

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 567

AN ACT

To award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the First Rhode Island Regiment, in recognition of their dedicated service during the Revolutionary War.

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

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “First Rhode Island
3 Regiment Congressional Gold Medal Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

5 Congress finds the following:

6 (1) During the winter at Valley Forge, from
7 1777–1778, the Continental Army had difficulty re-
8 cruiting the necessary quotas of men set by the Con-
9 gress.

10 (2) At the same time, the State of Rhode Island
11 was ordered to supply two battalions while a British
12 force occupied the City of Newport.

13 (3) In January 1778, at the urging of Brigadier
14 General James Varnum, General George Washington
15 wrote to Governor Nicholas Cooke of the State of
16 Rhode Island requesting assistance recruiting men
17 for the Continental Line.

18 (4) On February 14, 1778, the Rhode Island
19 General Assembly voted to allow the enlistment of
20 “every able-bodied negro, mulatto, or Indian man
21 slave”.

22 (5) In addition, the Rhode Island General As-
23 sembly provided that any enlisted slave “upon his
24 passing muster before Colonel Christopher Greene,
25 be immediately discharged from the service of his
26 master or mistress, and be absolutely free as though

1 he had never been encumbered with any kind of ser-
2 vitude or slavery”.

3 (6) As a result, between February 1778 and
4 June 1778, Colonel Christopher Greene, Lieutenant
5 Colonel Jeremiah Olney, and Major Samuel Ward
6 recruited men of African heritage and Indigenous
7 descent who formed the core of the First Rhode Is-
8 land Regiment.

9 (7) The First Rhode Island Regiment became
10 among the first units in American History in which
11 men of every race and ethnicity were recruited to
12 serve.

13 (8) On August 29, 1778, at the Battle of
14 Rhode Island, following an attempted siege of Brit-
15 ish-occupied Newport along with the newly allied
16 French fleet, the First Rhode Island Regiment acted
17 heroically in holding back Hessian forces and caus-
18 ing them to retreat.

19 (9) During the Battle of Rhode Island, the
20 First Rhode Island Regiment’s losses included three
21 killed, nine wounded and eleven missing soldiers.

22 (10) Soldiers of color from the First Rhode Is-
23 land Regiment continued to fight bravely to win
24 American independence for 5 more years in an inte-

1 grated Rhode Island Regiment that included men of
2 African, European, and Indigenous descent.

3 (11) By early 1784, the last Rhode Island sol-
4 diers were discharged at Saratoga, New York.

5 (12) Their commander, Colonel Jeremiah
6 Olney, praised the Regiment for “faithfully pre-
7 serving in the best of causes, in every stage of serv-
8 ice, with unexampled fortitude and patience through
9 all the danger and toils of a long and severe war”.

10 (13) Afterwards, some veterans of the First
11 Rhode Island Regiment had to consistently resist ef-
12 forts at re-enslavement and fought for back wages
13 from the Rhode Island General Assembly.

14 (14) According to the Rhode Island State Ar-
15 chives, the First Rhode Island Regiment included at
16 least the following soldiers: Babcock, Priamus (Pri-
17 mus); Bent, Prince; Bours, Cato; Brown, Priamus
18 (Primus); Burk, Africa; Burroughs, John; Car-
19 penter, Cudgo; Champlin, Dick; Champlin, Jack;
20 Champlin, July; Champlin, Newport; Champlin,
21 Sharper; Champlin, York; Clark, James;
22 Coddington, Jack; Fones, Jack; Gardner, Cuff;
23 Gardner, Hercules; Gardner, Minkl; Gardner,
24 Preamus (Primus); Gardner, Rutter; Gray, Ebe-
25 nezer; Green, Cuff; Greene, Cato; Greene, Jack;

1 Greene, Pero; Greene, William; Hammond, Prince;
 2 Harriss, Cesar; Hazard, Backus; Hazard, Jabin;
 3 Hazard, Jacob; Hazard, Peter; Hazard, Peter;
 4 Lefavour, Thom; Mason, Warsen; Mawney, Cyrus;
 5 Minturn, Jack; Mowrey, Pero; Nichols, Thomas;
 6 Perry, Ganset; Phillips, Philow; Pierce, Titus; Pot-
 7 ter, David; Randall, Prince; Rhodes, Bristol; Rhodes,
 8 Priamus; Rhodes, Richard; Rhodes, Samuel; Rich-
 9 mond, Ebenezer; Robinson, Mingo; Rodman, Isaac;
 10 Rodman, Mingo; Rodman, Prince; Rose, Cesar;
 11 Saltonstall, Brittain; Saunders, Sampson; Sheldon,
 12 Cesar; Slave; Slave; Smith, Juba; Sweeling, Query;
 13 Talbot, Sigby; Tanner, Quam; Tillinghast, Cuff;
 14 Updike, Cesar; Updike, Moses; Vaughan, Prince;
 15 Vernon, Cato; Watson, Fortune; Wells, Cesar;
 16 Wickes, Nat; and Willbour, Boston.

17 **SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.**

18 (a) AWARD AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of the
 19 House of Representatives and the President pro tempore
 20 of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements for the
 21 award, on behalf of the Congress, of a single gold medal
 22 of appropriate design to the First Rhode Island Regiment,
 23 collectively in recognition of their dedicated service during
 24 the Revolutionary War.

1 (b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For the purposes of the
 2 award referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary of the
 3 Treasury (hereafter in this Act referred to as the “Sec-
 4 retary”) shall strike the gold medal with suitable emblems,
 5 devices, and inscriptions, to be determined by the Sec-
 6 retary.

7 (c) RHODE ISLAND STATE LIBRARY.—

8 (1) IN GENERAL.—Following the award of the
 9 gold medal in honor of the First Rhode Island Regi-
 10 ment of the Revolutionary War under subsection (a),
 11 the gold medal shall be given to the Rhode Island
 12 State Library, where it will be displayed as appro-
 13 priate and made available for research.

14 (2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of
 15 Congress that the Rhode Island State Library
 16 should make the gold medal received under para-
 17 graph (1) available for display elsewhere, particu-
 18 larly at other appropriate locations associated with
 19 the First Rhode Island Regiment of the Revolu-
 20 tionary War.

21 **SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.**

22 The Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in
 23 bronze of the gold medal struck under section 3, at a price
 24 sufficient to cover the costs thereof, including labor, mate-
 25 rials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses.

1 **SEC. 5. STATUS OF MEDALS.**

2 (a) NATIONAL MEDALS.—Medals struck pursuant to
3 this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter 51
4 of title 31, United States Code.

5 (b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of sections
6 5134 and 5136 of title 31, United States Code, all medals
7 struck under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic
8 items.

9 **SEC. 6. AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS; PROCEEDS OF**
10 **SALE.**

11 (a) AUTHORITY TO USE FUND AMOUNTS.—There is
12 authorized to be charged against the United States Mint
13 Public Enterprise Fund such amounts as may be nec-
14 essary to pay for the costs of the medals struck under
15 this Act.

16 (b) PROCEEDS OF SALE.—Amounts received from the
17 sale of duplicate bronze medals authorized under section
18 4 shall be deposited into the United States Mint Public
19 Enterprise Fund.

Passed the Senate June 11, 2026.

Attest:

Secretary.

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