

**For Immediate Release:** Contact: Chandler Smith

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**U.S. Sens. Heller and Booker Introduce Legislation to Extend Care for Vets with Traumatic Brain Injuries**

***Calls for Extension of the Assisted Living Program Ahead of Looming Deadline Leaving Uncertain Future for Injured Veterans***

WASHINGTON – U.S. Sens. Dean Heller (R-NV) and Cory Booker (D-NJ)today introduced the Assisted Living Pilot Program for Veterans with Traumatic Brain Injury (AL-TBI) Extension Act, bipartisan legislation that authorizes the continuation of a Veterans Affairs program that provides intensive care and rehabilitation to veterans with severe brain injuries.

“With traumatic brain injuries afflicting many of our nation’s veterans, this pilot program allows for veterans suffering from these injuries to receive therapy for movement, memory, and speech loss,” **said Sen. Heller.** “This program has already shown positive results in Nevada’s communities, and Congress should allow it to continue. Reauthorizing this pilot program for three additional years will be vital in helping veterans reintegrate into communities across America.”

Since 2001, more than 265,000 U.S. troops suffered traumatic brain injuries, according to the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center. The AL-TBI program consists of privately run group homes around the country where veterans are immersed in therapies for movement, memory, speech, and gradual community reintegration.

“The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have tragically resulted in a generation of veterans with traumatic brain injuries. We have an obligation to support their recovery and their return to civilian life,” **said Sen. Booker.** “This legislation is critical to keeping alive an effective program that helps injured veterans more quickly re-adjust to their day-to-day lives.

“I am grateful to Sen. Heller for joining me in this bipartisan effort to make sure these wounded heroes continue to receive the treatment they need and deserve,” **Sen. Booker added.**

AL-TBI began as a five-year pilot program in 2008, but will expire this year if Congress does not act. This model of care allows veterans facing similar challenges to live together while receiving around the clock care. The results so far have been impressive, helping to rehabilitate veterans from severe injuries that are notoriously difficult to treat.

However, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has stopped placing any new veterans into the program. If the program is allowed to expire, the VA will have to discharge veterans in the program.

The AL-TBI program has received bipartisan support in both the House and the Senate. It was included in Sen. Sanders’ Comprehensive Veterans Health and Benefits and Military Pay Restoration Act, Senator Burr’s alternative comprehensive bill, and in two pending House bills.

“With the looming threat that legislative inaction would soon result in displacing veterans with TBI from specialized treatment facilities and block others from receiving needed care, we welcome this bill’s introduction,” **said Steve Nardizzi, CEO of Wounded Warrior Project.**

The program is endorsed by the following organizations: Wounded Warriors Project, Disabled American Veterans, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, AMVETS, Veterans of Foreign Wars, VetsFirst, and the Brain Injury Association of America.

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