

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 2025-4649, by Representatives Thai, Entenman, Duerr, Ryu, Abell, Parshley, Eslick, Zahn, Chase, Taylor, Cortes, Santos, Thomas, Nance, Walen, Burnett, Leavitt, and Berg

1 WHEREAS, In the spring of 1975, the withdrawal of American troops
2 from Vietnam and the reduction of aid displaced hundreds of thousands
3 of Southeast Asian refugees; and

4 WHEREAS, In response, Governor Daniel Evans of Washington state
5 recognized the humanitarian crisis and took decisive action to
6 welcome refugees seeking safety and new opportunities; and

7 WHEREAS, President Gerald Ford initiated Operation Babylift to
8 bring Vietnamese orphans to the United States, with a Pan Am 747
9 carrying 407 orphans landing at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport
10 on April 6, 1975; and

11 WHEREAS, Washington Secretary of State Bruce Chapman emphasized
12 America's moral obligation to support displaced people and provide
13 them with opportunities for resettlement; and

14 WHEREAS, Governor Evans declared Washington's readiness to
15 accommodate refugees, creating a task force to oversee their
16 resettlement and ensure their successful integration; and

17 WHEREAS, On May 20, 1975, the first group of 34 refugees arrived
18 at Camp Murray, where pre-World War II cottages were refurbished to
19 provide temporary housing; and

20 WHEREAS, The Washington community demonstrated extraordinary
21 support by donating resources, volunteering, and establishing host
22 family programs; and

1 WHEREAS, President Ford provided support for the nationwide
2 relocation of refugees and appointed Governor Evans to a Presidential
3 Refugee Advisory Committee; and

4 WHEREAS, By Christmas 1975, 4,052 Southeast Asian refugees had
5 settled in Washington, making it home to the fifth-largest
6 Indochinese refugee population in the United States; and

7 WHEREAS, Additional waves of Indochinese refugees, including 1.6
8 million *Boat people*, resettled to third-party countries between 1975
9 and 1997; and

10 WHEREAS, Upwards of 600,000 individuals lost their lives due to
11 economic sanctions and political persecution; and

12 WHEREAS, Recognizing the ongoing need for support, refugee
13 leaders convened in 1977 for the first conference focused on
14 continued assistance and integration efforts; and

15 WHEREAS, A third wave of refugees resettled in the 1980s, further
16 enriching the cultural and economic fabric of Washington State; and

17 WHEREAS, Governor Evans declared that closing the door to
18 refugees would be "the worst kind of hypocrisy," reaffirming
19 Washington's long-standing commitment to humanitarian efforts and
20 inclusion;

21 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Washington State House
22 of Representatives commemorate the 50th anniversary of the
23 Vietnamese, Lao, Cambodian, and Hmong refugee resettlement in our
24 state; and

25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That Washington State continue to uphold
26 the values of compassion and inclusion and support refugees who seek
27 safety, a bright future, and the promise of America.

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