

April 1, 2025

To Rep. Matt Bliss, Co-Chair
Rep. Jay Xiong, Co-Chair
Members of the Veterans and Military Affairs Division Committee
MN House of Representatives
House for the 94th Legislature (2025 - 2026)

Re: Support for HF1845

Dear Co-Chair Bliss, Co-Chair Xiong, and Veterans and Military Affairs Division
Committee Members:

My name is former Lt. Xang Vang. I served as a CIA-recruited foot soldier in the Secret War in Laos from 1969 to 1975.

I am one of the founders of the Special Guerrilla Units (SGU) Veterans and Families of USA organization, based in St. Paul here. I am writing this letter in support of the bill HF1845 and to provide a brief overview of the military structure of the Secret War in Laos, which was a critical part of the Vietnam War.

During the war, SGU soldiers were recruited, financed and operated under the CIA guidance and were stationed throughout different military regions in Laos. The CIA organized our SGU forces into Group Mobile (GM) units, each consisting of approximately 2,500 to 3,000 military personnel. Each GM unit worked closely with a CIA case officer and an interpreter, who provided daily coordination and intelligence gathering. We played a crucial role in collecting enemy movement reports, field intelligence, and casualty numbers, which were then relayed to our superior officers. In Laos' Military Region 2, high-ranking CIA officials frequently visited our GM units to inspect military operations alongside General Vang Pao.

When the Secret War ended in 1975, the communist North Vietnamese Army and Pathet Lao soldiers targeted and persecuted former SGU soldiers like myself. Facing imminent danger, I had no choice but to flee my homeland and seek refuge in the United States.

In 1997, Congress recognized the SGU's contributions by passing HR-371, the Hmong Naturalization Act, which provided an expedited path to U.S. citizenship for SGU veterans and their spouses. Additionally, our service was acknowledged through a Memorial Plaque and a dedicated tree at Arlington National Cemetery. In 2018,

President Trump further honored our sacrifices by signing a legislation granting burial rights for Hmong SGU veterans in U.S. national cemeteries.

I urge all of you to support and approve the HF1845. This bill is deeply personal to our surviving SGU veterans and their spouses. We fought alongside the United States because we believed in its mission to defend freedom and democracy in Laos and throughout Southeast Asia.

I urge you to recognize our service and honor our sacrifices by voting YES on this bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Xang Vang', with a stylized, flowing script.

Former Lt. Xang Vang
Executive Director
Special Guerrilla Units Veterans and Families of USA

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