

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **For Immediate Release:** | **Contact:** Megan Taylor |
| February 2, 2018 | 202-224-6244 |

**In Case You Missed It: Heller Efforts Highlighted During the State of the Union**

*Heller Worked to Double Child Tax Credit, Give Veterans Health Care Options*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.**– During his first State of the Union address, President Donald Trump outlined legislative successes, some of which are the result of U.S. Senator Dean Heller’s efforts, as well as his priorities for the coming year. Heller’s work includes: doubling the child tax credit from current law, ensuring Nevada’s veterans have access to care, making it easier for the VA to fire bad actors, cosponsoring legislation to increase access to potentially life-saving new cures, fulfilling our promise to Israel by relocating the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem, confirming conservative judges who uphold the Constitution, introducing legislation to double down on Iran sanctions, introducing legislation to streamline infrastructure development, and urging the passage of his legislation that would force Congress to pass an annual budget in order to receive pay. Below are excerpts from the President’s speech and a summary of Heller’s related efforts.

**Doubling the Child Tax Credit**

*“Our massive tax cuts provide tremendous relief for the middle class and small business. To lower tax rates for hardworking Americans, we nearly doubled the standard deduction for everyone.  Now, we also doubled the child tax credit…” – President Donald Trump*

Heller secured the provision to double the child tax credit from current law in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act [by filing an amendment with U.S. Senator Tim Scott (R-SC) that would increase the child tax credit to $2,000](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=ADAE007F-013A-4ADE-B306-8BF1465069EC). Read about it in the Review-Journal [here](https://www.reviewjournal.com/news/politics-and-government/house-set-to-vote-on-gop-tax-bill-but-senate-measure-faces-opposition/). Heller’s provision to [make it easier for startups and businesses to give employees an ownership stake in their company’s success](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=42F977DB-BFAF-4668-81AD-AD805E5128E8) by awarding stock options was also included in the final product.

**Ensuring Veterans Have Access to Care, Life-Saving Surgeries**

*“And we are serving our brave veterans, including giving our veterans choice in their healthcare decisions.” – President Donald Trump*

As a senior member of the U.S. Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee and author of legislation used to advance the VA Choice and Quality Employment Act (S.114) in the U.S. House of Representatives, [Heller played a pivotal role in sustaining funding for the Choice Program](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2017/8/heller-helps-get-va-choice-funding-over-the-finish-line-ensure-nevada-veterans-access-to-care). The Choice Program allows veterans living in rural areas to receive care near their homes and ensures

veterans have access to certain services, including surgeries and life-saving treatments that the VA cannot provide. For example, John, an Air Force pilot from Battle Mountain, used the Choice Program to remove cancer above his neck.

**Holding the VA’s Feet to the Fire**

*“Last year, Congress also passed, and I signed, the landmark VA Accountability Act.  Since its passage, my administration has already removed more than 1,500 VA employees who failed to give our veterans the care they deserve.  And we are hiring talented people who love our vets as much as we do.” – President Donald Trump*

[Heller joined U.S. Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL) and a bipartisan group of senators in introducing the  VA Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=3586AEA0-5FFC-4D55-8C82-EF3A350570A6), the legislation the President referenced during his address. This bill expedites the firing process for bad employees and ensures appropriate protections for whistleblowers. The legislation also prohibits the VA from awarding bonuses to employees who have been found guilty of wrongdoing. This past year, the President signed into law eight bills that Heller either introduced or co-authored that are specifically aimed at helping Nevada’s 300,000 veterans.

**Increasing Patients’ Access to Breakthrough Cures**

*“We also believe that patients with terminal conditions, and terminal illness, should have access to experimental treatment immediately that could potentially save their lives. People who are terminally ill should not have to go from country to country to seek a cure.  I want to give them a chance right here at home.  It's time for Congress to give these wonderful, incredible Americans the right to try.” – President Donald Trump*

Heller helped introduce the Trickett Wendler, Frank Mongiello, Jordan McLinn, and Matthew Bellina Right to Try Act (S.204), which would ensure that patients have access to innovative, potentially life-saving treatments.  This legislation has broad bipartisan support, and it was passed unanimously by the Senate on August 8, 2017.

**Recognizing Jerusalem as the Capital of Israel**

*“Last month, I also took an action endorsed unanimously by the U.S. Senate just months before.  I recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.” – President Donald Trump*

Heller introduced [the Jerusalem Embassy and Recognition Act, legislation that would relocate the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=15329846-E3DD-46F0-A16E-784700B8358B) by forcing the U.S. Department of State to do just that or face a penalty. In 1995, Congress passed the Jerusalem Embassy and Relocation Act, legislation that recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel by moving the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Although the bill became law later that year, the U.S. Embassy was not moved to Jerusalem.

**Confirming Circuit Court Judges**

*“Working with the Senate, we are appointing judges who will interpret the Constitution as written, including a great new Supreme Court Justice, and more circuit court judges than any new administration in the history of our country.” – President Donald Trump*

In 2017, [with help and support from Heller](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2017/12/heller-votes-to-confirm-record-breaking-number-of-circuit-court-judges-under-president-trump), the U.S. Senate delivered on President Trump’s promise to the American public by confirming 19 conservative judges to the federal bench. In October, [Heller pushed his colleagues to work full-time](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=A19D527D-5B3F-40E0-8C69-4566450C3C04), 24/7, for the remainder of the year to combat Democrat obstruction and get results for the American people. At the time, the Senate had confirmed only seven judges. Last year, the U.S. Senate confirmed more circuit court judge nominees under President Trump than any other President in modern history has had confirmed during their first year in office.

**Sanctioning Iran**

*“When the people of Iran rose up against the crimes of their corrupt dictatorship, I did not stay silent.  America stands with the people of Iran in their courageous struggle for freedom.  I am asking Congress to address the fundamental flaws in the terrible Iran nuclear deal.” – President Donald Trump*

As a strong opponent of President Obama’s dangerous deal with Iran, Heller has used his role on the U.S. Senate Banking Committee, which has jurisdiction over sanctions, to hold Iran accountable and prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon. He introduced the [Iran Ballistic Missile Sanctions Act](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2017/6/heller-files-amendment-to-double-down-on-iran-s-ballistic-missile-program), which imposes new sanctions on individuals, entities, and sectors that aid in Iran’s unlawful ballistic missile program, and filed it as an amendment to the Countering Iran’s Destabilizing Activities Act, which is also aimed at mitigating the damage of President Obama’s Iran deal. Heller cosponsored and voted in support of Countering Iran’s Destabilizing Activities Act, bipartisan legislation that imposes sanctions on Iran for its violation of arms embargoes and continued weapons tests, support of terrorism, and efforts to prop up the Assad regime. He also voted in support of Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (PL 115-44), which imposes additional sanctions on Iran, Russia, and North Korea.

**Streamlining Infrastructure Development**

*“Any bill must also streamline the permitting and approval process, getting it down to no more than two years, and perhaps even one.  Together, we can reclaim our great building heritage.” – President Donald Trump*

Heller, a member of the U.S. Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, secured six provisions in the FAST Act, the first long-term highway bill in nearly a decade that facilitates the construction and repair of existing roads, bridges, and other important infrastructure without increasing our nation’s deficit. Heller was able to use his role to advance Nevada’s top transportation projects, such as I-580 improvements near Carson City, Project NEON in Las Vegas, and the I-11 connecting Phoenix and Las Vegas. [Heller has also worked extensively to encourage investment in and streamline the construction of rural broadband](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/videos?ID=62146E69-C12C-4B3F-B92E-A99E75DE628D) infrastructure, which is essential to the success of businesses, schools, and local communities in rural Nevada. Because nearly 85 percent of Nevada is owned by the federal government, Heller introduced [bipartisan legislation that would expand Americans’ access to broadband by streamlining the application process required to construct broadband infrastructure on federal lands](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2017/6/heller-manchin-introduce-bill-to-expand-access-to-rural-broadband). Heller also fought for three amendments that would address issues with access to quality broadband to be included in the MOBILE NOW Act (S.19).

**Ending the Sequester, Return to Normal Budgeting Process**

*“I am asking Congress to end the dangerous defense sequester and fully fund our great military.” – President Donald Trump*

Heller voted to strengthen our military by supporting the latest National Defense Authorization Act, which included the highest pay raise for our troops in eight years, and he was the only member of Nevada’s delegation who voted against sequestration in 2011. Since coming to the Senate, Heller has led the charge to force Members of Congress to pass a budget every fiscal year. He [introduced the No Budget, No Pay Act, which requires Members of Congress to pass a budget and related appropriations bills on time each year in order to receive pay](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=5f8409c1-10c2-47c3-b683-3ad052149ee2). Heller [most recently urged the passage of his No Budget, No Pay bill during the Schumer Shutdown](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=245146A6-2192-4EC3-99AD-FDC0F037A1D0), which followed the Senate Democrats’ filibuster of appropriations bills.

###

