

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE GERAN TARR

## HB125

*“An Act relating to a veteran’s designation on an identification card or a driver’s license for Hmong veterans and Lao veterans.”*

### **Sponsor Statement**

The United States of America has long been true and faithful on our commitments made to our friends and allies, world over. Hmong Veterans fought alongside US soldiers during the Vietnam War and were promised Veteran recognition. Through HB125, we are seeking to honor that commitment.

In the 1960’s, the CIA recruited Hmong soldiers to help the US fight in Vietnam and Laos. Between 1962 and 1975, about 12,000 Hmong soldiers died fighting against the Laotians. After the US withdrawal from Vietnam in 1975, the Lao kingdom was overthrown by the communist party and the Hmong became targets. The Hmong people were displaced and relocated from Laos to Thailand, some even ending up in UN refugee camps. Some of the Hmong people were sent to re-education camps, where most ended up dying. It’s been estimated that 30,000 Hmong were killed by the communists while trying to reach Thailand. Over 100,000 Hmong people died as a result of both the Vietnam and the “Secret War.”

The Hmong people put their faith and trust in the United States government, which promised them citizenship and veteran status after the war. It has now been over fifty years later and we are asking that the promise be honored. We owe all our veterans respect for their respective efforts on behalf of this great nation. To truly and deeply acknowledge sacrifices made for the betterment of our nation, we must recognize how much our Hmong veterans and Lao veterans gave and lost for our country.

To keep the promise offered half a century ago, I ask for your support of HB125.