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

# In Case You Missed It: Republican Congress Has Plenty to Show for a Productive 2017

# *Heller Shares Highlights of the Past Year in Review-Journal Piece*



[**COMMENTARY: Republican Congress has plenty to show for a productive 2017**](https://www.reviewjournal.com/opinion/commentary-republican-congress-has-plenty-to-show-for-a-productive-2017/)

By Sen. Dean Heller

Las Vegas Review-Journal

As we approach a new year with a renewed sense of optimism, we also reflect on a year of significant progress — despite what President Donald Trump’s critics may suggest. By working together, we’ve been able to finally get this country headed in the right direction, and I’m going to highlight a few reasons why Nevadans will benefit because of it.

To begin, fewer than two weeks ago the president signed into law our legislation that will provide critically important tax cuts for Nevada’s middle class. To put that into perspective, this bill is expected to save a typical Nevada family of four approximately $2,200, according to the independent Tax Foundation. One way we were able to achieve that is by doubling the child tax credit from current law — one of the provisions that I was proud to secure in the legislation — and lowering rates on low-income and middle-class families.

This is particularly important at a time when nearly eight in 10 Americans who work full-time live paycheck to paycheck, real median household income in Nevada is down $7,000 from 10 years ago and housing and child-care expenses continue to skyrocket.

From bringing Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin to Las Vegas to hear directly from my constituents, to working closely with Ivanka Trump to increase the child tax credit, I’ve made sure that Nevadans’ voices were heard by the administration and my colleagues. As a member of the tax-writing Senate Finance Committee who fought to get this bill over the finish line, I encourage all Nevadans to compare your paychecks today to the ones you’ll receive in February; they’re going to be bigger because our bill allows you to keep more of your hard-earned money.

Furthermore, this bill saves tens of thousands of Nevadans hundreds of dollars by repealing Obamacare’s individual mandate. According to the IRS, approximately 70,000 Nevadans paid Obamacare’s tax penalty in 2015, and of those who paid the fine, eight in 10 of them made $50,000 or less per year. It does not make sense for the government to fine Nevadans who likely cannot afford a product they are forced to buy, so our bill eliminates Obamacare’s individual mandate penalty.

This bill also takes a critical step toward achieving true energy independence by authorizing oil and gas leases in parts of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. This will allow us to increase our domestic energy supply, keep energy costs for Nevadans down and decrease our dependence on foreign nations for resources that we already have.

In addition to passing the first tax overhaul in decades, the U.S. Senate confirmed more than 300 of the president’s nominations, including 19 conservative judges. Not only did we make sure Justice Neil Gorsuch got a seat on the U.S. Supreme Court, but we confirmed more circuit court judge nominees under President Trump than the U.S. Senate has confirmed under any other president during his first year in modern history.

We also overturned 15 overly burdensome Obama-era regulations — the most ambitious rollback of government rules and Washington red tape since President Ronald Reagan was in office.

Finally, this year the Senate passed more than 400 bills, and almost 100 of them were signed into law. Fifteen of them were bills that I either authored or helped introduce, including legislation to expand veterans’ GI Bill education benefits, ensure veterans’ continued access to lifesaving surgeries and give them more options when appealing disability claims. The president even signed one of my bills in Reno, where I also met with Secretary of Veterans Affairs David Shulkin to discuss issues ranging from preventing suicide among veterans to retaining doctors.

From helping write and pass the first tax overhaul in more than 30 years to passing new laws to help Nevada’s veterans, 2017 has been a year of progress. But we can — and will — do even better in 2018.

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