

Committee Co-Chairs Representative Bliss and Representative Xiong, Distinguished Members of the Veterans and Military Affairs Division Committee, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to share our story.

My name is Yee Hang. I am an American, a proud graduate of West Point, and a retired U.S. Army colonel. But above all, I am the son of a Hmong Special Guerrilla Unit soldier, Major WangTru Hang. Today, I am honored and privileged to wear this uniform once more to honor the sacrifices of my father and the countless brave men who stood alongside him. Please note that my testimony does not reflect the official stance of the United States Army or the U.S. government.

The bill before you is a significant ask, but it is also a just and honorable one. Minnesota has already taken meaningful steps to recognize veterans of the Secret War—through the Laos War Veteran (Allied Veteran) license plate and the designation of May 14th as Hmong Special Guerrilla Units Remembrance Day. These are commendable acts, but they are only the beginning. Today, we ask you and the state of Minnesota to take the next step—to grant these warriors the recognition they have long deserved.

People often thank me for my service, but my 27 years in uniform pale in comparison to the sacrifices of men like my father. At just 16 years old, he was recruited to fight a war on behalf of a country he had never known. For 14 long years, he battled and bled alongside his brothers-in-arms. And what was his reward? No formal recognition, no title—just a simple license plate which he cherishes with pride and a state holiday.

Yet he and others like him do not harbor bitterness. They lost their homeland. They lost loved ones. They fled with nothing but the clothes on their backs. And yet, they carry themselves with dignity and honor because they know that their sacrifices mattered. They fought for freedom, for democracy, and for a cause greater than themselves.

These men—these giants—inspired a new generation, including myself, to follow in their footsteps. Many of us continue to serve our great nation, and some have even made the ultimate sacrifice. Others have built new lives here, contributing to our communities in profound and meaningful ways.

This bill is not just about honoring the past—it is about doing what is right before it is too late. Time is running out. The few remaining warriors are in their twilight years. Passing this bill will finally grant them the title they have earned—the title of veteran. It will not erase their hardships, but it will ensure that their sacrifices are acknowledged, respected, and never forgotten.

This is more than just legislation. It is an act of justice. It is a recognition of duty, honor, and sacrifice. And it is long overdue.

Thank you.