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4 **A RESOLUTION**

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6 Authorizing and requesting the Office of Government Affairs convey Milwaukee
7 County's opposition to the deportation of United States Hmong and Laotian residents
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10 WHEREAS, the United States Census Bureau reports there are approximately
11 260,073 Hmong residents and 232,130 Laotian residents in the United States while
12 Wisconsin is home to more than 49,000 Hmong residents and 4,500 Laotian residents;
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15 WHEREAS, on June 18, 2019, President Trump announced that the Immigration
16 and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Agency would begin mass deportation of immigrants;
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19 WHEREAS, in January 2020, the U.S. Secretary of State met with the Laotian
20 Foreign Minister to discuss whether the Lao People's Democratic Republic would accept
21 Hmong and Laotian residents deported from the United States; and
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23 WHEREAS, the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its
24 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, the latter of which the United States
25 has acceded to, in Article 33 declares, "No Contracting State shall expel or return
26 ("refouler") a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers or territories where his
27 life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality,
28 membership of a particular social group or political opinion"; and
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30 WHEREAS, any deportation of Hmong and Laotian residents would be
31 detrimental to their welfare and safety as they could possibly encounter physical,
32 emotional and mental abuse; and
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34 WHEREAS, deportation would tear families apart and subject them to poverty;
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37 WHEREAS, the Laos 2018 Human Rights Report indicated that police and
38 security officials committed several human rights violations and were not reprimanded
39 or prosecuted by the government; and

40 WHEREAS, Hmong and Laotian residents who are not United States citizens
41 and have criminal records or under deportation orders could face potential deportation
42 to Laos including those who are green card holders as reported by Wisconsin Public
43 Radio; and

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WHEREAS, Fox6 News confirms that a spokesperson for the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency (ICE), explains as of February 1, 2020 there were 38 Laotian Nationals in ICE custody with final orders for removal and all of them have criminal convictions; and

WHEREAS, ICE further indicated there are another 4,716 Laotian Nationals who have final orders for removal who are not yet in ICE custody and, of those, 4,086 have criminal convictions; and

WHEREAS, the Director of the Hmong American Center in Wausau, Wisconsin, estimates close to 360 residents of Wisconsin and Illinois could be at risk for deportation and maybe more, as there is no statute of limitations on crimes which make someone deportable; and

WHEREAS, U.S. Representative Betty McCollum of Minnesota penned a letter on February 3, 2020 to the U.S. Secretary of the State expressing opposition to the deportation of Hmong and Laotian residents arguing “it is unconscionable to deport individuals to any country in which the U.S. knowingly puts them at risk and to take such action is itself human rights abuse”; and

WHEREAS, on February 13, 2020, the Governor of Wisconsin wrote to the U.S. Secretary of State expressing opposition to the deportation of Wisconsin’s Hmong residents and to reconsider any negotiations that would result in deportation; and

WHEREAS, Wisconsin Senator Tammy Baldwin and U.S. Representatives Gwen Moore and Mark Pocan wrote a letter to the U.S. Secretary of State on February 14, 2020 to express concern over previous human rights violations in Laos and noted that residents of Wisconsin share a strong bond with the Hmong community; and

WHEREAS, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared Coronavirus (COVID-19) a pandemic on March 10, 2020, shortly thereafter, on March 18, 2020 the Department of Justice (DOJ) closed several immigration courts for the protection and safety of immigration lawyers, judges, prosecutors, staff and immigrants; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 resulted in several immigration changes administered by the Trump Administration which included postponing immigration hearings, halting of deportations flights to certain countries, removal of migrants arrested at the border and suspension of refugee admissions into the country; and

WHEREAS, any deportation of Hmong and Laotian residents living in the United States would be detrimental to families, as many residents facing deportation are parents, grandparents, business owners, taxpayers and good law-abiding residents of society; and

88 WHEREAS, the Committee on Intergovernmental Relations, at its meeting of
89 September 10, 2020, recommended adoption of File No. 20-506 (vote 4-1); now,
90 therefore,

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92 BE IT RESOLVED, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors hereby opposes
93 any deportation of Hmong and Laotian residents from the United States; and

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95 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
96 hereby requests Government Affairs staff communicate the County's opposition to the
97 U.S. Secretary of State and Wisconsin Congressional Delegation.

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