

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE**  
**HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS**

March 4, 2025

10:56 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Representative Ted Eischeid, Chair  
Representative Andrew Gray  
Representative Carolyn Hall  
Representative Zack Fields  
Representative Dan Saddler  
Representative Jamie Allard  
Representative David Nelson

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

All members present

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 8

Encouraging the United States Congress to award the Hmong veterans of the Vietnam War the Congressional Gold Medal.

- MOVED CSHJR 8 (MLV) OUT OF COMMITTEE

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: HJR 8

SHORT TITLE: AWARD HMONG VETERANS CONGRES. GOLD MEDAL

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) NELSON

|          |     |                                 |
|----------|-----|---------------------------------|
| 02/03/25 | (H) | READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS |
| 02/03/25 | (H) | MLV                             |
| 03/04/25 | (H) | MLV AT 10:15 AM BARNES 124      |

**WITNESS REGISTER**

REPRESENTATIVE DAVID NELSON  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** As prime sponsor, presented HJR 8 to the committee.

MAI XIONT

Unalaska Community Inc  
Unalaska, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Gave invited testimony in support of HJR 8, Version I.

LADDIE SHAW  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Gave invited testimony in support of HJR 8, Version I.

#### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

[10:56:43 AM](#)

CHAIR EISCHEID called the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs meeting to order at 10:56 a.m. Representatives Gray, Nelson, Hall, Saddler, and Eischeid were present at the call to order. Representatives Allard and Fields arrived as the meeting was in progress.

#### **HJR 8-AWARD HMONG VETERANS CONGRES. GOLD MEDAL**

[10:57:33 AM](#)

CHAIR EISCHEID announced that the only order of business would be HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 8, "Encouraging the United States Congress to award the Hmong veterans of the Vietnam War the Congressional Gold Medal."

[10:58:08 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GRAY moved to adopt the proposed committee substitute (CS) for HJR 8, Version 34-LS0482\I, Radford, 2/27/23, as the working document.

CHAIR EISCHEID objected.

[10:58:34 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE NELSON explained that the proposed CS would correct a drafting error in the language of the original resolution.

[10:59:11 AM](#)

The committee took a brief at ease at 10:59 a.m.

10:59:21 AM

CHAIR EISCHEID removed his objection to the motion to adopt the proposed CS for HJR 8, Version 34-LS0482\I, Radford, 2/27/23. There being no further objection, Version I was before the committee.

10:59:58 AM

REPRESENTATIVE DAVID NELSON, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor, presented HJR 8, Version I, to the committee. He paraphrased the sponsor statement for HJR 8 [included in the committee file], which read as follows [original punctuation provided]

House joint resolution 8 urges the United States Congress to recognize the sacrifices and contributions of Hmong soldiers during the Vietnam war by awarding them the Congressional gold medal. This long overdue honor would acknowledge their bravery loyalty and invaluable service and support of the United States armed forces.

During the 1960s over 100,000 Hmong soldiers were recruited by the United States Central intelligence agency. These warriors played a critical role in intercepting enemy forces and disrupting the flow of troops and supplies along the Ho chi min trail. Despite being heavily outnumbered the Hmong soldiers fought with unwavering courage gathered vital intelligence and conducted rescue message to save down American pilots. Approximately 40,000 Hmong soldiers were killed while defending and protecting US military operations.

Following the war long veterans faced severe persecuted forcing many to flee their homeland and seek refuge in Thailand and the United States.

It is time for our nation to honor their service and fulfill the commitments made to them The Congressional gold medal represents not just a symbol of recognition but an affirmation of their legacy in American history.

We must acknowledge and honor the Hmong veterans who stood alongside US forces to ensure their sacrifices are never forgotten. We urge Congress to award the Congressional gold medal to these courageous warriors.

11:03:00 AM

REPRESENTATIVE GRAY thanked Representative Nelson for bringing forward HJR 8.

[11:03:11 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER commented that the Hmong have been one of the "best friends" of the U.S.A. in among its many military conflicts.

[11:04:28 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 11:04 a.m. to 11:05 a.m.

[11:05:58 AM](#)

MAI XIONT, Unalaska Community Inc, gave invited testimony in support of HJR 8, Version I. She explained a history of the Hmong people's role in assisting the U.S. military in the Vietnam War and emphasized the importance of honoring them for their service to the country. She urged the committee's support for the proposed resolution.

[11:08:56 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 11:08 a.m. to 11:09 a.m.

[11:09:23 AM](#)

LADDIE SHAW, a former Alaska State Representative, gave invited testimony in support of HJR 8 Version I. He briefly explained his time serving in the Vietnam War and said that he "absolutely" wanted to honor the Hmong. He said that the Hmong were "our lifeline" during the Vietnam War and emphasized the value of honoring an unwavering ally like the Hmong people. He urged the committee's support of HJR 8 Version I.

[11:10:29 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER asked Mr. Shaw if he could share any personal anecdotes of the Hmong helping him during his time in Vietnam. He asked Mr. Shaw how the Congressional Gold Medal would be effective in proving the United States' appreciation for the Hmong.

MR. SHAW shared his experience in fighting alongside the Hmong people and said that they were "never recognized for the value

of what they did." He said that the Hmong community lost over 300,000 people, while the U.S. military lost only 58,000 people during its time in the Vietnam War. He emphasized the outsized impact and importance of awarding the Congressional Gold Medal to the Hmong people to honor their service to the U.S. military.

[11:13:29 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GRAY thanked Mr. Shaw for his service in Vietnam.

[11:14:06 AM](#)

CHAIR EISCHEID opened public testimony on HJR 8, Version I. After ascertaining that there was no one who wished to testify, he closed public testimony on HJR 8, Version I.

[11:14:54 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GRAY moved to report CSHJR 8, Version 34-LS0482\I, Radford, 2/27/23, out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. There being no objection, CSHJR 8(MLV) was reported from the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs.

[11:15:29 AM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease at 11:15 a.m.

[11:15:43 AM](#)

CHAIR EISCHEID thanked the invited testifiers and delivered committee announcements.

[11:16:19 AM](#)

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the committee, the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs meeting was adjourned at 11:16 a.m.