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Gov. Evers Signs Bill Designating May 14 as Hmong-Lao Veterans Day, Orders Flags to Half-Staff

MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers today signed Assembly Bill 154, now Wisconsin Act 31, designating May 14 as Hmong-Lao Veterans Day in Wisconsin. The governor issued [Executive Order #115](#) ordering the flags of the United States and the state of Wisconsin to be flown at half-staff in honor of Hmong-Lao veterans.

The governor was joined today by: Wa Chong Vang, son of General Vang Pao of the Laotian Army; Nao Shoua Xiong, President of the Wisconsin Lao Veterans Association; and State Sen. Jerry Petrowski (R-Marathon), lead author of Assembly Bill 154. The bill signing concluded with a ceremonial lowering of the United States and state of Wisconsin flags to half-staff over the East Wing of the Wisconsin State Capitol.

“I’m honored to be here today as we express our respect and gratitude for the contributions of Hmong people both here in our state and across our country by declaring May 14th in Wisconsin as Hmong-Lao Veterans Day,” said Gov. Evers. “It’s not only important that we recognize the dedicated service of the Hmong-Lao veterans who risked their lives in the Vietnam War and their families made in coming to the United States, it’s also critical that we ensure future generations understand the sacrifices these individuals made in service.”

During the Vietnam War, thousands of Hmong-Lao people fought alongside the United States and ultimately faced harsh retribution from the Vietnamese and Lao governments for their service. Many Hmong-Lao soldiers and their families were forced to flee, many resettling in the United States, including Wisconsin. Forty-six years ago today, May 14, 1975, is recognized as the last day of airlift evacuation of remaining Hmong-Lao soldiers and their families from the covert headquarters in Long Tieng, Laos, to the Nam Phong refugee camp in Thailand.

[Assembly Bill 154](#), now Wisconsin Act 31:

- Designates May 14 as Hmong-Lao Veterans Day in Wisconsin; and
- Requires the governor to annually issue a proclamation for the observance of Hmong-Lao Veterans Day, ordering the flags at the State Capitol Building to be flown at half-staff, requesting the day be used to recall the veterans' accomplishments and to thank those veterans for their service, and encouraging schools to discuss Hmong military service in support of the armed forces of the United States.

In addition to signing the bill today, the governor has proclaimed Hmong-Lao Veterans Day in Wisconsin each year since assuming office in 2019. The governor’s 2021 proclamation is available [here](#).

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