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**Reconciled Spending Bill Funds Four Nevada Military Construction Projects, Includes Heller Provisions to Support Nevada’s Veterans, Strengthen Water Security**

**WASHINGTON –** U.S. Senator Dean Heller (R-NV) today announced that the final conference agreement to accompany the Energy and Water, Legislative Branch, and Military Construction and Veterans Affairs appropriations bill (H.R. 5895) includes provisions designed to support Nevada’s veterans and increase accountability at the VA. The spending bill also funds four Nevada military construction projects at Creech Air Force Base, Nellis Air Force Base, and the National Guard Readiness Center in North Las Vegas, and it includes a Heller provision to strengthen Nevada’s water supply and security, which is based on [legislation (S.2539) that Heller previously introduced to reauthorize the Colorado River System Conservation Pilot Program (CRSCPP) for four years.](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2018/6/u-s-senate-passes-heller-measures-to-help-nevada-s-veterans-strengthen-nevada-s-water-security) Heller [previously announced that he successfully worked to keep funding to revive Yucca Mountain out of this legislation](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=F78BF374-12F0-4C31-BEB1-671AEB199C5D).

A senior member of the U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, Heller has worked to see that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) effectively operates the VA Caregiver Program, which provides a stipend to family members of severely disabled veterans who provide in-home care to the veteran. Heller’s amendment included in the appropriations package would ensure that the VA Caregiver Program has the staffing necessary in Reno, Las Vegas, and across the country to provide the attention and support these veterans and their caregivers deserve. Earlier this year, Heller and U.S. Senator Bob Casey (D-PA) contacted Acting VA Secretary Robert Wilkie urging a retrospective review of the eligibility determinations of caregivers who were discharged from the program. The letter is available [HERE](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/af1aa13b-a47e-49dd-933f-dd150b411bc7/VA%20Caregivers%20Letter%202018.pdf).

In addition to increasing oversight of the VA Caregiver Program, Heller also has a record of enhancing accountability for the VA’s use of resources to help end veteran homelessness. The appropriations package also includes an amendment that Heller filed with U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs Ranking Member Senator Jon Tester (D-MT) to prohibit the VA from transferring any funds out of the VA’s homeless veteran programs. Heller has repeatedly fought back against the VA’s repurposing of funds from VA programs designed to assist homeless veterans. In a December 2017 letter to former VA Secretary David Shulkin, Heller doubled down on his opposition and urged Shulkin to stop the VA’s proposal to redirect funding intended to help the homeless veteran population. The letter is available [HERE](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/6cb8c450-7039-4361-8fff-dd6d1c15cf3d/December%20Letter%20to%20Secretary%20Schulkin.pdf). In April of 2018, he requested that the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies provide robust funding to the Supporting Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Program, the Grant and Per Diem (GDP) Program, and case management and supportive services as administered by the VA because these programs are central to federal efforts to end veteran homelessness. The letter is available [HERE](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/223426c2-9306-498a-9b0c-831931dcc813/Approps%20Letter%202018.pdf).

“As a senior member of the U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, I’m always working to see that Nevada Nevada’s 300,000 veterans receive the benefits and care that they have earned and deserve. That includes using my oversight role to ensure that the VA effectively maximizes its resources to provide quality care and support our nation’s heroes,” **said Heller*.*** *“*I’m pleased that this legislation includes my measures aimed at increasing accountability for the VA’s Caregiver Program, providing support for disabled veterans, and enhancing oversight of the VA’s use of funding to address homelessness among veterans.”

Heller also secured the inclusion of his provision to reauthorize the CRSCPP for four years in the reconciled bill. Established by Congress to conserve water and mitigate the impact of droughts in the Colorado River Basin, which includes southern Nevada, the CRSCPP compensates holders of water rights along the basin for using less water. The CRSCPP has conserved nearly 143,000 acre feet of water since its inception in the Lower Basin alone and without Congressional action, the program is slated to expire in September 2018. Reauthorizing the program is critical for southern Nevada as the region receives nearly 90 percent of its water supply from the Colorado River, serving over 2 million residents in Clark County and over 42 million visitors per year.

“Nevada’s infrastructure and water security is critical to our state’s success, which is why I continue to fight for commonsense policies that help provide the tools we need. My provision to reauthorize the Colorado River System Conservation Program will go a long way to support the conservation efforts in southern Nevada, a region that is no stranger to drought,” **said Heller.** “Nevada’s infrastructure and water security is critical to our state’s success, which is why I continue to fight for commonsense policies that help provide the tools we need.”

Heller has a long history of authoring and supporting legislation to improve the water supply in Nevada and address emergency drought situations across Western states. In 2016, the U.S. Senate adopted an amendment to the Energy and Water appropriations bill that was filed by Heller and Senator Harry Reid (D-NV) to increase funding for CRSCP by $50 million. The Pilot System Conservation Program was authorized under Sec. 206 of the Energy and Water appropriations bill of 2015. Additionally, in 2014, the Senate passed the Emergency Drought Relief Act, legislation introduced by Heller, Reid and Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) that requires federal agencies to maximize water supplies, reduce project review times and ensure water is directed to users whose need is greatest.

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