

117TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

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To award a Congressional Gold Medal to the former hostages of the Iran Hostage Crisis of 1979–1981, highlighting their resilience throughout the unprecedented ordeal that they lived through and the national unity it produced, marking 4 decades since their 444 days in captivity, and recognizing their sacrifice to the United States.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. PADILLA (for himself, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. CORNYN, Mrs. MURRAY, and Mr. LUJÁN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_

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**A BILL**

To award a Congressional Gold Medal to the former hostages of the Iran Hostage Crisis of 1979–1981, highlighting their resilience throughout the unprecedented ordeal that they lived through and the national unity it produced, marking 4 decades since their 444 days in captivity, and recognizing their sacrifice to the United States.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2       *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3       **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4       This Act may be cited as the “Iran Hostages Con-  
5       gressional Gold Medal Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress finds the following:

3 (1) On January 20, 1981, United States dip-  
4 lomats, military personnel, and civilians were re-  
5 leased after being held hostage for 444 days by mili-  
6 tant student supporters of Iran's Ayatollah Ruhollah  
7 Khomeini in a violation of international law. The in-  
8 dividuals were taken from the United States Em-  
9 bassy in Tehran, Iran, and the ordeal came to be  
10 known as the Iran Hostage Crisis.

11 (2) The hostages were subjected to intense  
12 physical and psychological torture throughout their  
13 captivity, such as mock executions, beatings, solitary  
14 confinement, and inhospitable living conditions.

15 (3) Throughout their time held, the hostages  
16 were routinely told to denounce the United States  
17 and, when they refused, they were tortured, but re-  
18 mained strong in their spirit.

19 (4) One hostage wrote "Viva la roja, blanco, y  
20 azul", which translates to "Long live the red, white,  
21 and blue", on the wall of his cell as a reminder of  
22 the values he swore to protect.

23 (5) The hostages showed extraordinary courage  
24 by continually engaging in acts of resistance against  
25 their captors, such as by refusing to sign condemna-

1 tions of the United States, in the face of gross viola-  
2 tions of their human rights.

3 (6) Many of the hostages still experience trau-  
4 ma as a result of the events of the crisis and deserve  
5 to have their suffering recognized.

6 (7) While, as of the date of enactment of this  
7 Act, 35 of the hostages are living, it is important  
8 that the people of the United States reflect on the  
9 resilience and strength of the hostages, which serve  
10 as an example to current generations.

11 (8) The people of the United States should—

12 (A) acknowledge the hostages as heroes  
13 who—

14 (i) experienced great tribulation; and

15 (ii) endured, so that the people of the  
16 United States may know the blessing of  
17 living in the United States; and

18 (B) strive to demonstrate the values shown  
19 by the hostages.

20 (9) On January 22, 1981, President Jimmy  
21 Carter met with the hostages in West Germany and  
22 stated the following: “One of the acts in my life  
23 which has been the most moving and gratifying in  
24 meeting with and discussing the future and the past  
25 with the now liberated Americans who were held

1       hostage in Iran for so long. I pointed out to them  
2       that, since their capture by the Iranian terrorists  
3       and their being held in this despicable act of sav-  
4       agery, that the American people's hearts have gone  
5       out to them and the Nation has been united as per-  
6       haps never before in history and that the prayers  
7       that have gone up from the people throughout the  
8       world to God for their safety have finally been an-  
9       swered.”.

10           (10) On January 28, 1981, when welcoming the  
11       hostages home, President Ronald Reagan stated the  
12       following: “You’ve come home to a people who for  
13       444 days suffered the pain of your imprisonment,  
14       prayed for your safety, and most importantly, shared  
15       your determination that the spirit of free men and  
16       women is not a fit subject for barter. You’ve rep-  
17       resented under great stress the highest traditions of  
18       public service. Your conduct is symbolic of the mil-  
19       lions of professional diplomats, military personnel,  
20       and others who have rendered service to their coun-  
21       try.”.

22           (11) During the 444 days the brave hostages  
23       were held, the rest of the United States held its  
24       breath, waiting for news of the hostages. The United

1 States hoped and prayed together, as one, for the  
2 hostages' safe return.

3 (12) Bruce Laingen, who served as United  
4 States Ambassador to Iran from 1979 to 1980 and  
5 was the highest ranking diplomat held hostage,  
6 summed up the experience by saying the following:  
7 "Fifty-three Americans who will always have a love  
8 affair with this country and who join with you in a  
9 prayer of thanksgiving for the way in which this cri-  
10 sis has strengthened the spirit and resilience and  
11 strength that is the mark of a truly free society.".  
12 It is now the responsibility of the people of the  
13 United States to honor the spirit, resilience, and  
14 strength that the hostages displayed during their  
15 444 days of imprisonment.

16 (13) Now, more than 4 decades later, the  
17 United States continues to honor the hostages. The  
18 recipients of the award bestowed by this Act are he-  
19 roes in every sense of the word. They are role mod-  
20 els who wore their pride in the United States with  
21 esteem and have allowed for subsequent generations  
22 to appreciate the blessing of living in the United  
23 States. Today, as we mark 40 years since their re-  
24 lease, the people of the United States acknowledge  
25 their endurance, strength, and contributions to see-

1       ing a more peaceful world. The hostages suffered for  
2       the United States and now it is the duty of the  
3       United States to recognize them for it.

4   **SEC. 3. DEFINITION.**

5       In this Act, the term “hostage” means a person of  
6       the United States who was taken captive on November 4,  
7       1979, in Tehran, Iran, at the United States embassy and  
8       released on—

- 9               (1) July 11, 1980; or  
10              (2) January 20, 1981.

11   **SEC. 4. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

12       (a) AWARD AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of the  
13       House of Representatives and the President pro tempore  
14       of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements for the  
15       award, on behalf of Congress, of a single gold medal of  
16       appropriate design to the 53 hostages of the Iran Hostage  
17       Crisis, in recognition of their bravery and endurance  
18       throughout their captivity, which started on November 4,  
19       1979, and lasted until January 21, 1981.

20       (b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For the purposes of the  
21       award referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary of the  
22       Treasury (referred to in this Act as the “Secretary”) shall  
23       strike a gold medal with suitable emblems, devices, and  
24       inscriptions, to be determined by the Secretary, in con-  
25       sultation with the Secretary of State.

1 (c) SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.—

2 (1) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of the  
3 gold medal under subsection (a), the gold medal  
4 shall be given to the National Museum of American  
5 History of the Smithsonian Institution, where it  
6 shall be available for display as appropriate and  
7 made available for research.

8 (2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of  
9 Congress that the Smithsonian Institution should  
10 make the gold medal received under paragraph (1)  
11 available for loan, as appropriate, so that the medal  
12 may be displayed elsewhere.

13 **SEC. 5. BRONZE DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

14 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may strike and sell  
15 duplicates in bronze of the gold medal struck pursuant  
16 to section 4, at a price sufficient to cover the cost thereof,  
17 including labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, and  
18 overhead expenses.

19 (b) PROCEEDS OF SALES.—The amounts received  
20 from the sale of duplicate medals under subsection (a)  
21 shall be deposited in the United States Mint Public Enter-  
22 prise Fund.

23 **SEC. 6. AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS.**

24 There is authorized to be charged against the United  
25 States Mint Public Enterprise Fund such amounts as may

1 be necessary to pay for the costs of the medals struck  
2 under this Act.

3 **SEC. 7. STATUS OF MEDALS.**

4 (a) NATIONAL MEDALS.—The medals struck pursu-  
5 ant to this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter  
6 51 of title 31, United States Code.

7 (b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of section  
8 5134 of title 31, United States Code, all medals struck  
9 under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic items.

10 **SEC. 8. DETERMINATION OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.**

11 The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of  
12 complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010,  
13 shall be determined by reference to the latest statement  
14 titled “Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation” for this  
15 Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record  
16 by the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, pro-  
17 vided that such statement has been submitted prior to the  
18 vote on passage.