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| |  |  | | --- | --- | | **For Immediate Release:** | **Contact:** [Michawn Rich](mailto:michawn_rich@heller.senate.gov) (Heller) 202-224-6244 | | July 20, 2015 |   **Heller Statement on New Reno VARO Director**  **(Washington, DC)**– U.S. Senator Dean Heller issued the following statement after the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced a permanent director for the Reno VA Regional Office (VARO):  “As a member of the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee and as an outspoken advocate for Nevada’s veterans, I am pleased the VA has chosen a permanent director for the Reno VARO, which I have been pushing for since last year. Veterans all across the Silver State have faced one of the worst backlogs in the nation when applying for VA disability benefits, in part due to poor management, which is why improving the Reno VARO remains a priority. No doubt, I will continue staying closely involved in its progress,” said **Senator Dean Heller**. “Having spoken with Under Secretary Allison Hickey this morning, I look forward to working with Ms. Jackson and will do everything within my power to hold her accountable to ensure Nevada’s veterans receive the care and benefits they were promised in a timely manner.”  **Background:**   * With more than 1,600 backlogged disability claims, which on average take more than 230 days to process, Nevada is one of the worst states in the nation when it comes to delivering disability benefits to veterans. * After an IG report revealed management as a reason for Nevada’s claims backlog, [Senator Heller called on the former Reno VARO Director to resign](http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2014/6/heller-calls-for-reno-varo-director-to-resign). * In December, [Senator Heller sent a letter to the VA Secretary](http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/353e6aad-3d27-4d0b-af22-39e12e6b3945/Letter%20to%20McDonald%20re%20VARO%20Director%2012.3.14.pdf) requesting permanent leadership for the Reno VARO. * As Co-Chair of the [VA Backlog Working Group](http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=0fc103f4-e52c-4c2b-833b-f1eee7cace02), Senator Heller has led the charge to implement legislation to end the VA disability claims backlog. Heller’s legislation, the 21st Century Veterans Benefits Delivery Act ([S.1203](http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/a0ed7a15-14c7-4702-9082-ddf8b16a08ad/114th%20-%2021st%20Century%20Veterans%20Benefits%20Delivery%20Act.pdf)), is up for markup in the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee this week.     ###  [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) |