

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 542

Commemorating the 50th anniversary of Southeast Asian refugee resettlement and the many contributions and sacrifices of Southeast Asian Americans to the United States.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

DECEMBER 11, 2025

Ms. HIRONO (for herself, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. KIM, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. PADILLA, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, and Mr. WYDEN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

RESOLUTION

Commemorating the 50th anniversary of Southeast Asian refugee resettlement and the many contributions and sacrifices of Southeast Asian Americans to the United States.

Whereas April 17, 2025, marks the 50th anniversary of the beginning of the Khmer Rouge's devastating reign in Cambodia, April 30, 2025, marks the 50th anniversary of the fall of Saigon, December 2, 2025, marks the 50th anniversary of the abolition of the Lao monarchy, and May 1, 2025, marks the 50th anniversary of the beginning of the evacuation of Hmong, Lao, and other Lao ethnic minorities from Laos;

Whereas 2025 commemorates the 50th year of the beginning of the resettlement of Southeast Asian refugees to the United States;

Whereas Southeast Asian American refugees and their descendants comprise more than 3,000,000 individuals in the United States, including Cham, Hmong, Khmer, Khmer Kampuchea Krom, Khmer Loeu, Khmu, Lahu, Lao, Iu Mien, Montagnards, Phutai, Pnong, Tai Dam, Tai Deng, Tai Lue, Vietnamese, and ethnic Chinese with Southeast Asian heritage;

Whereas the Vietnamese from South Vietnam allied with the United States in opposition to the expansion of communist North Vietnam;

Whereas tens of thousands of Vietnamese who served alongside the United States sought refuge in the United States after the fall of Saigon on April 30, 1975, and hundreds of thousands more Vietnamese arrived in the United States in the following decades to escape persecution and political oppression;

Whereas the Central Intelligence Agency and other Federal agencies enlisted the Hmong, Lao, and Laotian ethnic groups in Laos as allies to aid United States forces in Southeast Asia, waging a 13-year covert operation called the “Secret Wars” against the Pathet Lao, Viet Cong, and Northern Vietnamese Army;

Whereas thousands of Cambodians assisted United States forces during United States operations in Cambodia, including Operation Menu;

Whereas approximately 1,500,000 to 3,000,000 Cambodians were murdered during the Khmer Rouge genocide between 1975 and 1979;

Whereas more than 3,000,000 individuals were displaced from Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam due to war, conflict, and genocide;

Whereas, between 1975 and the mid-2000s, the United States received more than 1,200,000 Southeast Asians escaping the aftermath of the Vietnam war, persecution in Laos and Vietnam, and the Khmer Rouge genocide in Cambodia;

Whereas, in 1975, Washington State Governor Daniel J. Evans was the first governor to welcome refugees from Vietnam to the United States through a program designed to resettle Vietnamese refugees;

Whereas, while the resettlement of Southeast Asian refugees throughout the United States provided new opportunities, many individuals and families encountered significant challenges due to lack of financial resources, comprehensive support, and language barriers;

Whereas, even after 50 years, many Southeast Asian Americans still face economic, educational, and linguistic barriers in the United States;

Whereas, as survivors of war and genocide, Southeast Asian Americans still face unique health disparities, including higher rates of physical, mental, and chronic health challenges, including more than 60 percent of Cambodian refugees in the United States and a significant number of other Southeast Asian Americans who continue to experience post-traumatic stress disorder;

Whereas, as children of the survivors of war and genocide, first- and second-generation Southeast Asian Americans have intergenerational, compounded trauma that has created poor mental health conditions, educational barriers,

and immigration challenges, including some with removal orders;

Whereas limited English proficiency rates for Southeast Asian Americans are between 40 and 50 percent, and for elders, the rate of limited English proficiency is as high as 90 percent;

Whereas, despite many challenges they have faced in the United States, Southeast Asian Americans have thrived and contributed greatly to the economic, educational, military, political, and social culture of the United States since their resettlement;

Whereas Southeast Asian Americans serve at every level of United States Government, including in Congress;

Whereas Southeast Asian American communities have established vibrant cultural centers throughout every region across the United States; and

Whereas Southeast Asian Americans have strengthened the fabric of this Nation through their resilience, hard work, and cultural richness by enhancing our communities, enriching our economy, and helping build a more vibrant and resilient country for all: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) commemorates the 50-year anniversary of
3 the beginning of the large-scale Southeast Asian ref-
4 ugee resettlement in the United States;

5 (2) honors the sacrifices made by Southeast
6 Asian American communities on behalf of the
7 United States, including all those who served and
8 who gave their lives;

1 (3) recognizes the contributions of Southeast
2 Asian Americans to the economic, military, political,
3 and social culture of the United States;

4 (4) continues to pursue comprehensive policies
5 that ensure opportunities for Southeast Asian Amer-
6 ican communities, including in education and health;
7 and

8 (5) affirms the United States commitment to
9 embracing and assisting refugees, immigrants, and
10 naturalized United States citizens in our commu-
11 nities.

○