



HMONG CULTURAL CENTER

Koom Haum Hmoob Kab Lis Kev Cai

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To Whom It May Concern:

Hmong Cultural Center is providing this letter in support of SF 5065, a bill in support of appropriations for community grants activities and events to recognize and commemorate the 50th anniversary of Hmong and Southeast Asians in Minnesota.

Founded 32 years ago in 1992, Hmong Cultural Center is the one of the oldest surviving Hmong community organizations in Minnesota. All those years ago, Hmong Cultural Center was started by a group of Hmong elders to help preserve Hmong culture and promote cross-cultural understanding between Hmong and non-Hmong in our state. Hmong Cultural Center continues this mission today with popular programs including arts instruction in the Qeej instrument for children and youth, ESL and Citizenship classes for Hmong and other recent immigrants and refugees, a Hmong Resource Center Library and a 2,000 square-foot museum open to the public and for school field trips 7 days a week on University Avenue just 4 blocks from the State Capitol.

In our museum exhibits, we highlight the early history of Hmong in Minnesota starting in 1975, waves of Hmong settlement to St. Paul and the state from the 1970s through the present day as well as Hmong achievements and contributions to Minnesota and the United States. For the Hmong community, the 50th anniversary of the first Hmong refugees coming to Minnesota is a very significant milestone. This is an anniversary the Hmong community would also like to share with others to help them better understand the many obstacles the Hmong community in Minnesota has overcome over the past half century including poverty, cultural and language barriers and racism and discrimination to become successful citizens and make important contributions to our state.

For these reasons, we strongly support SF 5065. The legislation will allow both the Hmong and Southeast Asian community to organize multiple activities and events to commemorate and celebrate this very important anniversary and share the significance of our community's history with all of Minnesota. Thank you and please feel free to contact us with any additional questions about our support for this worthwhile bill.

Yours Sincerely,

Txongpao Lee

Txongpao Lee, Executive Director

Mark Pfeifer

Dr. Mark Pfeifer, Director of Programs