



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

RIVETS

OFFICE OF VETERANS SERVICES

Daniel J. McKee **Governor**

Kasim J. Yarn **Director**

March 14, 2023

The Honorable Samuel Azzinaro
Chair, House Committee on Veterans' Affairs
State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903
via email: Rep-Azzinaro@rilegislature.gov
via email: HouseVeteransAffairs@rilegislature.gov

RE: H-5467 – House Resolution Respectfully Urging the United States Congress to Pass
Legislation to Provide Veterans Benefits to the Hmong/Laotian Veterans who
Served the United States in the “Secret War” in Laos

Dear Chairman Azzinaro:

I write today regarding H-5467 – House Resolution Respectfully Urging the United States Congress to Pass Legislation to Provide Veterans Benefits to the Hmong/Laotian Veterans who Served the United States in the “Secret War” in Laos.

On March 23, 2018, federal legislation was passed which added Hmong/Laotian guerilla fighters as a new category of persons eligible for interment in the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) national cemeteries. Not long after, the VA National Cemetery Administration notified states that interment of Hong/Laotian guerilla fighters in state cemeteries would cause the VA to recapture funding or downgrade state cemeteries upon audit.

For Rhode Island to provide Veteran status to Hmong/Laotian guerilla fighters which then provides eligibility for state-level Veterans' benefits, such as interment in the state's Veterans Memorial Cemetery, federal legislation ensuring states are not penalized must be enacted.

As always, I thank you for your partnership and consideration of this letter. Your leadership and advocacy for Rhode Island's Veterans and their families are appreciated.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "K. Yarn".

Kasim J. Yarn
Director

cc: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs
The Honorable Arthur J. Corvese
Nicole McCarty, Esq., Chief Legal Counsel to the Speaker of the House
Lynne Urbani, Director of Policy, House of Representatives