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H. RES. 1331

Recognizing and appreciating the historical significance and the heroic struggle and sacrifice of the Vietnamese people for the cause of freedom and commending the Vietnamese-American community and nongovernmental organizations.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 5, 2010

Mr. CAO submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the
Committee on the Judiciary

RESOLUTION

Recognizing and appreciating the historical significance and the heroic struggle and sacrifice of the Vietnamese people for the cause of freedom and commending the Vietnamese-American community and nongovernmental organizations.

Whereas citizens of the Republic of Vietnam valiantly fought, with the support of the United States and other allies, to defend freedom and democracy for over two decades before Communist forces broke the Paris Peace Accord by invading South Vietnam and establishing a totalitarian regime throughout the country;

Whereas after the Communist takeover on April 30, 1975, over 1,000,000 former soldiers and civil servants of the Republic of Vietnam were sent to hundreds of “re-edu-

cation” camps, where tens of thousands died of forced labor, starvation, torture, diseases, or summary execution;

Whereas in the final days of the Vietnam War, the United States 7th Fleet rescued and brought to freedom 130,000 evacuees who, after a brief stay in Guam, became the first Vietnamese refugees resettled in the United States;

Whereas according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 840,000 Vietnamese subsequently fled the country by boat and arrived as refugees in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines, Hong Kong, and Brunei, and tens of thousands of Vietnamese refugees crossed Cambodia and Laos to reach Thailand;

Whereas from this mass exodus, which came to be known to the world as the Vietnamese boat people saga, over 755,000 of these refugees resettled in the United States, Australia, Canada, England, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, and many other countries, and over 81,000 were deported to Vietnam;

Whereas the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimates that over 250,000 boat people died at sea as a result of storms, illness, and starvation, as well as kidnappings and killings by pirates;

Whereas hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese refugees and immigrants subsequently arrived in the United States under programs such as Humanitarian Operation (HO), Humanitarian Resettlement (HR), U11, V11, McCain-Davis Amendment, Priority One In-Country Refugee Program (P1), Resettlement Opportunity for Vietnamese Returnees, and Amerasian Homecoming Act;

Whereas Catholic Charities, the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops, and many nongovernmental organizations assisted Vietnamese refugees to resettle in the United States;

Whereas generous United States families, churches, and organizations helped sponsor the newly arrived refugees to establish new lives in the Nation;

Whereas the Vietnamese-American community, non-existent 35 years ago and now making up about half of all overseas Vietnamese and the fourth largest Asian-American group in the United States, has contributed significantly to all aspects of life and society in the United States, including business, engineering, science, law, academia, medicine, engineering, arts, media, military, civil service, and community service;

Whereas Vietnamese-Americans have been recognized to be among the most politically assimilated citizens in the United States and have produced many candidates running for public office and winning seats on local governing bodies and school boards, in State legislatures in California and Texas, and in the United States Congress;

Whereas Vietnamese-Americans are a highly upwardly mobile group, ranking among the most successful socioeconomic groups in the United States, pursuing many different careers and owning numerous businesses;

Whereas by 2006, 72 percent of Vietnamese-Americans were naturalized United States citizens, the highest rate among all Asian-American groups;

Whereas refugees advocacy nongovernmental organizations such as BPSOS, Hong Bang, Inc., World Vision, and

others provided direct relief care and assistance to refugees in temporary asylum camps;

Whereas founded in 1980 by boat people to rescue and bring other boat people to freedom, Boat People SOS (BPSOS) conducted rescue-at-sea missions, rescuing over 3,300 boat people in the South China Sea and in the 1990s successfully advocated for humanitarian resettlement of 18,000 former boat people after repatriation to Communist Vietnam;

Whereas since 1997, BPSOS has built capacity for local Vietnamese-American communities across the United States to achieve self-reliance, served tens of thousands new refugees and immigrants, and when Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Ike devastated the Gulf Coast and left thousands of families and individuals homeless, traumatized, and dispirited, BPSOS acted as First Responder, coordinating relief efforts and assisting over 4,000 families rebuild their lives;

Whereas BPSOS has effectively fought human trafficking in Southeast Asia, Taiwan, and the United States, including making significant contributions to the investigation and successful prosecution of the American Samoa case, the largest labor trafficking case in United States history;

Whereas the year 2010 marks BPSOS' 30 years of service to individuals and communities in crisis and 35 years of the Vietnamese-American history, and in 2010, BPSOS launched its 30/35 national public education and awareness campaign to showcase every development phase of the history of the Vietnamese-American community;

Whereas Congress has designated every May as Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month to pay tribute to the genera-

tions of Asian and Pacific Islanders who have enriched history in the United States and are instrumental in its future success; and

Whereas BPSOS will sponsor a ceremony on May 18, 2010, which will be held at the Capitol Visitor Center in Washington, DC, to document the heroic journey to freedom of over 1,000,000 Vietnamese refugees and immigrants, their Vietnamese-American experiences, inspiring stories of survival and resurrection from the demise of their country, and their astonishing achievements in their new homeland, and to honor the generosity as well as inspiring values of the United States that welcomed the Vietnamese boat people: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) recognizes all former Vietnamese boat peo-
3 ple and the Vietnamese-American community in gen-
4 eral on the occasion of Asian/Pacific American Her-
5 itage Month;

6 (2) recognizes the arrival of the Vietnamese
7 boat people to the United States, their inspiring
8 journey to freedom, and their successful assimilation
9 into and admirable contributions to United States
10 society; and

11 (3) recognizes Boat People SOS and other vol-
12 unteer agencies and nongovernmental organizations
13 that facilitated the resettlement, adjustment, and as-

- 1 simulation of Vietnamese refugees into United States
- 2 society.

