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## SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 34

Offered February 5, 2013

*Commending South Vietnamese Americans.*

Patron—Black

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, South Vietnamese Americans, a proud, industrious people, make up the fourth-largest group of Asian Americans in the United States; and

WHEREAS, a South Vietnamese mass immigration to the United States began when communist tyranny swept the former Republic of Vietnam after the fall of Saigon in 1975; and

WHEREAS, to the very end, soldiers of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) fought valiantly, defending their freedom with skill, daring, and gallantry; the ARVN 3rd Cavalry Regiment, for example, demonstrated such skill and heroism in battle that it was awarded the coveted United States Presidential Unit Citation; and

WHEREAS, nearly 60,000 American fighters died in the Vietnam War and some 224,000 South Vietnamese troops also fell defending their nation; and

WHEREAS, although the American sacrifice in Vietnam was enormous, some of the most bitter combat—including the savage warfare after the United States' withdrawal—was shouldered principally by our South Vietnamese allies; and

WHEREAS, the 1968 communist Tet Offensive was designed to crack South Vietnam's will to resist, instead, South Vietnamese forces fought ferociously, and not a single unit collapsed or ran; indeed, even the police fought, turning pistols against heavily armed enemy regulars; and

WHEREAS, together with American soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines, the ARVN decimated the indigenous Viet Cong guerillas, eliminating them as an effective fighting force for the remainder of the war; and

WHEREAS, most American units had left Vietnam by 1972, yet South Vietnamese units continued to perform remarkably well; with limited American help, they defeated North Vietnam's all-out Easter Offensive, a massive conventional invasion led by Soviet T-54 tanks; and

WHEREAS, the Easter Offensive victory helped force North Vietnam to accept a negotiated end to the war; and

WHEREAS, sadly, in 1974 the United States withdrew most military support, including air power, severely restricting the flow of fuel and munitions to the ARVN; strangled by a lack of supplies, tanks and artillery pieces were allotted meager quantities of ammunition—sometimes just a few shells per day—and radios often had no batteries; and

WHEREAS, the strangulation of South Vietnamese supply lines destroyed morale and decimated combat power, making it impossible for even the bravest South Vietnamese troops to effectively defend against the final invasion by North Vietnamese soldiers; North Vietnam remained well-supplied by their communist allies in China and the Soviet Union; and

WHEREAS, everyone with ties to the Americans or the government of the Republic of Vietnam feared the threatened communist reprisals; as communist forces overran the South during the spring of 1975, 125,000 key South Vietnamese personnel were airlifted from South Vietnam to refugee centers in the United States; and

WHEREAS, as American troops and embassy staff were evacuated by waiting aircraft, terrified South Vietnamese mothers thrust their babies into the hands of complete strangers, hoping their offspring might somehow survive the approaching bloodbath; and

WHEREAS, the promised reign of terror quickly emerged and the South Vietnamese desperately fled the murderous tyranny of the communists; roughly two million South Vietnamese fled to escape North Vietnam's promised "people's paradise"; and

WHEREAS, launching small, crowded sampans, many South Vietnamese sailed into the vast, treacherous waters of the South China Sea, where hundreds of thousands drowned in the escape attempt; the South Vietnamese continued to flee their country in huge numbers from 1975 until the mid-1980s; and

WHEREAS, beginning in 1975 and for decades afterwards, well over one million South Vietnamese—especially former military officers and government employees—were imprisoned in communist concentration camps; these were euphemistically called "reeducation camps," where many thousands of South Vietnamese were "educated" to their deaths; and

WHEREAS, the communist concentration camps were characterized by brutal forced labor, political

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59 indoctrination, and deadly assignments like human mine clearing; there were no formal charges or trials;  
60 and

61 WHEREAS, the conditions in the camps were so savage that many surviving inmates estimate that  
62 almost a third of the prisoners of war died while in captivity; and

63 WHEREAS, South Vietnamese immigration to the United States peaked in 1992 when, after decades  
64 of torture, many concentration camp survivors were finally released and sponsored by their families to  
65 come to this country; and

66 WHEREAS, after persevering through unimaginable brutality and suffering, the South Vietnamese  
67 who escaped their homeland demonstrated admirable talent and intellect; they became an entrepreneurial,  
68 upwardly mobile group, whose poverty rate rapidly declined after their arrival in the United States; and

69 WHEREAS, today, 82 percent of the South Vietnamese in the United States are native-born or  
70 naturalized citizens, an exceptionally high portion of American citizenship for any immigrant group; and

71 WHEREAS, for several decades, South Vietnamese American patriots have contributed to the United  
72 States with intellect, skill, loyalty, and determination; many have served proudly in the Armed Forces of  
73 the United States; now, therefore, be it

74 RESOLVED by the Senate of Virginia, That South Vietnamese Americans, who faced overwhelming  
75 military odds and hardships be commended for their extraordinary gallantry in defense of their  
76 homeland, the Republic of Vietnam, and that all Vietnamese who fled to the United States be  
77 commended for their industriousness and patriotism, which are in the finest traditions of the United  
78 States and the Commonwealth of Virginia; and, be it

79 RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for  
80 presentation to the National Congress of Vietnamese Americans as an expression of the Senate of  
81 Virginia's admiration for South Vietnamese Americans' bravery in escaping from the former Republic of  
82 Vietnam and their many ensuing contributions as residents and citizens of the United States.