

**For Immediate Release:** Contact: Neal Patel

September 9, 2014 202-224-6244

**Heller Hosts Roundtable with Veterans to Discuss Legislation Addressing VA Disability Claims Backlog**

**(Washington, D.C.)** – U.S. Senator Dean Heller (R-NV) issued the following statement after hosting a bipartisan roundtable with Co-Chair U.S. Senator Bob Casey (D-PA)—attended by Veterans Service Organizations and Working Group members Senators Jerry Moran (R-KS), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Pat Toomey (R-KS), and Joe Walsh (D-MT)—to discuss solutions needed to address reducing the backlog associated with VA disability claims:

**“The need to reduce the VA’s disability claims backlog is more pressing than ever.  Just last week, I spent time with veterans in Pahrump, Nevada, to talk about the issues they face when dealing with the VA, and it came as no surprise to me that the VA backlog of disability claims remains a concern in Nevada, which has the worst VA Regional Office in the nation.”**

Heller continued, **“Today, I met with Veterans Service Organizations to discuss ways in which the Working Group may provide solutions to the plight of America’s veterans who are facing delays in receiving their earned benefits. That’s why I introduced the 21st Century Veterans Benefits Delivery Act. As a Co-Chair of the bipartisan VA Backlog Working Group and as a member of the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee, I am committed to reducing wait times, making the claims process more efficient, and ensuring no veteran is forced to wait months or years to be compensated for their injuries of war.”**

*In March, the Working Group released the* [*VA Backlog Working Group March 2014 Report*](http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=3411e103-fef2-486a-9d45-88319cbd6d2b) *in which the VA Backlog Working Group analyzes the many factors that contribute to the claims backlog.*

*To accompany this report, the Working Group also introduced the 21st Century Veterans Benefits Delivery Act (S. 2091) aimed at providing a comprehensive solution. The bill is divided into three sections:*

* ***Title I – Benefits Claims Submission.*** *This section is designed to encourage, assist, and educate veterans on the benefits of submitting a completed claim, when possible, as well as reinforce the services available to help a veteran complete a claim.*
* ***Title II - Reforming Practices of Regional Offices.*** *Personnel and management must be given tools to perform efficiently. This section requires the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) to make structural changes that increase accuracy and efficiency at the regional office level.*
* ***Title III - Government Response.*** *This section holds the government accountable and helps to ensure the claims process is a priority when the VA requests records.*

###