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**Heller Effort to Empower Veterans to Fight Human Trafficking in Nevada Passes Senate**

*Heller Proposal Rolled Into Abolish Human Trafficking Act*

**Washington, D.C.** – Legislation authored by U.S. Senator Dean Heller (R-NV) to help train disabled military veterans to fight cybercrime unanimously passed the U.S. Senate last night as part of a larger anti-human trafficking proposal, the bipartisan Abolish Human Trafficking Act.

Heller’s proposal expands the popular Human Exploitation Rescue Operation (HERO) program, which allows wounded and injured military veterans to receive training in computer forensics to fight online child sexual exploitation. It also ensures funding for the HERO training internship and makes sure that there are positions available in the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for those who complete the program.

Heller, a senior member of the U.S. Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee, has made supporting Nevada’s veterans in their transition to civilian life one of his top priorities in the U.S. Senate.

The bipartisan HERO Improvements Act was introduced by Heller in June with Senators Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), John Cornyn (R-TX), and Amy Klobuchar (D-MN).

“Human trafficking is a horrifying, pervasive crime that’s denied vulnerable women and children across Nevada of their freedom,” **Heller said.** “As a long-time champion of supporting and authoring proposals to combat human trafficking in Nevada, I applaud the Senate for passing my bill to support the HERO program, a critical initiative that trains our veterans to fight human trafficking and child exploitation on the web. I can’t think of anyone better to deploy in this shared effort than our nation’s own heroes. With more hands on deck trained to identify these heinous crimes, we can help protect Nevada’s children from abuse and trafficking.”

The Abolish Human Trafficking Act, cosponsored by Heller, is 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 continued,** “The Abolish Human Trafficking Act allows us to treat human trafficking like the organized crime it is by bolstering law enforcement efforts to better identify perpetrators in Nevada and across the country. Our proposal also provides much-needed federal resources to aid victims on a path to recovery. The House must swiftly act to help put an end to human trafficking and get this bill to the President’s desk.”

Since coming to the U.S. Senate, Heller has worked to safeguard Nevadans from human trafficking and put a stop to the industry in the state. Last year, [legislation he authored to require air carriers to help train flight attendants recognize cases of human trafficking](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2016/4/heller-applauds-final-passage-of-faa-bill) was included in the FAA Reauthorization Act. 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).

Congressman Ted Poe, R-TX, introduced companion legislation to S. 1311 in the U.S. House.

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