

Written Testimony in Support of HCR34 – Vietnamese American Remembrance Day

Submitted by: Lyllian Nguyen

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Dear House Committee, Honorable Members, and Distinguished Guests,

My name is Lyllian Nguyen. I am a second-generation Vietnamese American, born in the United States. Oregon is where I was born and raised. I didn't live through the Vietnam War, but I carry it in my story, in my blood, and in the legacy passed down to me. As we approach the 50th anniversary of the fall of Saigon, I feel the weight of that moment. Not only as history, but as a deeply personal truth that shaped my family and continues to shape my purpose.

I write in support of HCR 34 because this resolution is more than a symbolic gesture. It is an act of honoring. It ensures that the lives lost, the journeys endured, and the communities built are remembered not just in memory, but in legacy. It tells every veteran, every refugee, and every second-generation child like me that we are seen, we are remembered, and we belong.

My mother lost her husband, Bui Cong Dong, a Red Beret in the South Vietnamese Army, in 1974 just one year before Saigon fell. Widowed with seven children, she made the brave and painful decision to flee her homeland. With nothing but faith and strength, she started over in a new country, determined to protect her children's future. Her courage is something I will always carry with me.

I also honor my father, Kim Dinh Nguyen, and my grandfather, Rung Xuan Pham, who both served in the Republic of Vietnam's Southern Army. After the fall of Saigon, they were imprisoned in re-education camps. Despite the trauma and hardship, they survived and eventually found a path to begin again in the United States. Their journey is part of a larger story, one shared by thousands who lost their country but never lost their will to live with dignity and purpose.

Their sacrifices and those of so many others live on through us. They live in our language, our food, our memories, and our presence here today. They also live in the quiet, human moments that remind us why remembrance matters.

Over the years, I've listened to countless stories of war, separation, survival, and hope. As a journalist and a cultural advocate, I've shared many of these stories. But one moment in particular has stayed with me.

I was at the beach with my children when I met an older American veteran walking alone. I saw the South Vietnam flag pin on his hat and stopped to thank him for his service. He looked surprised, and then softly began to share. He had recently lost his wife, and with tears in his eyes, he told me about the time they spent apart during the war, the things he missed, and the memories he carried.

I shared how my own parents, each grieving their own losses — found each other in America and rebuilt a life together. I am one daughter in a large, blended family born from war, migration, and resilience.

As we sat together by the ocean, he removed the pin from his hat and placed it in my hand. “For years,” he said, “I didn’t know if going to Vietnam was the right decision. But today, seeing you a young Vietnamese mother living freely, raising children, and saying thank you. This gave me peace. It was the comfort I didn’t know I needed.”

That moment lives in my heart. It was a bridge between generations, between war and healing, between sacrifice and legacy.

That is what HCR34 holds space for. Not just remembrance but recognition. Not just sorrow but hope. It is a tribute to the honor, courage, and loyalty of all who served and sacrificed, and a promise that their stories will not be forgotten. That their legacy lives on in the freedom of their children, in the voices of their grandchildren, and in the future we continue to build together.

On behalf of my family and on behalf of the many families who have walked this path of loss, survival, and renewal, I thank you for acknowledging this history. I respectfully and proudly support HCR34.

Thank you,

Lyllian Nguyen

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