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**Heller Files Amendments to Crackdown on Criminal Gangs, Help Veterans Get Jobs**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – U.S. Senator Dean Heller (R-NV) filed two amendments aimed at cracking down on criminal gangs and prioritizing the hiring of veterans as U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents to the immigration legislation.

Heller filed an amendment based on his Criminal Alien Gang Removal Act (S. 2380) to help protect Americans from dangerous criminal gangs, including MS-13, a brutal transnational gang that [operates in Nevada and nearly every other state](https://www.justice.gov/opa/speech/file/958481/download). This amendment would prohibit gang members from entering the country and permit the immediate removal of criminal gang members who already are in the United States. Additionally, the proposal ensures that criminal alien gang members are ineligible for immigration benefits, such as asylum, special immigrant juvenile status, and temporary protected status. U.S. Reps. Barbara Comstock (R-VA-10), Peter King (R-NY-02), Raúl Labrador (R-Idaho), and House Judiciary Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte introduced this legislation in the U.S. House of Representatives and it passed with a bipartisan vote of 233-175.

Heller also filed an amendment that expands an existing program that prioritizes the hiring of veterans as Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers to include prioritizing the hiring of veterans as ICE agents.

“Our entire immigration system is broken and in need of significant reform. One commonsense way we can improve our current system is by cracking down on dangerous gangs, such as MS-13, by stopping individuals associated with them from entering this country,” **said Heller.** “At the same time, we can strengthen security at our borders and in our communities by putting more veterans – who have already committed their lives to protecting this country - in jobs to do just that. As we work to find a solution that prioritizes border security and also provides certainty for individuals who came to this country seeking a better life, I encourage my colleagues to support my amendments that would empower law enforcement and enhance public safety in Nevada and throughout the nation.”

**Background**:

[MS-13, which stands for “Mara Salvatrucha,” is one of the major gangs operating in Central America with ties to the United States](http://www.crs.gov/Reports/RL34112?source=search&guid=2e98e73fa5c44eb2a9942677fd8885ff&index=0#_Toc460246346). According to the Department of Justice (DOJ), there are approximately 10,000 members inside the United States and 40,000 members worldwide, and the gang is involved in criminal activities that include murder, drug trafficking, and human trafficking. In Nevada, [an MS-13 gang member was found guilty of murder](http://www.rgj.com/story/news/crime/2017/10/13/ms-13-gang-member-found-guilty-sparks-murders/763466001/) in November 2017 after he fatally shot two young men at an apartment in Sparks, NV seven years prior.

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