Legislation Text

File #: RES 25-713, **Version:** 1

Honoring the Legacy and Service of Pang Mang Thao and proclaiming Wednesday, May 7, 2025, as Pang Mang Thao Day in the City of Saint Paul.

WHEREAS, Pang Mang Thao is a respected Hmong-American community leader and veteran advocate based in Minnesota. He has served as the President of the Lao Veterans of America (LVA) Minnesota chapter, playing a pivotal role in advocating for the recognition and support of Hmong and Lao veterans who served during the Vietnam War; and

WHEREAS, His wisdom, compassion, and vision have impacted countless families and communities. Even today, he continues to serve passionately in various organizations. His leadership journey has spanned over 40 years; and

WHEREAS, Born in Laos, Pang Mang Thao lost his father at the age of four and was raised by his mother's side of the Xiong family. As he grew older, he left his village to pursue education in the cities. In 1969, he began teaching elementary school in Xam Neua, Laos. Prior to his marriage in 1970, Pang Mang was already serving as a secretary to a respected elder clan leader, Mr. Hua Laum Thao, who recognized his natural leadership abilities. Mr. Thao blessed him and predicted that Pang Mang would become a great leader for his people-a prediction that proved true; and

WHEREAS, Due to the impacts of the Vietnam War, Pang Mang Thao and his family fled Laos and resettled as refugees in Ban Vinai, Thailand, in 1979. In 1980, they immigrated to the United States, settling in St. Paul, Minnesota. Shortly after arriving, Pang Mang continued his leadership journey. In 1981, while living in Roosevelt Homes (public housing townhomes), he was elected as a local community leader among two others. He helped assess family needs, worked on crime prevention initiatives, and coordinated social services for over 360 families. Pang Mang was re-elected to this leadership position for eight consecutive terms from 1981 to 1989; and

WHEREAS, His reputation for wise leadership grew rapidly and earned the respect of local government, social service agencies, and nonprofit organizations. Over the following decades, Pang Mang Thao held the following leadership roles: Chairperson of Thao Laublaig (1981-present), Chairperson of Hmong Muang Phin (Muaspheeb) - overseeing eight tribal clans with over 280 families (1987-present), Chairperson of Thao/Kue Tribal Clans (first term 1984-1986, second term 1988-1990), Chairperson of Koomhum Moob Thoj Paab Tshaavntuj of the United States (1986-1996), Chairperson for a City Committee under Mayor James A. Scheibel (1989), Board Advisor for Lao Family Community of Minnesota (1991-1993, 2005-present), National Committee Member for Hmong Affairs under General Vang Pao (1990-present), Board Member, United Lao Movement for Democracy (1991-1994; Board Advisor 2004-present), Board Advisor for the Hmong 18 Clan Council (2000-2004; 2004-present), Board Advisor for Thao Advancement Committee (2000-present), Board Advisor for a Committee under Nchaiv Fwj Yooj (2002-present), Board Advisor to General Vang Pao (2004-present), Board Advisor for Lao Human Rights Council, Inc. (2004-present), Board Advisor for Thao/Xue Tribal Clans of Minnesota (2005-present), President and Advisor of United Lao Council for Peace, Freedom, and Reconstruction (2017-present), President of Minnesota Lao Veterans (2013-present); and

WHEREAS, During the Vietnam War, Thao served alongside U.S. forces as part of the CIA-backed "Secret War" in Laos, where Hmong and Lao soldiers were recruited to combat the spread of communism in

Southeast Asia. After the war, many of these veterans resettled in the United States, particularly in Minnesota, which now hosts one of the largest Hmong populations in the country. Thao has been instrumental in lobbying for the rights and recognition of these veterans. He has traveled to Washington, D.C. and Arlington National Cemetery multiple times, advocating for legislation that would honor the sacrifices of Hmong and Lao veterans. His efforts contributed to the passage of the Hmong Veterans' Service Recognition Act, allowing naturalized Hmong and Lao-American veterans to be buried in U.S. national cemeteries; and

WHEREAS, Beyond his advocacy at the national level, Thao has been active in local community events, often delivering speeches that honor the contributions of veterans and promote unity within the Hmong and Lao communities. His leadership has been recognized by local governments; for instance, the City of Saint Paul honored his contributions on June 2, 2018; and

WHEREAS, Thao continues to work towards ensuring that Hmong and Lao veterans receive the recognition and benefits they deserve. His commitment to service and advocacy remains a cornerstone of his efforts to support the veteran community; and

WHEREAS, As of today, Pang Mang Thao has served 22 terms as president or advisor in various organizations. He has successfully restored families, strengthened communities, and uplifted countless individuals through his leadership. His passions remain focused on advocating for veterans' rights, recognition, and service benefits, promoting peace, harmony, and prosperity within families, and strengthening community unity and preserving Hmong cultural heritage. Pang Mang Thao’s unwavering commitment continues to inspire many, as he dedicates his life's work to advancing the future of the Hmong communities in America; and

RESOLVED, that the Saint Paul City Council honors the legacy and service of Pang Mang Thao and will continue their commitment to support the vibrant and diverse Hmong community and Hmong Veterans and celebrate the many achievements the Hmong community has contributed to the city; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Saint Paul City Council hereby proclaims Wednesday, May 7, 2025, as Pang Mang Thao Day in the City of Saint Paul.

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