

House Resolution 505

By: Representatives Hong of the 103rd, Momtahan of the 17th, Sainz of the 180th, Martinez of the 111th, and Carpenter of the 4th

A RESOLUTION

1 Commending the Laotian American community in Georgia and honoring the Airavata flag;
2 and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, during the Vietnam War, Laos became an unexpected battleground, with the
4 Royal Lao government, in collaboration with the Central Intelligence Agency, leading
5 Hmong and Lao forces in combat against the North Vietnamese Army and Pathet Lao
6 insurgents; and

7 WHEREAS, these forces played a crucial role in aiding and protecting United States military
8 operations in Laos, often at great personal risk, and their sacrifices remain an integral part
9 of the history of that conflict; and

10 WHEREAS, in 1975, Laos underwent a profound political transformation with the fall of
11 Vientiane and the rise of the Communist Pathet Lao government, marking the end of the
12 Kingdom of Laos and the establishment of the Lao People's Democratic Republic; and

13 WHEREAS, this sudden shift in political power created widespread fear and persecution,
14 particularly for those associated with the former regime, intellectuals, and others deemed
15 threats to the new government, forcing many Laotians to flee their homeland; and

16 WHEREAS, thousands of Laotians braved the treacherous waters of the Mekong River to
17 seek refuge in Thailand, where they endured difficult conditions in overcrowded and
18 under-resourced refugee camps before being resettled in countries such as the United States;
19 and

20 WHEREAS, the State of Georgia extended a warm welcome to these Laotian refugees, with
21 vibrant communities forming in cities such as Atlanta, Cornelia, Chickamauga,
22 Lawrenceville, Marietta, Riverdale, and Macon, where they have worked diligently to
23 integrate into American society while preserving their cultural identity; and

24 WHEREAS, Laotian Americans in Georgia have made invaluable contributions to the state's
25 cultural and economic landscape, establishing businesses, cultural organizations, and
26 community centers that promote their heritage and foster a sense of belonging; and

27 WHEREAS, featuring a white three-headed elephant against a red background, the Airavata
28 flag holds profound cultural and historical significance for the Laotian community,
29 symbolizing the ancient Kingdom of Lan Xang, also known as the "Land of a Million
30 Elephants," which was one of the most prosperous kingdoms in Southeast Asia from the 14th
31 to the 18th centuries; and

32 WHEREAS, for Laotians living abroad, the Airavata flag serves as a powerful connection
33 to their history, identity, and traditions, representing unity, resilience, and the enduring spirit
34 of their ancestors; and

35 WHEREAS, it is abundantly fitting and proper that the Airavata flag be recognized as a
36 symbol of the Laotian American community, celebrating their journey, resilience, and
37 contributions to the diverse fabric of this state and the nation.

38 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
39 the members of this body commend the Laotian American community in Georgia for their
40 many achievements and contributions as well as honor the Airavata flag as a representation
41 of their heritage and legacy.

42 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
43 and directed to make appropriate copies of this resolution available for distribution to the
44 public and the press.