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S. 2607

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.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

AUGUST 4, 2021

Mr. PADILLA (for himself, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. CORNYN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. LUJÁN, and Ms. WARREN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

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.

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