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Kevin Raycraft, Field Director
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
Detroit Field Office
985 Michigan Avenue, Suite 207
Detroit, MI 48226

Dear Director Raycraft,

We are writing to urge the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to immediately release Lue Yang, Sufeng Yang, Sai Vang, Pang Nhia Hang, Wa Kong Lor, and other detained Hmong refugees from Michigan and Ohio.

We are elected officials in Michigan, including the first Hmong American elected official in Michigan. We take seriously our responsibility to ensure the safety, quality of life and opportunities for our residents.

These community members are integral parts of their families and local communities. They are fathers, mothers, and community leaders who came to the United States as refugees following the Vietnam War. The Hmong people were recruited by the CIA to fight for the United States in the secret war in Laos. They escaped Laos in the aftermath of the war, many facing danger in the jungle and crossing the Mekong River. Some of the detained individuals were born in refugee camps in Thailand. Most came to the United States as refugees directly as a result of our country's involvement in Southeast Asia.

Lue Yang is the President of the Hmong Family Association, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization providing critical services and programming for Michigan families. He is the primary breadwinner for his family of eight, including an elderly grandmother.

We are aware that these individuals have past minor nonviolent convictions from two or more decades ago. One of the individual's convictions was expunged lawfully under Michigan's expungement law. None of these community members were targeted for immediate removal over many years. None have reoffended.

ICE should expend its resources by targeting individuals who are truly a threat, instead of indiscriminately detaining and deporting immigrants and refugees without consideration for their contributions to society and our economy or their personal history. Immigrants and refugees seeking the American Dream deserve opportunity and dignity, just like every American.

Sincerely,

Mai Xiong
Co-Chair, Michigan Asian Pacific American
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State Representative, District 21

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State Senator, District 2

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