “serve the long-term needs of our country’s veterans.”

Additionally, [following Heller’s request](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/7ea8fab4-69e0-44f5-b739-49de8fbbe1a1/FY18%20Homeless%20Veterans%20Programs%20Funding%20Letter%20SSVF%20GPD%20HUDVASH.pdf), the government-funding measure directs federal resources to help end veteran homelessness and assist at-risk veterans. The bill includes $1.7 billion for homeless assistance programs at the VA, including $340 million for the homeless supportive services for low-income veterans and families. It also includes $40 million for new housing vouchers for homeless veterans. Since coming to Congress, [Heller has championed several bills to combat veteran homelessness](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2018/1/heller-to-va-help-nevada-s-homeless-veterans-get-jobs-succeed-in-stem-careers) in Nevada and across the country.

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