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SJR 10

Honoring Hmong Vietnam Veterans

This resolution calls upon Congress to award the Hmong Veterans of the Vietnam War the Congressional Gold Medal. This is a long-overdue honor in recognition of their bravery, sacrifice, and unwavering loyalty to the United States.

The Hmong people played a pivotal yet often unrecognized role in the Vietnam War, particularly in Laos, as part of the covert operation known as the "Secret War." Recruited by the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), thousands of Hmong soldiers fought alongside American forces, intercepting enemy movements, gathering critical intelligence, and rescuing downed U.S. pilots, often at great personal risk.

Despite their extraordinary contributions, Hmong veterans have yet to receive full recognition for their sacrifices. The war's aftermath led to severe persecution of the Hmong in Laos, forcing many to flee as refugees.

Today, over 50,000 Hmong veterans reside in the United States, including members of Alaska's vibrant Hmong community. These veterans and their families continue to preserve their cultural heritage while contributing to the economic and social fabric of our state.

The Congressional Gold Medal is the highest civilian honor awarded by the United States Congress to individuals or groups who have made a lasting impact on American history. The Hmong Veterans of the Vietnam War demonstrated unparalleled valor in defense of freedom, making them deserving of this distinction.

Alaska has a deep connection to its veteran community, and our state has previously recognized the contributions of Hmong-American veterans through legislation such as House Bill 56, which established May 15 as Hmong-American Veterans Day.

By urging Congress to award the Congressional Gold Medal to Hmong veterans, we reaffirm our commitment to honoring those who stood shoulder to shoulder with American service members in one of the most challenging conflicts in modern history.

I respectfully ask my colleagues in the Alaska State Legislature to support this resolution and encourage the United States Congress to act in awarding the Congressional Gold Medal to the Hmong Veterans of the Vietnam War.