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| |  |  | | --- | --- | | **For Immediate Release:** | **Contact:** [Neal A. Patel](mailto:neal_patel@heller.senate.gov) | | November 29, 2016 | 202-224-6244 |   **Heller Initiative to Improve Staffing and Infrastructure at International Airports Passes Senate**  **(Washington, DC)** – Today the Senate unanimously passed the *Cross-Border Trade Enhancement Act,* [S.461](http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/58d25b11-35e5-4973-9811-d2215eb28877/S.%20461%20-%20ANS%20Final%203.0.pdf), bipartisan legislation that encourages public-private partnerships to boost staffing and make infrastructure improvements at U.S. ports of entry without adding to the national deficit:  “I appreciate Majority Whip John Cornyn for teaming up with me to get this important Nevada tourism priority passed in the Senate. Providing ports of entry, like the Reno-Tahoe International Airport, the ability to form public-private partnerships aimed at improving international passenger processing can increase tourism while improving national security. I hope this legislation creates efficiencies that attract new international service to the Reno-Tahoe region,” **said Senator Dean Heller.**  **Background:**  The Nevada Congressional delegation has worked for years to add additional customs staff to the Reno-Tahoe International Airport. If enacted, the Cornyn-Heller legislation would give airports another tool to increase staffing and improve operations. Decreasing passenger processing time will help airports like the Reno-Tahoe International Airport attract additional international airlines and passengers.  Senators Cornyn, Heller, Flake, Johnson, and Klobuchar introduced the *Cross-Border Trade Enhancement Act* early this year and successfully teamed up to ensure its passage in the Senate. The legislation encourages public-private partnerships to boost staffing and make infrastructure improvements at U.S. ports of entry without adding to the deficit. Senator Cornyn’s original language was limited to land ports of entry, but Senator Heller successfully pushed for language that mirrors [Amendment #3565](http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/5838307c-8880-46ea-98a8-27c41de34eb6/Cornyn-Heller-McCain-Flake%203779.pdf), filed earlier this year to the [*Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization Act of 2016*](http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/9270731d-2db7-4c87-a2c3-b79f98bcdcef/Thune-Nelson%20Substitute%203464.pdf) (H.R.636), which includes airports. That language included the following:   |  | | --- | | * Given the need for improved airport security and traveler processing efficiency at participating airports, this amendment would allow ports of entry to enter into public-private partnerships with the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to improve operations. Specifically, it would allow airports participating in the Port of Entry Partnership Pilot Program, known as the Donor 559 program, to privately finance:   + Salaries and expenses of up to five additional CBP officers;   + Salaries and expenses of CBP employees that support officers in performing law enforcement functions;   + costs related to the temporary placement or permanent relocation of officers; and   + Costs incurred by CBP to pay existing officers overtime. | |  |   ###  [http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/vendor/_skins/heller/images/newsletter/icon_fb.png](http://www.facebook.com/pages/US-Senator-Dean-Heller/325751330177) [http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/vendor/_skins/heller/images/newsletter/icon_tw.png](http://twitter.com/SenDeanHeller) [http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/vendor/_skins/heller/images/newsletter/icon_yt.png](http://www.youtube.com/user/SenDeanHeller) |