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State of Minnesota

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

EIGHTY-EIGHTH SESSION

H. F. No. 72

01/14/2013 Authored by Dettmer; Woodard; Newton; Erickson, S.; Benson, M., and others
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 allied Hmong-American and Lao-American
1.5 veterans 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 the People's Republic
1.9 of China and the 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 to conduct, under the direction of the Special Activities

2.1 Division of the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), a Secret War in Laos against the
2.2 Communist invaders of South Vietnam; and

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

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

2.12 WHEREAS, by their valiant fighting and the monumental sacrifice of over 100,000 of their
2.13 own lives in the American Secret War in Laos, these allied 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 allied Hmong and Lao SGU fighters in the American
2.18 Secret War in Laos and their family and community members were eventually ruthlessly
2.19 exterminated or driven from their homelands in Laos; and

2.20 WHEREAS, over 250,000 of those Hmong and Lao refugees have sought refugee status in
2.21 the United States and other nations, including nearly 80,000 who have resettled in Minnesota,
2.22 with most of those refugees having by now earned United States citizenship; and

2.23 WHEREAS, accurate records exist to validate the identities of that subset of refugees who
2.24 are veterans of the CIA's SGU of the American Secret War in Laos; and

2.25 WHEREAS, along with the majority of America's Vietnam War veterans, many of the
2.26 allied Hmong-American and Lao-American veterans of the American Secret War in Laos are now
2.27 nearing the end of their natural lives, with many others having already passed into eternity; and

2.28 WHEREAS, the Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery at Little Falls, and the state veterans
2.29 cemeteries of most other states, have been developed with federal subsidies and must therefore
2.30 comply with federal rules, such as rules governing eligibility for burial; NOW, THEREFORE,

2.31 BE IT RESOLVED by the Governor and the Legislature of the State of Minnesota that
2.32 it urges the President and the Congress of the United States to amend federal law and policy to

3.1 allow the allied Hmong-American and Lao-American veterans of the American Secret War in
3.2 Laos, and their spouses and any dependents, to have the final, eternal honor of perpetual interment
3.3 alongside their fellow American veterans within state veterans cemeteries throughout the nation,
3.4 including the Minnesota State 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 President and the Secretary of the United States Senate, the
3.7 Speaker and the Clerk of the United States House of Representatives, the United States Secretary
3.8 of State, the presiding officers of both houses of the legislatures of each of the other states of the
3.9 union, and to Minnesota's Senators and Representatives in Congress.