

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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Sponsor Statement House Joint Resolution 16

"Encouraging the United States Congress to pass legislation granting the Hmong veterans of the Vietnam War access to the same veteran benefits received by United States veterans."

HJR 16 encourages the United States Congress to fulfill the promises made to the Hmong soldiers during the Vietnam War and grant them access to the same veterans' benefits received by the United States veterans.

In the 1960's over 100,000 Hmong soldiers were recruited by the United States Central Intelligence Agency to help the United States soldiers in the fight against communism. The Hmong warriors fought to intercept and prevent the flow of troops and supplies along the Ho Chi Minh Trail, and approximately 40,000 were killed as they supported and protected United States Armed Forces during combat missions.

The Hmong warriors were heavily outnumbered, however continued to fight, gather critical intelligence about enemy operations, and continued to undertake rescue missions to save the lives of downed United States pilots.

The Hmong soldiers suffered acts of retribution and atrocities at the hand of the Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese causing many to flee to Thailand. These soldiers became refugees because the United States government encouraged them to fight on behalf of the United States.

The Hmong people fought bravely in what was called the "Secret War", and for their loyalty were promised access to the same veterans benefits as those received by the United States veterans. The Hmong people have put their faith and trust in the United States government, and we are requesting that the promises made to those who risked everything for our country be honored. We must recognize how much the Hmong veterans gave and lost for our country and support HJR 16.