

# Ripon Profile

**Name:** Dean Heller

**Occupation:** United States Senator  
for the State of Nevada

**Your father, Jack "Blackjack" Heller, was a famed stock car driver, and you are an accomplished driver in your own right. What lessons from the racetrack apply to politics today?** Racing is a competitive sport that requires hard work, but most of all it's fun. Politics is similar. You always try to stay ahead of the pack. It is a privilege to represent the State of Nevada in the U.S. Senate, and I enjoy what I do. It requires hard work, but traveling the state, talking to Nevadans, and meeting new people every day really is a part of what makes this job so great.

**You've been in the Senate now for almost a year. What has surprised you most about the job?** I was really surprised with the partisanship in the Senate. Neither side wants to work with one another, and it's more about a press release than solving our nation's problems.

**What are the main economic pressures people are feeling in your state?** No state has felt the brunt of the economic downturn more than Nevada. My state continues to lead the nation in unemployment and struggle with a crippled housing market. Burdensome regulations and a healthcare law no one can afford are making it difficult for small businesses to get up and running and hire new workers, all while gridlock in Washington and big-government policies impede recovery. It's time for a new direction in Washington.

**What are three things Washington should be doing to help people deal with these pressures?** It has been three years since the Senate passed a budget. Our government has no direction or long term fiscal plan. This creates uncertainty and contributes to the anemic economy. Step one would be to pass a long-term budget that places our nation on a sound fiscal footing. The next step would be to pass comprehensive tax reform that broadens the tax base, brings down rates, and simplifies the tax code. This would set the foundation for long term growth and provide stability for our nation's job creators. Finally, we need to tear down the barriers to economic growth by removing excessive regulations that have stifled growth, created instability, and increased costs to small businesses across the country.

**Harry Reid is not just your fellow home state Senator, but he is also the leader of the Democratic opposition. Is it difficult to set politics aside when it comes to acting in Nevada's best interests?** The Nevada delegation has a long history of setting our differences aside when it comes to fighting for our state. While I disagree with Senator Reid on a wide range of national issues, when it comes to Nevada, we have no problems working together.

**Finally, when you leave office, what do you hope to be remembered for?** I'll let history decide that. What I want be remembered as being is a good husband and a good father.

