



# ***AGENDA Memo***

***CITY HALL - ONE FRANK H. OGAWA PLAZA, 2<sup>ND</sup> FLOOR - OAKLAND - CALIFORNIA 94612***

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Councilmember, District 2

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**TO:** Members of the Oakland City Council

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**SUBJECT:** Resolution condemning deportations of Southeast Asian refugee communities by the Trump Administration's Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE); respectfully urging Governor Gavin Newsom to grant pardons to Sakhone Lasaphangthong and Somdeng "Danny" Thongsy to allow them to remain in the United States and to protect our Lao, Hmong, Lu-Mien, Khmu, and immigrant community.

**DATE:** April 1, 2020

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Councilmembers Thao and Fortunato Bas respectfully submit this supplemental to detail the reason for the urgency of this resolution. Sakhone Lasaphangthong and Somdeng "Danny" Thongsy are both formerly incarcerated refugees who, because of the Trump Administration's refugee and immigration policies, are facing deportation to a country their parents fled when they were children.

Sakhone was born in Laos and separated from four of his nine siblings at age five; he lived in a refugee camp in Thailand for two years before members of his family brought him to the United States. Incarcerated at age 22, he served 20 years of a 30 years sentence before being paroled in 2018. During his incarceration, he attained three associate degrees in social and behavioral science, general business, and American studies and increased participation in the prison's educational system from 4 to 300. He now works as an Ambassador for the Asian Prisoner Support Committee and as an Outreach/Housing Navigation Manager for Family Bridges, connecting individuals struggling with homelessness with City and County resources.

Somdeng "Danny" was born in a refugee camp in Thailand. His family immigrated to the United States when he was only two years old. Danny lived with his brother at age seventeen when his brother was murdered. Danny later made a series of bad choices which led to his own incarceration. There he sought therapy and found transformation through a strong spiritual practice. HE became an advocate in self-help programs, and

**Sheng Thao, Councilmember District 4**

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Subject: Danny Thongsy and Sakhone Lasaphangthong Pardon Resolution

Date: 3/17/2020

Page 2

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took leadership roles facilitating groups, leading bible studies, and mentoring other prisoners. He earned a degree in Social Science and became a member of Juvenile Lifer/Youth Offender group called Kid Creating Awareness Together (Kid CAT) and advocated for the passage of SB 260 and 261, which advocate for fair sentencing for youth. Eventually paroled, Danny became a member of the Asian Prisoner Support Committee and was awarded the Yuri Kochiyama Fellowship at the Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Asian Law Caucus. He later advocated for SB 54, AB 1308, and AB 2845, which focused on parole reform. Danny currently serves as a Coordinator for the Justice Reinvestment Coalition of Alameda County, which seeks to create a more fair and just public safety system.

As detailed above, Sakhone and Danny spent a combined five years in a country to which they are facing deportation. They have lived most of their lives in the United States and both serve to enrich their communities. Councilmembers Thao and Fortunato Bas are requesting the Oakland City Council pass a resolution respectfully urging Governor Gavin Newsom to grant Sakhone and Danny pardons so they may stay in the United States and continue their work benefiting Oakland.

Respectfully submitted,



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Councilmember Sheng Thao



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Councilmember Nikki Fortunato Bas