(Date)

Edmund G. Brown Jr.

Governor of California

c/o Kristina Lindquist

Deputy Legal Affairs Secretary

Office of the Governor

State Capitol

Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Brown,

I am writing on behalf of Somdeng “Danny” Thongsy in support of his request for a pardon. I am [your name], and I am the [your title and constituency]. Danny has shown himself to be a model civilian through his community service work that has helped make California a more equitable society.

As a refugee whose family fled heavy bombing during the war in Laos, Danny was born in a refugee camp in Thailand and resettled in Stockton California as a toddler. Due to the trauma both of the war in Laos and the violent death of his brother, coupled with lack of culturally competent support and growing up in an impoverished neighborhood, the odds were stacked against him. As fate would have it, he made a terrible mistake as a teenager.

While incarcerated, he matured and with full remorse of his past actions, he transformed his life. He graduated with a high school and college degree, joined and facilitated numerous self-help programs and mentored others to make positive choices. Danny found spirituality and became active in chapel programs and religious studies. He advocated with Kids Creating Awareness Together (Kid CAT) to pass SB 260 and 261, resulting in hundreds of parole grants to those sentenced to life as youth. Throughout prison, he had no disciplinary record.

After his release, Danny has made numerous positive contributions to his community and society. Danny quickly began his fellowship at Asian American Advancing Justice-Asian Law Caucus (AAAJ-ALC) as a Yuri Kochiyama Fellow. He engaged in policy advocacy, organizing, and legal support for AAAJ-ALC’s Immigrant Rights and Criminal Justice Reform Programs. There, he advocated for SB 54, which helps keep immigrant families from being torn apart and AB 1308 for youth offender parole hearings. He engages in community outreach as a member of the Asian Prisoner Support Committee. He is active in his church community and interfaith organizations, volunteers extensively in the Bay Area such as helping with re-entry support and teaching origami to youth, attends numerous leadership workshops and conferences, and promotes voter engagement through his job at Oakland Rising, among other activities.

However, ​Danny is facing imminent deportation to Laos, a country he has never set foot in, because of his immigration status. For many refugees like Danny, a pardon is one of the only ways to prevent deportation. A pardon would give him the chance to remain together with the only family he has left, his sister. It would allow him to remain a contributing member of society in the US, the only country he has known given that he arrived here as a refugee when he was 2 years old.

Pardons exist as recognition that people can not only change their lives, but can make the world around them a better place. Danny has proven that despite the challenges he faced and the wrongs he committed, he has chosen to turn himself into an advocate for communities that need him. I support his request for a pardon so that he may continue improving our community. Please feel free to contact my office if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

[Insert Name]