

# Alaska State Legislature

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**Representative Pete Petersen**  
Serving Northeast Anchorage and Muldoon

## Sponsor Statement

### HB 92: Lao Veteran Registration Plates

House Bill 92 would recognize and honor Lao veterans who fought in support of United States (US) military operations in the Kingdom of Laos between February 28, 1961, and May 15, 1975, by issuing new registration plates commemorating the owner's service in combat.

The most conservative estimated numbers during the US involvement in the Vietnam War are 35,000-40,000 brave young Hmong killed in combat; 50,000-58,000 wounded; and 3,000 missing in action. After the US withdrawal from Southeast Asia, thousands more Hmong were killed during genocide carried out by communist forces during the Hmong attempt to flee to neighboring Thailand. (LaoVeterans.com)

"Every (Hmong) that died, that was an American back home that didn't die, or one that was injured that wasn't injured. Somebody in nearly every Hmong family was either fighting or died from fighting...They became refugees because we (United States Government)...encouraged them to fight for us. I promised them myself, 'Have no fear, we will take care of you'." - Edgar Buell, Senior US Aid/CIA official working with the Hmong army, "60 Minutes", March 4, 1979

The most recent numbers set the US Hmong population between 200,000-300,000; with the Alaska population at almost 4,700 and rising. Many Hmong have immigrated here following the Vietnam conflict after persecution for supporting the US. This would be a great way to honor their service and support.

The color and design of the Lao veteran plates will be determined by the commissioner in consultation with veteran's and Hmong community organizations.