

Ensign stepping down May 3; Heller seen as replacement

By Karoun Demirjian, Las Vegas Sun

WASHINGTON – Embattled Sen. John Ensign announced this afternoon he will resign from office, effective May 3. The move opens the door for Republican Gov. Brian Sandoval to appoint Rep. Dean Heller to finish out the term.

“It is with tremendous sadness that I officially hand over the Senate seat that I have held for eleven years,” Ensign said in a statement. “The turbulence of these last few years is greatly surpassed by the incredible privilege that I feel to have been entrusted to serve the people of Nevada. I can honestly say that being a United States Senator has been the honor of my life.”



John Ensign

Sun columnist Jon Ralston first reported earlier in the afternoon that Ensign would step down.

If Heller is appointed, it would give him a strategic leg up as an incumbent against his presumed opponent in the 2012 Senate race, Democrat Rep. Shelley Berkley. Berkley is still expected to run.

Nevada State Democratic Party spokesman Zach Hudson released a statement Thursday afternoon criticizing Heller.

Read the whole story