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State of Minnesota

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

EIGHTY-EIGHTH SESSION

H. F. No. 1667

04/02/2013 Authored by Dettmer

The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on State Government Finance and Veterans Affairs

1.1 A resolution

1.2 memorializing Congress and the President of the United States to amend federal  
1.3 veterans cemetery law to expand eligibility for burial in State Veterans Cemeteries  
1.4 developed with federal funding to include the Hmong-American and Lao-American  
1.5 surrogate fighters of America's Secret War in Laos.

1.6 WHEREAS, early in the Vietnam War the United States government discovered that  
1.7 most enemy war materiel and many enemy combatants were being supplied by the communist  
1.8 government of North Vietnam and their allied communist governments of Red China and the  
1.9 Soviet Union; and

1.10 WHEREAS, the United States government discovered that those enemy combatants and  
1.11 war materiel were being routed from North Vietnam to the battlefields of South Vietnam via an  
1.12 ever-more-expansive primitive road system through the mountains of Laos, which came to be  
1.13 known as the Ho Chi Minh Trail System; and

1.14 WHEREAS, the United States government determined that it was of utmost urgency to  
1.15 interrupt that enemy supply route through the use of targeted military action; and

1.16 WHEREAS, the United States government determined that it would be politically  
1.17 inadvisable to widen the allied war effort through overt military intervention against the enemy  
1.18 Ho Chi Minh Trail System, and concluded that any allied military action to that effect would need  
1.19 to be implemented in great secrecy and stealth; and

1.20 WHEREAS, the United States government, beginning in 1961 and lasting through 1978,  
1.21 recruited, trained, equipped, directed, resupplied and paid Hmong and Lao people indigenous  
1.22 to the mountain highlands of Laos and Vietnam to conduct, under the direction of the Special

2.1 Activities Division of the United States Central Intelligence Agency, a Secret War in Laos against  
2.2 the communist invaders of South Vietnam; and

2.3 WHEREAS, indigenous Hmong and Lao fighters were formally organized by the U.S. CIA  
2.4 into a Special Guerrilla Unit (SGU) led by the principal Hmong leader, General Vang Pao; and

2.5 WHEREAS, the members of the CIA's Hmong and Lao Special Guerrilla Unit fought  
2.6 valiantly and persistently in the American Secret War in Laos to interdict enemy supply lines  
2.7 on the Ho Chi Minh Trail, to rescue downed United States military pilots from within enemy  
2.8 territories, and to defend key friendly military outposts in Laos, such as the clandestine and  
2.9 vital U.S. emergency military airport at Luang Prabang among others, and to draw away from  
2.10 the main war thousands of enemy combatants to protect against Hmong and Lao SGU attacks  
2.11 against their supply lines in Laos; and

2.12 WHEREAS, by their valiant fighting and the monumental sacrifice of over 100,000 of  
2.13 their own lives in the American Secret War in Laos, these Hmong and Lao SGU fighters were  
2.14 able to directly and indirectly save the lives of many thousands of American service members  
2.15 during the Vietnam War; and

2.16 WHEREAS, because of their friendship with and heroic efforts on behalf of the United  
2.17 States military, the majority of our nation's Hmong and Lao SGU fighters in the American Secret  
2.18 War in Laos and their family and community members were eventually ruthlessly exterminated  
2.19 or driven from their jungle mountain homelands in Laos; and

2.20 WHEREAS, over a quarter of a million of those Hmong and Lao refugees have sought  
2.21 refuge in the United States of America and other nations, including nearly 80,000 of whom have  
2.22 resettled in Minnesota, with most of those refugees having by now been granted United States  
2.23 citizenship; and

2.24 WHEREAS, reasonably accurate records exist to validate the identities of that subset of  
2.25 refugees who were members of the CIA's Special Guerilla Unit of the American Secret War in  
2.26 Laos; and

2.27 WHEREAS, along with the majority of America's Vietnam War veterans, many of the  
2.28 Hmong-American and Lao-American surrogate fighters of the American Secret War in Laos are  
2.29 now nearing the end of their natural lives, with many others having already passed into eternity;  
2.30 NOW, THEREFORE,

2.31 BE IT RESOLVED by the governor and the Legislature of the State of Minnesota that we  
2.32 urge the President and the Congress of the United States to amend federal law and policy to allow

3.1 the Hmong-American and Lao-American surrogate fighters of the American Secret War in Laos  
3.2 to have the final, eternal honor of perpetual interment alongside their fellow American veterans  
3.3 within State Veterans Cemeteries throughout the nation, including the existing Minnesota State  
3.4 Veterans Cemetery at Little Falls, Minnesota.

3.5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the secretary of state of the state of Minnesota shall  
3.6 transmit copies of this memorial to the speaker and the clerk of the United States House of  
3.7 Representatives, the president and the secretary of the United States Senate, the United States  
3.8 Secretary of State, and presiding officers of both houses of the legislatures of each of the other  
3.9 states of the union, and to Minnesota's senators and representatives in Congress.