

HANDOUT

Star Tribune July 9, 2004

Do it on your own

In the early 1920s, when my uncle came to America from another country, he did not speak English but was a very able-bodied person to work. He saved enough money to bring his four brothers to America with no government money involved. They learned to speak English, read and write, and all five went on to be successful businessmen.

If the Hmong or anybody else want to come to America, that's fine.

But they shouldn't do it at the expense of the Americans who have worked hard, pay high property, state and federal taxes, and tried to get ahead themselves.

Karon Looft, Crystal.

Star Tribune July 10, 2004

Making good on a promise

A July 9 letter writer writes that Hmong should not come to America at the expense of the Americans who have "worked hard, paid high . . . taxes" and cites the example of her uncle and brothers. The only problem with her argument is that there are too many other factors involved.

The Hmong fought with the U.S. forces during the Vietnam War, specifically in Laos. They rescued downed pilots, led forces through jungles, guarded transportation routes and were subjected to daily attack with their villages and families.

When U.S. forces pulled out we left these "friends" behind and tried to forget about their service to "hard-working American taxpayers."

However, the Communist governments that took over did not forget how these people had aided the U.S. forces. Thousands of Hmong were killed, and most fled for their lives to Thailand. The Thai government did not force them back, but did force them to stay in deplorable camps.

Today we are only making good on a promise. They helped our soldiers in the past, and they help build our culture and economy today as Americans.

Marque Jensen, Minneapolis.