

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Councilman Dai Thao Discriminates Against Hmong Leng

St. Paul, MN, February 19, 2022. **The Mong Equality Committee will hold a press conference at Cups & Cheers, 1624 White Bear Ave., North, St. Paul, MN 55106, at 12 PM** to address Councilman Dai Thao and others' baseless proclamation that Hmong Der's spelling of "Hmoob" and "Hmong" is standard over Hmong Leng's spelling of "Moob" and that "Moob" is not a Hmong word that is inclusive of both Hmong Leng and Hmong Der.

In a social media post by Councilman Dai Thao on September 21, 2021, he baselessly claimed that Hmoob/Hmong is standard while Moob is not regarding the Hmong Leng writing on a stone at the Saint Paul-Changsha China Friendship Garden. The writing on the stone was "Moob Minnesota txais tog koj." He stated, "I saw this at Changsha/St.Paul friendship garden. What is your thought on using the Moob spelling compare to the standard Hmoob/Hmong?"

To push his agenda forward, he organized a public meeting on November 23, 2021, to rally the public to support his position, wherein he misled the public by falsely interpreting Mr. Brett Hussong's speech. The SGU organization led by Sai Nu Vang and Kang Yee Khang publicly denounced the use of the word "Moob" and that it should be replaced with "Hmong." Mr. Sai Nu Vang falsely claimed that the word "Hmong" had been registered with the United Nations as an official spelling for the Hmong/Mong people. Kongsue Xiong, the sole member of the Hmong Advisory Committee for the Minnesota China Friendship Garden Society who opposed the use of "Moob" pointed fingers and denounced his own committee's actions, accusing them of wrongdoing by not abiding by policies and procedures.

Furthermore, Councilman Thao, in an email, dated December 14, 2021, claimed that the use of the term "Moob" inscribed on a rock at the Saint Paul-Changsha China Friendship Garden was not acceptable in that it was not inclusive of all Hmong. He stated, "... It is the first (welcoming) stone that contains "Moob" that is not inclusive – creating the problem because it is written in the green dialect. The white dialect would write it as "Hmoob" and a neutral way of it would be written as "Hmong". Hmong is the inclusive spelling because it is not dialect related."

Councilman Dai Thao's statement about the words "Moob" and "Hmong" is imbalanced and fundamentally untrue. To the Mong Leng, the term "Moob" is inclusive; it refers to white and green Mong/Hmong people. In English, the equivalent word to "Hmong" is "Mong." "It is unacceptable for an elected official such as Councilman Thao to use his position, platform, and power to incite such divisive rhetoric between the Mong or Hmong community.

The issue is not what Councilman Dai Thao had put forth that “Moob” is not inclusive. The issue is simply an age-old struggle between white and green Hmong/Mong of one group (White Hmong/Mong) wanting to dominate the other (Green Hmong/Mong). It is the age-old struggle of societies across time of one group or nation wanting to push their agenda over another group or nation. Councilman Dai Thao and those who support his position are attempting to push “Hmoob” and “Hmong” forward while erasing “Moob” and “Mong.” That is what is transpiring in this debate; it has nothing to do with the lack of inclusiveness.

To single out and take offense and exception to the use of the green Hmong/Mong term “Moob” is simply an attempt to dominate and seal the lips of the green Hmong/Mong dialect speakers or Mong Leng. This is an attempt to violate a fundamental human right of the Mong Leng – the right to speak and write in the way that one deems fit for one’s people.

Moreover, Councilman Dai Thao’s push and those who support his discriminatory, racist view has caused supporters of his views to come out of the woodwork to exert their superiority over the Mong Leng with hateful, hurtful name-calling and labeling of the Mong Leng all over social media such as Facebook, YouTube, local exchanges between Mong Leng and Mong Der families and friends all over the world.

The Mong Equality Committee is a collective group of concerned Mong or Hmong individuals who stand for mutual respect, dignity, inclusion, unity, and equality within our community. The Mong Equality Committee was formed to preserve these essential values and bring transparency and truth to the ongoing debate over the use of the term “Moob,” which was engraved on a stone at the Saint Paul-Changsha China Friendship Garden.

For more information, please contact Zongkhang Yang at 651-239-3113, email mongequalitycommittee@gmail.com or visit the Mong Equality Committee at MongEquality.org.

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