



Testimony for MN Senate Environment, Climate, and Legacy Committee
Maycee Vang, Program Manager, the United Hmong Family
SF2590
Tuesday, March 25th, 2025

Thank you Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee for the opportunity to testify today. We appreciate Chair FOUNG HAWJ for his continuous support and introducing this bill for a great event held in the city of Saint Paul.

I'm Maycee, the Program Manager for The United Hmong Family (UHF) who hosts two unique events in the city of St. Paul, the state of Minnesota, and for the nation.

The Hmong community first arrived in Minnesota in the late 1970s. Since then, we've grown exponentially in Minnesota. We've become doctors, lawyers, teachers, public servants, and even Olympic gold medalist.

As we adapt to the American lifestyle, we notice how the community started to lose its identity of what it meant to be "Hmong American". This is evident in that many Hmong children cannot speak or write in Hmong, understand Hmong culture tradition, and Hmong arts.

The United Hmong Family organization became an official non-profit in 2017 and tackles this issue by continuing to host the Hmong New Year that has been held in Minnesota for the last 44 years.

We don't have an official holiday except for the Hmong New Year, where we come together to celebrate the harvest and honor our ancestors with music and dance.

We believe that hosting the Hmong New Year provides Hmong children with an opportunity to learn about Hmong culture, traditions, arts and most importantly their Hmong roots. Most specifically, UHF hosts an annual dance competition at the Minnesota Hmong New Year. This dance competition is unique to the Hmong community and encourages display of Hmong arts in the form of dance, clothing and storytelling of the Hmong history.



As our events and organization continues to grow, we are requesting \$350,000 from the Legacy budget to assist with funding for the Minnesota Hmong New Year to continue to grow the competition and offer other additional programs for our annual cultural celebration that brings together tens of thousands of Minnesotans a year.

With the expansion of our programs, we had all 106 vendor spots sold out, had 49 dance groups who registered to compete, and welcomed over 31,000 attendees into Saint Paul RiverCenter in just two days. As you can see, the Hmong New Year has grown to be a part of Minnesota's history. People travel internationally to celebrate the Hmong New Year here in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Although we are asking for support from the legislature, I want to also share with you that we also have support from our community with a strong interest in preserving and celebrating the Hmong cultural with great cultural significance and hope to receive support from local corporations that have demonstrated a long-term commitment to the cultural needs of the community and foundations similarly interested in supporting UHF's goal of celebrating the Hmong culture and presenting its story to the community.

Thank you for the opportunity to allow me to testify today.

I respectfully request the committee's support for including this request in the omnibus bill.