

Emails between Reid, Heller reveal how poker efforts deteriorated

By Karoun Demirjian, Las Vegas Sun

WASHINGTON – The online poker bill-making process has never been pretty. But a collection of emails released by Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid's chief of staff Friday reveals an especially brambled picture of what has kept legislation crucial for Nevada's biggest industry on ice for so long.

The story framed by the emails is one of missed opportunities and broken promises. At its heart, it's also a story of a tenuous partnership between the Senate's top dog and its freshest pup, Reid and Republican Sen. Dean Heller.

The pair also are at each other's throats over a Nevada election that could determine who controls the Senate next year.

Reid's adversaries contend the account Reid's staff has put forward is at best incomplete and designed to be politically misleading.

The emails were released Friday when Reid's chief of staff, David Krone, summoned Las Vegas media to his office in the Capitol to, as he put it, show them what is really going on with the long-stalled legislation that would both legalize online poker and halt a proliferation of other kinds of Internet gambling being considered by other states.

Krone's decision to share the emails comes during an increasingly bitter finger-pointing feud in which Reid has accused Heller of failing to deliver Republican votes he had promised and Heller has accused Reid of contorting facts and

irresponsibly politicizing an issue of vital importance to Nevada.

“I am not going to let Dean Heller go out there and call Harry Reid a liar,” said Krone, who has never spoken about poker publicly. “I want to tell my side of the story.”

To make his case, Krone shared a raft of emails detailing exchanges between him and Mac Abrams, Heller’s former chief of staff, who has been running Heller’s Senate campaign since May 1. The emails were sent between May and September.

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