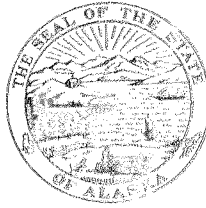


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HCR 4 Sponsor Statement

“Proclaiming May 15 to be Hmong-American Veterans Memorial Day.”

House Concurrent Resolution 4 would recognize and honor Hmong 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 proclaiming May 15 to be Hmong-American Veterans Memorial Day.

Hmong were called "damned good fighters" by the CIA. They fought bravely in what was called the U.S. "Secret War" in Laos against some of the toughest North Vietnamese and Lao troops for 13 years and suffered casualty rates five times higher than the rate experienced by U.S. soldiers.

The most conservative estimated numbers during the U.S. 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.

“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.

The “Secret War” is no longer a secret and the recognition of these brave fighting men is long overdue. That is why I urge the passage of HCR 4 and by doing so commemorating the service of these forgotten warriors.