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| **For Immediate Release:** | **Contact:** Neal A. Patel/Michawn Rich |
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**Heller Amendment Seeks Justice for Victims of Human Trafficking****(Washington, DC)** – Today, United States Senator Dean Heller spoke on the Senate floor about his amendment to S. 178, the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015. More specifically, Heller’s amendment ensures that Department of Homeland Security personnel are properly trained to prevent human trafficking.  **Photo****Click here to watch video.**REMARKS AS PREPARED:Mr. /Madam President,I rise today in support of the Hirono-Heller Amendment # 2109, which addresses Asian-American and Pacific Islander student data.In my home state of Nevada, and in many of my colleagues’ home states, the AAPI population is one of the fastest-growing. In fact according to Census data, Nevada’s AAPI population grew by 116 percent between 2000 and 2010. Now, even though this AAPI group represents students who come from a variety of different backgrounds, current law and the Every Child Achieves Act use the broad “Asian/Pacific Islander” category when reporting on student achievement. As a result, this student population as a whole seems to perform well, but the broad AAPI category hides big achievement gaps between subgroups. And current Census data gives us this evidence. According to the 2010 Census, 72% of Asian Indian adults have a bachelor’s degree or higher, whereas only 26% of Vietnamese adults do. Steps should be taken to help close these achievement gaps and create an environment where all students can succeed. This is critical to ensuring that our nation’s children are prepared to attend college or enter the workforce. That is why the Hirono-Heller amendment is so important. Our amendment would simply require school districts with large populations of AAPI students to show how these subgroups are performing.This amendment would only apply in large school districts with over 1,000 AAPI students. This represents less than 3% of school districts nationwide. In fact, 11 states would not be affected at all by the Hirono-Heller amendment. It’s also important to note that this amendment would only be used for public reporting purposes. And it would not require accountability measures or interventions at any level. Furthermore, I also ensured this amendment is consistent with current law so that it maintains and protects the privacy rights of students.The bottom line is that having this kind of subgroup data available equips parents and local officials with the necessary information to determine how their students are doing and how to better support students who need help the most. As a father of four and a grandfather, I think parents should have access to this kind of data to know how schools are serving children in their subgroup, so they can make the right choice for their child. And school choice advocates agree. I am pleased our amendment is endorsed by the National Association of Public Charter Schools and other charter organizations. The truth is that school districts across the nation are already collecting and reporting disaggregated AAPI student data. In fact just this morning I sat down with several school superintendants from all across my home state and they told me that access to this type of data would be extremely helpful in their districts. Principals and teachers also understand the value of this subgroup data and how it reveals groups of students in need of assistance that would otherwise be missed by looking at the broad AAPI category. That is why this amendment is also supported by the National Association of Elementary School Principals, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, and the National Education Association. I am also proud that our amendment is also supported by over 100 AAPI, Latino, and African-American civil rights groups, educators, women’s groups, and the disability community. These groups agree with Senator Hirono and me that AAPI subgroup disaggregation is a top priority.I want to thank Senator Hirono for her leadership on this issue and dedication to serving the needs of our communities. I would also like to thank Chairman Alexander and Ranking Member Senator Murray in their efforts to not only put together this bipartisan bill but also to move forward with an open amendment process during its debate. I encourage my colleagues to vote in support of the Hirono-Heller amendment to ensure that parents and school administrators alike are able to target students who need help the most. Mr. President, I yield the floor. ###http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/vendor/_skins/heller/images/newsletter/icon_fb.png http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/vendor/_skins/heller/images/newsletter/icon_tw.png http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/vendor/_skins/heller/images/newsletter/icon_yt.png |