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**A Long-Time Champion For Victims of Crimes, Heller Announces Support for Marsy’s Law in Nevada**

**WASHINGTON** - U.S. Senator Dean Heller (R-NV) today announced that he is supporting Marsy’s Law, [a proposed amendment to the state of Nevada’s constitution](https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Session/78th2015/Bills/SJR/SJR17_EN.pdf) to expand protections and rights for victims of crime. Heller is a strong supporter of victims’ rights and has a long history of championing policies to help deliver justice to victims and hold perpetrators of violent crimes accountable for their actions.

Currently, victims and their families are provided no enforceable rights under the Nevada Constitution. A number of states have addressed this disparity by adding enforceable victims’ rights and protections into their state constitutions, but Nevada is one that has not. Marsy’s Law will appear on the ballot in Nevada this November as Question 1. If Marsy’s Law passes in Nevada, it will create a victims’ bill of rights in the state’s constitution.

“As a champion of policies that will crack down on human trafficking, provide resources for sexual and domestic violence survivors, and improve the criminal justice system’s response to these crimes, I am proud to announce my support for Marsy’s Law during National Crime Victims’ Rights Week,” **said Heller.**“Just like the accused, victims deserve to have guaranteed rights that are clearly defined. Victims and their families have been through enough in the wake of a tragedy – they should not be faced with additional trauma. I am pleased that Nevada now has the opportunity to ensure that victims of crimes are fully protected.”

Marsy’s Law is named after Marsalee “Marsy” Nicholas, a 21-year-old college senior who was murdered by her ex-boyfriend in 1983. Shortly after Marsy was killed, her family was confronted by her accused murderer at their local grocery store. The family had no idea that he had been released on bail because the courts and law enforcement, though well meaning, had no obligation to keep them informed. Marsy’s brother, Dr. Henry T. Nicholas, started the [Marsy’s Law for All initiative](https://marsyslaw.us/about-marsys-law/).

Specifically, Marsy’s Law in Nevada would ensure that each person who is the victim of a crime is entitled to:

(a) be treated with fairness and respect and be free from intimidation, harassment, and abuse throughout the criminal justice process;

(b) be reasonably protected from the defendant;

(c) have the safety of the victim and victim's family considered when setting bail;

(d) prevent release of information the defendant could use to locate the victim;

(e) refuse an interview or deposition unless under court order;

(f) reasonably confer with the prosecuting agency;

(g) reasonable notice of all public proceedings and be present at all public proceedings;

(h) be reasonably heard at any public proceeding;

(i) timely judgment of a case;

(j) provide information to officers concerning the impact of the crime on the victim;

(k) be informed of the conviction, sentence, incarceration, and release date of the defendant;

(l) full and timely restitution;

(m) prompt return of property when no longer needed as evidence;

(n) be informed of all post-conviction proceedings;

(o) have the safety of the victim, the victim's family, and the public considered before any parole;

(p) have restitution money first applied to the amount ordered to the victim; and

(q) be informed of the rights in the amendment.

**Background** **on Sen. Heller’s efforts to empower victims of crimes**:

* Heller cosponsored the [Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act (SESTA),](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=A85FBCCD-3D90-4E8E-BB33-AD616B276157) legislation that will help end online sex trafficking in [Nevada, which ranks 9th in the U.S. among reported human trafficking cases](https://humantraffickinghotline.org/states). [The president signed this legislation into law on April 9, 2018](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=A85FBCCD-3D90-4E8E-BB33-AD616B276157).
* Heller co-authored the [Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence Reporting (SAFER) Act](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=AC843F36-1234-4CB6-BC03-173239BDD647), bipartisan legislation designed[to assist law enforcement in their efforts to reduce the nation’s rape kit backlog](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=AC843F36-1234-4CB6-BC03-173239BDD647). It was signed into law on January 8, 2018.
* Heller cosponsored the [Combating Human Trafficking in Commercial Vehicles Act](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=AF675B46-1126-41E8-A51B-E54C48674A8C), legislation that requires the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation to designate an individual tasked with coordinating human trafficking prevention efforts within the federal agency and further increases support to educate commercial drivers on how to recognize and prevent human trafficking. [It was signed into law on January 4, 2018](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=AF675B46-1126-41E8-A51B-E54C48674A8C).
* Heller authored the [HERO Improvements Act](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2017/9/heller-effort-to-empower-veterans-to-fight-human-trafficking-in-nevada-passes-senate), [legislation to help train disabled military veterans to fight cybercrime](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2017/9/heller-effort-to-empower-veterans-to-fight-human-trafficking-in-nevada-passes-senate). It unanimously passed the U.S. Senate as part of a larger anti-human trafficking proposal, the bipartisan Abolish Human Trafficking Act.
* Heller co-authored the Abolish Human Trafficking Act, a bipartisan bill aimed at cracking down on the horrific crime of human trafficking. The legislation funds services for victims and law enforcement, increases penalties for perpetrators, and encourages stronger reporting to track human trafficking crimes.
* Heller co-authored the Justice Served Act, which would provide funds to prosecute the rape kit backlog and justice for victims of crimes like sexual assault by resolving cold cases and exonerating those wrongfully convicted of crimes they did not commit.
* Heller co-authored the Debbie Smith Crime Victims Protection Act,legislation to reauthorize the Debbie Smith Actand dedicate much-needed resources to state and local law enforcement agencies to conduct forensic analyses of crime scenes, including untested rape kits.
* In 2015, he supported the landmark Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, signed into law by President Obama, which included [his amendment to ensure DHS personnel are prepared to better identify victims and perpetrators of human trafficking](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2015/4/heller-s-amendment-seeking-justice-for-victims-of-human-trafficking-passes-senate).

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