

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 17

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

THIRTIETH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY REPRESENTATIVES TARR, LeDoux, Spohnholz, Saddler, Parish, Kawasaki, Tuck, Josephson

Introduced: 3/29/17

Referred: House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs

A RESOLUTION

1 **Encouraging the United States Congress to pass legislation giving full military burial**
2 **rights to Hmong veterans of the Vietnam War.**

3 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

4 **WHEREAS**, beginning in 1960, the United States Central Intelligence Agency
5 recruited thousands of Hmong people to fight against the Communist Pathet Lao and North
6 Vietnamese Army regulars in Laos; and

7 **WHEREAS**, in July 1961, Brigadier General Edward G. Lansdale wrote in a memo to
8 General Maxwell D. Taylor that about 9,000 Hmong tribesmen had been equipped for guerilla
9 operations and these operations were being conducted with considerable effectiveness in
10 Communist-dominated territory in Laos; and

11 **WHEREAS** as many as 100,000 Hmong soldiers were recruited and trained as
12 Special Guerrilla Units to engage the North Vietnamese Army; and

13 **WHEREAS** the United States relied heavily on the Hmong Special Guerrilla Units,
14 although outnumbered by enemy forces, to intercept and prevent the flow of troops and war
15 supplies along the Ho Chi Minh Trail; and

16 **WHEREAS** the Hmong soldiers conducted tactical guerilla actions, flew thousands

1 of deadly combat missions in support of the United States Armed Forces and the Central
2 Intelligence Agency, and fought in conventional and guerilla combat with an extremely high
3 number of casualties; and

4 **WHEREAS** the Hmong soldiers protected United States personnel, guarded United
5 States Air Force radar installations, gathered critical intelligence about enemy operations, and
6 undertook rescue missions to save the lives of downed United States pilots; and

7 **WHEREAS** approximately 40,000 Hmong soldiers lost their lives defending
8 democracy, approximately 50,000 Hmong soldiers were seriously injured and disabled, and
9 approximately 3,000 Hmong soldiers were missing in action; and

10 **WHEREAS** Hmong soldiers died at 10 times the rate of United States soldiers in the
11 Vietnam War; and

12 **WHEREAS**, because the war effort of the United States in Laos was covert, the
13 accounts of the sacrifices and service of the Hmong soldiers remain largely unknown; and

14 **WHEREAS** many Hmong soldiers became refugees because the United States
15 government encouraged them to fight for the United States, and, as a result, thousands of
16 family members of Hmong soldiers were evacuated to a United States air base in Thailand to
17 avoid bloody vengeance by the communists in Laos and Vietnam; and

18 **WHEREAS**, after the conclusion of the Vietnam War, thousands of Hmong soldiers
19 suffered acts of retribution and atrocities by the Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese, causing
20 hundreds of thousands of Hmong refugees to flee to neighboring Thailand; and

21 **WHEREAS** approximately 50,000 Hmong veterans reside in the United States, and
22 150,000 Hmong and Laotian-born children have graduated from schools in this country; and

23 **WHEREAS** the Hmong warriors were promised that they would be treated just like
24 other United States veterans;

25 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature encourages the United States
26 Congress to pass legislation granting the Hmong veterans of the Vietnam War full military
27 burial rights.

28 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Donald J. Trump, President
29 of the United States; the Honorable Michael R. Pence, Vice President of the United States and
30 President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Dr. David J. Shulkin, United States Secretary of
31 Veterans Affairs; the Honorable Paul D. Ryan, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives;

1 the Honorable Mitch McConnell, Majority Leader of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Nancy
2 Pelosi, Minority Leader of the U.S. House of Representatives; the Honorable Charles E.
3 Schumer, Minority Leader of the U.S. Senate; and the Honorable Lisa Murkowski and the
4 Honorable Dan Sullivan, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative,
5 members of the Alaska delegation in Congress; and all other members of the 115th United
6 States Congress.