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| April 24, 2018 | 202-224-6244 |

**Senate Panel Passes Heller-Backed Bill to Curb Nevada’s Opioid Crisis**

**WASHINGTON**– The U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) today unanimously passed legislation [cosponsored by U.S. Senator Dean Heller to improve the federal response to the nation’s drug epidemic](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=3F004D3E-3581-408F-A143-B62C16AE9B27). The Opioid Crisis Response Act of 2018, S. 2680, now goes to the full U.S. Senate for consideration.

In Nevada, 665 people died from drug overdose in 2016, according to the latest data available from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/states/nevada/nevada.htm) (CDC). Further, [Nevada’s drug overdose mortality rate stands at 21.7 percent](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/states/nevada/nevada.htm), higher than the national average of 19.8 percent.

“As we recognize National Addiction Treatment Week, I applaud the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee for unanimously passing bipartisan legislation that will help many Nevadans and Americans across the country who are battling opioid addiction,” **said Heller.** “The Opioid Crisis Response Act represents a comprehensive approach to help states combat this epidemic, and I look forward to working with my Senate colleagues to see this legislation signed into law.”

Specifically, the legislation will improve the ability of the U.S. Departments of Education, Labor, and Health and Human Services to address the crisis, including the ripple effects of the crisis on children, families, and communities, and improve data sharing between states. It reauthorizes grants to states for drug prevention and treatment and also improves detection and seizure of illegal deadly drugs through stronger FDA and Customs and Border Protection coordination.

Heller has a long history of supporting legislation to confront Nevada’s drug problem. Last month he also [helped introduce a bill to strengthen penalties for fentanyl](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2018/3/heller-helps-introduce-bill-to-crack-down-on-fentanyl-traffickers) distribution and trafficking to ensure they better reflect the serious nature of the crime. Additionally, earlier this year he joined Senator Michael Bennet (D-CO) in introducing the [Every Prescription Conveyed Securely (EPCS) Act](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2018/2/heller-bennet-introduce-bill-to-combat-opioid-crisis), a bipartisan bill that requires electronic prescriptions for controlled substances under Medicare.

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