

Also mentioned for the job, though less frequently, is Nevada Attorney General Adam Laxalt, who, like Heller, was defeated in the election. “You know, I think it’s important that I let the process go on, and I don’t have any comment right now,” Laxalt said.

So many people were interested in the Interior post that Roll Call, a Capitol Hill newspaper, made Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers the focus of its coverage because she was one likely candidate—Trump considered her for the job in his first cabinet—who said she did NOT want to be considered.

Reducing the size of national monuments—opposed by Nevadans 70 to 22 percent in a Center for Western Priorities survey in July—was a pet project of Heller’s, and it would likely generate opposition to his nomination by environmental organizations. An effort by Trump—supported by Heller—to reduce the size of monuments with executive orders is under court challenge by state governments and environmental organizations.

Two political publications referenced other liabilities they suggest Heller carries.

Politico said “sentiment at 1600 Pennsylvania seems to be cooling on” Heller, but the website cited Heller’s “caus[ing] turbulence over the Obamacare repeal effort” as the reason. Heller made his peace with Trump after the repeal effort, with Trump traveling to Nevada to campaign for him, making Heller beholden to the billionaire. Whether Politico was reporting stale information or the volatile Trump has returned to his earlier feelings about Heller in the wake of his reelection defeat is



HELLER

anyone’s guess.

The Hill, another Capitol Hill newspaper, also referenced the earlier Heller/Trump relationship but included the later warmth: “But

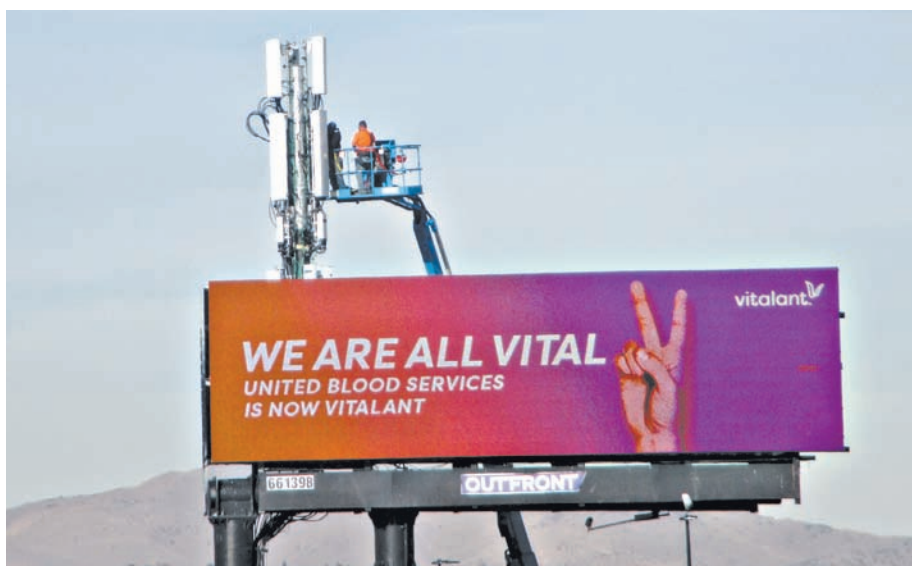
Heller may lack a key qualification Trump has sought in his Cabinet members: loyalty to him. During the 2016 presidential race, Heller made disparaging remarks about Trump, saying he was ‘vehemently opposed’ to the real estate mogul. But since Trump took office, the two have grown more friendly. Both Trump and his elder daughter—White House adviser Ivanka Trump—campaign for Heller.”

For the scandal-plagued Trump administration, Heller brings his own baggage.

Heller functioned as a paid lobbyist for MGM Resorts International, pressuring federal officials to block a Connecticut tribal casino that would compete with an MGM casino just across the border in Massachusetts, Politico reported on Feb. 2 this year. Between 2013 and 2018, according to the Center for Responsive Politics, MGM gave Heller \$80,550.

One complicating factor to an appointment is that the #MeToo movement may be turning its attention to the Interior Department with last week’s lawsuit filed by Independence National Historical Park Chief Ranger Michelle Schonzeit against Zinke and Bernhardt, charging the Interior Department “has a large sexual harassment and sexual discrimination problem.” □

## Cold duty



Above a billboard alongside the freeway between the spaghetti bowl and Mill Street, two workers installed a short-mast cell site while drivers whizzing past watched.  
PHOTO/DENNIS MYERS

# NEW YEAR'S EVE

## AT THE ROW

### NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTIES

\$20 Advanced Cover • 3 Hour Premium Bar \$50  
All Access \$60 or Premium VIP \$100

## MIDNIGHT FIREWORKS

## KICK OFF THE WEEKEND WITH TWO GREAT SHOWS

**PATTON OSWALT**  
DECEMBER 29

**KENNY LOGGINS**  
DECEMBER 30

EL DORADO | CIRCUS CIRCUS | SILVER LEGACY

IN THE HEART OF RENO | THEROWRENO.COM