

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

July 29, 2014 202-224-6244

**U.S. Sens. Heller and Booker’s Legislation to Extend Care for Vets with Traumatic Brain Injuries Included in VA Bill**

***Three Year Extension of the Assisted Living Program for Injured Veterans***

**WASHINGTON** – **U.S. Sens. Dean Heller (R-NV) and Cory Booker (D-NJ)** issued a statement today commending the bi-partisan package of landmark reforms to the Dept. of Veterans Affairs hospital facilities schedule to be voted on this week.

The compromise includes legislation sponsored by the senators to prevent veterans suffering from severe traumatic brain injuries from being kicked out of rehabilitative centers treating them.

“This program allows veterans suffering from traumatic brain injuries to receive therapy for movement, memory, and speech loss, so that ultimately these men and women can reintegrate into society,” **Sen. Heller said**. “These injuries are an all-too-common result of modern warfare, and this program is already helping Nevada veterans. I am so glad that this bipartisan package reauthorizes this pilot program for three additional years so that veterans can continue to access these important services.”

“Losing access to this program would be a devastating and unjust setback to veterans with severe brain injuries,” **Sen. Booker said.** “I’m encouraged this crucial proposal will get a full floor vote and urge my colleagues to not leave Washington without making sure these veterans are taken care of.”

Since 2001, more than 265,000 U.S. troops suffered traumatic brain injuries, according to the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center. The **Assisted Living Pilot Program for Veterans with Traumatic Brain Injury (AL-TBI) Extension Act** authorizes the Department of Veterans Affairs to extend a program that provides intensive care and rehabilitation to veterans with severe brain injuries.

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, including several veterans housed in several New Jersey facilities.

Since Sens. Booker and Heller introduced the legislation, Sens. Landrieu (D-LA) , McCain (R-AZ), Pryor (D-AK), and Baldwin (D-Wis) have joined as co-sponsors.

###