



## Wisconsin State Legislature

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Contact: Senator Petrowski  
Representative Snyder

May 14, 2021  
(608) 266-2502  
(608) 266-0654

### **Governor Signs Petrowski/Snyder Hmong-Lao Veterans Day Bill**

MADISON... Governor Tony Evers this morning signed a bill authored by State Senator Jerry Petrowski (*R-Marathon*) and State Representative Pat Snyder (*R-Schofield*) establishing May 14<sup>th</sup> as Hmong Veterans Day in the State of Wisconsin. The bill calls for the governor to issue a proclamation each year to recognize and honor May 14<sup>th</sup> as “Hmong-Lao Veterans Day” -- and calls for the flag at the State Capitol to be lowered to half-staff that day in their honor. The bill also encourages schools to take a portion of their day to recall and discuss the accomplishments and sacrifices made by the Hmong veterans.

“Today, and every May 14<sup>th</sup> going forward, we take time to honor the Hmong veterans for their service and sacrifice,” said Senator Petrowski. “Each veteran has their own personal story of bravery, one that should be both commemorated and appreciated. Their stories of courage need to be told – and their sacrifices remembered.”

Throughout the Vietnam War, the United States worked in cooperation with thousands of ethnic Hmong to fight against the North Vietnamese and Laotian communist forces in what is referred to as the “Secret War” in Laos. Recruited by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), their primary endeavors were to disrupt the supply chain of munitions and North Vietnamese soldiers along the Ho Chi Minh Trail, help to protect and defend strategic points such as communication towers and radar stations, and to retrieve American fighter pilots shot down behind enemy lines. These Hmong soldiers fought valiantly during this covert war to help aid and assist the American effort of preventing communism from spreading deeper into Southeast Asia. They fought on the ground, flew combat missions, directed air strikes, and gathered valuable enemy surveillance that they shared with the American forces.

“May 14, 1975 was the date of the last airlift of Hmong and Lao veterans out of Laos,” said Representative Snyder. “I am glad that on this May 14<sup>th</sup> - 46 years later – we can honor these brave veterans. The Hmong and Lao soldiers who served as allies to United States Armed Forces during the Vietnam War risked everything for their actions and suffered serious reprisals against their families and communities. It is long past time that we celebrate those who served with our soldiers and I am glad that we will now recognize their incredible service every May 14<sup>th</sup> in Wisconsin.”

In addition to signing the bill Governor Evers issued Executive Order 115 recognizing May 14, 2021 as Hmong-Lao Veterans Day and ordering flags to be flown at half-staff.

###