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| |  |  | | --- | --- | | **For Immediate Release:** | **Contact:** [Michawn Rich](mailto:michawn_rich@heller.senate.gov) 202-224-6244 | | July 22, 2015 |  |   **Heller-Casey VA Backlog Bill Clears Committee**  *Legislation to eliminate VA backlog one step closer to Senate passage*  **(Washington, DC)** – Today, the bipartisan [*21st Century Veterans Benefits Delivery Act*](http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2015/5/heller-casey-lead-va-backlog-working-group-in-release-of-new-report-legislation-to-address-claims-delay)(S. 1203) passed the Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs. The legislation, introduced earlier this year by Senators Dean Heller (R-NV) and Bob Casey (D-PA), creates reforms at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to eliminate the disability claims backlog and improve the claims process. Click [HERE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M9_UlYuMIys) or on the video below to watch Senator Heller’s speech.    **Background:**  In May, Senator’s Heller and Casey released the [VA Backlog Working Group 2015 Report](http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/24c2c880-205c-4eb7-9e90-b9bc4958ce4e/2015%20VA%20Backlog%20Report.pdf) in which the Working Group identifies the progress that has been made on the claims backlog since 2014, which Working Group recommendations have been implemented by the VA and Congress, and what actions must still be taken to fully transition the VA to a 21st century benefits delivery system.  The [*21st Century Veterans Benefits Delivery Act*](http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2015/5/heller-casey-lead-va-backlog-working-group-in-release-of-new-report-legislation-to-address-claims-delay)and the [VA Backlog Working Group 2015 Report](http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/24c2c880-205c-4eb7-9e90-b9bc4958ce4e/2015%20VA%20Backlog%20Report.pdf) were endorsed by several Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs), including [Veterans of Foreign Wars](http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/2bc2af7c-8b0d-4c07-b972-d614abf2dfb4/114%20VA%20Backlog%20Support%20Letter%20-%20VFW.pdf) (VFW),  [American Legion](http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/31e77c20-cff1-450c-9a95-305af123a43e/114%20VA%20Backlog%20Support%20Letter%20-%20American%20Legion.pdf), [Disabled American Veterans](http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/506afb5b-5684-4cbb-9439-1474d6597006/114%20VA%20Backlog%20Support%20Letter%20-%20DAV.pdf) (DAV), [Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America](http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/665b0694-a963-45ad-91d1-fca4f978d07a/114%20VA%20Backlog%20Support%20Letter%20-%20IAVA.pdf) (IAVA), and the [Military Officers Association of America](http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/02edc48a-52f8-4cbb-bffb-e6a170f8cf5e/114%20VA%20Backlog%20Support%20Letter%20-%20MOAA.pdf) (MOAA).  Three additional bills, introduced by Senator Heller, were included in S. 1203 as passed by committee.   * [***Filipino Veterans Promise Act* (S. 151)**](http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=8d1c07c9-84be-4a47-9361-33370663f8e5) – Senators Heller and Mazie Hirono (D-HI) introduced this bipartisan legislation in January to establish a process for all eligible Filipino veterans to receive the compensation they are entitled to for their service to the United States during World War II. * [***The Veterans Small Business Opportunity and Protection Act* (S. 296)**](http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=691e901c-4a04-488e-a162-cee817b8bb15) – Authored by Senators Heller and Joe Manchin (D-WV), this legislation expands certain eligibility as a veteran-owned business for surviving spouses and dependents. * ***Veterans Affairs Research Transparency Act of 2015* (S. 114)** – Introduced by Senator Heller in January, the legislation requires the VA to make taxpayer-funded research for the VA publicly available.   ###  [http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/vendor/_skins/heller/images/newsletter/icon_fb.png](http://www.facebook.com/pages/US-Senator-Dean-Heller/325751330177) [http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/vendor/_skins/heller/images/newsletter/icon_tw.png](http://twitter.com/SenDeanHeller) [http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/vendor/_skins/heller/images/newsletter/icon_yt.png](http://www.youtube.com/user/SenDeanHeller) |