

MONG EQUALITY COMMITTEE

P.O. Box 17213, Saint Paul, MN 55117

mongequalitycommittee@gmail.com

<https://mongequality.org>

(651) 321-2139

April 12, 2022

Good afternoon!

It is a SAD SAD day that you and I, all of us, are here on this freezing cold afternoon! None of us wanted to be here, yet here, we are. We never thought this day would come where one of our very own Hmong political leaders would choose to discriminate and lie to his own Mong community. Yet that day is here because Councilman Dai Thao has made it very clear that he will do whatever it takes to get his way even if it means stepping over his own people, especially the Mong Leng.

As we all know, it all started in September last year with the writings on an art stone at the St. Paul-Changsha China Friendship Garden where one of the stones was written in the Mong Leng dialect: "Moob Minnesota txais tog koj." Everything about this sentence was correct, but Councilman Dai Thao took exception simply because the Mong Leng term "M-o-o-b" was used on the rock instead of the Mong Der term "H-m-o-o-b." He tried to fool his fellow council members, other non-Hmong, and the unsuspecting Hmong by trying to say that "M-o-o-b" was not a standard word nor was it inclusive of both Mong Der and Mong Leng. But we know how that attempt ended for him. **He failed miserably!** Principles of fairness, diversity, and the wisdom of former Parks and Recs Director Mike Hahm lead to the decision to keep the Mong Leng writing on the art stone as is.

Instead of gracefully acknowledging that he was wrong, Councilman Dai Thao quickly announced on his Facebook timeline that he was proud to be part of the solution. However, we knew very well that he was one of the main culprits that led to the upheaval and division in our community. We called him out on March 5th. Then, on March 9th, he reached out to us that he would like to issue a public apology and wants to meet in-person with us to hear and learn more about what he can do to heal the community moving forward.

Believing that he was genuine, we responded and accommodated all of his requests as we attempted to settle on a meeting date and time. Yet, despite all of our efforts, he had only led us on using various delay tactics and finally backed out on his own invitation to meet with us by claiming as if we had declined his offer to meet, showing his true color: **an absolute LIAR!**

And so we are here today to say to Councilman Dai Thao:

We no longer need you at City Hall. We do not need **discriminatory rhetorics and lies from you**. You've attempted to silence your Mong Leng community members, and you've failed. You were called to apologize. You acknowledged and said that you wanted to talk to us to issue a public apology. Yet, on the very day that we were to meet with you, you shut us out despite every back bending that we did to meet your requests, including providing our names and addresses to your office. We did all of that, but you turned your back on us and gave us no other choice but to come here today.

And so here we are, and we say to you: **Go home!**

You have brought shame and disgrace to the Ward 1 office. The citizens of St. Paul, Ward 1 deserves a better city council member **who represents all constituents, not just a select few**. We need someone who respects diversity, fosters inclusiveness, and seeks solutions instead of creating problems and division within our community.

Again, go home, Dai. You've lied.